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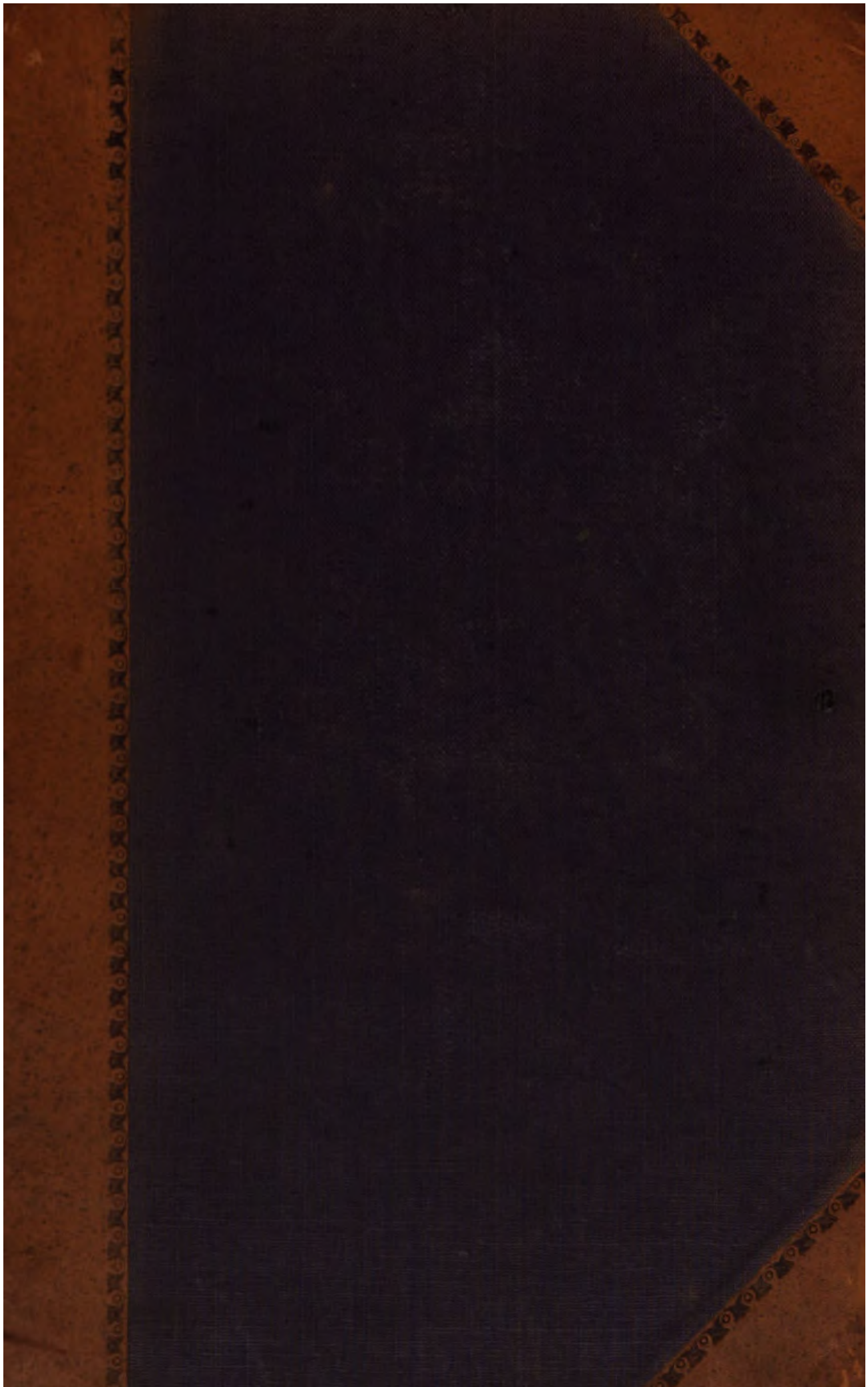
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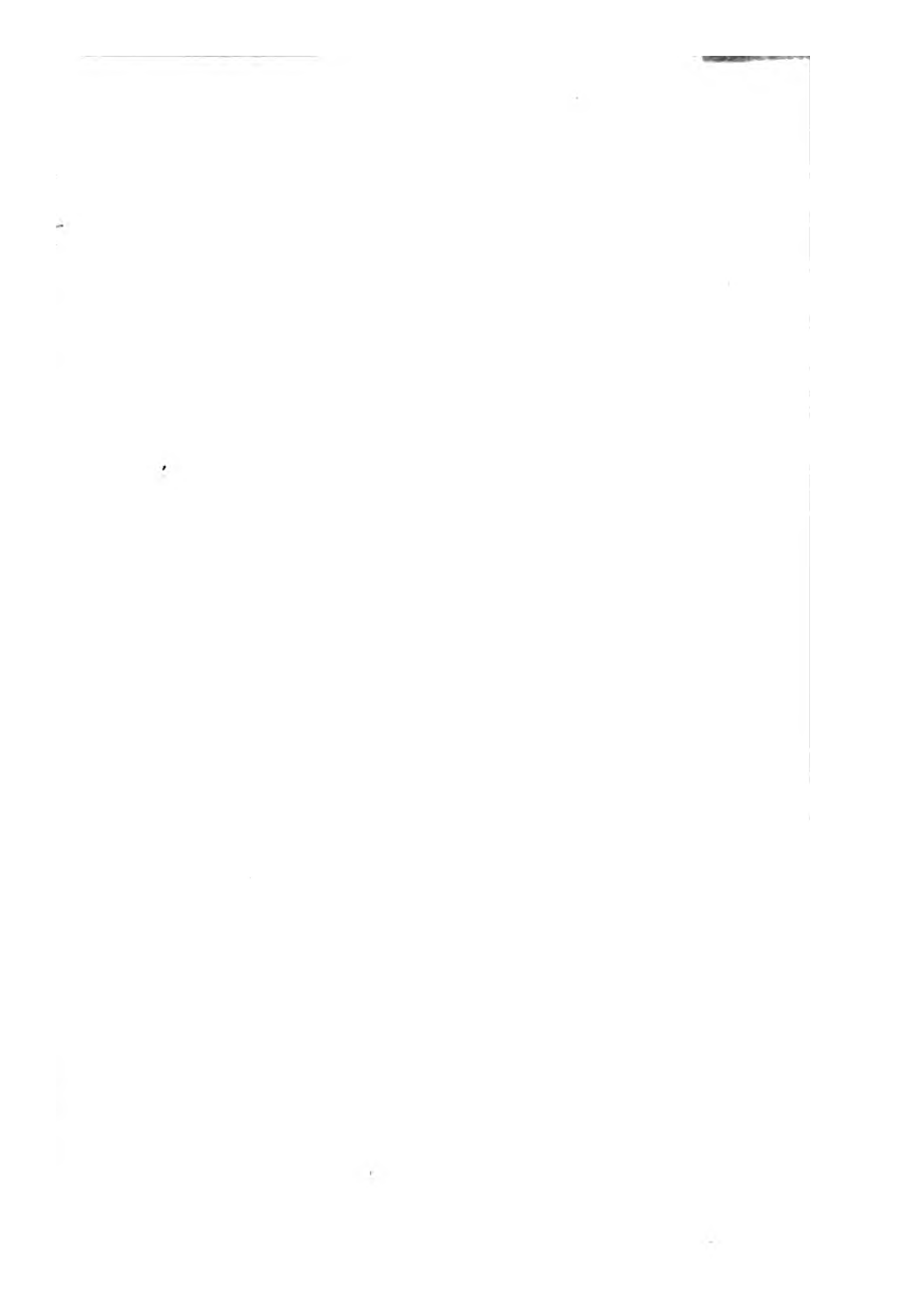


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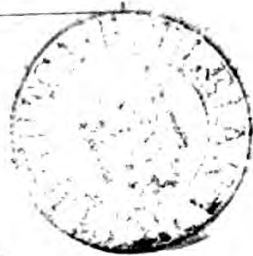




THE
ST. JAMES'S MAGAZINE

AUGUST TO NOVEMBER.

VOL. V.



LONDON:

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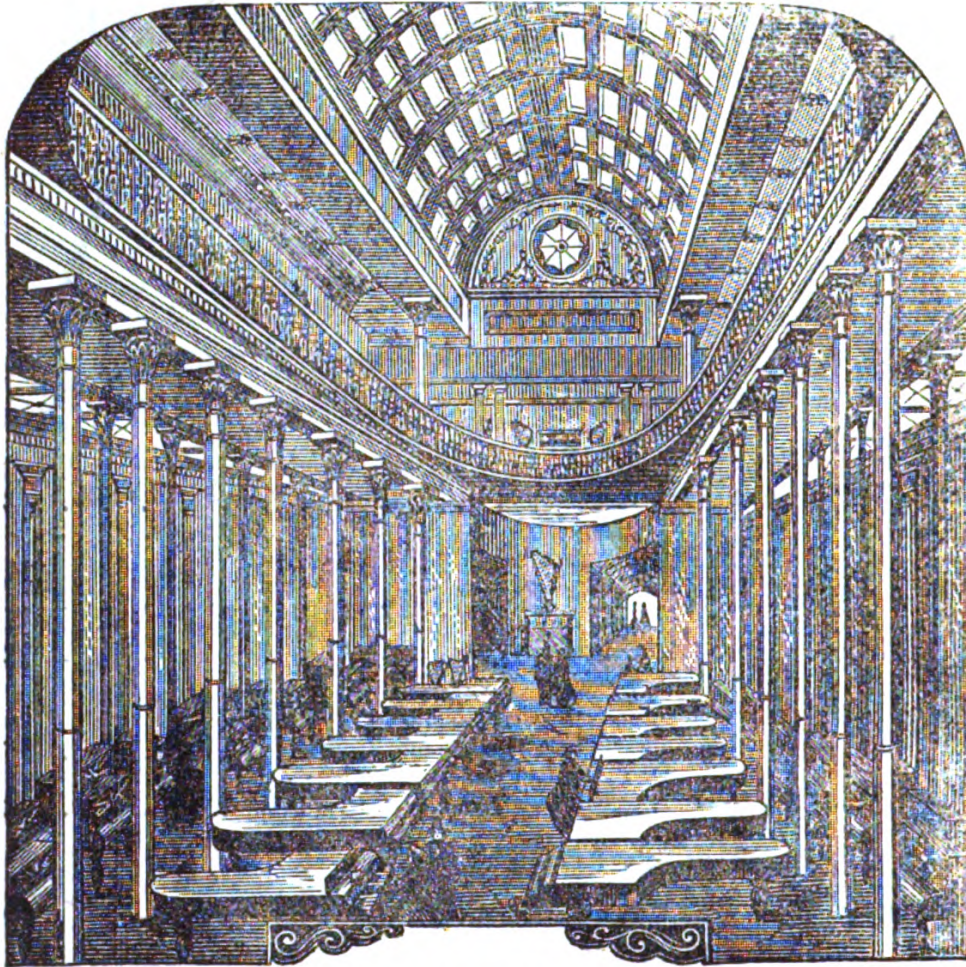
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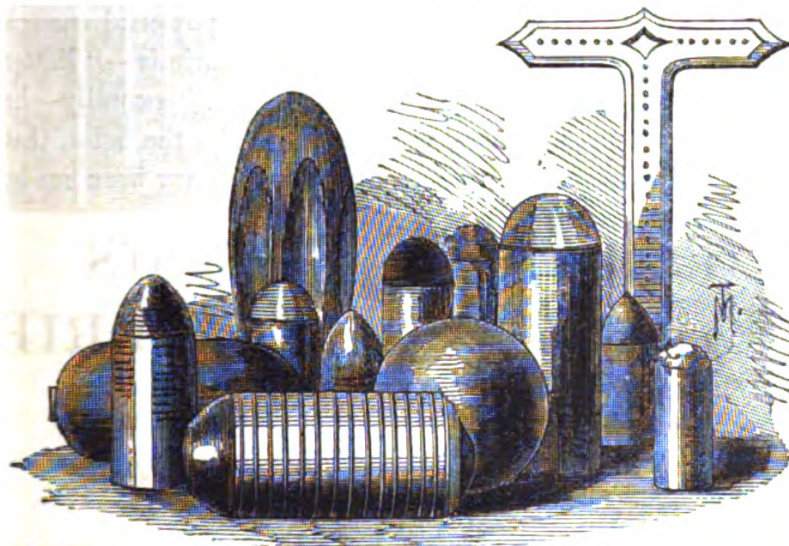
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THE ARMSTRONG GUN.



THAT a soldier should bedaring is pre-supposed by the very tenure on which his profession is maintained. Ever ready to go forth against the foe, and do battle, wholly regardless of

what may happen to himself:—this is the notion we are wont to associate with the character of one who has chosen for his career the profession of arms.

The subject of our proposed National Defences, whether they should be fixed or floating, or both; whether the science of artillery construction be sufficiently advanced to compass the manufacture of ordnance powerful enough to smash, or otherwise destroy, those floating leviathans mailed in iron, which a maritime enemy, in the event of war, would be sure to bring against us; and—granting such competency—whether it be more desirable to meet our enemies upon the water, floating battery to floating battery, ship to ship; or whether to launch our missiles at them from stationary forts—these are all questions of such deep importance that few adults, acknowledging the proud nationalism of Briton, but will have pondered on them ere this.

We make no apology, then, for adding a few words, to the common stock of information on this momentous subject. Technical though the discussion be, it has its popular aspect as well; and to this chiefly we shall address our observations.

Lieut.-Colonel Boxer, R.A.F.R.S.—chief of the Laboratory Department at the Woolwich Arsenal—if he be not the boldest soldier who ever existed, is the very boldest soldier of whom we, speaking for ourselves, have any record. Of this no doubt; and it shall be demonstrated by-and-by. That gentleman has written what, for the size of it, must be called a pamphlet, but what, for the importance of it, must be denominated a book. The title-page informs the reader that it has been printed for private circulation. Considerable publicity has been given to its contents, however, before this time; more publicity yet, it is destined to have.

Now, the especial courage of the gallant Colonel is seen in the following:—that whereas the national Commissioners advise the construction of land batteries for the defence of our maritime arsenals, on the strength of the conclusion that ordnance constructors, and notably Sir William Armstrong, can easily manufacture guns large enough and powerful enough for giving effect to these batteries, Colonel Boxer says, *imprimis*—“Better make your guns first, gentlemen; fortifications afterwards:” secondly—he intimates very plainly, and, to our mind, very convincingly, the belief that not only have guns of the necessary calibre and power never been made, but that they never will be made.

If this be not courage, we do not know what courage is. We sincerely trust the gallant Colonel has made no error of calculation in regard to the impact of War Office fury that will be launched against him. We trust he has armed himself with some competent moral armour-plating, and that he will come to no grief. The fact is within our cognizance that an able and zealous naval officer, Commander ***** was summarily put on half pay, because he said something depreciatory of the Armstrong gun system. But what was the gravity of that gentleman’s offence by comparison with the offence committed by Colonel Boxer? who not merely by implication, summarily disposes of Sir William Armstrong’s breech-loading guns—or Armstrong guns proper—as wholly inefficient for the purpose of damaging iron-clad ships—not only demonstrates that the muzzle-loading, smooth-bore gun made by Sir William Armstrong but in no other sense, an Armstrong gun—would be found utterly inefficient to successfully attack iron-clad ships at ranges of 1,700 to 3,000 yards; but boldly pronounces the opinion that guns of the calibre and power requisite, cannot be made by Sir William Armstrong or any other artillery constructor!

And now let the circumstance not be forgotten, that the pamphlet was printed before the seventh of July; the day on which Sir William Armstrong’s 150-pounder burst at Shoeburyness, launching its breech nearly forty yards to the river, and revealing a fracture that comprehends no less than 425 square inches of surface.

Nor do the gallant Colonel's objections to the Commissioners' deductions end here. Having premised with expressing his grave doubts whether guns of such weight and power as the Commissioners recommend, ever can be made, and fired, with competent charges of powder, he next assumes for purposes of present argument, that he may have erred on this point—that guns such as the Commissioners recommend, can and will be made; but if made, he says, and all fear of bursting obviated, still their projectiles, instead of being effective against iron armature at distances of 1,700 to 3,000 yards, would hardly be effective at more than 200 yards. If this be so, it follows that as against mailed floating batteries or mailed war ships, the heavy ordnance planted upon our land fortifications would be wholly ineffective.

Though the subject under discussion is based upon technicalities, yet the popular interest it involves is so great, that at the expense of any amount of dignity, we feel urged to make it comprehensible to every reader, whether scientific or unscientific, if possible. Imagine, then, a duck swimming about on the surface of a pond, or lazily floating at rest, as the case may be. On the brink of the pond stands a mischievous boy, who has deliberately willed to hit that duck with a stone, if possible. Now, the first question to be asked and answered is, "at what range," so to speak, "is the duck from the boy?" If *very near*, the bird would incur great risk of being hit by a stone directly hurled. If *very far*, the boy would know better than to hurl a stone directly at his victim. The stone would fall short of the mark; its range would be insufficient: it must be projected no longer "*horizontally*,"—to use an artillery term, the correctness of which is only approximative—but at a certain elevation, proportionate to conditions which we need not stop to discuss. To use another artillery expression, it must be launched vertically. To set the case plainly before the non-scientific reader, the only possible way by which the boy could hit the duck, would consist in throwing the stone high aloft, and allowing it to fall *upon* the duck. *Allowing it to fall upon the duck*, ay, but let any one reflect on the chances against its so falling. At any considerable distance the duck might not be hit once in ten thousand times.

Good: let us now assume (a very wild assumption indeed, but it shall stand us in good stead), let us assume the duck to have the ability to throw stones also—the ability to throw them as far as the boy. Let us assume the duck to be a reasoning bird, and to reason thus:—"The only way I can reach you is by throwing stones up in the air and allowing them to fall. I may not hit you, indeed, but I shall hit something or other; whereas, if you don't hit me, why, then, so to speak, you hit nothing at all, or, at any rate, nothing worth talking about; for your brick bats will fall into the water."

Well, now, instead of duck read floating battery—it may be a mortar-boat: instead of boy read land artilleryman; instead of stones

read shells, and then the case lies plain before you. The present resources of artillery science are such that shells can be pitched by "vertical firing," (as artillerists say,) several miles if necessary. We will not discuss the case of five or six mile ranges at present. Ranges varying from 1,700 to 3,000 yards are sufficient for the purpose of our argument; seeing that the latter range, *i.e.*, 3,000 yards is the maximum fixed upon by the Defence Commissioners—the utmost limit to which they can hope to launch their land projectiles with any effect. Assume now that some possible enemy, moved by the spirit of evil within him, resolves to burn down one of our naval arsenals—Portsmouth for example. Some possible enemy, we say, not France of course; ("*L'Empire c'est la paix.*" We have come to know that, and, of course, believe in it.) Some possible enemy. Well, there is no harm in saying that the German fleet does not run in our mind; although to aid its construction just fifteen hundred pounds sterling were patriotically contributed in Berlin last year. We really are not joking. The Prussian marine appears to nurture a deadly feud against the British navy ever since the day when our beloved Queen—steaming up the Rhine in her yacht—was rudely summoned, through her captain, to heave to, whilst a little man with a long sword, paddling out of the Emmerich in a cock-boat, should search for contraband. The yacht did *not* heave to: the little man did *not* get on board; and if her beloved Majesty *had* any contraband (who knows?), why she made a clean run of it, as some ladies (so we have been told) had been known to do before. The little man telegraphed to Cologne, stating how he had been snubbed; and the heads of his department telegraphed back, commending him for what they called his "*Diensteifer.*" The little man and his clique vowed a deadly hatred to Britannia from that day; and so, inhabitants of Portsmouth or Southampton, the German fleet that is to be, may inflict the injury that a neighbouring fleet can inflict at any moment. Only fancy, you really *may* wake up some fine morning and find the German mortar-boats or floating batteries shelling you out of bed!

Well, now, what to do? that is the question; and that is just what Colonel Boxer asks.

"Send for Sir William Armstrong!" the probable exclamation would be. Telegraph for him. Armstrong's the man. Have we not expended three millions on his guns? Have we not knighted him, C. B'd him? Have we not guaranteed him two thousand per annum sterling for life, come what will? Is he not Director-General of Rifled Ordnance; F.R.S.; and Doctor of Civil Law? Have we not passed an Act of Parliament decreeing that so soon as any inventor in Sir William's line applies to the Patent Office stating his inventive claims, *it shall be competent for the Patent Office to reveal the secret to the War Department?** Have we not put unlimited faith in Sir William Armstrong? Did we not vow he *should* be

* Such is the actual provision of the 22 Victoria cap. 13.

the man to put the Napoleon rifle guns' muzzles out of joint? Napoleon guns! Pooh, pooh. What did the *Times* say about them? "Pooh, pooh! *Monseigneur, l'auteur du passé et l'avenir*. Don't brag about your trumpery muzzle-loaders. It's all very well for folks so little advanced in metallurgy as your people to make that sort of thing, but it won't do for us, my fine fellow. Talk about the secret of our Armstrongs. Pooh, pooh! Suppose you *did* know the secret, what then?—you could not use it I tell you. No. No. The Armstrong gun's a superior sort of article. You can't make it—that's the fact. You haven't the skilled workmen. You can't get them. Be tranquil, *Monseigneur, l'auteur du passé et l'avenir*. There was something looming in the distance when you wrote that book, that you couldn't see. The Armstrong gun I tell you. Knuckle under. It's no use kicking against fate. Britannia is good as she is powerful. She won't hurt you, but you shan't hurt her."

Revenons à nos moutons. We have feigned the ideal case of helmeted, tight-laced, booted, spurred, and beer-exhilarated ducks of the German fleet shelling the good folks in Portsmouth and Southampton out of their beds. We feigned the case of putting the question, "What would they do?" and we feigned the people calling in hot haste for Sir William Armstrong. Well, Sir William arrives—we will say—bringing with him Mr. Anderson, his second in command. Both look aghast at the furious vertical practice of the German fleet. Mr. Anderson, rubbing his brow, protests the firing to be "verra extreeordinary!"

What will Sir William Armstrong do? What will Mr. Anderson do? What does Colonel Boxer imagine they will do, or *can* do under the circumstances? Why, Colonel Boxer plainly intimates his confident belief that Sir William's smooth-bores, under the given circumstances, could do nothing—nothing to the enemy; that is to say: What Sir William's smooth-bores might do to friends, Colonel Boxer (writing prior to July 7) did not venture to speculate upon. On the 7th at Shoeburyness, Sir William's 50-pounder muzzle-loader burst; launching its breech nearly forty yards to the rear; and disclosing a surface of fracture that extended over 425 square inches. That could only injure friends in the vicinity, and would not avail against enemies in the distance.

Yes, Colonel Boxer, himself a scientific artillery officer, chief of the Laboratory Department, author of a standard British book on Artillery—this gentleman roundly states his belief, firstly, that such guns as the Commissioners pronounce to be necessary for mounting upon the forts, are hardly likely to be made strong enough to be fired with safety; secondly, that if made, even then, instead of being effective against iron ships or floating batteries, at distances varying from 1700 to 3000 yards, they would not be effective at much (if any distance) beyond 200 yards. This, be it remembered, is no mere assertion of ours. It is the deliberately-expressed opinion of an artillery officer—an artillery officer, too, who, owing to his great knowledge of the specialities of artillery pro-

jectiles, and what they are competent to effect under given circumstances, has long filled with honour to himself, and advantage to the country, the important post of head of the War Laboratory Department.

Whilst we write this another proof of Colonel Boxer's outspokenness in this matter has come to our knowledge. The inquiries of Mr. Monsell's Select Committee on Armstrong guns have been proceeding, as some of our readers may be aware. Colonel Boxer, in the beginning of July, was examined before that Committee. His opinion of the ordnance manufactured by Sir William Armstrong being demanded, he is reputed to have said (and we have no doubt that the proceedings of that Committee, when printed, will substantially verify this allegation), that, in his opinion, the larger varieties of ordnance manufactured by Sir W. Armstrong were dangerous, and the smaller varieties no better than other guns.

Even while we write, an angry debate is taking place in the Lower House relative to these facts. What ought to depend upon the issue of physical demonstration has been made a matter of private feeling. This is very much to be regretted; seeing that the competence of ordnance to launch their projectiles with effect against iron-plated ships will not be advanced one iota, by any amount of mere political debate in or out of Parliament.

The circumstances of the case are so very plain that all who take the trouble may readily grapple with them. The forts are proposed to be built on the assumption that Sir William Armstrong can make ordnance of sufficient power to demolish mail plates at ranges varying from 1,700 to 3,000 yards. Has he or has he not—can he or can he not? It is not asserted that *the real* Armstrong guns can effect this demolition; on the contrary, practice has unmistakably demonstrated their utter inability to effect such destruction at any range, however short. Sir William Armstrong himself has been driven to admit that they cannot; and at this point he elected to follow a course that will fix on him most deservedly an unpleasant taint as long as he lives. The fact being made apparent that his own guns—the Armstrong rifled ordnance—were wholly incompetent to do the work required of them—that they were less powerful indeed than old service 68-pounders—he began to construct enormous muzzle-loaders and to call them Armstrong guns. We know not how to designate this step, without violating amenities. Such an instance we never before met with, and sincerely trust we never may again. Inasmuch as the 12-ton gun recently demolished was not a breech-loader—not a rifled gun, the question would naturally be asked, “How then can it be an Armstrong gun?” Sir William had provided a suitable answer:—“*Because it was built on the definite tension principle;*” and the *Times* newspaper has been misled into stating that principle as an invention of Sir William Armstrong. The merit of applying that principle in this country, at least, belongs to Captain Blakely. Whether the American, Treadwell, preceded him in America we are not prepared to say, nor

does it affect the argument.* So soon as Sir William Armstrong's own guns had demonstrated their incompetency, and muzzle-loaders, built on Blakely's principle were found necessary, Captain Blakely, not Sir Willam Armstrong, should have been the one to make them.

Thus far in regard to the propriety of the case. No matter : Sir William Armstrong built a specimen muzzle-loading gun, and tried experiments with it. These experiments are what we are at present considering. Have these experiments, or have they not given any hope in the destruction of mailed plates, at ranges varying from 1,700 to 3,000 yards? None whatever. This being so, well may we ask, with Colonel Boxer, "What use are the fortresses?" If a reply to this question be sought in the rejoinder, "But Sir William may build guns of still higher powers," the objection lies patent. If out of four proposed guns the one involving the minimum strain has hopelessly burst, what hope for the others?

Be it remembered that the Defence Commissioners have not permitted themselves to speculate upon the indefinite expansion of artillery. They knew better than this. They knew that the size and power of heavy ordnance are hemmed in by limits. The point they had to do with was the establishment of these limits. They took for granted the ability to construct the four following sorts of guns† :—

- 12-ton gun to throw a 150 lb. spherical shot.
- 12-ton gun to throw a 300 lb. rifled shot.
- 22-ton gun to throw a 300 lb. spherical shot.
- 22-ton gun to throw a 600 lb. rifled shot.

Colonel Boxer does not take this for granted, save in so far as concerns the first, or 12-ton 150 pounder, the gun that actually had been made, and had not been burst at the time when his pamphlet was composed. It may be debateable ground now whether the 150 pounder smooth-bore can be made strong enough to bear the exigencies of practice:—at least by Sir William Armstrong. If this gun cannot safely fire a round 150 lb. round shot, how can it be expected to fire a 300lb. elongated rifled shot?—and, assuming that the 12-ton gun must fail, whether plain or rifled, what hope, for the 22-ton guns?

Colonel Boxer, however, assumes the four guns made and capable of being made in any quantity. He assumes that the Commissioners have not erred in their estimate of actual velocity to be got out of these ordnance. Thus, then, data being fixed determinate—mutually agreed upon—the rest becomes pure matter of calculation. To what extent the Commissioners have erred in their calculations let Colonel Boxer explain for himself.

"In their last Report," he states, "the Commissioners are not content

* Documentary evidence in these cases is alone worthy of regard. Treadwell's patent bears date January 30th., 1856; Blakely's February 27th., 1855.

† *Fide* Report of Commissioners, May 20th., 1862, par. 20.

to rest the conclusions as to the effect likely to be produced by big guns upon assumption only; but, to give the question a more tangible form, by introducing certain figures and calculations which bear directly upon it. With these figures and calculations it will be necessary to deal, when it will, perhaps, appear that, unsatisfactory as is the hypothetical mode of argument adopted in their former Reports, the Commissioners have gained nothing under the circumstances by departing from it."

It is assumed that the above shot (*i.e.* of the four pieces of ordnance already specified) will be discharged with certain definite initial velocities; and it is then calculated what will be the effect of these shot as regards penetration, under various conditions as to range.

"With these assumed initial velocities it is not my purpose to deal, but I will take it for granted that the shot can be discharged with these velocities."

What we have now to determine is simply this:—Are the Commissioners right in their calculations as to the penetration of the shot at the stated ranges, when discharged with the initial velocities laid down?

"I have (states the author) gone carefully into these calculations, and the following table shows the results as determined by scientific principles, the theoretical truth of which cannot be questioned."

We omit the tables. Enough to say that they promulgate two vital errors. At par 19 of the report of the 26th of February, it is stated that the heavy Armstrong projectiles carry a velocity of from 700 to 800 feet per second to a distance of 4,000 yards. "But," writes Colonel Boxer, according to my calculations the "remaining velocity of the heaviest Armstrong shot in the service will only amount to about 500 feet per second at 4,000 yards range."

Error the second shall be set forth in not only Colonel Boxer's own words, but his own italics and capitals. Italics and capitals sometimes mean a good deal. Whatever their significance the following are not ours but Colonel Boxer's:—

"These calculations of the Commissioners are based, they say, upon the assumption that the quantity of 'work' done is represented by the product of the weight into the square of the velocity." And it is evident, although they do not direct our attention to this, that they have further assumed *that the amount of penetration in the sides of a ship like the "Warrior," is to be alone estimated by this 'work done,'* **WHATEVER MAY BE THE DIAMETER OF THE IMPINGING PROJECTILE!** This (writes the Author still) is a most extraordinary error; in fact an error in principle which cannot fail, when laid bare, to have a most damaging effect upon the recommendations contained in the report. Familiarly rendered it amounts to this, that the same exertion only is required to raise a body weighing 2 cwt. one foot high, as to raise a body weighing 1 cwt. through the same distance: or that it only requires the

same amount of work to knock a hole 13.1 inches in diameter through the Warrior's side as to knock a hole 10.4 inches in diameter."

Thus it will be seen that the Commissioners' assumptions in respect of the penetrative force of the projectiles specified, discharged from the four pieces of ordnance specified, and with initial velocities, for the sake of argument, conceded, are wholly incorrect and untenable. Even though the four guns as specified could be manufactured and discharged with safety, they would be of no avail against iron armature at a range of from 1700 to 3000 yards. Hence, the Commissioners themselves, by their own report, furnish conclusive testimony against the utility of stationary forts when opposed to iron-plated floating batteries or frigates; therefore, the projected forts being inefficient for the purpose intended, the country should be saved the profligate waste of money involved in their construction.

KINDLY REMEMBRANCE.

'Tis the last night, to-morrow's sun
 Shall speed me on my way afar;
 And I, 'neath other trees shall watch
 The rising of this evening star.
 Say, wilt thou bear me in thy mind,
 And let thy thoughts of me be kind?

In tranquil pleasures day by day,
 On rapid wing the hours have flown;
 No shade of coldness or distrust
 Upon the passing joy was thrown;
 Then bear me, dear one, in thy mind,
 And let thy thoughts of me be kind.

I would not that a graver shade
 Upon thy gentle brow should rest;
 I would not that a tender pain
 Unknown before, should haunt thy breast;
 But this I ask, bear me in mind,
 And let thy thoughts of me be kind.

CAROLINE M. KING.

OUR SECULAR MUSIC.

“ Oh ! surely Melody from Heaven was sent,
 To cheer the soul when tired of human strife ;
 To soothe the wayward heart with sorrow bent,
 And soften down the rugged path of life.”

WE English are, individually and nationally, an enthusiastic people. We may not be characterised by the brilliant, sparkling piquancy of the French, nor by the rapturous ecstasies and passionate sentiment of the Italians. We may be rough and bluff-stolid, unimaginative, matter-of-fact, but we are, nevertheless, enthusiastic ; albeit our enthusiasm occasionally finds vent clumsily enough.

Until now, England has never been so celebrated as some other countries for the love and cultivation of the Fine Arts.

We have heard of Germany as the nursery of musical genius ; and of Italy as the land of the painter, revelling in the intense blue of his native sky, and the vivid colouring of its glowing sunsets.

The taste for these branches of the Fine Arts, now so prevalent in England, is an importation—an exotic, which, from careful nursing, and tender, persevering culture, has attained a degree of perfection equalling, if not surpassing, that of its native countries. And this brings us to our subject at once ; the Music of the age—especially the Music of England.

At this time there is what is called “ a rage ” for Music among the upper and middle classes. This is an instance of England’s enthusiasm ; her people have adopted Music as one of their hobbies, and now they are riding it with a heavy and unsparing hand.”

“ Music ” is, after all, a vague term, and in the present day is frequently made to stand sponsor to a great deal that is very spurious and very questionable. “ Clap-trap ” would be a more suitable name for many of the compositions, and most of the amateur performances, both vocal and instrumental, of these times. Listen ! These two handsome girls (*great* acquisitions to an evening party, we are confidently told,) are going to give the audience a little “ Music ” in the shape of a piano-forte duet. You happen to be standing near, and now you draw closer still, and solicit the honour of turning over the leaves of their music-book, petitioning in your gallantry for one glance from the dark eyes of her nearest you, as a sign that they have arrived at the last bar of the page, and pleading, as an excuse, your ignorance of Music at sight. The bargain is struck, and the “ Music ” commences with a succession of loud, heavy chords, which, assisted by the free use of the pedals, temporarily deafens you ; and when you recover the use of your ears, they are assailed by an uproar almost as alarming. The gentle pianists are now fairly under weigh, and belabour the unlucky instrument with astonishing energy. Treble scrambles furiously to the top of the keys, omitting every other note in her haste ; and forthwith commences a precipitate descent in a double chromatic scale, which is prematurely cut off by a desperate rattle of

conflicting sharps and flats, and that is displaced by a storm of chords which are succeeded by more shakes and cadenzas, not one of which is allowed its full complement of notes. Meanwhile, bass diligently keeps up a rolling thunder from below, even more trying to ordinary ears than the shrill treble; and presently the two unite in the discharge of what have been not inaptly termed, "Instrumental fireworks," and conclude with a tremendous crash, which echoes again and again through the startled atmosphere.

You are bewildered by the "silence after the din," almost as much as by the din itself, and the speech of thanks dies upon your lips; you quit the lighted rooms, seize your hat, and seek the quiet streets, the appalling finale ringing in your ears. My dear sir, that is "Music," and what a Goth you must be to be impervious to its charms in these days!

Now, we do not for an instant wish that Music, that Queen of the Arts, should ever be one whit less widely appreciated than it now is in England; nor would we, if we could, restrict the number of its patrons and patronesses to those only who have mastered the laws of Harmony and Melody—who have notation and rhythm at their fingers' ends, and can thread with facility the intricacies of thorough bass. For though we can promise to all who have time and inclination to explore the wide and comparatively unknown regions of this delightful science, a reward rich beyond expectation, yet would it be hard to deprive others of that which circumstances prevent from being more than a recreation to them.

But we could wish that those whose taste lies obviously in another direction, would be persuaded to follow the bent of their natural inclination, and not consider it incumbent upon them to dabble in Music because it is the fashion to be musical. Some there are, who are conscious of their lamentable deficiency in what are commonly called "ear" and "taste," and yet are unwilling to give in, forgetting that, without those two qualifications, they never can impart any degree of pleasure to others; for there are few who cannot detect a purely mechanical performance, disguised though it may be by borrowed marks of expression and brilliant execution. But the most hopeless are those would-be musicians, who are unaware of their incapacity, and contentedly pursue their mistaken avocation with perfect self-complacency. If such would only be influenced by dissuading friends, (there are always plenty ready to impart unpleasant truths of every description); but, unfortunately, in the majority of instances, such Mentors contrive to rouse all the perversity of the natures with whom they have to deal, and so effectually defeat their own ends.

We are all unanimous in acknowledging the visible improvement that has taken place in *Sacred* Music. How amazed would our grandfathers and grandmothers be now, could they step into one of our village churches and hear the harmonious and congregational singing; the little band of well-disciplined and tutored voices constituting the "choir," leading the larger body; and the two combined pealing through the sacred building,

in joyful yet reverential strains—a very “perfection of praise.” Where are the days of the old pitch-pipe, horn, or violin? when the palsied clerk struck up the tune, (if tune it may be called, which had neither beginning, middle, nor end), and took the lead in a shrill and quavering treble, the congregation following at their own discretion, each performing a distinct solo in a different key, following the devices of his or her fancy, and arriving, like the fashionables at an evening party, one after the other, at the final note, which consisted of a prolonged and discordant nasal twang. Those days are gone, and few of us are inclined to lament over such relics of the past jog-trot generation, to which, however, some infatuated octogenarians still allude as the “good old times!” deploring in the same breath the degeneracy and short-comings of the present. With such it is useless to argue; they *will* cherish the remembrance of the “brave days of old,” in which they have lived more than two-thirds of their lives—they carry their conservative spirit to what appears to us to be a ridiculous pitch; for ever harping on the same worn out string, that “our grandfathers and grandmothers did remarkably well” without what we now consider absolutely essentials, and, *therefore, we* should also abjure our “so called” improvements. If this plan had been acted upon throughout the history of our now highly-favoured land—if no one had ever ventured to adopt a course differing from that in which his grandfather had contentedly lived, we should now be nomadic and untutored savages, regardless alike of the laws of civilization and society, and the mandates of Him who inhabiteth eternity!

But we must not expect to make converts of the above-mentioned ladies and gentlemen of the “old school;” our modern improvements, our harmonized chants, our new system of notation, our revised psalters and hymnals, will never find grace in their sight. They look upon Tallis, of whose school *we* are all admirers and professors, as an interloper; because he cuts off and clips with his artistic shears the twists and turns, the ornaments and apoggiaturas, the Rousseau’s Dreams, and other barbarous and jaunty tunes in which their souls delighted. They denounce us as “irreverent,” because we do not consider it more decorous to drawl and loiter over our notes of church music, than to quicken the time to “Allegro Moderato,” because we prefer crotchets to semibreves, and abjure breves altogether. We are not now upholding the cause of mediæval revivalism, though, strange to say, even that, which savours strongly of the antique, is almost as distasteful to our hostile old friends as are our more modern ideas.

One word more on sacred Music, although irrelevant to our subject.

Reader! we are entering a church; not a church that is locked up and put away, as it were, for Sunday’s use, as our Noah’s Ark and dissected map of the Deluge, that lively representation of the children of men trying to swim in long red and blue petticoats, their faces distorted by the agonies of drowning (which were considered as proper and suitable

Sunday toys), used to be in our childish days ; but one that is, occasionally at least, left open on other days, that people may come in from the outer world ; and while some merely gratify their curiosity, others may be soothed by the calm stillness of the spot, contrasting forcibly with the surrounding glare and noise and strife, the irritations and vexations, the turmoil and bustle of this strange and restless life !

Hush ! the organist is preparing for next Sunday's service ; and, even as we enter, a succession of rich soft chords heralds the opening of the first voluntary.

Grandly the rolling of the bourdon introduces the melody—gently it steals upon the ear as from some under world—solemnly it swells into a volume of majestic sound ; louder and louder it rolls, mounting higher and higher, pealing wildly through the throbbing air—a grand, a mighty Hallelujah—a glorious Jubilate Deo, such as should rise, night and day, laden with the hearty thanksgivings of the whole glad earth, which is “bound by gold chains of prayer about the feet of God,” a cloud of incense to the throne of the Almighty ! Again and again it reverberates from arch to arch, from pillar to pillar, from aisle to aisle—anon, subsiding into a strife of wailing minor chords—in mournful cadence it dies away, with fitful sobbings ; and, shrouded in the deep vibration, the last low, lingering, plaintive, tremulous note expires as with a sigh—leaving us with beating hearts and suspended breath.

This is *real Music*.

“Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes.”

Music that probes to the very heart's core, calming our ruffled spirits, and stilling (temporarily at least) the surging billows of our rebellious wills, chafing and tossing, blindly, furiously, helplessly, against that inexorable barrier, the Divine Will, raised in merciful pity by Him who spake to the sea and said, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” And what if the effect that *such* Music (and other Music, too, that of Nature, of waving trees and rippling water—of the wind sighing and sweeping over the Eolian harp), has upon us is not permanent ? What if the ardent glow, or the peaceful calm which for the time being it diffuses over our hearts, is soon dispelled when we again come in contact with the sterner realities of our daily lives ? Surely it is better to be soothed for a time than not be soothed at all. Surely the effect of those sweet sounds must be good and not evil, when they leave us refreshed and softened if only for an hour—when they shed a gleam of harmless and pure happiness, even over *one* day out of the few that are yet remaining of the rapidly receding tide of our human lives !

And why should not our secular Music be improved as our sacred Music has been ?

In its *military* branch it *has* taken a stride ; officers and bandmasters

do seem to be inspired with some ambition on the subject; and now we would suggest that individuals and families should follow their example, remembering that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well. Let all who *have* taste and capabilities make the most of them—let none who really are fortunate enough to possess a “voice” neglect to cultivate it.

We want to correct the too prevalent idea that Music consists in *noisy* instrumental or vocal performance.

O! ye shades of Mozart, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Sebastian Bach! O! ye wraiths of the unknown composers of our ancient and heartstirring national melodies—English, Scotch, and Irish! O! ye modern and living champions of this noble science, rise up and support our cause! Help us to persuade our English youths and maidens that if the prevailing taste of the country were only proved to be for *melody* rather than *noise*, plenty of melody, operatic and otherwise, would soon appear in print, and the noisy claptrap of our drawing-rooms in 1862, our “bravura style,” would be very shortly extinct, like the very curious but highly objectionable race of Antediluvian reptiles!

We hope yonder group of rosy, pouting maidens are not offended by our remarks; but we fear the arrow has struck home too truly to please them, for bright eyes look askance at us from under turban hats and waves of silken-netted hair; and silvery voices wonder audibly at our impertinence. And this dashing cornet, who has just purchased a flute second-hand from Jones, of the —th Guards, who is rather “hard up,” and daily wakes the slumbering echoes with more energy than harmony, strokes his incipient moustache, and waving his cigar with a flourish of disgust, mutters his opinion that “it’s a precious deal too hard upon a fellow that’s musically inclined—cutting up *noise* at that rate!” Never mind the gentleman, but we must try to conciliate the young ladies before we go.

Shake hands and be friends, pretty maidens; we only want your Music to be like yourselves—gentle, and soft, and melodious—everything should *match*, you know. We should be as startled to hear a discordant note from *those* lips or fingers as we should be to note a glaring inconsistency in your invariably tasty and becoming dress; with which compliment we make our bow, leaving you to go home and make a bonfire of all your printed *noise*, and a selection of all your printed *melody*, to be bound up in nemophila blue, with gilt edges!

A TANGLED SKEIN.

A ROMANCE.

BY ALBANY FONBLANQUE, JUN.

CHAPTER XXI.

EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING.

STEPHEN FRANKLAND instantly darkened his lantern, and having stolen noiselessly to the spot from whence the sound proceeded, listened. He heard an incessant scraping, as of some sharp instrument, against the brickwork outside; the drip, drip, drip, of the detached mortar as it fell to the ground, and the heavy breathing of the worker. Now and again these sounds ceased for a while, and then came a heavier fall of mortar into the space between the bricking and the door; and sometimes the old door itself would creak as though some force was being employed against it. After this, the scraping would be resumed. Sometimes the chisel seemed to slip, and came with a dull "thud" against the panelling; and thus the listener could tell that some, at least, of the brickwork had been removed. How much he knew not. The door was not locked. The breach was being made close to the handle. The light by which the worker was operating shone through the cranny between the door and the lintel, and flickered on the ceiling above Stephen's head as he stood almost breathless, pressing both hands upon his heart, in a vain attempt to silence its wild throbbings. At any moment—for anything that he could tell—the work might be completed, the long closed portal opened from without, and his competitor for Brandron's secret stand face to face with him in the deserted chamber. Then flashed across his mind all that he had heard from Grant respecting the room. It was the death-chamber of his race. Every Frankland, in the direct line, for generations past, had ended his days there—some by violence. What if the intruder—not recognizing him in the uncertain light—should rush upon him? If there should be a struggle—a chance blow—an unlucky fall, and he should become a paricide? The idea of personal danger never occurred to him; nor had he from the very first the slightest doubt as to who was toiling there at midnight to break his way into the forbidden room, or the motive for which he sought to enter it.

Have you ever experienced that wondrous faculty of the mind which enables one—without the slightest effort of thought—to realise, and, even, consider the consequences of an event in the same instant of time in which that event occurs, and sometimes, as we fancy, *before* it has actually happened? An idea is on its way from the outer world to your brain through your nerves. These are active intelligencies enough, but how the mind outstrips them? It seizes on the idea on its way, exposes it in every

shape, unfolds its consequences, and reveals to you how they may affect years of your life, or the lives of those dear to you, before the eye or other organ of the senses has well made known that it has even started on its journey! To the metaphysician or pathologist I may be displaying gross ignorance in thus reflecting. Very probably I am. I merely attempt to describe what I have felt—however erroneously—to be the case on more than one occasion, and what Stephen Frankland has described as his feelings on this eventful night. His listening, after the first moment, merely taught him the mode by which an entrance was being made. The first moment taught him all else, reproduced the events of months, and created thoughts which the most rapid speaker could not clothe in language in an hour.

It taught him that the fear expressed by Brandron on his death-bed was well founded. He *had* betrayed the hiding-place of the papers to the person whom he had met at Westborough. That person was now seeking them to prevent the performance of the "*act of justice*" which Stephen had sworn to execute, and who he was, could be no longer a matter of doubt.

You must pardon my attempting to give you even the faintest idea of the young soldier's misery. Place yourself in his position and try to realise it! The best tried friend you have ever known has been basely murdered, and a chain of facts, hopelessly cogent, point out your own father as his murderer! But a few hours since you have parted with the woman who has opened your heart to the softest, the noblest, the most exquisite emotions that man can entertain; who has made the world appear to you happier and purer, and in all things better than before, because her sweet presence reigns upon it. You hasten to remove the only obstacle which seems to stand between you and her love. You touch it, and instantly the flood-gates of a sea of blood are opened, and your life's welfare is wrecked, beyond hope, upon the hideous tide!

The same moment in which this terrible blow was struck revealed a long array of its inevitable consequences. How could he explain his future conduct? He saw himself misrepresented by the world, misjudged by friends, condemned by those whose good esteem he valued. He could never gladden his eyes with the sight of Grace again. The home towards which his strong, brave heart, had yearned so tenderly, was no place for him now. He saw himself returned to his Indian career, a careworn, broken-spirited man, dragging on a haunted life, with the possibility that any hour might bring him the news that his father had expiated an inhuman crime by a disgraceful death. Such small matters, even, as when and how he should take his departure in the morning, presented themselves side by side with those graver fears and mournful reflections. I may be told, perhaps, that I am describing impossibilities; but anyone who has ever fallen from a height, and remembers the number of ideas—serious and absurd—which crowded themselves into the few

seconds during which he was passing through the air, will know that the picture is not an exaggerated one. It was all the work of an instant.

In an instant, also, Stephen had made up his mind what was to be done; and he paused, listening—as I have said—only for the purpose of resolving when and how to do it. He determined to surprise the worker at his work, and to say and know the worst at once. Procrastination had vanished with the doubt which encouraged it.

At first he thought of bursting open the door; but a moment's reflection sufficed to show him that he might not be able to do this with one effort, and that the worker, alarmed at the noise, would escape him. Moreover, the breach in the brickwork might not, as yet, be large enough for him to thrust his body through in pursuit. He might have waited, indeed, until an entrance had been effectually made from without, and the seeker of Brandron's papers had entered the room, but the suspense was too great for him: "And how am I sure," he thought, "that his entrance will be made to night at all?" No! He felt that his only safe course would be to return to his own chamber by the way he had come, and to surprise the worker in the passage. There could be no escape then!

Silently he made his way to the open window, and gained the roof of the house by means of the rope which still hung from the parapet. It was more difficult to mount than to descend, of course, and yet the great clock on the stairs which had chimed the quarter to two o'clock some minutes before he had begun his retreat, had not struck the hour before he found himself again in his own room, with his hand on the lock of the door prepared to spring upon the worker in the act.

Do you think badly of Stephen Frankland when I say that he trembled in every limb, and that a miserable sickness stole over him and sapped his strength?

He threw open the door, and staggered rather than sprung into the corridor towards which hung the tapestry which concealed the entrance to the deserted chamber.

No one was there!

Aghast at a discovery so opposite to what he had expected, he paused and listened. The house was still as death, but for the monotonous ticking of the great clock and the louder beating of his heart. There hung the old tapestry as it had hung for years. Not a particle of dust or mortar was on the floor. He drew aside the hangings and there was the rough brickwork complete.

Had he been dreaming?

Perplexed, bewildered, half-stupefied with wonder, he leant for support against the wall, *and it gave way with him!*

It was evidently no dream! The bricks had been cut out and replaced carefully.

The worker had done his work for that night, and would return to it the next!

He could now account for the mysterious noises which the guests had been talking about during the last two days, and wondered how it was that he had not heard them—he whose bed-head was within a few yards of the spot from whence they proceeded—he who was usually such a light sleeper! Short had been his hours of rest since Grace Lee had made that portentous revelation, until these last two nights, during which he had slept, as he now remembered, long and heavily, and in the morning had woken up dull and unrefreshed. “Is it possible,” he thought, “that I have been drugged?” No! A second thought showed him that this could not be. He had taken nothing from his father’s hand which could contain a narcotic. He had not even been in his company for some hours before retiring for rest. He had spent the latter part of each evening with Lord Rossthorne, with whom he had always been a favourite, and whose gout had become so severe as to confine him to his dressing room. There Stevie had sat chatting with him till nearly midnight, and smoking the inevitable cheroot. On each occasion he remembered that he had drunk a tumbler of weak brandy and water, as was his wont, just before retiring for the night. The spirit had been taken from the case of bottles in ordinary use. The water had been brought up a moment before by Sanderson, the old lord’s valet, for his master’s use. The more Stephen considered, the more he felt convinced that the only person who had an interest in drugging him could not have tampered with this drink; and the more he considered the more he felt convinced that, somehow or other, he had been drugged.

Thus wise one can be after the event!

Stephen returned slowly to his own chamber, but not to rest. If a narcotic had been administered again this night, the excitement which he had undergone was sufficient to neutralise its effect. No sleep for him.

He threw open the window, and, with a heavy heart, gazed into the opening day—into the bright opening hours of morning that so few of us see, except with jaded eyes after a night of pleasure and of pain; the bright opening hours in which every created thing but Man joins in a triumphant hymn of praise to the Great Creator, and of welcome to his sun. And the fresh morning breeze, full of the perfume of a thousand newly opened flowers—full of the melody of newly-wakened birds—full of health and promise—played on his throbbing brow, and brought him some relief. Reflection began to point out one little spot—not of light, but of less than the surrounding blackness—in the storm-clouds which had gathered over his life. There was no direct mention of his father in the papers over which he had glanced with the detective in the old oak-panelled room. The latter had not heard the worker at his work. He had promised that they should work out the clue together, and Stephen had given no pledge which would prevent him from warning his father the moment that he became in peril. Brandron had wished him to escape. The victim of his crime had not called for vengeance, so that the *act of*

justice were completed. Who, then, had a right to demand blood for blood?

The rising sun was not above the hills, before Stephen had resolved upon the course he should pursue. He might have waited till the following night, and, taking care that nothing should interfere with his watchfulness, surprise the worker at his work, or in the act of seeking for the secret, and in the terror of the moment wring from him a confession of all that the papers left undisclosed. But he scorned the idea of playing the spy on anyone, much more upon his father. Through all, and in spite of all, he felt that he *was* his father, and, notwithstanding his crimes, to be dealt with frankly and with compassion by a son. "I will tell him plainly what I know," resolved Stephen. "If he chooses to have confidence in me, and explain this fearful mystery, well and good; if not, I must work it out my own way. In either case," he mused, gazing with glittering eyes over the brightening landscape, so suggestive, as we know, of happy reminiscences, "one thing is quite clear, the house which once was Mangerton Chase is no longer a home for me."

So he set to work at once to make preparations for his departure; and remembering that he had left in the library his desk, which contained Brandron's letters and other papers of importance, was descending thither to obtain it, when, upon passing a partly-opened door, a voice from within called out—

"Sanderson—Sanderson! Is that you?"

It was Lord Rossthorne's voice, and it sounded as if he were in pain.

"No, it is I—Stephen. Can I do anything for you? May I come in?"

"Oh, of course; but I did not know you were such an early riser," added the old nobleman, as Stevie entered the room.

"I do not think that any one is up yet. Shall I go and rouse your servant? or, can I get you what you want?"

"You can indeed, Stevie, if you do not mind playing the sick-nurse to an old cripple for five minutes. Do you see a bottle on the mantelpiece containing a dark fluid and marked *chlorodyne*. Well, measure me out thirty drops of that, and give it me in a wine-glassful of water. I have had a wretched night, and my old enemy has just opened a heavy battery upon my right knee; but if you would only help me to take him in reverse, and spike some of his guns with the help of that little bottle—No, not that one, the next! Thanks."

Lord Rossthorne was sitting up in bed as Stephen entered, wrapped in an old dressing-gown of plain blue flannel; but there was an innate look of grace and dignity about him which nothing could lessen. They say that no man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*, and, perhaps, Lord Rossthorne was no exception to the rule. If you were to take him, however, when racked with agony and dress him in rags, he would look every inch a peer!

The same thing with his words. There was a charm—not so much in what he said, but in his manner of saying it, which it was very difficult to resist. He was so courteous; so considerate, so ready with some flattering expression of thanks for the slightest service; and yet there was an under-current of command running through it all.

“I remember,” he said, as Stephen was preparing the medicine, “reading a very clever little article some time ago, upon bad nights. The writer discussed them under two heads—‘the bad night early’ and ‘the bad night late.’ In ‘the bad night early’ you cannot get to sleep when you go to bed, but doze off at last, and wake up refreshed at your usual hour. In ‘the bad night late’ you get your first nap without trouble, start up thinking it is time to rise, find that you have only rested for an hour or so, and spend the remainder of your time making your bed uncomfortable, and counting the long hours as they drag along. I have had ‘the bad night late.’”

“Did any thing disturb you, then?” asked Stephen, quickly, pausing in his occupation.

“No. I woke about two or half-past, and have not been able to close my eyes for more than ten minutes at a time, since. Ah! that’s capital,” he added, as he tossed off the draught which Stephen now handed to him. “It is an excellent anodyne, and is all the better for being administered by a friendly hand. It is not a pleasant thing, Stevie, my boy, to be left all alone in the world at my time of life—to receive no care or attention save what one buys of servants. It is a natural consequence of old age, though; one of the penalties of having lived too long,” he added, sadly, “and I must not complain.”

“One may have lived too long and incur it,” replied Stephen, in a low tremulous voice, “without being old.”

Lord Rossthorne watched his averted face attentively for a few moments, and then, laying his hand kindly on his arm, said—

“I have wished to speak to you, Stevie, about yourself. The present seems a good opportunity. Can you spare me a little time, or are you going to be busy this morning. If so, I ——”

Stephen drew a chair to the bedside and sat down.

“Remember,” said the peer, “that I knew your mother; that I have known you since you were a child, and I think we have always been good friends; have we not?”

“You have always been very kind to me, my Lord.”

“Tut, tut! There is nothing so good for an old man who has seen, perhaps, too much of the world, as the society of a frank, loyal boy who had yet to enter it. You gave me that society, Stevie, a few years ago. It was *you* who were kind to me. I am younger in heart now than I was then; and you, I am afraid, are older. May we speak now as equals?”

“Say what you please. It is sure to be generous and kind.”

“Well, then, when last I saw Percy Coryton—it is not often that he

honours me with his company, though he is my heir, but let that pass—when we last met, he could talk of nothing else but you and your doings here. How well you looked, how you were the life and soul of the place, how cleverly—I suppose I must out with it—you, to use his own expression, ‘sat upon’ your half brother. In a word, he gave me the idea that things were going on here as they should be; for I must confess,” added Lord Rossthorne, with a smile, “that the little I have seen of Mr. Tremlett gives me the notion that he wants a good deal of ‘sitting upon’—whatever that operation may be—if its results are the abatement of pretentious, and therefore offensive pride. But the few days I have spent here suffice to show me that my nephew has been very much mistaken, or else that your position has encountered some grave change. I know that it is a most delicate and difficult one. I am inclined to believe that my latter view is the correct one, and I think I am not presuming upon our friendship, Stephen, when I ask you if I am not right?”

“You are; but you must not blame Frank,” added our Stevie, quickly, “I mean he is not so much to blame, after all. You see I had home so constantly before my mind’s eye whilst I was away in India, that when I returned I could not realise how many years had passed or how many things had happened—how greatly my brother’s authority had advanced since I left. His education has been so different to mine—so much better. He has mixed with a set so different, again, to the set I have lived amongst—so much cleverer. I own I think him hard and—and worldly; but I’ll be bound there is many a man who has double my brains who will give him credit for much good sense.”

“Double your brains!” mused the peer; “Hum—m! this is a question more of heart than brains, Stephen Frankland.”

“Of course,” replied the young soldier, mistaking his meaning; “and when a man is fried to death out in India, without anything to do, or occupy his mind, he gets dreamy and thin-skinned, and grows sulky, like me, when he comes home, if everybody does not fall down and worship him. I don’t know whether it is that the bond of relationship slackens as we get on in life, or whether other ties, contracted during absence from one’s kith and kin, take its place. I would do a great deal for my brother Frank, but I am not ashamed to own—now that I have seen him as a man—that there are those—my old Colonel, for example—whom I like—no, that’s too cold a word—whom I *love* better than he. Why, then, should I blame him for affecting other people and their ways, more than me and mine?”

“How is it that you speak entirely of your half-brother?”

“Because I have no right to criticise the conduct of any one else in this house—nor will I do so. They take their own course.”

“Then why do not you take yours?” replied the peer. “It is tolerably clear to me from what you say, and *certain* from your manner of saying it, that your associations here are no longer pleasant. Why not form new

ones? You are young, the world is still all before you. You expected to find happiness in one place—it is not there! Shake the dust off your feet and seek it elsewhere. You expected to find the old bond of love strong and close—it has rusted, and crumbling away. Take heart of grace, man, and forge another that will last you your life. In a word—*marry.*”

Stephen flushed crimson. “Marry! I marry! Impossible!”

Lord Rossthorne smiled; “My dear boy,” he said; “to a young fellow with your appearance in possession, and a title in prospect, nothing in the matrimonial market is ‘impossible.’”

“You would have me sell myself and my name for a fortune,” replied Stephen, bitterly. “No, my Lord. To me of all men in the world I think such a proposition might have been spared.”

“You quite misunderstand me, and the fault is mine for expressing myself so clumsily. God forbid that I should urge you to an unworthy union! You ought to know me better, Stevie, than to suppose such a thought to be in my mind. Before I was your age, I was a father. My wife and my children were taken from me one by one; but still my married life, short as it was, was a happy one. Who is it who said ‘It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.’ I speak for your happiness and your welfare.”

“But I must consider the happiness and welfare of another. I cannot look upon marriage as the one-sided bargain which so many men regard it. What have I to give a woman in return for the privations—loss of friends—destruction of old associations, which she must sustain in becoming my wife. You do not know what Indian life is, Lord Rossthorne, or you would not ask me to subject one I might love to its monotony, its sufferings, its temptations.”

“I ask you to do no such thing. I see no necessity for you to return to India—nay, do not interrupt me. Listen! I am your godfather, as well as your friend, and am entitled to preach. Did I not promise and vow that you should hear sermons,” said the old nobleman, gaily. “I am a very lonely man, Stevie, and cannot afford to lose one who does not mind sometimes giving up himself to be bored by me, as you do. Master Percy is a wondrously fine gentleman, and would make a passable Baron Rossthorne, if the title did not die with me. But my fortune has always been ample—my expenditure, for many years, very moderate, and there is room for others in my will. Moreover, though I never mixed much in politics, I am not without some influence with those who do. So if you are determined to adhere to your profession, now that there is every prospect of your army being consolidated with that of the Queen, why there is no reason why your services should be confined to India. If politics have any charm for you, there is a borough not a thousand miles from here, which I think would look kindly upon a candidate who had my support—the more so, because I have never attempted to influence its choice hitherto. Ah, Stevie! I see the old Frankland pride twitching

at your nostrils and darkening your brow. I know exactly what you would say about obligations and independence, and the rest of it. Don't say it, Stevie. Take pity upon a poor gouty hermit, whom you can put under greater obligations than ever he can impose upon you. Stay in honest old England. Marry, and let an old lonely man have a corner on your hearth. Let him hear again the sound of children's voices, and, if God spares him to live, let him have something to live for."

Stevie had buried his face in his hands as the peer proceeded—too much moved by the earnestness of the appealing gaze, which once met his own, to dare to encounter it again.

"Your own kindred could do all this," he said at last, in a musing tone, without raising his head.

"Not so," said Lord Rossthorne, speaking more calmly than before. Young Coryton, as I have already said, is a very good sort of young fellow, but not my sort. He stayed with me last Christmas—a sort of duty visit. It was a great sacrifice, I know, for him to leave Melton, and drag through seven days with me in my old house; but this I can assure you, I did not bore him half as much as he bored me. It is said that no man likes those who will succeed him. You have done me so much good this morning, that I feel half induced to make an execrable pun, and say that I object to Percy Coryton's *airs*. Rossthorne and the bulk of my fortune will go to him as a matter of course. I shall leave his brother something more—something more for the proper maintenance of his title; a few thousands will go in legacies and charity, and you will have to discuss what becomes of the residue with my executors; for my will is made, and it will be yours whether you like it or not."

"You cannot expect me to answer you now!" exclaimed Stephen, almost angrily, starting from his chair and pacing up and down the room. "Why do you speak to me thus now? *now*, when——give me time, give me time! But oh, do not think me ungrateful!" checking himself, he added suddenly. "If I cannot find words to tell you how I thank you—how heartily I thank you—not for your generous offers; no, no, I am not thinking of them now, but for having saved me from the bitter, bad thoughts which have been haunting me. There are good men left in the world after all. There is a use for every life, however blighted it may appear."

"Bah! You have no business with such thoughts at your age. You are hipped and disappointed now, naturally enough. Never mind what has passed; you'll see it in a different light some day. You are too sensitive. Besides, it may all come right again."

"You would not say that if you knew all," said Stevie, gloomily.

"I desire to know no more than I do at this moment," replied the peer, "and that is, that you can never be at peace here. I have told you what to expect at my death. Why wait till then? Take it now, with the advice which I gave you just now. Sit down by my side again, and hear

me quietly, for I have not done yet. That's right. I am now going to act the father confessor, and require to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, upon a very delicate point. I have heard some of the guests here couple your name with that of a Miss Lee, in the vulgar badinage which some people think it witty to indulge in."

"Who has dared to——?" burst out Stevie.

"Never mind," interrupted the speaker. "Do not let us diverge from the main track. Was it that young lady who was here with Mr. Coleman and his family the night that I arrived?"

"It was."

"She is pretty, well educated evidently; agreeable, and lady-like. You might do worse, Master Stevie!"

"She is all you have said and more; but I can never ask her to become my wife," he replied, gloomily.

Then came a lengthened pause, during which the peer plucked nervously at the tufts of the counterpane. At last he lifted his head with a sigh, and said—

"Do you remember a conversation which we had when you came to wish me good bye, just before you left for India?"

"I do, well."

"I ventured to give you some advice upon a subject which, I regret to learn, applies to the position of this young lady. I was much struck with one of your replies. I have thought it over many times since, and now repeat it to you. It is not for us, Stephen Frankland, to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children!"

"It is not that," cried Stevie, eagerly; "believe me, it is not that. She would make a wife of whom the proudest in the land might be proud. The obstacle is all on my side—God help me!"

"Then you do love her?" exclaimed the peer.

"I do—with all my heart—with all my soul." And all his heart and all his soul seemed to beam through his honest brown eyes as he made the confession.

"She has refused you, then?"

"No."

"You have never spoken to her of love?"

"Never."

"And you will not?"

"I have not done so."

"Hem!" mused Lord Rossthorne. "I think I see. One more question, and this the last. Who is this Colonel Vincent, whom Sir George and Lady Tremlett appear to have taken such a fancy for? He was talking a good deal about India a night or two ago, before you re-appeared," the peer continued, without waiting for a reply; "and I thought perhaps you might know him."

"I have no personal knowledge of him," Stevie replied; "but, if he

be the person I suspect him to be, I have heard of him, and not to his advantage."

"Ha! I am not generally affected by first impressions, but I must own that I took a dislike to him from the moment when we were introduced. I don't like his eyes: you meet them incessantly when he is not speaking to you, and never when he is."

Thus craftily did the peer attempt to divert Stephen's mind from dwelling upon the main subject of their colloquy, perceiving with excellent tact that it was not one to be pressed. Gradually he led the conversation back to it, and began to make arrangements for the future, as though it had been definitely settled as he wished. But Stephen's manner was gloomy and absent, and his replies were sometimes strangely at variance with what had gone before.

"You must fix a day to come to Rossthorne, before I leave," said the Peer; "and if I can shake off this attack, I must bid you good bye the day after to-morrow."

"I go to-day."

"Indeed! So soon?" exclaimed Lord Rossthorne. "Can you not wait till I go, and accompany me?"

"Much as I should like to do so, I fear I must say no. I have that before me which cannot be postponed. I must be in Derby to-day at four o'clock."

"But surely you can return. How long will this business, whatever it is, occupy you?"

"I cannot tell. I——"

"At any rate you will join me when it is concluded."

"Ah, *when*," replied Stevie, with a deep sigh. "If I only knew what would happen then?"

"There's something on your mind, my boy, beyond what I know," said Lord Rossthorne, after a pause. "Confidence is seldom worth having when it is asked for, but help proffered at the right time has often a double value. Can I assist you? If so—how? I will add this much only, that should your troubles be those which are commonest with young men in your profession—an expensive and ill-paid one—my solicitor shall give you a panacea which will set them at rest for ever."

"You are all goodness. Oh, my Lord," Stevie exclaimed, "how shall I ever be able to convince you how deeply grateful I am; and should I be driven to decline all your generous offers—if I should even be compelled to renounce the privilege of sharing your roof, and doing my little best to solace you for the dear ones over whom you mourn—if—" and the speaker's face grew very sad—"if it must be that this meeting should be our last—think of me at my best. Deem me not ungrateful—anything but that; and whatever you may hear of me—however unnatural my conduct may seem—believe—and I will never ask you to believe a lie—that

all I do is done in the execution of a duty which I should be a villain to disregard."

And whilst Lord Rossthorne was yet overcome by the surprise which this strange speech occasioned, Stephen had fallen on his knees beside the bed, had uttered one fervent "God bless you" and pressed his hand, and without another word or look rushed from the room.

CHAP. XXII.

HOW A STORM GATHERED OVER TREMLETT TOWERS.

FOR most of us who have led country lives, there is, I think, some quiet spot which we seek in times of trouble or of joy. To stranger eyes it is merely a shady nook—a pleasant walk, a seat in an old arbour, or the corner of a window sill. In our eyes there is erected thereon a temple sacred to THOUGHT; and to us—its chief and only Priest—alone is revealed its mysteries. What sacrifices have been made upon its altar—what innocent and happy rites have been celebrated in its groves—what temptations have been whispered amidst its cloisters—what lamentations have echoed round its garlands, no tongue but ours can tell. Childhood first erected it; Love's rosy fingers have piled its golden pinnacles; and, even amongst its ruins, Age need not look in vain for consolation.

Such a spot you may be sure there was for a man of Stephen Frankland's temperament, and thitherward he instinctively wandered as soon as he found himself in the open air, after having quitted Lord Rossthorne in the abrupt fashion narrated in my last chapter.

It was a spot down in the park, about a mile from the house, where a little babbling stream which appeared to be deviating its course through the open country beyond, had apparently changed its mind at some epoch in its existence, and with a sort of "No-I'll-be-hanged-if-I-do" air, had turned sharp round and dashed into a plantation of young ash trees, over which certain giant oaks watched with a fatherly and protecting air, as though they had been appointed their guardians by some Court of Equity amongst the sylvan deities, in which perhaps the great god Pan is Lord Chancellor. This was one of the scenes to which his day dreams on board ship had so often transported him, and there we may leave him with his thoughts which the reader, who knows him pretty well by this time, cannot fail to divine.

¶ An hour afterwards—whilst the morning was still young—he retraced his steps, and on entering the shrubbery which skirted Lady Tremlett's particular flower garden, he caught a glimpse of a white dress through the laurels. My Lady was not given to early rising, and supposing that the promenader might be Mrs. Spraggle, or the Hon. and Rev. Mrs. Theophilus Corbyle—personages, either of whom he did not care to

encounter in his present frame of mind—Stevie turned into a thickly-planted by-path, which a stranger would not be likely to find, and hurried towards the house. At a bend, however, in its maze-like windings, he came full tilt against the wearer of the white drapery, and found that it really was his step-mother out at that unusual hour, and not alone! An ugly frown darkened over Stephen's brow when he found that Colonel Vincent was her companion.

Lady Tremlett uttered a shrill cry of fear, and clung to the Colonel; then, when she saw who it was that had surprised them, uttered a little shrill cry of surprise and clung to Stevie.

The Colonel was not in the least disconcerted, but drew lines on the gravel walk with the point of his cane, and observed—

“This charming spot seems to be a place of general rendezvous. Lucky for me that it is so. I should have lost my way in the labyrinth, if Lady Tremlett had not just come up by accident.”

“Oh, yes, Stevie dear, I assure you, quite by accident;” added My Lady, eagerly. “I have only just this moment come out; breakfast is so late; I don't know what Jones can be about.”

Stevie made no reply, and all three turned back together. As soon as they reached the lawn, Colonel Vincent suddenly remembered that he had promised to show Sir George some coins which he had in his room, and went into the house to get them.

“The first bell has not rung yet,” said Stevie, as soon as the visitor was out of hearing; “will you walk a little way with me, now.”

“But, Stevie, I was not walking with him, and it's very wicked of you to say so?”

“I did not say so.”

“But you *think* I was; you know you do, Stevie! And you'd go and tell Francis, and ——”

“Dear Mammie,” said Stevie, taking her arm, and drawing it within his own, “why should you think that I would play the spy upon your movements? I am very glad that I have met you, though, and I will tell you why. Now, pray don't be offended with what I am going to say. I love you, and respect my father's wife too much to venture, for one moment, to dictate to her the course which she ought to pursue towards any gentleman—any person who might be under her roof; but when I tell you that I am convinced this Colonel Vincent is one with whom no man of honour, knowing his antecedents, would associate, I think you will see that you ought to be very careful how you admit him to the least degree of intimacy.”

“He is a wicked—dreadful creature, and I never will speak to him again. I won't, indeed, Stevie,” burst forth Lady Tremlett, flushing crimson.

Stevie was surprised. “Has any one else told you? How do you know?”—he asked.

"He has—that is, I—you. Oh, how tiresome you are, Stevie!" stammered My Lady; "did you not say so just now?"

"Well, Mammie dear," said her step-son, caressing affectionately the little hand which trembled on his arm, "we will not talk any more about it; of course we must be civil to him while he remains your guest. Only, take my advice, and drop his acquaintance."

"But he is a relation of the Dean; and what has he done?"

"I cannot tell you. I have written to a friend who can say if my suspicions are well founded. You shall know when I get an answer; but see! there's Frank calling to us. Let us go in."

As they approached the open broad windows of the breakfast-room "dearest Francis" came running out to meet them in a high state of excitement for so (generally) self-possessed a personage.

"Oh! I've found you at last," he said, out of breath, and waving his arms about, vaguely. "Come with me! come this way, at once!"

"What do you mean?—where?—what has happened?—can't you speak, man?" said Stephen.

"Ask no questions, but follow me. Come and judge for yourself. Come this way! I tell you, at once."

And he crossed the hall, followed quickly by Lady Tremlett and Stevie, towards his father's so-called "study"—the room where we saw that ugly-looking letter burned a month or two ago—and flung open the door with a crash, revealing Sir George standing, the picture of misery, by the mantel-piece, and two odd-looking men seated on the extreme edges of two chairs, brushing their two hats with the cuffs of their two coats, nervously, and watching him. One glance sufficed to send the blood tingling to the roots of Stephen's hair.

"My God!" he exclaimed, half aloud; "*it's come!*"

"Dear! dear! dear!" cried Lady Frankland, "what *is* the matter? What do these dreadful creatures want? Do look at their dirty shoes all on the nice clean drugget."

"Beg your pardon, marm, I mean My Lady, if you *be* My Lady," said one of the men, rising, "there aint no call for you to put yourself about. We've just come down from London to take Sir George Tremlett, Barrow-knight, and we've been and took him as a gentleman ought to be took. All he's got to do is to come along gently with us—leastwise, if he has to come at all," he added in an under tone. "What's a hundred or two to a gentleman as lives in a house like this?"

"Do I understand you to mean that money can settle this—this affair?" asked Stephen in a whisper.

"Of course! Why, what can't money settle? Debt, two hundred and eighteen pounds; costs, forty-five pun ten and sixpence—total, two hundred and sixty-three pun ten shillings and sixpence."

The words "Debt" and "Costs" have not usually a pleasant sound, particularly when uttered by a sheriff's officer; but oh! what music they

made in Stephen Frankland's ears! He gave a great gasp of relief and said—

“Then this arrest is only for a debt!”

“*Only* for a debt!” sneered Mr. Tremlett; “but for one of nearly three hundred pounds, and Sir George has just now acknowledged that he has not got three hundred pence to pay it with.”

“Hush—h, Frank!” cried Stephen, casting an angry look from his half-brother to the bailiffs; but he was not to be hushed.

“It is right,” he continued, “that these men should be told—it is right that their employers should know how matters stand. What business had they to trust him with two hundred and eighteen pounds?” demanded this dutiful son.

“Ah!” commented My Lady, playing with her bracelets; “what business had they to trust him with so much money? Why, it's more than dear Francis paid for that brace——”

“It is enough to found an infant school,” interrupted the dear fellow, unwilling, perhaps, that the purchase in question should be mentioned just then, “and do inestimable good; whereas, most probably, it has been squandered—squandered foolishly, if not worse. What, I ask, is there to show for it?”

The poor Baronet lifted his head at this appeal, and replied—

“I will tell you—nothing!”

“There! you hear—‘Nothing.’ Two hundred and sixty-three pounds, besides the shillings (which alone would pay the weekly wages of many a respectable family), and all for nothing! It is too bad. What has become of the money?”

“Listen and you shall know all. The debt, out of which——”

“Beg your pardon, Sir,” said the bailiff who had spoken before; “but if you'll give me your word, as a gentleman, not to try to escape by the window, we'll go outside out of hearing. We do'nt want to hear family matters, do us, Jim?”

“What you say, Tom,” replied the other man, “I ollus sticks to; What does the genelman say?”

“That he thanks you for a degree of consideration from which others” —with a glance towards his second son—“might well take example. “Still, he begs you to remain. You have heard too much not to hear what yet remains. Sit down. I was speaking,” continued Sir George, after a few moments of apparently painful consideration, “of the original debt, out of which my present liabilities arise. It amounted to more than twelve hundred pounds, Francis, and was contracted before you were born.”

“Oh, poor dear; and he has paid all the rest out of his pocket-money!” observed Lady Tremlett. “Well, it might be a great deal worse.”

“I have paid it, principal and interest, twice over, Rhoda.”

“Oh, why did you not tell these creatures so at first, and send them away?”

"I will explain all to you, dear," replied the Baronet in a broken voice; for the little gleam of kindness in his wife's manner had softened his poor weak heart. "I borrowed the money—it matters not after all these years to inquire why—upon promissory notes; and, when I could not pay these as they became due, I had to renew them—I mean I had to sign others, and give sometimes as much as fifty pounds at a time for the indulgence; and yet had the same amount to pay, with accumulating interest, in the end. You know what my income has been, and you may judge to what shifts I have been driven to meet these extortionate demands, and yet pay off nearly a thousand pounds of the debt. I tell you frankly I have been obliged to borrow of friends for this purpose. I owe Lord Rossthorne a hundred pounds, and Coleman has my I. O. Us. for a hundred and seventy at this moment."

"In short," observed dearest Francis to his mother, "he has gone on wasting the means that he had, and incurring fresh liabilities without the remotest prospect of ever being able to discharge them. Exposing us to strangers, too, in this way! Bringing bailiffs into the house before all my friends! What are we to think of such conduct? If I were called upon in my capacity as a county magistrate to express my opinion, I should call it—oh!"

Stephen had been endeavouring in vain to frown the speaker into silence; but he lectured with his head in the air, after his usual lofty style, and did not perceive or heed the gestures—now beseeching—now angry—that were addressed to him. In seizing him by the arm, our Stevie only meant to compel his attention, but such was the honest fellow's indignation that his great brown fingers closed, in spite of him, upon his brother's tender flesh with such force, that the threatened judicial dictum degenerated into the cry of a beaten child, and it was some days before five black spots faded out of the dear fellow's skin.

"Silence," whispered Stephen, huskily on his ear, whilst he still writhed in that iron grasp. "Have you no respect—no pity?"

"Eh, let him be, Sir," said the spokesman bailiff; "let him have his little talk out. We're accustomed to this sort of thing, ain't us, Jim? Genelmen as as to pay other genelman's debts ollus likes to have a bit of talk fust. It's natural they shud want summut for their money. Let him be."

"I—I am not going to pay the debt!" cried Francis, forgetting his bodily pain in the keener anguish which the idea of being called upon to pay for his father's release occasioned. "I—I have nothing whatever to do with this affair!"

"Then you ain't one of the parties as is liable on these bills, supposing the Barrowknight's obleeged to go to quod," inquired the bailiff, producing the two ominous slips of paper, on the back of which Sir George Tremlett's dishonoured acceptances were set out.

"I never sign bills—upon principle."

"Pr'aps you're a going to lend him the money?"

"No such thing, man! How dare you?"

"If you ain't a party to the bills, and ain't a going to lend the money to pay 'em, who the dickens are yer. You *can't* be a relation by the way you talk."

"Fellow, I *am* a relation, and ——"

"Then," cried the bailiff, in a burst of honest indignation, "I'm damned—I beg your Lordship's pardon, but I *am* damned if you oughtn't to have your head punched."

"Hold your tongue," thundered Stephen, coming forward from the window where he had stood chafing and burning with shame during the above colloquy; "you forget yourself. May I see those papers?"

"Certainly, Sir;" and the man placed them in his hand.

"For God's sake bring this scene to an end one way or the other," said Sir George, faintly. "I am legally bound to pay this money, or go to gaol. Rhoda, what do you say?"

My Lady thus appealed to, appealed in turn to her son—

"Dearest Francis, you are so very clever! Tell me, what *do* I say?"

The dear fellow maintained a dogged silence for some moments, and then muttered—

"It is bad enough to have to pay the debts, but the costs are more disgraceful still. Forty-five pounds, ten shillings and sixpence for costs! all of which might have been avoided. Why did he not come and tell us—you, I mean—why did he not go and tell *you* when the bills were coming due that he could not pay them."

"Oh yes, my love, you ought to have come and told me—Francis is quite right."

"Still, I suppose," continued the dear fellow, "that the money must be paid—that is, I mean *advanced*."

"I only ask it as a loan, my dear Rhoda," the Baronet pleaded, "only as a loan. In a year or two it will be replaced. You know," he added, in a low voice, "that you have it in your power to deduct it from my—my allowance."

At this moment Stephen, who had retired with the writs to a side table and had there been writing, came forward with them, and a third slip of paper in his hand and addressed the bailiffs.

"There are, I see, two bills;" he said, "one for a hundred and sixty-five pounds, and the other for fifty-three. Here is a cheque upon my agents in London for the larger amount and the costs. In all, two hundred and ten pounds ten and sixpence. I am sorry that I cannot draw at present for the balance, but I am going to town in a few hours—I will accompany you, if you desire it—and shall be able to give your employers ample security for payment of the entire debt in three days. Will this do?"

"Dear Stevie," exclaimed My Lady, "how very kind. I must really give him a kiss—so generous!"

"Hum," sneered Mr. Tremlett, "I did not know that captains in Indian regiments could afford such romantic notions. I only hope he is as just to his own creditors, as he is inclined to be generous towards those of—of—"

"His father," said Stephen, sternly. "I do not wonder, Frank," he added, in a lower tone, "that the word sticks in your throat."

"The genelman—who *is* a genelman as I can see with half a eye," said the bailiff, turning the cheque over in his hand, "axes if this 'ere sort of thing will do. Well, generally speaking, it *won't*. Generally speaking, we has orders to take nothing but the brass or bank notes, which comes to the same thing. But in this 'ere case we has instructions not to be hard on the Barrowknight, and to take any good security for the debt. Well, is this 'ere a good security? You aint much of a speaker, Jim, but you aint often took in; what do *you* call it?"

Jim turned his little ferret eyes upon Stevie's anxious face, and then upon the cheque, and after a short deliberation gave the following verdict, solemnly—

"I calls it a hout and houter."

"Then that's settled," said his chief, rising and preparing to replace his papers in a huge greasy pocket book; "and I've your word, Mr.—Mr.—"

"My name is Frankland. I am a captain in the army, and Sir George Tremlett's son—his eldest son."

"Hey! why didn't you say that before? That makes right righter."

"Stop," interrupted Mr. Tremlett; "I must interpose here. Rejoiced as I am to find Sir George released from his painful position, I cannot allow credit to be received under a false pretence."

"A false pretence!" exclaimed Stephen.

"At any rate a suppression of the whole truth. You have said that you are my father's eldest son, and these good men will go away under the impression that you have some claim upon this property, whereas—"

"I have none. If I had— but no matter. I am—as I am (this to the bailiffs), and will pay the mcney in three days, upon my honour as an officer and a gentleman. Knowing what you now know, will you quit this house?"

"The other genelman don't feel inclined to put his name to the cheque, too, does he?" asked the sheriff's officer.

"I object—upon principle," replied the "other gentleman," loftily.

"Very well," said the bailiff, pouching his pocket book. "You aint got no call to come with us (this to Stevie) without you like. Only as you *are* going to London, you call to-morrow morning on Messrs. Puddle and Snap, 287 A, Bucklersbury; have a talk with them, and that'll settle it."

Several times during this conversation, Sir George had tried to break in, and had been prevented by a gesture from Stevie. Now he could no longer be restrained—

"It shall not be!" he cried, "I will not have it! My noble—noble boy—my own true hearted Stevie! I will *not* owe this to you. Take your hard-earned savings—the earnings of your blood! Never! I will rot in prison first. Give him back that cheque. Take me with you—now! I am ready. And you," he exclaimed, turning towards his second son, with flashing eyes, "shame upon you for standing by and consenting to such a sacrifice! I will not accept it! Let me go, I say. Stevie, let me go—let me go—let me go!" and he struggled towards the door through which the bailiffs were passing."

"Calm yourself, Sir," said Stephen, restraining and gently forcing his father into an arm-chair. "There has been no sacrifice. Mother, pray go to your guests, and then no one need know what has happened. Francis, I think you had better leave us too."

"Allow me to explain, though, that what I observed just now, about—"

"Oh, never mind what you observed," rejoined Stephen, wearily.

"But I must say that you have acted very liberally; and as you are not a rich man, I shall advise my mother that—"

"Spare your advice," said Stephen, in his sternest tone. "I tell you, plainly, brother, that but for your advice, and the influence—gained I know not how—which gives it weight, this house might be the happy home it once was when—when—"

"When *your* influence prevailed, I suppose you would say," retorted "dearest Francis," with his best sneer.

Was it because Lady Tremlett, who had left the room at Stephen's request, had overheard his words from the passage, that the moment Francis had passed her, she came running back in tears, and threw herself into her step-son's arms, sobbing like a child!

Gently he disengaged himself from her embrace, and led her to the door; kissed her on the forehead in his old tender, protecting way, and returned to where his father sat, with his face buried in his hands.

For some time they remained there in silence—the Baronet pondering painfully over what had passed, and Stephen, bowed down with sorrow for what had got to be said. At last the former started from the chair and exclaimed—

"Let me go with you to London, Stevie. Let me try and manage this miserable business my own way. I have pulled through so much already. I can pull through it all, if they will but give me time; and they will; they will, indeed, Stevie! They have had me arrested here because they thought that Fran—— that—that the money would be paid. Take me with you; say you will, Stevie!"

Stevie shook his head.

"Only for a little time—a day or two. Don't leave me alone here, Stevie—don't! I cannot bear to be left alone. Let me go with you for a little time, until it has blown over."

"It cannot be. But for this mischance we two should not have met again. As it is we must part—perhaps for ever."

"In Heaven's name, why?" cried the Baronet, aghast.

"When I tell you," replied Stephen, solemnly, "that I know what reason took you to Westborough—whom you went there to see, and what you—what happened; your own heart will tell you why."

"My God, Stevie!" his father gasped, turning absolutely livid with consternation and terror. "My God!—you will not betray me?"

"Betray you! No! But beware: there are those who, in spite of my utmost efforts, have gained a clue to the secret which at present is locked in my breast."

The Baronet groaned aloud.

"The time will come when they will know all that I know—perhaps more! Happily for you, I am able to follow their movements, and the moment you are in danger I will warn you. I can do no more. Then you can only find safety in flight."

"But where?—how?—I— I—"

"I will provide the means. Almost the last breath of your victim was spent in a prayer that you might escape the punishment which this world awards to your crime; provided—mark me well!—that justice be done where it is due."

"You mean to the child. It shall be—it shall be! But, oh! Stevie, I have lost all clue to her. I have, indeed!"

"When and where did you see her last?"

"I have never seen her—never. I had a clue once, but—and now she is lost!—lost!—lost!—lost!" and the Baronet wrung his hands at every repetition of the word.

"Be it my task to find her, then," said Stephen; "and from henceforward I devote myself to it, and to it alone."

"But you forgive me—say you forgive me, Stevie?"

"God help me, I cannot. It was so *base*—so treacherous."

"It was, it was; but oh, Stevie! if you knew all."

"I know enough—too much. No more need be said. You may escape its consequences in this life; pray to Heaven that it may be pardoned there."

"No! no! no! Stevie, you must not go thus," cried his father, seizing upon him in a frenzy of grief, as he turned to quit the chamber; "you cannot have the heart to leave me with this fresh horror on my head?"

"I must."

"You will return soon—very soon. Stevie, you will come back to us again?"

"Never."

"Oh, recall that word—that bitter, cruel word. Oh, Stevie, my son! my only stay!—my hope!—my loving, noble son!—my son!—my son!"

and Sir George Tremlett—the tears streaming down his cheeks, fell upon Stephen's neck, and sobbed and implored him to stay—to return, in vain.

“Father,” he said, “you have well nigh broken my heart. Do not add to my pain by useless supplications, which must be rejected. I have a duty to perform towards the living and the dead. The very day this is completed I shall return to India—would to God I had never left it. I came home—it seems only a few days ago—full of love for you all—full of I cannot say what happy anticipations. You all know how they have been realised. If I had never met you at Westborough—if I had never learnt the secret of that darkened room”—the Baronet started—“could this be any longer a home for me? You are silent. It was only the other day that you bade me leave it for my own peace of mind. How much more am I bound to quit it now? God in his infinite mercy bless you all. God turn your hearts more to *Him*, and to each other. Farewell!”

So saying Stephen turned, and without giving another look towards where his father had sunk on his knees—crushed and speechless—slowly left the room.

In the hall he had left a small bag, in which he had packed what he required for his journey. This he seized, and hurrying out of a side-door, was making his way through the shrubbery towards the park gates, when he heard a quick step behind him, and his own name called out faintly. He looked back and saw that his step-mother was following him.

“Oh, I am so glad I have caught you. Are you going now?” she panted, all out of breath.

“I am.”

“What?—all alone—on foot?”

“I prefer to walk to the station.”

“See here,” said My Lady, looking round her nervously, and trying to force a roll of bank notes into his hand; “see, see—take them! You have been so good—so generous; take them—but don't tell Francis.”

“Dear Mammie,” replied Stevie, with his sad sweet smile, rejecting the proffered gift, “let us forget about this weary money. I do not need your help. Let me go on in my own way.”

“And you will very soon return, Stevie, won't you?—and we will try and be happy together, as before.”

Stevie pressed her hand in silence, and turned his face aside.

“Only look at those dark clouds that are flying up yonder,” she added. “I am sure there will be a dreadful storm. Do let me order one of the carriages for you. Francis will lend you his brougham—he said he would, indeed he did, just now.”

“Never mind the clouds,” Stevie replied, “they will not hurt me. Kiss me, Mammie, dear. Be kind to my father. Once more. Have I hurt you? No! God bless you, and good bye.”

And so he left her, and ran on into the storm which was darkening over his path.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE SECRET.

“Now, I tell you what it is, Sir,” said Mr. Lager to Stephen, when true to their appointment they met on the platform of the Derby Railway Station; “let’s you and me take a little country walk, and talk this ’ere matter over quietly. It’s done raining now, and the fields ’ill be mighty pleasant.”

“Wouldn’t it be better to engage a private room in the hotel?”

“Beggin your pardon, Sir, I don’t like ho—tels. Private rooms in such like places aint always private. Give me the open air for business, where two’s company and three’s none.”

Stephen made no further objection and forth they sallied, passed through the town and its outskirts, struck into the meadows, and soon arrived at a spot sufficiently lonely for their purpose.

“Now, Sir,” said the detective, “if you’ll set yourself down on that there bank, I’ll squat on this here stump; and if you sees anyone coming along the path to the right, you say ‘Hem;’ and if I sees anyone coming along the path to the left I say ‘Hem;’ and when this person passes us I shall say—pretty loud—‘But my friend can’t give more than five-and-twenty shillings a quarter for it,’ to which you must reply—‘Oh, he can’t, can’t he;’ whereby this here person won’t be much the wiser about what we’re really saying.”

Stephen could not help smiling at this quaint precaution, and seated himself as the detective had suggested.

“You aint repented having trusted me, Captain Frankland, eh?” he asked.

“Before I answer that question,” said Steven, “you must tell me what brought you to Tremlett Towers, and why you entered that room?”

“To tell you plain truth, Sir, you’ve bin watched ever since the Inquest. I’ve bin a watching you myself ever since you left the Convent at Hull.”

“How do you know I was there?” asked Stephen, sharply.

“I know it—that’s enough; and I know what you went there to find out—that’s more! Lord bless you, Captain, I sees through all this like glass. Mr. Brandron sez to you, sez he, ‘There’s papers at Mangerton Chase hid away in such and such a place; but he—he didn’t make you clearly understand where Mangerton Chase is—or rather where it *isn’t*—for it’s Tremlett Towers now. You set to work to find it out, and as soon as I knew your little game, I sez to myself, sez I, ‘here’s a hound,’—begging your pardon—‘as is on the scent. Stick to his heels Lager, my man. and you won’t go far out of the way!’ If I hadn’t seen you get into that room, I should still have had my eye on you. That’s why I got that stupid old Crowner to let you down so easy at the Inquest. Why, we might have quodded you for not telling all you knew—all what Mr.

Brandron told you; but, thinks I, 'no, give him time and he'll tell us everything,'—and so you have."

"I have told you nothing, man! what do you mean?"

"There's ways of telling a thing without talking about it. Come, come, Captain; if you and I had not met now, we should have run against one another some day, and then somebody would have been hurted. Let's work this business out together—you for your purpose, I for mine. You can't prevent my getting along, and I can help you. I ax you agin—you ain't repented having trusted me, eh?"

"Upon the whole, No," replied Stephen, thoughtfully.

"That's right—that's as it should be. How about these here papers, have you got them with you?"

"I have. They are here." And Stephen produced the bundle just as he had fastened it up with the detective the night before.

"Ha, all right! Now, Sir, if you don't mind reading those letters out slowly. They're very nicely composed, they are. I've bin a-thinking over them amost all night, and I've pretty nigh made plain English out of 'em. There's nothing like *hearing* a thing read, though, to draw the broth out of it. Just begin at the beginning, will you, Sir?"

Stephen assented. The paper was yellow with age and dust, and eaten through here and there by rats; moreover, the writing was blotted in places, as Stephen thought, by tears. I give them as they were, at last, decyphered, and the words in italics are such as had to be guessed at by help of the context.

"Tuesday,

"Mr. Howell presents his compliments to Miss Bruce, and begs to send for her *perusal* the books he mentioned this morning, and which she expressed a wish to have."

No date.

"MY DEAR MISS BRUCE,

"How could you have imagined that you had offended me? You ask me to be perfectly candid, and I will *be so*. I have never passed pleasante hours than those which have been spent *in your* house, but there was that in your Father's *manner* towards me which makes me fear that I am not so welcome as I used to be. I am not conscious of having offended him in any way. What have I done? Pray *make my* peace. I enclose the tickets that will pass you through the lines at the Review on Thursday, if you *should like* to go.

"Your's faithfully,

"GEORGE HOWELL.

"P.S.—I suppose I ought to thank you for returning the books, but I should have been much more grateful *if you had* deigned to accept *them* from me, as I hoped you would."

“ Saturday.

“ Will I come to your cousin’s ball? Won’t I! It was Mrs. Chappell who told me that you thought you had offended me. Am I *to suppose* that this invitation is meant as a sort of peace-offering from your family? What I can have done, though, to provoke hostilities, and make one *requisite*, I have no more idea than the man in the moon. Shall you go early? Will you keep a dance or two *disengaged for me*? Signify your royal pleasure in this behalf by coming without a bouquet. You will *find one* for you in the lady’s room. Who is this Mr. Brandron?

“ Your’s,
“ G. H.”

“ Wednesday night.

“ MY OWN BELOVED,

“ I cannot sleep, I cannot rest with those ecstatic words ringing in my ear. You *love me*! You have said so, Mary, with your own sweet lips—or *is it a dream*? Oh, let me hear them again! Now that I know that you are mine—*mine*, Mary, for ever, in spite of all the world; *I cannot live a day without seeing you*, I think, darling. How impossible it was for *me to express* one tithe of my love—to thank you, my glorious! brave! beautiful one! for the inestimable gift of your own, in all that crowd! Be in the Square garden to-day at twelve, or any time. *I will wait all day to see you*. *I have made* great friends with Sarah, and *she will give* you this. We must be very careful now, till something can be settled.

“ Your own ever loving
“ GEORGIE.”

“ To-morrow, dearest, same time and place. I met your Father just now in Regent Street, and got nothing but black *looks*. *Can he suspect?*”

“ MY OWN DARLING MARY,

“ I regret as much as you do the *necessity* which compels us to deceive your family, and, consequently, my own. But *what can I do*? Were I to call on your father and ask him to sanction our engagement, he would set himself up in his foolish pride, give me a long lecture about unequal marriages, show me the door, more or less politely, and *forbid you* to see or communicate with me again. As it is, he does not forbid you to do so, and I do not see that *you are* at all bound to tell him that we meet daily—alas! naughty girl! not daily. Why did *you not come* yesterday? I wandered up and down the banks of the Serpentine, waiting for you, till really the policeman looked as though he thought I was going to run away with the bridge, or commit suicide. No such nonsense. I have something to live for now. And so you still preserve that faded bouquet? Don’t keep faded flowers, bright one: come for fresh ones every day. I—jealous of old Brandron! Nonsense!

“ Your own
“ GEORGIE.”

"OH, YOU DEAR LITTLE GOOSE!

"The idea of fretting about such a proposition. Accept at once, but not too eagerly, for *fear they* may suspect. Say that you are tired of the gaieties of the season, and want country air. I have a friend who lives among the Derbyshire wilds, not more than a few miles from Macclesfield, and consequently well within lover's distance of your aunt's home. Mary, darling, he is a clergyman, the best fellow in the world, and the *congregation* of his little out-of-the-way church does not count a dozen. He has often asked me to go and stay with him, and—but I must *speak* what I have in my mind. I cannot write it, it would frighten you—and yet it is not frightful, darling. Accept at once. God bless you my love!—my life!—*my wife* that shall be.

.
"Craigsleigh.

"Everything is arranged. Richard will perform the ceremony. Be at the brook at which we parted last at 10 on Monday. Bring Susan, or Sarah, whichever her name is—I mean Alston—that is, if you think that you can really trust her.

.
"Jersey.

"MY OWN BELOVED WIFE,

"I find to my sorrow that *I shall be* detained here *much longer* than I supposed. You ask me if I did not feel guilty during those two days *which intervened* between your departure from Craigsleigh and *your arrival* at home? Guilty of what? Of spending the happiest hours of my life in the *company* of the best, the most beautiful, and the dearest of little wives? 'Not guilty, my Lady, upon my honour,' as my Lord Rossthorne *would say*. I wish you were here. You have no idea what a beautiful island this is, or how much more lovely it would be in my eyes if your dear presence were here to *add to the charm* of the scene!

"Have you heard of Richard's good luck? The *appointment* is worth £1000 a year, and I hear that the climate is not at all unwholesome.

"I cannot help thinking that you are wrong—oh, sapient wifey!—in not letting me have it out with your father before I left; but no more of this till we meet again, which must be very shortly. Be very careful, dear, with that fellow, Brandron. I cannot make him out. Is he a spy? I hate his quiet stealthy manner, and have often caught him watching you in a way that used to make me savage. I *was* jealous of him, Mary, as I was of *any one who* was permitted to come near you, when I, who loved you—who had won your love—was an exile *from your* home. Of course I am not *jealous* of him *now*, only be careful. We must not be found out. We must take the initiative and disclose all; and the sooner this *takes place* the better pleased will be

"Your ever loving husband,

"GEORGIE."

.
"Jersey.

"MY BELOVED WIFE,

"I seize an *opportunity* of replying to your letter within an hour after its receipt. The news you send delights me beyond expression. We *must*

make our marriage public now. But oh, you wicked wife! why did you not tell me before? The slightest shade of blame must *not fall on* your honour, or on our little child's good name. I have been bandied about here from pillar to post, and all my applications for release have been disregarded. There must be some influence at work, somewhere, against me. I shall leave directly, at any risk, and *be with you* almost as soon as my letter. Still, should anything happen, on no *account brave* your father's anger alone. Let me bear the brunt of it, and if by any chance your *condition should be* discovered before I can arrive, fly at once to Mangerton Chase. No one lives there now, and the entire house is *at my disposal*. Wait there—take Susan—Sarah, I mean, with you—till I come. I have no time to *add* more. That God may guide and watch *over you*, beloved wife, is the incessant prayer of your proud, happy, and ever loving *husband*,
 “GEORGIE.”

This was the last of the letters.

From a paper in which the marriage certificate was folded, Stephen Frankland next read as follows, but the right hand edge was so gnawed by the rats that the words it contained were illegible.

“I certify that I was present in the chapel a where my mistress, Miss Mary Bruce, only daugh married by licence to Mr. George Howell, as this from the Register will prove. I say that she of grief, being deserted by her husband and acc -ther, falsely, of having given birth to an illegit In truth, it was born in lawful wedlock, on the sec January.

“And I say that this child was taken away sister Mary to be nursed. And further, I de be lost or the proofs of its legitimacy be destr our will, the person who does this crime is has already tried to bribe us to do so may happen to me this is true and m me God.

(Witness) “SUSAN—sometimes called SARAH—ALSTON.
 “JOHN EVERETT BRANDRON.”

“Now these here letters,” said Mr. Lagger, when Stephen had concluded, “is very pretty writing, but what do they come to when they're biled and peeled? Shall I tell you?”

“By all means. Pray go on.”

“They comes to this. The gentleman as writes from Jersey—*Hem!*—being a friend of mine, says that he won't give more than five-and-twenty shillings a quarter for it. Don't you see?”

P O S T F R E E .

IN January of the present year the Congress of the United States passed an Ordinance, abolishing their letter-franking privilege. Henceforth, with that express provision removed, we may expect to hear of the Postal Department of the States, hitherto so unprofitable to the Government, becoming in time a paying concern. Our trans-Atlantic cousins are nearly a quarter of a century behind us in knocking off this abuse. The Franking System in this country did not survive the old rates of postage. In the United States, despite reduced rates, it has been long continued. As when the privilege was given up in this country, so in America, the measure seems to have given general satisfaction; no voice appears to have been raised in denunciation; no "*in memoriam*" sung. A leading New York paper writes in the following sensible strain in heralding this postal reform:—"The abolition of the Franking System is the explosion of an absurd practice, and consequently an evidence of the common sense of the Congress. It was at best but robbing Peter to pay Paul. Under the old system of postages, something might be said in favour of allowing documents to pass free from representative to constituent, but it is utterly different now. No letter ought to be written, which is not worth three cents to writer or recipient. If the public value the member's speeches, they must pay a penny for the privilege of reading them. Members should no longer talk to Buncomb gratis. Buncomb must pay the piper if it wishes to dance," &c. We will not stay to inquire how much the prospect—nay, the actual circumstance of an empty exchequer has helped to the abolition of the privilege in question. We the rather see in this measure another evidence, among many more weighty ones, that Jonathan is dreadfully in earnest in that fratricidal struggle of his. At any rate, it is clear that all classes in the Northern States consent to needful retrenchments with wonderful unanimity.

We purpose now to do what this reform in America has suggested to us, viz.:—to turn over a few pages in the history of our own Post Office, to see how the Franking privilege originated with us, and how its abuse—and the advent of cheap postage—secured its abrogation. People, still in the prime of life, remember the practice of which we are speaking: whilst, however, the facts will be familiar to them, the subject may not be without novelty to the present generation; for the sake of the latter the former must forgive a short sketch.

Prior to the first legal settlement of the Post Office, in 1660—the establishment of the Post was kept up at the instance of the reigning sovereign for his special service and behoof. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, relays of post-horses were employed,—regularly in times of war,—for carrying the king's messages and letters from place to place. James the First set on foot a Post Office for letters to foreign countries, of the use of which merchants might avail themselves. In the reign of

Charles the First a post office, for inland letters, was established under the management of the Government. Cromwell made many improvements in the Post Office, giving as a reason for attending to the establishment of the Posts, "That they will be the best means to discover and prevent many dangerous and wicked designs against the Commonwealth." It is sufficiently obvious that, from the earliest times to the date of the Penny-post system in 1840, the letters of the monarchs and their ministers were passed Free through the Post, in virtue of a right none could dispute. In the reign of the Second Charles, the Post Office became the subject of Parliamentary enactments, and at this time it seems certain that the Franking privilege, hitherto enjoyed by the Executive alone, was extended to Members of the Commons House of Parliament. A Committee of the House of Commons (1735) reported that "the privilege of Franking letters by the knights, &c., chosen to represent the Commons in Parliament, began with the creating of a Post Office in the kingdom by Act of Parliament." When the Post Office Bill, here referred to, was introduced into the House of Commons (1660), a proviso securing the privilege was inserted. In the twenty-third volume of the Parliamentary History we have an account of the clause. We could almost wish for once that the debate to which it gave rise had been chronicled with Hansardic minuteness. Sir Walter Earle proposed "That Members' letters should come free during their sittings." Sir Heneage Finch (afterwards Lord Chancellor and Earl of Nottingham), one of the most prominent members, said, in his usual manner, "It was a *real poor mendicant* proviso, and below the honour of the House." Sir Heneage was one of a decided minority;—Mr. Boscawen, Sir George Downing, and Sergeant Charlton, all speaking in favour of the measure; the latter urging that "the Council's letters went Free." Matters so far proceeded till the question being called, the Speaker, Sir Harbottle Grimstone, "hesitated much," being unwilling to put it, and saying, "*He felt quite ashamed of it.*" Try to fancy the staid Sir Oracle, the Speaker of 1862, making this stand in the face of a less turbulent House in less turbulent times! How the Speaker's difficulty was got over does not appear; though it seems that the question was eventually put, when the clause passed by a great majority. Passed through the Commons House, the proviso was designated as mean and dishonourable by the Lords, and accordingly negatived. A few years later the real reason was elicited—there was no provision made in the Bill that the *Lords' own letters should pass Free!* When next, therefore, it was attempted to give legislative sanction to the Franking system, this serious omission was supplied, and both Houses made common cause on a proper understanding of the case—neither Lords nor Commons feeling it below their dignity to secure for themselves this exemption from Postage. Though this measure was only legally confirmed in the reign of George the Third (1763), almost all the benefits that it sought to confer, together with more unbridled license, had been granted to Parliament since the

Restoration. It was managed in this way.—The passing of the Post Office Bill in 1663, and the concurrence of the Lower House in the Lords' Amendment, was only secured on a promise from the Executive that Members should enjoy the privilege: the *modus operandi* being *warrants* issued from the Treasury to the Postmaster-General, at the instance of Members, directing that such and such allowances be made.

We could not well exaggerate the looseness to which this privilege, and the means adopted for securing it, gave rise both in the Post Office and out. The Post Office, in its incipient stages, seems to have exhibited all the usual forms of every current abuse of management: with the example set in high places it could not well have been otherwise. Mr. Scudamore, of the General Post Office, has succeeded in rescuing from the *limbo* of unlimited dust, a number of curious and highly interesting old records of the Post Office,* affording us rare glimpses of the management in many of its details, with much bearing on our present subject. When the mails were farmed by private individuals, proper surveillance was extremely difficult, if at all possible, in some parts of the country. Deputy-postmasters had little difficulty in setting aside any enactments that might happen not to please them; they might pass letters Free almost at pleasure, or they might appropriate the postage to themselves with impunity. Tradesmen were especially anxious to obtain the position of deputy in the provinces; for, besides being enabled to get their own letters Free (the time being long anterior to Postage Stamps), they could easily confer the same privilege on their correspondents. Before the days of stage coaches and mail-guards, the post bags were carried on horseback by boys engaged by those who farmed the mails. Independently of the post bags, these riders were also accustomed to carry letters concealed upon them, for considerations of their own, or charges quite unorthodox. In the Surveyor's book, referring to Country Posts from 1735, Mr. Scudamore finds a long complaint from one of the Surveyors, exhibiting more malice than good grammar; but which we give because it is evidently touching an old sore, and shows how things were managed at that date. "At this place (Salisbury) found the post boys to have carried on vile practices in taking the bye letters, delivering them in this citty, and taking back the answers, especially the Andover riders. Between the 14th and 15th instant, found on Richard Kent, one of the Andover riders, five bye letters, all for this citty. Upon examination of the fellow, he confessed he had made it a practice, and persisted to continue in it, saying he had noe wages from his master. I took the fellow before the magistrates, proved the facts; and, as the fellow could not get bail, was committed; but, pleading to have no money nor friends, desired a punishment to be whipped, and, accordingly, *he was to the purpose*. Wrote the case to Andover and ordered the fellow to be dismissed, but no regard was had

* Postmaster-General's First Report.

thereto; but the next day the same rider came post, ran about the cittye for letters, and was *insolent*. The second time the said Richard Kent came post with two gentlemen, made it his business to take up letters; the fellow, instead of returning to Andover, gets two idle fellows and rides off with three horses, which was a return for his master not obeying instructions, as he ought not to have suffered him to ride after the said facts *was* proved against him." Our shrewd Surveyor had thus his revenge, and the Post Office revenue suffers no more from the delinquencies of the "said Richard Kent."

It is important here to notice, that the Post Office authorities had much more control over the means of conveyance, especially the packet service, a hundred years ago than they now have. At present the mail packets are under the superintendence of the Admiralty, and are almost entirely borne on the expenditure of that Department. At the time of which we are speaking, the Government did its own packet business—one of the Postmasters-General being almost exclusively engaged superintending the transactions. That these functionaries took cognizance of much now far removed from the sphere of the present Postmaster-General, is evident from items in the early management which Mr. Scudamore has ferreted out. One packet agent is scolded, "that he had not provided a sufficiency of beef and pork for the prince!"—(who this pork-loving prince was does not appear). Another, because he had stirred up a mutiny between the captain and his men, "*which was unhandsome conduct in him.*" Other items prove the heads of the Post Office to have been public guardians of loyalty and morality on board packet. They bring one Captain Clies to trial, "for that he had spoken words reflecting on the Royal Family, which the Postmasters-General *took particular unkind of him;*" whilst they reprimand another captain "for breaking open the portmanteau of a gentleman passenger and spoiling him of a parcel of snuff." At one time we find them complaining in the following style:—"Wee are much concerned to find the letters brought by your boat (from the West Indies) to be so consumed by the *ratts*, that wee cannot find out to whom they belong." After which we find them "purchasing new vessels, stores and provisions, and ordering the old ones (with the *ratts* aforesaid) to be sold by *inch of candle.*"

This sole control over the resources of the packet service explains much in the history of the Franking System quite unintelligible under present arrangements. The Treasury Warrants to the Postmaster-General, of which we have already spoken, covered a vast variety of commodities never dropped into the Post Office letter-box, and which could neither be stamped, sorted, nor despatched in the orthodox way. Merchandise, presents to and from the country, live stock, and even human beings seem to have been among these Franked consignments—a free passage for which was obtained by a wide stretch of the privilege under notice. We cannot find that the Post Office Department in the United States, whilst

its Franking System was in full force, was ever troubled with the heterogeneous mass of curious packages with which the English Post Office used to be burdened. Now and then parcels, scarcely of the nature of letters, sending home linen to be washed, for instance,* were, by a stretch of the Franking System, committed to its Post Office by Federal Government officials. These small items, however, dwindle into comparative insignificance before those known to have been confided to the safe custody of English Postmasters-General. The following list of a few Franked commodities is culled from a great number of such in the "Agents' Letter Book," found amongst the old records to which reference has already been made:—

"Imprimis.—Fifteen couple of hounds, going to the King of the Romans with a free pass.

Item.—Two maid servants, going as laundresses to my Lord Ambassador Methuen.

Item.—Doctor Crichton, carrying with him a cow and divers necessaries.

Item.—Three suits of cloaths, for some nobleman's lady at the Court of Portugal.

Item.—A box, containing three pounds of tea, sent as a present by my Lady Arlington to the Queen Dowager of England at Lisbon.

Item.—A case of knives and forks for Mr. Stepney, His Majesty's Envoy to Holland.

Item.—Two bales of stockings, for the use of the Ambassador to the Crown of Portugal. (?)

Item.—A deal case, with four fitches of bacon, for Mr. Pennington of Rotterdam."

When the right of Franking letters was sanctioned and systematized by Act of Parliament, we hear no more of Treasury Warrants and the strange packages they conveyed. The system changed, abuses and enormities of another kind crept into it. The only requisite now for ensuring the free transmission of a Member's letter was his own signature on the cover. It was not necessary that Parliament should be in Session, or that the correspondence should be on the affairs of the nation (though this was the original design of the privilege) to secure this postal immunity. This arrangement, as might have been expected, led to various forms of abuse. Packets of Franked covers were kept in a Member's escritoire in much the same way as the stamped envelopes of the present day are laid by for future use. In many cases packets were given away or sold. They do not seem to have been guarded closely; as it is well known that many servants of Members, both with and without their master's knowledge, made large sums of money by selling covers with the necessary superscription upon them. Lacqueys of powder and plush actually invaded the lobbies of the old Houses of Parliament, and pursued this species of traffic, as we may find scouts of the present day ready to bargain with you

* New York Paper.

(though of course to a less extent) for Members' orders to the Strangers' Gallery. Thousands of letters passed through the Post without even the necessary signature of some representative, but with ingenious imitations of it. The clever forger might practise his calling in this direction with small fear of detection; and this we may be sure he would do with his usual effrontery. To such an extent, in fact, did this and kindred abuses accumulate that, whereas in 1715, the public revenue lost about £24,000 in postage; in 1763 the loss was estimated at £170,000.

The abuses outside the Post Office gave rise to breaches of faith inside. Inspectors and deputy-inspectors of Letter Franks were distinct appointments in the metropolitan offices, and existed till the present century. Postmasters were accustomed to open Franked Letters, to discover whether or not they belonged to Members. This practice, a questionable proceeding in any case, was stigmatized in Parliament as early as 1735, as a breach of privilege on the part of the Postmasters. In order to secure the letters passing inviolate through the Post Office, as well as to restrain the frauds that laid them open to examination, it was enacted, in 1764, that no letter should pass Free unless the whole address was in the Member's own handwriting, with his signature attached also. This arrangement existed for twenty years, when it was found that fresh regulations were required. This time it was ordered that the Franks be dated—the month to be given at length; and it was further provided, that all such letters should be put into the post on the same day.

Even then the value of the Franked correspondence was, and continued to be estimated at something like £80,000 annually. No further reforms were attempted, however; it was long a settled question, that the only wholesome reform must be the entire abolition of the privilege. It continued, however, under the restrictions we have described till the Penny-postage era, when, thanks to Sir Rowland Hill, and the indignation which inquiry into this privilege caused, no voice seemed to be raised for any such express provision as had existed for nearly a couple of centuries.

During all these years the English people seem to have vied with each other as to who could best "do" the Legislature through its Post Office. We have seen with what success. Even now—though the "Conscience Money" of the Chancellor of the Exchequer shows a different phase of the national character, and is in some sort a set off against it—the Post Office is still victimized by all kinds of low craftiness. With charges extremely low, the amount of *dodging* of the proper payments is as lamentable as it is sometimes ludicrous. Hundreds of newspapers, for instance, are annually *caught* (and we may reasonably assume that thousands more escape) with short loving messages deftly inscribed between their paragraphs of type, or letters, different descriptions of light articles, and even money curiously imbedded in their folds! We heartily wish the *ancien regime*, with its high charges and its searching exactitude applied to such people! We could wish them a twelve months' residence in Continental

Europe, where Post Office matters, in many respects, are managed differently than they are with us. England has all along led the van in Postal reforms. Acquaintance with contemporary history, whilst it would, doubtless, rouse their indignation, would help English people to value their privileges in this respect. At the time Sir Rowland Hill was urging his Penny-postage scheme on the attention of the British Legislature, another European State (Piedmont, 1837)—far removed from absolute despotism in other respects—had the most stringent and severe regulations maintained in its Post Office. The Law punished any one posting a book or a newspaper opposed to the principles of the monarchy, with from two to five years hard labour; any one who might receive one of such newspapers or books through the Post, without having delivered it into the hands of the authorities, with two years imprisonment: a reward of 100 crowns was offered to any one giving information. These arbitrary and iniquitous laws are equalled and even surpassed in European codes of still later date.

We have the remains of the old Franking System in the official plan still pursued. Letters on the business of the Post Office, as carried on by its different branches, come and go Free. Of those leaving the Head office, each letter, before it is sent forth, is stamped with a lithographed facsimile of the name of the head of the department in which it has originated. This practice, and the postal immunities that follow from it are really, if not ostensibly, pursued in all the Government Offices. Though, as is well known, the Post Office transfers a considerable surplus over to the Public Exchequer, the Penny-post System must have been considered a success if it had only paid expenses and carried Free the immense mass of Government Correspondence. The different Government Offices are supposed to turn out upwards of twelve millions of letters annually! Supposing three-fourths of these (and we are probably under estimating the number) are sent through the Post, we may realize the advantage which the Government has in possessing this giant monopoly. The power which the machinery of the Post Office gives to the Government defies all competition. The operations of the Post Office Savings' Banks, for instance, will illustrate our meaning. It is there provided, that every deposit of every person in each of the 2,722 Money Order Offices of the three countries, will be acknowledged by the Postmaster-General in a separate letter within two or three days of the deposit being made. And yet this arrangement will cause but an imperceptible ripple in the great stream of the nation's correspondence flowing nightly from Saint Martin's-le-Grand.

As it is an easy transition from *Free* to cheap postage, we may be pardoned for just stating here that we have noticed, with some curiosity, that a Postal Committee of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce has lately brought up a recommendation for a *Halfpenny Post* for local letters. By *local* letters we suppose are meant letters posted and delivered in the same town. In the seventeenth century, a *Halfpenny* post was established in

London, with every prospect of success, but suppressed by the Government of the day as an infringement of its monopoly. England, the first to inaugurate a scheme of Cheap Postage, has been distanced already, and even in her own colonies. A letter may circulate for a penny through the length and breadth of the British Isles; but no line we could draw from Scilly to Shetland, or from the West coast of Ireland to the most Eastern part of this island, would exceed the length of seven hundred miles. In the United States, a letter may travel the length of three thousand miles for the single rate of three cents; and, although their Post Office is worked with a loss, it is laid to other accounts irrespective of the distance the mails traverse. Our own rate of postage is high, however, compared with that which obtains in our Eastern empire. For half an anna (equivalent to *three farthings* of British money) a letter under half an ounce may be forwarded a distance of two thousand miles! This postal district, extends from Peshawur, in Affghanistan, to the farthest extremity of Cape Comorin; or, in an opposite direction, from the mouth of the Indus to the most easterly village in Upper Assam!

So far the English Post Office has moved with the spirit of the times. So long as it continues to do so, no agency will ever overtake it. The Government may well feel secure in its monopoly of letter traffic; it can step in, as it has been known to do, and prohibit all rivalry. Kindred agencies, however, such for instance as the Metropolitan Electric Telegraph Company, may yet render necessary another concession from the Post Office, be it only in the way of holding its own. Twenty years ago, when the Postal Committee sat to investigate the merits of the Penny-post System, Colonel Maberly (the then Secretary of the Post Office) gave the following neat and terse evidence:—

“*Chairman.*—I suppose you consider the Postage Rate now reduced to the minimum?”

“*Colonel Maberly.*—So long as you can go still further, I suppose it is not reduced to the minimum. I cannot answer that question.

“*Chairman.*—The great probability is that it will not be reduced lower?”

“*Colonel M.*—*I do not know; we may have a second Mr. Hill, perhaps.*

“*Chairman.*—Do you think it probable that there will be any further reduction or not?”

“*Colonel M.*—If you ask me whether I think it is probable, I think it is not.”

We give no opinion either one way or the other. Perhaps the subject is worthy of some consideration; not of “a second Mr. Hill,” however, for the Knight of the Penny-post is still, we believe, as sagacious and energetic as ever.

THE BANKER'S DAUGHTER.

“Lady Carrington's carriage stops the way.”

A HARD, stern man of the world was William Weston, the Banker of Lombard-street. He and I began life together: he mounted a stool in his uncle's banking-house; I entered as a student at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. It is now thirty-five years ago, and in that time William Weston has amassed a fortune of nearly half a million of money; yet would I not change with him could he give me double the sum and a peerage to boot.

At five-and-thirty he married his cousin Ellen Weston, solely for money and the prospective partnership in his uncle's banking firm—love was out of the question. He did not care a jot for her, and she not only hated him, but loved another. It may be imagined that but little happiness ensued from such an union. His wife—broken spirited and heart-broken—only lived three years, leaving him an only daughter. Years rolled on; his uncle, the head of the firm, died, and William Weston stepped into his shoes and fortune. Under his skilful management the business and profits of the bank increased rapidly. The firm of Weston and Co. was high in the estimation of business men—their paper was good for millions—their credit almost boundless. A great number of the landed gentry and nobility banked with the firm of Weston and Co., for there was not a banker in London so accommodating. Did a noble lord overdraw his account a few thousands it passed unnoticed. Did a customer require forty or fifty thousand pounds at a day's notice, there was not the least trouble about it—merely a few title deeds from the family solicitor deposited in the Banker's strong box, and the thing was done—the amount was paid over by cheque at once.

In the fire-proof room of the bank reposed the title deeds of many a noble mansion and ancestral estate. Some of these priceless parchments were in solitary grandeur; by the side or on top, however, were other parchments with the name of the estate and the ominous word MORTGAGE engrossed on the back, followed by four, five, and even six figures. Conspicuous among these latter was a large parchment inscribed, “The Earl of Carrington's estates.” This was covered, surrounded, and almost concealed by a number of other deeds bearing the names of particular estates and farms, but all with the name MORTGAGE engrossed on them, with sums beneath ranging from five thousand pounds to thirty thousand pounds, and amounting in all to nearly one hundred and ninety thousand pounds. William Weston smiled grimly when he opened this particular strong box in order to add to its contents a fresh deed endorsed with the same ominous word. Be it observed, however, that these latter mortgages were not for large amounts, mostly ranging from one to five thousand pounds. Clearly the noble Earl was getting to the end of his tether. The family estates were encumbered when he suc-

ceeded to them, and the title; and it may well be imagined that a racing stud and an expenditure of some thousands a year beyond the nett rent-roll did not conduce to disembarass them.

The difficulties in raising money increased daily; even the accommodating Banker, William Weston, began to get very chary of his hundreds and thousands. At last came the time when Lord Carrington was informed that no further advances could be made: his account, said the Banker, was already overdrawn some thousands of pounds, and the estates were encumbered almost to their full value.

The ruined Earl hurried to town on learning the stern truth, and came in all haste to Lombard-street.

He was shown into the bank parlour, where the wealthy Banker received him with the utmost urbanity and deference; but in answer to enquiries as to the possibility of raising more money—if only twenty thousand—the reply was—

“My Lord, I assure you it is utterly impossible. No professional money-lender would lend you as much as we have on the fee simple of the estates by at least twenty thousand pounds.”

“What, then, is to be done?” asked the peer. “Money I must have; here I have over three thousand to pay next week at Tattersall’s over the Ascot settling.”

“Really, my Lord, it is very embarrassing—I may say extremely embarrassing. I hardly know what to advise or suggest to your Lordship. To be sure, there is the Cambermere estate; it is mortgaged for seventy thousand pounds. I think I might venture to say I could find a purchaser at eighty thousand. That would leave your Lordship a balance of ten thousand.”

“The Cambermere estate,” said the Earl, tittering, “which has been in our family since the Conquest. And you wish me to sell that; and who might the proposed purchaser be?”

“It is possible that I myself, my Lord, might feel inclined to venture on it as a speculation—merely as a speculation, my Lord. I am a business man and cannot afford the luxury of a plurality of country seats—merely as a speculation, I repeat, and to oblige your Lordship.”

Already to “*oblige his Lordship*” William Weston had become the possessor of one large estate adjoining the ancestral one from which the Earl derived his title; now it seemed that another was about to be swallowed up, leaving the peer only Carrington Park and estates, these latter mortgaged to their full value.

“No; I will not sell, Weston,” said the peer decidedly. “I’d rather smash up at once—go abroad and live on five hundred a year—the rents will pay the interest of the mortgages.”

“But, my Lord,” said the Banker, with a sinister look, “supposing that the mortgagees are not satisfied with the rents—supposing they demand back their capital—supposing, in default, they chose to *foreclose*?”

Lord Carrington turned pale at the dreadful word "foreclose."

"But you are the mortgagee, Weston! Surely you would not do anything so shabby as foreclose?"

"My Lord, money is very scarce just now. I fear a financial crisis is impending. We have immense sums out at interest. It may be that we shall have difficulty in meeting our engagements. In that case I fear we should be compelled to foreclose. However, my Lord, I will take the affair into my most serious consideration," he continued, observing carefully the effect his words produced. "I have an urgent appointment on the Exchange now and cannot further prolong the discussion; but if your Lordship will honour me by dining with me this evening, at seven, we can talk it over."

Lord Carrington dared not have refused, had he felt so inclined. As it was, seeing a chance of coming to an arrangement, he accepted the invitation, not without a feeling of wounded pride and humiliation.

The party assembled at the Banker's table consisted only of themselves and Julia Weston, the host's only daughter. Under other circumstances Lord Carrington might have been attracted by the grace and beauty of the young lady. As it was, he only saw in her the daughter of a vulgar city banker—of the Shylock who held the bond, and who seemed inclined to claim his pound of flesh to the last ounce. He could not fail to be struck by her singular beauty, notwithstanding the all-absorbing topic which engrossed his mind. Tall and well-formed, Julia was just budding into womanhood. Regular features, beautiful eyes, and a profusion of ringleted brown hair, had Julia Weston. Her figure was grace itself, and though from her youth (not yet nineteen) slender, it yet gave promise, by its exquisite proportions, of its maturer beauties. After Julia had retired to the drawing-room, the Peer and the Banker entered into a long discussion, marked by calm reticence on the one part—by feverish and impetuous hastiness on the other. The Banker would commit himself to nothing—not even another mortgage would he consent to. The utmost that could be wrung from him was an advance of five thousand pounds, to enable Carrington to meet his engagements at Tattersall's. This, however, was in a bill of exchange, at a month, which Weston distinctly stated he should pay away in the course of business, leaving the other to meet it when due or take the consequences.

Again and again Lord Carrington found himself seated at the Banker's table, each time, however, coming away more and more dissatisfied at the prospects of the future.

Thus a month wore on, day after day. Weston put him off with promises to "see what could be done," which resulted in nothing.

Carrington, for about the tenth time, was seated at the Banker's table. The bill for five thousand was due on the following day. When he received the five thousand pounds he had signed a warrant of attorney. It is true, as a peer of the realm, that his person was secure from arrest; not so,

however, his property; and well he knew that within twenty-four hours of the dishonour of the bill, the bailiffs would be in possession of Carrington Park. On this occasion he drank deeply of wine, even before Miss Weston retired.

Grown desperate from the state of affairs, he yet endeavoured to be in good spirits, and for nearly the first time paid great attention to the young lady. As the wine mounted in his head his attentions became more marked, and were even somewhat bold, as though he considered her worthy of his passing notice, but not of his serious attention.

Julia received his flattery and fulsome speeches with calm composure, merely taking the trouble to acknowledge them. The Banker looked on meanwhile, with a smile of triumph on his hard face, watching narrowly both Carrington and his daughter. Occasionally, as the peer, under the influence of the wine, would verge on the boundaries of impropriety in his language, Weston's brow would lower and his face pale. It was after one of these speeches of the latter that the Banker signalled to his daughter to retire.

"A devilish pretty girl that daughter of yours, Weston," said Carrington insolently; "a pity she has not got blood as well as beauty. She'd be quite a belle at the West End. She would, 'pon my soul."

Had he been observing enough to have seen the expression on the Banker's face, he would have trembled for his estates.

"Yes," was the calm reply; "she is a very beautiful girl, and would be an ornament to any station. Any man, no matter what his rank, might be proud to call her his wife."

"Well, I don't know about that, you can't make a silk purse of a sow's ear,' as the proverb says. Of course, you know, Weston, it's not her fault nor your fault that she is not of gentle blood."

"Pass the wine, Lord Carrington—by the bye, I hear from my manager that we have very heavy calls to meet next week. It is absolutely necessary that you redeem those mortgages of yours to the extent at least of a hundred thousand. Absolutely necessary, my Lord!" and he slowly and deliberately filled his glass and passed the bottle.

"But it's impossible," said Carrington, turning very pale.

"I'm very sorry to hear it, my Lord. The alternative is very painful, but it is absolutely necessary. The money must be had, or———a foreclosure. Pass the bottle again if you please."

Carrington was now quite sobered. Ruin stared him in the face—not at a remote time, but imminent—a few days would suffice to ruin him utterly—credit, position, all would go at one fell swoop.

"As you were pleased to observe, my Lord," said the Banker, after a long silence; "my daughter is an exceedingly beautiful young lady. It is unfortunate, as you say, that she has not 'gentle blood.' I'll trouble you for the filberts if you please—thanks—that, however, cannot be helped. I venture to repeat, however, notwithstanding that drawback

that she is calculated to adorn any station—even that of a Peer of the Realm.”

Lord Carrington did not venture to contradict this time.

“In addition to her great personal advantages she will bring to the happy man, who shall be her husband, the treasures of a highly educated and richly stored mind—and last, though in the estimation of most people not least, I shall give her on her marriage a dowry of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. By-the-bye, my Lord, I think that is exactly the amount to which Carrington Park is mortgaged—singular, very singular—quite a coincidence I may observe. Then she has her mother’s fortune settled on her, in itself a good income, so that, as far as worldly advantages are concerned, my daughter is in a very enviable position. I think, my Lord, that few young ladies, even of gentle blood, could bring to their husbands at once greater beauty and fortune combined. Singular, very singular,” he added, cracking a nut, “is it not, that her dowry should tally with the encumbrances on Carrington Park?”

The ruined Earl saw it all now, and wondered at his own former obtuseness.

The price of the Banker’s forbearance was to be a coronet for his daughter.

Proud as Lucifer—looking down on the middle and commercial classes with the utmost contempt, and hating what he was pleased to term in conversation with a friend, “money-grubbing bankers” particularly, he yet made up his mind at once to accept the proffered terms.

“You are quite right, my dear sir,” he said, “your daughter would indeed grace any station. Now, did I think I had the slightest chance of success, I need scarcely say how proud I should be to offer my hand and title. You must have observed lately the admiration with which she has inspired me.”

Weston had observed nothing of the kind.

“If you think I have the least chance of favourably impressing the young lady, Mr. Weston?”

“I really cannot answer your question, Lord Carrington; I must leave that to my daughter herself. I think, however, it is extremely probable that with my sanction she might entertain your proposal favourably.”

And thus did this man dispose of his daughter, as if she were a bale of merchandise.

“I think you said you had an engagement at your club at 10,” said Weston, looking at his watch; “it is now half-past nine; will you come up to the drawing-room?”

“No, I thank you, not now; shall you be at home to-morrow?”

“I shall be at the bank; my daughter, however, will be at home. I will see that your bill for five thousand is duly met. Good night, Lord Carrington.”

"Julia, my dear," said Weston; "Lord Carrington will make you a proposal to-morrow."

"Lord Carrington! why he scarcely treats me with the respect due to a lady."

"Manner, my dear girl—merely manner—I assure you he thinks most highly of you."

Then ensued a long and painful scene. The father was stern and determined; he used all his arguments, all his paternal authority, to gain his point. Julia was alone and unfriended. Ever accustomed to yield implicit obedience to her father, it is not wonderful that she should at last give way so far as to declare that if Lord Carrington should persist in his suit, after she had acquainted him with one fact, that she would no longer object.

"And what is that fact?" asked her father.

"That I do not love him, that I never can love him, and that I love another."

Weston's brow grew dark at these words, but after considering for a moment, he said calmly—

"Then, if I understand you aright, you will accept Lord Carrington, if he does not think the fact of your not loving him at present an obstacle."

"Neither at present nor at any future time, will I ever feel for him anything but distaste and aversion."

"Why so? Is he not noble, good-looking, and in the prime of life? Surely, apart from any such folly as love, the title, the position, might well deserve your consideration. The Countess of Carrington—surely you are not insensible to the rank and position the title will bestow—you will mix with the highest and noblest in the land. Your beauty will command admiration, your rank envy, your wealth every luxury you can desire. Say no more—Lord Carrington will call on you to-morrow—see that you receive him in a proper spirit."

There the conversation dropped. Weston seeing no obstacle to the marriage in Julia's girlish scruples—she, seeing in the fact of her loving another, a means of escape.

Knowing nothing of the worldly nature of the bargain on both sides, she thought, poor girl, that she merely would have to candidly own to her noble suitor that her heart was engaged, for him at once to withdraw his suit. Determined to tell him all she had little fear of the result, as she could not conceive a man noble and, as she supposed, wealthy, acting so base a part, as to force an unwilling girl to bestow her hand where she could not bestow her heart.

On the following morning Lord Carrington called as her father had said. His manner was respectful and almost deferential, but, had she no other reason, the cool manner in which he at once came to business and offered the Banker's daughter his hand and title, would at once have offended her pride.

In spite of his deferential manner and the air of diffidence which he assumed, Julia could discern the fact that he had not the least idea of such an absurdity as a refusal. But what was her dismay when, having heard him out, and stated the fact of her indifference to him and love for another, he coolly declared that he was extremely sorry that any girlish fancy should prejudice him in her eyes—that he was not so happy as to possess her heart; and ended by hoping that as Countess of Carrington she would speedily forget any little affair *du cour* of the past, and reflect new lustre by her beauty and accomplishments on his ancestral coronet.

“Surely, my Lord,” she exclaimed in terror, as she saw the probability of her hopes being dashed to the ground, “surely you would not accept my hand when I have no heart to give—surely you would not be so cruel, so unkind, as to force me into an union which is distasteful, nay, hateful to me?”

“Force you, Miss Weston,” he said. “I have not the power even if I had the will—I can only respectfully press my suit, and trust that your feelings may undergo a change.”

“But it is forcing me; it is nothing else,” she cried passionately. “I told my father that I would tell you all, and that then if you pressed your suit, I would not refuse. But then,” she said bitterly, “I thought you were an honourable man as well as a peer, and would scorn to use your rank to influence me through my father.”

“I can only plead my great love and devotion as an extenuation of my fault in still seeking your hand, Miss Weston. Pray, remember, if it is a fault that it is yourself who are responsible for it. What man can gaze on so much grace, so much beauty, such great attractions as you possess, and yet be wise, Miss Weston?”

Julia's answer was a flood of tears. She saw she was in the coils and could discover no chance of escape, for now she had little hope of Lord Carrington relenting.

That evening the Earl dined with them again. Julia was present—pale, sad, with traces of tears on her face, and a wild frightened look in her beautiful eyes.

“My Lord,” said the Banker, with bland pomposity, when the cloth was removed, filling his glass; “Let us drink to the health of the future Countess of Carrington.” The toast was drunk; the Banker nodded and said, “Julia, my dear.” The Lord merely bowed towards her—and in a month's time Julia Weston became the Countess of Carrington.

All this I heard afterwards, as, not liking the man, although an old schoolfellow, I never called on the Westons except professionally, and of late my services had not been required. Some months previously, however, I had constantly attended Miss Weston, whose health was none of the best. Pain and sickness have a wonderfully softening effect on the

mind, especially of women; they long for some one to confide in—something to talk to about the inmost feelings of their heart. I soon felt convinced that my fair patient had some secret cause, if not for sorrowing for anxiety. It was no feeling of idle curiosity which prompted me to discover what this care might be. I am one of those who believe that, in order successfully to treat the body the physician must ascertain if there be not “a mind diseased,” and endeavour, if possible, to soothe the spirit before attempting to deal with physical ailments. First exacting a promise of secrecy, which I smilingly gave, my patient proceeded to initiate me into a little love affair which had been proceeding for some time. In the immediate neighbourhood of the estate which her father had purchased from the Earl of Carrington, and which he had determined to retain as his country seat, was an old country Squire with an only son. Arthur Fanshawe, for so the young gentleman was called, was young, handsome, agreeable, and with boundless audacity. It is not, therefore, surprising that he should have made the acquaintance of his beautiful neighbour, the Banker's daughter, during the four winter months of their stay in the country. Julia thought him everything that was brave, noble, and lovable. Unknown to her father she rode, walked, and went on fishing excursions with him, till all this ended one fine day in the young couple vowing everlasting love and fidelity to each other. Now all this, though very delightful to them, did not meet the stern father's approval, for, in the first place, the gross income of the Squire was only about fifteen hundred a year, while the son had absolutely nothing during the father's life, not even a profession, unless a commission in the County Militia could be called one. Besides, old Weston had set his heart on marrying his daughter to a Peer, and a Peer he was determined to get for her. Thus it happened that, getting an inkling of what was going on, he suddenly removed his daughter to town, thinking thus effectually to put a stop to the folly. Vain hope! At first the young lady moped and fell ill—then I was called in and discovered the cause of the mysterious ailment. Scarcely had I done so, than I remarked a wonderful improvement in my patient's health and spirits. At the time I could not quite account for the sudden change, and did her the injustice to think that time had healed the wound. Subsequently, however, I learned that, once or twice a week, the same morning express which was wont, during their stay in the country, to whirl the Banker up to town to business, now brought the faithful lover. Julia, in London, enjoyed perfect liberty. Her father was engaged at the bank during the day, and, having no female friends or relatives staying in the house, of course she went occasionally for a walk alone. I need scarcely say that Arthur Fanshawe generally met her by appointment, and it was this was the cause of the favourable change, which all my medicaments could not effect.

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But now Julia was Countess of Carrington, and her day dream of

love and happiness was over. The marriage was a private one, so that I heard nothing of it until some time afterwards.

It was in the box lobby of her Majesty's theatre that I next saw the Banker's daughter. I had some nieces from the country staying with me and, having promised to take them to the Opera, had taken advantage of a box ticket placed at my disposal by a patient, to redeem my word. At the very commencement of the performance I was sent for by a patient in St. James's Square. Fortunately it was a false alarm, and as there was nothing serious the matter I hastened back to the Opera. In the box lobby I met my beautiful young patient, William Weston's daughter. Not knowing anything of her marriage, I was surprised at the magnificence of the jewels she wore. I thought, in her evening dress, with the emerald tiara in her dark hair, that she looked exquisitely beautiful. I shook hands with her, and addressed her as Miss Weston.

"Good Heavens, Doctor!" she exclaimed, "do you not, then, know that I am married?"

"Indeed I was not aware of it; allow me to congratulate you. Has your father, then, relented in favour of your late lover?—and have I the pleasure of speaking to Mrs. Fanshawe?"

"Mrs. Fanshawe! Great Heavens, No! Would to God I were so—even Julia Weston again. Come with me, Doctor, there is no one in my box, and I wish to speak to you."

Not without some astonishment I followed her. Strange, I thought, that I should not have heard of her marriage? Who could it be?

I entered the box with her, and, seating myself, prepared to listen to what she had to say. The box, which was on the grand tier, next to that of royalty, commanded a view of the flies. The ballet was about to commence, and we could see groups of girls assembled in readiness to come on. Occasionally, too, the forms of aristocratic-looking men in evening dress might be perceived, proving that a favoured few, other than professionals, were admitted behind the scenes.

"There! do you see that gentleman talking to the girl dressed as a fairy?" exclaimed my companion, suddenly.

"Yes!" I said, in some surprise; "that is Lord Carrington; I believe, from report, that he is a constant worshipper of those beautiful nymphs."

"You are quite right, Doctor," she said, while an angry flush mounted to her cheek; "and now I must inform you that I am the Countess of Carrington."

I was apologising for my unintentional offence in speaking thus of her husband, when she stopped me.

"There, don't apologise," she said; "it is needless—I am not jealous—I do not love him—never can love him—and, of course, where there is no love there can be no jealousy."

Then she told me all that the reader already knows.

“Do you know, Doctor,” she said when she had concluded her narrative, “that if I had waited for one week only, all would have been well. I had not the courage to tell poor Arthur that I was about to be married, so I avoided him and did not answer his letters. Well, a letter arrived for me at my father’s on the very day on which I became Countess of Carrington. It was forwarded, and I received it five days afterwards. It contained news which would have made me refuse to be that man’s wife even at the foot of the altar; for it told me that by the death of a distant relative that my Arthur had succeeded to a large fortune. Not that I cared for the fortune, but I think, I feel sure, that it would have influenced papa. At all events, Arthur would have married me, and we would have trusted to time for a reconciliation; but now, now all is over for me.”

“And what of Arthur Fanshawe, do you see or hear from him now?” I didn’t know why I asked the question. There was something so strange, so reckless in her manner, that perhaps impelled me.

“Do I see him or hear from him now? Yes. I know it is wrong but I cannot help it. See!” she said, motioning towards the side scenes, where Lord Carrington could be seen, the centre of a group of laughing ballet girls, “see how well my Lord remembers me. Can you wonder that I sometimes forget him?”

I was shocked at the levity of her tone, and she observed it in my face

“Don’t look so horrified, Doctor. I assure you I shall respect myself even if I have no respect for my husband. His honour is in safe keeping unless,” and a strange expression came over her beautiful features, “unless he drives me to desperation, by putting too great an humiliation on me. There is a limit to a woman’s patience under insult and injury, but there is no limit to a woman’s love. Doctor,” she said earnestly, “laying her hand on my arm, there can be no more harm in saying it than in feeling it. I still love Arthur Fanshawe—I love him desperately—as my life. Now you know all.”

“Lady Carrington,” I said, “you are on the brink of a precipice—pause before it is too late. Surely because your husband is imprudent, perhaps unfaithful, it is no reason that you should endanger, perhaps forfeit, your own reputation.”

“There is no danger—I will bear with him, and endeavour to do my duty unless——. Do you know he threatened the other night when he was intoxicated to bring one of his mistresses home to supper and seat her at the head of the table. Should he ever dare to do such a thing I will leave him for ever.”

“And where would you go?” I asked almost fearing the answer.

“Where would I go? Where should a wife go, when she is compelled to leave her husband? I would go to my father. This marriage was his wish; he could not refuse to receive me. If he should,”—— She did not complete the sentence, and I rose and took my leave.

"Lady Carrington's carriage stops the way."

I was waiting with my two nieces till the long line of carriages before my humble brougham should have driven off with their occupants.

"Lady Carrington's carriage stops the way," again shouted the servant.

I was not sorry when her Ladyship descended and entered, for I had been waiting for nearly half an hour.

She bowed to me as she passed, and was handed in by a tall handsome young man, who I thought bade her farewell rather impressively.

My brougham was next, and had been kept back by the delay of Lady Carrington.

Under what different circumstances did Lady Carrington next "stop the way" before me.

"What a beautiful girl!" said a young man near me. "Who is she?"

"The Countess of Carrington."

"Is that the Earl who accompanied her to the carriage?"

"That Carrington," said the other with a pitying smile. "No, indeed; Carrington is better employed than dangling after his wife. Don't you know him? Come, and I will introduce you; we shall find him in the Green-room.

"The Countess of Carrington's carriage stops the way."

The words still rang in my ears, nor could I get rid of the fancy during my drive home.

"The Countess of Carrington's carriage stops the way;" all through the long night. I heard it even in my dreams.

A daughter knocks at her father's door. It is night and the rain pours down and the March wind howls. The father listens to her tale, a tale of cruel outrage, and insult, and wrong. When she has finished he says, coldly—

"Daughter, your place is with your husband; return to him."

"Never, so help my Heaven! Much I have borne in silence; but this last insult I cannot, will not bear. Not content with a life of shameless profligacy, he brings home before my very face his paid mistress, and commands me to receive her. Once again, I will never return to him."

"This is no place for you. Your husband's home is your home. If he has done wrong it is a wife's place to forgive. To-morrow I will myself call on him and investigate this affair. Meanwhile return to your home. Once again, this is no home for you without your husband's consent."

"Never, so help my Heaven!" repeated the daughter.

Then she went forth into the night, but she sought not her husband's home. The father was William Weston; the daughter the Countess of Carrington.

Arthur Fanshawe was in town. She knew his address.
That night a star fell from the firmament.

An elopement in high life. The Countess of Carrington had eloped with a former lover, a Mr. Arthur Fanshawe. All the world was talking of it. They had gone to Paris, and the injured husband had followed them with murderous intent. All this I heard one morning in the course of my visits. The next day I received a letter from the guilty wife, telling me the tales of her wrongs, and beseeching me to pray for her. I did more, I wept for her.

Shortly afterwards there was a duel fought in the wood of Vincennes, near Paris, between two young Englishmen.

Four men went on the ground in the mist of early morning. Three only left it.

The brightest April sun streamed down on a ghastly scene.

A tall, fair, handsome young man lay on his back with his glaring eyes staring upwards at the heavens.

It was Arthur Fanshawe, and he was shot through the heart.

And what of the Countess of Carrington, the Banker's daughter, and Peer's wife?

None could tell, she disappeared, and was seen and heard of no more.

Two years rolled on and the sad tragedy faded away from men's minds. William Weston, the Banker, was a miserable man, as well he deserved to be. He had never seen nor heard from his ill-fated daughter since the night when he refused her an asylum and drove her into the arms of her lover. A curse rests upon him. I am frequently called in to attend him—but cannot cure or alleviate the remorse which is gnawing at his heart. During these two years I had led an active and I hope not an useless life—still I could not drive from my mind the memory of Julia, Countess of Carrington, in all the pride of rank and beauty, as I had seen her at the opera.

“Lady Carrington's carriage stops the way.”

The words would still return and ring in my ears.

I devoted an hour or two every day to my hospital duties. Each physician has under him an assistant physician, and one or more “clinical clerks.” These latter are students at the hospital, and it is their duty to see and constantly attend to the patients in the various wards, and report any change in the symptoms to the physicians.

“Well, Mr. Buckshire,” I said to one of these young gentlemen who officiated for me, “how fare your patients; have you any fresh patients since yesterday?”

“One came in to-day, Sir; very interesting case, indeed; seems a very superior sort of person; young, and has been very handsome. You'd better see her, Sir. Delirious—almost in a state of coma. I can't make

the case out, neither can the assistant-physician. Will you come and see her?"

Accordingly, I followed my clerk to the bedside of the female whom he described as a very interesting patient. This I did not pay much attention to, as Mr. Buckshire was always discovering "interesting cases." In this case, however, he had told no more than the truth. The patient in question could not have been more than five and twenty, possibly less; her face, though thin and fair, wore still the traces of great beauty; her figure was slender and delicate, while the whiteness and delicacy of her hands bore testimony to the fact of her never having done hard work. Even her language in the ravings of delirium was not that of an uneducated person. Occasionally she spoke French and Italian, but so rapidly and incoherently that I could make but little sense of it.

"What name?" I asked.

"Jane Smith," said Mr. Buckshire, referring to his book; "no friends, quite destitute—brought in by an old woman, who said she was her landlady, and couldn't afford to keep her any longer for nothing."

"Jane Smith," I muttered, "strange; surely I have seen that face before. Is not that a valuable ring on her finger?" I asked, pointing to it. When, however, Mr. Buckshire attempted to get it off to examine it, the patient resisted so violently that he could not succeed.

"There—there!—leave it alone; some keepsake, I dare say, which even poverty and starvation could not induce her to part with. Poor girl!" I said, after I had examined her and prescribed. "I fear she won't last long; she is so weak, and the fever is not yet at its height."

On the following day Mr. Buckshire presented himself as usual, case-book in hand.

"Well, Mr. Buckshire, what to-day?"

"Two new cases, Sir;" then reading from the book—

"Eliza Jones, aged 47; erisypelas in fore-arm—slight fever. This patient keeps an old clothes shop, consequently does a good deal of washing—"

"Really I can't quite see the force of your logic, Mr. Buckshire; what next?"

"Very interesting case next—highly interesting. Emma Bates, aged 17; this patient is a very interesting girl—large dark eyes, brilliant complexion, good teeth, raven black hair, pretty figure—evidently moved in a superior station of life. Crinoline maker, Jewin st—"

"There—there!—that will do; you are incorrigible. If you fall in love with all your patients in that manner, and think more of their good looks than their constitutions, I fear their chances of recovery will not be of the brightest. Is there anything that requires my presence?—any serious case?"

"No, Sir; I think not, to-day."

I entered my brougham, which was waiting in the quadrangle of the

hospital, and told the coachman to drive hard. He stopped on arriving at the gate; Mr. Buckshire at that moment ran up, saying—

“Oh, I forgot to tell you, Sir, the interesting patient who came in yesterday died in the night. You remember, Sir, the one with the turquoise ring. This is it, Sir; would you like to look at it? Its going to be sold to pay burial expenses. She was terrible just before she died, and begged so hard that she might not be sent to the dissecting room that the house surgeon promised she should not.”

I took the ring mechanically.

“Oh, and here's a letter, Sir, was found in her pocket; it's addressed to the Countess of Carrington. She's been a lady's maid in a nobleman's family, I think, Sir. I knew at once she was a superior class of person.”

“What!” I exclaimed, in breathless astonishment; “the Countess of Carrington!” I took the letter; surely enough the envelope was addressed, “The Countess of Carrington, Park-lane, London.” The letter was soiled and crumpled and hardly legible, but I saw that it commenced “Dearest Julia,” and ended, “Ever your very devoted lover, Arthur Fanshawe.”

I looked at the ring on the inside; it bore the inscription, “Julia Weston, from Arthur Fanshawe. February, 185—.”

“Great God!” I thought, “and this was the end of the rich Banker's daughter, Julia, Countess of Carrington. Inscrutable are thy ways, oh, Providence!”

“I will keep this ring and letter, Mr. Buckshire,” I said. “I knew this unfortunate woman, and will communicate with her friends.”

Mr. Buckshire looked somewhat surprised. I suppose at my pale face and strange manner.

“Are you not well, Sir? Shall I get you a glass of wine?” he said.

“No, I thank you. Drive home at once,” I said to the coachman.

“What is the stoppage, Mr. Buckshire?” I asked, noticing that we did not move.

“Only the dead cart, Sir. It's the patient who died last night—the female whom the ring and letter belonged to.”

I leaned back in my seat. The words seemed again to ring in my ears, as I had heard them at the Opera.

“Lady Carrington's carriage stops the way.” And after a lapse of two years, and again—

“*Lady Carrington's carriage stops the way.*”

But the carriage is a dead cart and the Countess is a corpse.

Sic transit gloria Mundi!

GEORGE WITHER, THE PURITAN POET.

THIS sunny month of June has enticed large numbers of respectable people to come by boat, rail, or road to have a glimpse at Mr. Fowke's Folly; and the result is apparent to the present writer only in the overcrowded streets, and the Babel of languages at every corner. Being a reflective man, and a timid, I am less at home among the noisy population than I should wish to be; but as Nature has mingled with my constitutional love of solitude an inordinate appetite for books, I suppose I must make the best of my bargain. A peep into the crowded London thoroughfares has been enough for me. The sight is not a cheering one to a man who, like myself, cherishes his personality as a precious memento, by which he may be identified to after generations. I see the great ocean of Life roll past, wave on wave—I see face after face swallowed up in a great mist of impersonal sight-seeing; and, as I look, all self-identity, combined with the possibility of self-assertion, appears to vanish from me. One of the great crowd, I lose my characteristic; I am nobody, and a portion of everybody. Appalled at the prospect, I shrink back, snail-like, into my snug little shell of a study, and am once more conscious of a solitary individuality.

I close the door, draw the curtain, and shut out the world. The murmur of the busy millions is wafted to me from afar—subdued and softened by the distance, it seems a not unpleasant music.

Now, therefore, while the great mass of residents and visitors rush hither and thither in a noisy flood, I hold in my hands a quaint old book, full of quaint old woodcuts, which carries me back to the time when Charles lost his head at Whitehall—when a brewer left his pigs and poultry at St. Ives to become iconoclast. Said quaint old book, long dear to me, summons up many a picture of the past. There is a homely English flavour about its contents which enables me to recognize its origin at a glance, and a well of English undefiled, which is refreshing after Tomkins' last volume of scattered leaves. It is an old-fashioned relic, picked up on glorious ground—*campos ubi Troja fuit*—breathing here of a stern-featured poetic Helen, prurient or passionate; there, of a Hector and a battle-field. It is brimful of character and individuality.

Wherefore, and for other reasons, it is appropriate reading for one that would keep alive his consciousness of personal manhood. The author lived in a time of action, and became a component element of that time; but his self-assertive capacities gave prominence to powers which might otherwise have rested in inglorious obscurity. So competent was he to ensure this desirable prominence, that, throughout the whole course of his life, he managed to keep that priceless jewel of his, his ambition, healthy and untarnished. Never, even in the thickest of the fight, did he forget Fame—who makes sages, heroes, or madmen of us; and the whole business of his brain was to do her courtesies. To come at once to the matter

in hand, the man of whom I speak was George Wither, self-styled "The Man who would not Flatter:" and it is to the consideration of his life and writings that I propose to devote a very few of these pages.

George Wither was born at Bentworth, in Hampshire, on the eleventh day of June, 1580. His father, also a George, appears to have been an old-fashioned unsophisticated gentlemen of liberal means, who eschewed what we call Society, and cultivated the good graces of Pomona on his own acres. After receiving the rudiments of education at the little grammar-school of Colemore—then under the superintendence of the eminent mathematician, Antiquary John Greaves, he was sent, in 1604, to Magdalen College, Oxford, where "He made some proficiency with much ado in academical learning." He appears to have been much fonder of writing verses than of construing Greek; for he left the University without a degree.

"We have some fellows that would scorn to be
Tearm'd well, I know, especially by me;
Because they know that my ungentle fate
Allowed me not to be a graduate.

Abuses Stript and Whipt, 2nd Book, p. 205.

Soon after this he went to London, and studied law at one of the Inns of Chancery. But according to Anthony Wood, he had as little relish for legal terms as for academical idioms. "His geny hanging after things more smooth and delightful, he did at last make himself known to the world, after several rambles therein, by certain specimens of poetry, which, being dispersed in several hands, (he) became shortly after a public author, and much admired by some in that age, by his quick advancement in that faculty." In 1613, he published his *Abuses Stript and Whipt*—a crude sharp satire, which became immediately popular. This book pleased the public, because it clothed in rough homely English an insular distrust of Kings and Courts, as well as a poetical contempt for new-fangled official scarecrows. The public applause tickled the young man's vanity not a little, and he strutted up and down the literary platform with remarkable self-complacency. Buckling on his armour, he penetrated into dark political corners, dragging many sour-visaged social traitors to the light. *Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo*, was blazoned on his bran new shield. But the shield-glitter dazzled defiance into dangerous eyes, and the bearer found himself a prisoner between stone-walls. The young poet's language had not been complimentary to certain long-locked gentlemen of the *beau monde*. He was seized, reprimanded, and finally locked up in the Marshalsea. Still clinging to his pen and ink, he wrote the *Satire to the King* in prison. This dignified and conciliatory effusion, bristling with pluck and impudence, in spite of a dash of explanation here and there, opened the gates of the Marshalsea, and Wither came forth with honours. Puritanically-disposed people took a fancy to him after this, commiserating his slovenly usage and praising him highly for "His profuse outpouring

of English rhyme." Then St. Giles, leading on the trading population of old London, caught at his verse, proclaiming it in shop and pot-house as prophetic and oracular. The "honest, plain matter," as Wither himself called it, suited the imaginations of the middle and lower classes. The seeds of the Revolution had been sown, and were sprouting vigorously in the public mind. The margin between the sensuous and the sensual, the gay and the obscure, having been overstept by the aristocracy, it was full time for the people to interfere. They had to pay through the nose for the fun which they were not privileged to share. Here, then, was a sober-suited young champion, ready to do their battles, in the very teeth of Church and King. The persecution undergone by him while in the exercise of his poetical functions, only served to treble his influence. He began a bustling, uncomfortable life. He was for ever compelled, forcibly, to bear his Majesty's compliments to the governor of some lock-up or other—the Fleet, Newgate, or the Marshalsea. In prison, however, the Muse was with him, caring very little for the darkness and the hard fare; but talking like Hope with the angels, and finding music even in the jingling of the keys at the gaoler's girdle. Nothing daunted Wither's tough English heart, as long as he could sharpen the Toledo of Satire on the whetstone of self-conceit. Fresh fines and fresh imprisonment were repeatedly forthcoming. "What care I," cried Tyrtæus; "What care I for your paltry hencoop—shut me up when you can imprison the immortal soul." Then, bursting into heroics, with a sneer which seems to have communicated itself to his rhyme and rhythm, he exclaims:—

"Is this the dismal place
Wherein, before I came, I heard it said
There's nothing but grief, terror, and disgrace?
I find it otherwise; and doubtless either
It is belied, or they who are sent hither
Within themselves, when to this house they come,
Bring that which makes it seem so troublesome.
I no worse here than where I was before
Accommodated am; for, though confined
From some things which concern my body more
Than formerly, it hath enlarged my mind!"

Thus, stone walls did not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage, for the self-assertive spirit of the poet. That there was some little ostentation in his exclamations, may be admitted; but that they were bold and to the purpose, is unquestionable. Here, indeed, was the sanguine poetic heart, big with inspiration, and disdaining the thralls of a quarrelsome age and an imperfect civilization.

After his first release from prison, Wither appears to have betaken himself to his little estate in Hampshire. Dwelling in his house at Bentworth, he wrote countless quantities of manuscript—songs, hymns, psalms, squibs, satires; and at the same time followed much of Roger

Ascham's advice—"To run fair at the tilt or ring; to play at all weapons; to shoot fair in bow and surely in gun; to vault lustily, to run, to leap, to wrestle, to swim; to dance comely; to hawk, to hunt, to play at tennis, and all pastimes generally which be joined with labour, used in open place or in the daylight—containing either some fit exercise for war or some pleasant pastime for peace." Here he found in perfection those old ceremonies and customs whereof we now and then catch glimpses in his songs; for Bentworth, like Herrick's Dean Prior, was linked by such ties to the golden world:—

"For sports, for pageantry, and plays,
Thou hast thy eves and holy days,
On which the young men and maidens meet
To exercise their dancing feet;
Tripping the comely country round,
With daffodils and daisies crowned.
Thy wakes, thy quintels, here thou hast,
Thy May-poles, too, with garland graced;
Thy Morris dance, thy Whitsun ale,
Thy shearing feasts, which never fail;
Thy harvest home, thy wassail bowl,
That's toss'd up after fox i' the hole;
Thy mummeries, thy Twelfth-night kings
And queens, thy Christmas revellings;
Thy nut-brown mirth, thy russet wit,
And no man pays too dear for it."

The days were even then gone by, when, early on May-day, as Chaucer tells us, "Forth goeth all the Court, both the most and the least, to fetch the flowers fresh, and branch, and blome." But there were customs enough left to interest a poet. Wither saw sturdy men and women bring in the May-pole; he drank at wakes with the old women; he watched the sad or happy faces of marriageable maidens on St. Agnes' Eve. Little dreamed the pretty maiden who

"With garlands gay,
Who made the lady of the May,"

that the country gentleman watching her with those hard heavy eyes, was about to celebrate her praises in his songs. Nor the Morris-dancers, singing their madrigals, and playing their mirth-awakening feats of arms. For, if some rude portraits are to be trusted, Wither was no Adonis, but a stern hard-looking Puritan, disinclined to indulge in frivolous pursuits. Under a harsh exterior, however—an outside like the thorns of the rose—Wither had a heart in tune with all innocent loveliness—that deep poetic instinct which is more than all poetic fame. He was beginning to form Arcadian pictures of the rural life, preparing the materials for many sweet pictures—"Tales of the May-pole and the Wassail Mead."

But the pastoral retirement was not to remain long undisturbed; Wither was a man of action, and whenever summoned by circumstances would be up and doing. To all intents and purposes State affairs were getting muddled. In 1632 Charles, proroguing Parliament, got up a surreptitious Privy Council, through the medium of which Laud prosecuted his great system, "Thorough." A brewer and a sailor rose up and voted his Majesty a humbug. The edict relating to ship-money brought out John Hampden, who refused to pay one farthing of the twenty shillings he owed the Government. The democratic councils ensued; Hampden spoke angry words to men of mettle; Pym, Cromwell, and the rest, strenuously applauded. Cromwell's crew of horse came next, and certain politicians grasped their swords with the determination to fight out their battle, man to man. Wither was, by constitution, at once democratical and Puritanical. At the outbreak of the civil war he was mixed up in the popular movement. Raising a troop of horse in the service of the Parliament, he went marching against the Royalists, under the motto—*Pro Rege, Lege, Grege*. What success and prowess attended his individual efforts is, of necessity, vague and uncertain; but having the misfortune to fall into the hands of his enemies, he was within an ace of decapitation. His life, however, was saved because Denham perpetrated a good-natured joke in his defence. Soon after this, according to the statement of Anthony Wood, he became "a Justice of Peace in quorum for Hampshire, Surrey, and Sussex, which office he kept six years; and afterwards was made, by Oliver, Major-General of all the Horse and Foot in the County of Surrey." After the Restoration, charged with writing certain seditious papers against the House of Commons, he was lodged in Newgate, only to be liberated a few years before his death, which took place in 1667.

The above is but the bare epitome of a wild, long, and continuous struggle in the pursuit of fine, healthy principles; but, in addition to his work in the great battles, Wither, throughout his long and useful career, conducted divers petty literary wars with successful temerity. Among his literary brethren he was not popular. To them, at least, his success appeared in striking disproportion to his abilities. Among his more respectable maligners was young Gill, junior preceptor of Saint Paul's Schools, where little John Milton was preparing to out-don the dons at college. Gill's later diatribes evinced some scholarship, and a great deal of temper; but Wither's only formidable opponent was Ben Jonson, to whom, perhaps, the young satirist's deficiency in scholarly qualifications seemed more glaringly apparent than to his other contemporaries. Wither, however, back-boned by honest conviction, fortified with vigorous self-consciousness, trespassing on the borders of self-conceit, met even the author of "Volpone" with that spirit which had enabled him to resist even the blandishments of a King, and to despise the limitations of a prison. He had merely a few words for

his more insignificant opponents, belabouring them now and then, after the following fashion :—

“ I cannot for reward adorn the hearse
Of some old rotten miser with my verse ;
Nor, like the poetasters of the time,
Go howl a doleful elegy in rhyme
For every lord or ladyship that dies,
And then perplex their heirs to patronize
My muddy poetry.”*

This hard, outspoken invective had method in it, notwithstanding that it lacked the sting of the epigram. To Wither's rough independent nature the vices and pettiness of that generation of poets appeared intolerable ; and intensely conscious of the strongly-marked features of his own personality, he was apt to identify the follies of the man with the imperfection of the writer. The noise his infuriated enemies made only confirmed his popularity with the public, which preferred plain English doctrine to Latin and Greek philosophising and fanciful Italian metaphysics. Honest folks bought his books, and laughed heartily at the heavy blows he dealt among his more accomplished opponents. Ben wrote a masque, and dubbed him “ Chronomatrix,” treating the poet of the people with that contempt with which, in his secret heart, he was inclined to look upon the people themselves. “ Chronomatrix, forsooth !” ejaculated Wither ; and thump ! down came his Puritan flail on the burly shoulders of the Laureate himself :—

“ I am not of a temper like to those
That can provide an hour's sad talk in prose
For any funerall ; and then go dine
And choke my grief with sugar-plums and wine.
I cannot at the claret sit and laugh,
And then half-tipsie write an epitaph ;
Or howle an epicaedium for each groom
That is, by fraud or nigardise, become
A wealthy alderman ; nor for each gull
That hath acquired the stile of worshipfull !”

Wither's poignant wit, and strong masculine sense, careless either to give or keep, were valiantly exercised again Jonson's keen personal satire and overwhelming erudition. Jonson bantered his opponent about the “ prentices,” “ unlettered clerks,” “ sempstresses,” “ boys with buttons,” and “ pudding wives,” who filled his pockets and bought his books. These formed a species of public which had damned Jonson's plays at the Globe Theatre ; and against which he had made certain loud outcries before Wither was born. With the profoundest contempt for the ancients, this despised public united a hearty irritability on the subject of Jonson's genius. Wither retaliated on the Laureate in a still more per-

* *Wither's Motto.*—Ed. 1633.

sonal strain, he described certain bacchanal verses at the "*Three Tuns*," and the "*Devil*," at which Big Ben with his "mountain belly" and his "rocky face" presided, and laid down convivial dicta for new disciples. It is difficult to say which conquered, but certainly there was a merry struggle for the mastery. Jonson, always jealous, dealt his heavy sledge-hammer blows without mercy; indignant to behold a literary freshman filching away his laurels, when they were just beginning to supply him with ease and enjoyment. But Wither had the stubborn cranial development of the true Puritan. He was a hard-hitting fellow, moreover, and one who paid back his enemies in their own coin. The Laureate knew as well as anybody, that his productions were much too elaborate to come home to the taste of the general public; whereas his young adversary, who prided himself upon his want of pride, was writing for the people, and for the people only. Rivalry was utterly out of the question; but it served to set George Wither on a momentary level with the stupendous genius who created "*Every Man in his Humour*," and "*the Sad Shepherd*." Shakspeare himself was the only man capable of overcoming Jonson; the Spanish Galleon, and the English Man of War, as Fuller denominated the two great dramatists, were far from being regarded with contempt by one another. But Wither was not the man to be put down by anybody. People began to stare at the young lion as he strutted along the streets; whereat the old lion was enraged so much the more. Ben expected all and sundry to gape with admiration when he donned his "coachman's coat," and waddled down to the Apollo Chamber from his house in Aldersgate Street.

But let us think gently of rare Ben Jonson's "*Chronomatrix*." Everbody knows who has read those merry begging letters to the King of England, that Ben was no saint himself. Wither was conceited, egotistical—an extinct specimen of an extinct class of moral coxcombs. But he was none the less a brave man and a good poet. He wrote about love in his own soft and delicate way, and had no inconsiderable share of the passion in his own element. He adored poetry with the ardour of a first last affection; and the verses in which he paints the beauties of the Muse are among the sweetest in the language. The following lines were written while the author was lying in the Fleet Prison:—

“She doth tell me where to borrow
 Comfort in the midst of sorrow:
 Makes the desolatest place
 To her presence be a grace;
 And the blackest discontents,
 Be her fairest ornaments.
 In my former days of bliss
 Her divine skill taught me this—
 That from everything I saw
 I could some instruction draw;

And raise pleasure to her height
 By the meanest object's sight ;
 By the murmur of a spring,
 By the least bough's rusteling ;
 By a daisy, whose leaves spread,
 Shut when Titan goes to bed ;
 Or a shady bush or tree :
 She could more infuse in me
 Than all Nature's beauties can
 In some other wiser man.

* * * *

Poesie ; thou sweetest content
 That e'er Heaven to mortals lent :
 Though they as a trifle leave thee ;
 Whose dull thoughts cannot conceive thee,
 Though thou be to them a scorn
 That to nought but earth are born ;
 Let my life no longer be,
 Than I am in love with thee.
 Though our wise ones call thee madness,
 Let me never taste of gladness,
 If I love not thy maddest fits
 More than all their greatest wits ;
 And though some too seeming holy
 Do esteem thy raptures folly,
 Thou dost teach me to contemn
 What makes fools and knaves of them.

No stauncher Tyrtulus ever breathed upon Parnassus : rushing forward as he did against hard conventional barricades—*de la vertu ou le mort approcher*. Men of earth might sneer at the weakness ; but Wither chose to dwell happily in the pleasant sanctuary his own genius had made for him—free to dream his independent dreams. The world might grumble and groan, monarchs might totter on their thrones, nations might come and depart like shadows, King Ben might indignantly point to the laurel on his beetling brows ; but there lay the fluent Philarete, quite composedly, singing songs particularly pretty and very Puritan. And the public—the jolly little bugbears of every guild—thought it worth their while to listen attentively.

During the reign of Charles I.,—during the Commonwealth, and part of the reign of Charles II., two schools of poetry had gradually gained ground. These schools were styled severally the Metaphysical and the Classical. Of the first, Cowley, a man of undoubted genius but corrupted taste, was the most characteristic master, and he it was who gave it reputation and historical significance.* Such men as

* To show the estimation in which the pinchbeck platitudes of this poet were held by contemporaries, take Sir John Denham's lines on Cowley's interment in the sacred purlieus of Westminster Abbey. Here is a short extract :—

“ Old Mother Wit and Nature gave
 Fletcher and Shakspeare all they have ;

Carew and Waller supported the pretensions of the Classical school. As the name partly signifies, its incompetent poetical philosophy was based upon the lyrical models once in vogue among the ancients. Its founders wrote verses so elegant as to gain for themselves the title of Literary Reformers ; and they paved the way for the fine gentlemen with French instincts who revolutionized the laws of metre during the reign of Queen Anne. The members of both these schools burned incense to a degenerate Venus. Their false and artificial poetry was the broken mirror in which were reflected the silly intrigues of literary courtiers and not very virtuous ladies of quality. But presently there sprang up a third school—a sober ascetic branch of the metaphysical school—of which Herbert, Quarles, and the subject of this paper were members. These men and others, many of whom leaned to the Royalist side in politics, were erroneously styled Puritans.

Of Wither's literary productions, which were legion, the best perhaps are "Faire Vertue, or the Mistresse of Philarete," and "Abuses Stript and Whipt." The one is pastoral, the other satirical. The first represents George Wither, Gent., (as he sometimes wrote himself on his title pages) in a bright ultra-poetic light, kneeling tremblingly at the feet of a beautiful English Diana. The second suggests plain George Wither, self-styled the "Man who would not Flatter," whistling over his wrath to keep it warm, and growling in harsh baritones at Kings and Courts. I recommend both poems to the consideration of my readers.

WILLIAMS BUCHANAN.

In Spenser and in Jonson, Art,
 Of slower Nature got the start ;
 But both in him so equal are,
 None knows which bears the happiest share.
 To him no author was unknown,
 Yet what he wrote was all his own.
 He melted not the ancient gold,
 Nor like Ben Jonson," &c. &c.

VISION AND ITS INSTRUMENTS.

PART II.

INSTRUMENTS OF VISION.

BY DR. SCOFFERN.

VISION having been functionally considered in our last, instruments of vision or eyes are now to be treated of. The simplest form of eye is found in the Annelida. To this division of animated Nature belongs the medicinal leech, which we will therefore take for our illustration. The leech has no less than ten eyes; but it would be premature to attribute any extraordinary power of vision to this creature nevertheless. Vision, indeed—using that word in its proper sense, as meaning ocular discrimination of objects—probably the leech has none. So far as the revelations of anatomy and analogical reasoning enable one to come to a conclusion, the leech merely acquires, through the medium of its ten eyes, the power of distinguishing light from darkness; no more. All that beautiful assemblage of refractive lens-work, discoverable in the eyes of Man, and the higher animals generally, is wanting to the leech. To understand the better how the visual organs of this little creature are formed, we may take a mutilated human eye for the illustrative starting point. What the optical arrangement of the human eye is we have not yet investigated, nor is that investigation necessary for the illustration here in view. Enough to know that behind the cornea or lantern-like front of a human eye, come lenses* and humours of various sorts and degrees, through all of which rays of light have successively to pass, until they ultimately fall upon a sentient net-work, spread over the posterior surface of the eye, very much after the fashion of a spider's web. This being premised, let us fancy that every part of a human eye has been removed, save the posterior net-work. This idea being fully realized, we shall have a very fair functional illustration of the eye of a leech. Such an optical instrument must be very imperfect, regarding it from a mammalian stand-point of perfection. Nevertheless, considering the life-duties and destinies of a leech, one has no difficulty in believing that such rudimentary visual organs are quite sufficient for its wants. The Naturalist well knows that Nature ever economizes her powers and resources. Imperfect Man, when he seeks to accomplish some end by the putting forth of force, is in the common habit of employing an uncertain super-abundance of force, to guard against the contingency of not putting forth enough. Nature never goes to work in this slovenly way. Ever using means adequate to the end proposed, she never transgresses these means. Much of Man's boasted certainty is nothing better than the aggregate of results approaching correctness, but never absolutely correct.

* Each transparent portion of the eye is, optically speaking, lenticular.

The small remaining errors he spreads about until they constitute an even surface—so to speak—and are no longer discoverable. The tuning of a piano will at once furnish a musician with an illustration of the sentiment we would seek to convey. If a piano were tuned absolutely correct for any one key, it must necessarily be incorrect for every other key. The tuner's great art is to distribute imperfections evenly about, until they are no longer discoverable.

The sort of eye we have been describing may be called the simple eye; simplest it indeed is, of all visual organs. Next in order of development is what may be denominated the mosaic eye, a very beautiful example of which may be seen in the common house-fly; still more magnificent examples being afforded by butterflies, moths, and dragon-flies. Every entomologist who has set himself the task of catching one of these latter insect-giants, well knows how great the difficulty of succeeding. A dragon-fly, whether on the wing or at rest, is not readily caught. It does not much matter which way you approach the wary fellow. Whether you look at him face to face, or whether he turns his back upon you, he sees you just as well. Evidently the dragon-fly's power of vision, whatever sort of eye he may have—is in certain respects an extensive power; yet, so far as Anatomy and Optics enables us to understand, the dragon-fly's power of discriminating the outline and contour of objects must be very small. If a dragon-fly, butterfly, or even common house-fly be caught, held firmly by the wing, and looked at full in the face, the eye may not only readily be distinguished, but may be seen to be wholly different from our own. Even without microscopic, or even magnifying aid—by the naked eye alone—the peculiar construction of the insect mosaic eye will stand revealed. The first impression conveyed by an eye of this kind, will be, that it is a remarkably brilliant eye. Continuing to regard it attentively, the cause of that brilliancy will be made apparent. A facet-like appearance will soon become manifest; something like the aspect of one of the old-fashioned round, facet-cut decanter stoppers. Without the aid of a magnifying instrument, this is all an observer could expect to perceive. Sufficiently magnified, the facets of such an insect eye would be found to exist in prodigious numbers; and upon the transparent surface of each facet, the observer would not fail to see his own reflected image. Inasmuch as each of these facets is set at a different angle, so does each correspond to a separate emanation, or set of luminous rays; and in proportion as the number of these facets is greater, so will the sphere of vision possessed by many insects be more extensive.

But the aggregate of facets only constitutes the exterior of insect eyes. The interior arrangement has now to be explained; let us then look about for some convenient analogy. Behold it at hand. A common tin funnel, such as used to fill bottles with, is closed with a pane of glass at the large end; the glass corresponding with one of the insect eye

facets, and the funnel itself is almost the exact representation of what is situated behind each facet of a mosaic insect eye. If we now assume that a branch of the insect optic nerve instead of proceeding quite up to the funnel mouth—quite up to the glass, that is to say—stops short at the point where the funnel tube joins the cone, the necessary condition will have been imagined for further illustration. Slight reflection on these conditions will suffice to make known the fact, that an arrangement, such as described, will limit the expanse of luminous rays, that can be taken in by each separate eye funnel. Were there no limitation of this kind, all the beautifully complex arrangement of funnels, and facets, just described, would have been resources thrown away. An insect eye thus modified, would have been no more perfect than that of a leech, notwithstanding its seemingly elaborate mechanism. No matter what the precise construction of an eye may be, if not merely the perception of light from darkness, but the individualisation of objects, the discrimination of outline, be an end proposed—some provision must exist for circumscribing limits to the field of sight, presented by any luminous object.

Mosaic eyes, unaccompanied by refractive lenses, are not restricted to insects. They are found in certain Crustacea—the decapods for example; creatures that possess a greater scope of vision than insects, though the eyes not consisting usually of so many facets, are not of themselves so elaborate. In what manner then is this increase of vision accomplished? Ten minutes' inspection of a live lobster stall will furnish a reply to the question. Amongst the sprawling fore extremities of a live lobster, certain things not claws, not legs; but rather like the antennæ or feelers of an insect are perceptible. These antennæ, as we will provisionally call them, are extremely mobile. Sometimes they are directed forward, sometimes backward; describing in their gyrations the arc of nearly three quarters of a circle. If the tip of one of these antenna-like things be carefully examined, an eye may be perceived, similar in all external aspects to one of the insect eyes we have been already describing. In point of fact, lobsters, despite of their bulk, have much that is in common with the nature and alliance of insects. A cray-fish is still more insect-like. If a flea be sufficiently magnified, the general similarity between it and a cray-fish will be at once apparent.

Mosaic non-refractive eyes, though those most generally found in animals belonging to the Crustacea, are not universally found. Some crustaceans possess refractive lenticular eyes; but when the latter occur, they are usually accessory.

Ascending a grade higher in the scale of creation, we now come to the Arachnida, or Spider tribe, in which as members are included the scorpion. Be the fact known, and very generally it is not known—spiders are *not* insects. No; they are far more important individuals than insects, possessing a higher organization; more intelligence. Mere bulk has nothing whatever to do with intelligence plainly, or else human individuals would

be vastly inferior to elephants and whales; and thus it is, in following the same line of reasoning, a spider has more brains—more power of good and evil within his little bulk than the most gigantic lobster. The eyes of arachnideans are constructed lenticularly, on the same principle as those of Man, and the higher animals generally. They have usually several of these eyes; wherefore the scope of vision of these creatures is not merely very extensive, but very perfect. The common scorpion has no less than twelve of these beautiful eyes. No wonder he can see, as well as sting, so sharply.

Ascending now in the animated creation, until we arrive at Vertebrata or creatures having a back bone, we see in the construction of their visual apparatus the highest development of optical resources. Different members of the Vertebrata have eyes differently modified, but the general principles of construction in all are the same. Should any reader desire to see and examine for himself ocularly, that which we here must be content to describe verbally, this can easily be done if the eye of a sheep or an ox be taken as an example. Looking at such an eye, in front, the transparent convex widow pane as we may call it—cornea in optical language—meets the view. The cornea is not usually described as being a lens; a lens, however, it plainly is, concavo-convex in shape. Behind the cornea will be found a liquid called, on account of its fluidity, the aqueous humour; stretched across this is a representative of the optician's perforated stop, the iris as it is called, having a round aperture in the middle of it susceptible of enlargement and contraction, results which the optician by his less elaborate machinery cannot accomplish. We have already indicated the functions of this iris with its pupil, as tending to obviate the defects of spherical and chromatic aberration; but it performs another function beside. The iris expands or contracts, making the pupil larger or smaller, according as the source of light is more or less intense, and a larger or smaller pencil of rays is necessary for the accomplishment of perfect vision. The nature of this accommodation must have made itself perceptible to all of us. Emerging at times from bright light to dusky gloom, who has failed to notice the extreme difficulty of seeing under this condition for the first few moments? Afterwards, however, the eyes by some means get accustomed to their duties. Objects, invisible at first, soon become moderately distinct, until our visual organs are at least reconciled to the gloom around them. Conversely, who can have failed to notice the utter bewilderment experienced on changing the condition, and emerging from gloom out upon sun light, or into a brilliantly illuminated apartment? If the eye could be looked into under either of the specified conditions, the pupil in the former case would be seen to expand so as to economise all available light; in the latter case, to contract, thus shutting out a number of luminous rays that otherwise, falling upon the retina, would be painful. In owls, cats, and other nocturnal animals, the expansive limits of the pupil are very large.

Habitually prowling at times when light is deficient, the visual organs of nocturnal animals are constructed with special reference to the rendering of all stray rays available. The tradition which represents owls and cats as able to see in positive darkness is founded on error. Some light there must be. The eyes of nocturnal animals are constructed with reference to functions of light, just as the eyes of man are constructed; but owing to the extreme dilatibility of their pupil they can do with less of it. In cats, as we all know, the pupil is peculiarly shaped. Round almost, when at its fullest expansion, it contracts under the influence of powerful light laterally but not longitudinally; the result of which is a long slit-like aperture. This peculiarity of pupil does not extend to any of the larger species of the cat tribe; not to the lion and tiger for example. The lynx we believe is the largest feline animal that is endowed with this peculiarity.

A large expanded pupil is regarded usually as conferring a brilliancy, and, therefore, a beauty to the eye of such individuals as possess it. The juice of the herb *Belladonna* has the remarkable property of expanding the pupil, and thus imparting this kind of brilliancy artificially. The very name "*Belladonna*" is stated to be dependent (and we believe correctly) on this circumstance. The words "*bella donna*," we need scarcely indicate, are the Italian for "beautiful lady," and it is recorded that the Italian ladies at one time were in the habit of enlarging their pupils, that their eyes might seem more bright, by the expressed juice of the herb to which the designation "*bella donna*" has since been given. The writer of this begs leave to express the hope that Italian fair ones never suffered half so much in the interest of beauty as he once suffered by accident. Some extract of *Belladonna* having got into one eye, all power of contraction in the pupil ceased for many days. The results were most painful and confusing. Not only did light, flooding in more profusely than it was wanted, cause a head disturbance verging on delirium, but all objects were seen double.

Expatiating thus on the construction of the iris and pupil, we have been led away from that systematic anatomical scrutiny of Vertebrate eyes upon which we had entered. A little way behind the retina—or, more properly speaking, behind the pupil—we find a solid transparent body, lenticular in form, and hence called the crystalline lens. The most convenient means by which to learn the contour of the crystalline lens will consist in boiling an entire eye; by which operation the lens is consolidated just as white of egg would be, similarly circumstanced. This result must frequently have been noticed when a boiled fish's head has been brought to table. The shape of a crystalline lens, and its relation to the pupil and iris, merit some attention; and will involve some of the points already stated in regard to spherical and chromatic aberrations, the imperfection of spherical lenses, and the superiority of such as have reference to Cartesian ovals. Now, it does happen (though the observer would perhaps not be able to satisfy himself of the fact) that the crystalline lens is really

not a spherical lens—that is to say, it has not reference to a sphere on either aspect. To affirm that the curves—and the curves are not similar on either side—have reference to Cartesian ovals, would be to affirm more than has ever been demonstrated. That Nature, however, has departed from the spherical origin is sufficiently apparent; and in doing this Nature doubtless has been actuated by some all-sufficient reason.

Before we proceed to indicate other functions of Mammalian eyes, it will be well to pause here and take cognizance of the optical resources that have already come under our consideration. The fact has already been announced that Sir Isaac Newton regarded the chromatic aberration of a lens, or a system of lenses, as an irremediable evil. He believed that such an instrument as an achromatic reflecting telescope was beyond the capability of Man to produce. How achromatic lenses *are* constructed has already been explained—combination of different refractive media solving the whole difficulty.

If the anatomical construction of an eye be reflected upon, the fact will be made manifest that this very means of obviating chromatic aberration has been adopted by Nature. Not only has each separate humour a different index of refractive power; but the crystalline lens itself, far from being homogeneous, is composed of layers of different densities. The defect of spherical aberration is amply provided for, and guarded against. From this, as already noted, the crystalline lens is not a spherical lens; but if tendencies to spherical aberration should nevertheless exist, the iris, by cutting off all peripheral rays, would countervail it.

Thus far, then, is the analogy complete between eye economy and telescope economy. The adaptation of means to an end is obvious. Every step has been taken that Man has felt himself compelled to take for perfecting his rougher instruments. The eyes, however, have mysteries of optical adaptation that have never been revealed, and which, perhaps, do not admit of revelation. The means by which they accommodate themselves to distances is one, and if we would contemplate this mystery under the most striking aspect of it, let the habits of a hawk or eagle—let the optical necessities of these birds be reflected on for a moment. The hawk or eagle, soaring aloft, sees his prey far down on the surface of the earth. To Man's vision, the object would be imperceptible; but acuteness of vision is not the point under contemplation just now. The question before us for solution is—"How does it happen that the hawk or eagle, swooping down with the velocity of a falling stone (the distance between him and his victim becoming rapidly less and less), accommodate the visual power of his eyes to each altered distance?" Several attempts have been made by physiologists to answer this question, but they have resulted in no satisfactory hypothesis. The fairest statement of the case, indeed, is to own plainly, and without circumlocution, that the method by which the result is accomplished is wholly unknown.

The refractive mechanism of our eyes is such, that all objects made visible are depicted upside down upon the retina. Based upon knowledge of this phenomenon, a somewhat warmly-disputed contest formerly prevailed, in regard to the explanation of our seeing things as they are, considering that our eyes take cognizance of them upside down. The wonder now is that so warm a contest should have gone on. We have only to assume that the sentient power of the optic nerve is specially adapted to this state of optical inversion; that it is made competent to invert in feeling and idea the picture of objects seen; and the difficulty ceases to exist. If the rejoinder be made, "This is mere speculation," granted; and human minds, on whatever field of knowledge careering, soon come to learn that they, like cows in Guernsey, are tethered each with a very short rope. The sum total of certain indisputable truths, to which we can here below attain, is very small; and when the human mind can know no longer, it fain will speculate.

Another much disputed topic the stereoscope has put to rest. How do the eyes realize to the brain the idea of solidity? was the question long asked unavailingly. The notion of solidity, doubtless, is referable to the two different angular bearings, which are presented by solid bodies to the two eyes. That such is the true explanation there can now be no doubt; inasmuch as two flat pictures submitted to the eyes, under the corresponding angles to these the solid representation would have presented, originate the notion of solidity.

Assuming the undulatory or wave theory of light to be the true theory, the curious speculation arises whether there may not exist sorts of light which, though invisible to the eyes of one animal, or one class of animals, are recognisable to others. At present there are strong presumptive grounds for replying to this question affirmatively; but long before such a conclusion was warranted by any evidence, the opinion may be said to have prevailed. Professor Stokes, of Cambridge, has proved that beyond the extreme ends of the solar spectrum there are rays naturally invisible, though capable of being rendered visible by transmission through one of certain liquids which have the property of what he first denominated "epipalic dispersion." If the undulatory theory of light be adopted (and it is now almost exclusively adopted), there is hardly any escape from the conclusion that far beyond the limits of our eyes, there are tints perceptible to other animals; and, far beyond the light limits of any animal there are—what should we call them? not tints, because they are no longer visible—undulations of the nature of light, and that would be recognised as light if eyes were only delicate enough to recognise them. The point we are now debating has no reference to the intensity, but the colour, of light. Whereas red light stands at one extreme of Man's visual solar spectrum, and violet light at the other; and whereas, (granting the truth of the undulatory hypothesis,) red light is made up of the largest, and violet light of the smallest waves; the great question is, whether there

may not be ethereal waves smaller than those constituting violet light, unrecognisable as light waves to us, but perhaps recognisable to other animals? again, whether ethereal waves larger than those constituting red light may not similarly cause luminous impressions to eyes properly attuned to their reception?

Great diversity exists as to the power and quality of human eyes; probably too the remark applies to the eyes of lower animals. The qualities of long and short-sightedness need not be taken cognisance of here. Both depend on peculiar optical configuration: hence both are susceptible of every explanation. Wherefore, however, one human eye should intuitively measure proportions better than another, or judge of distances better than another, are questions not so explicable. Perhaps the explanation is even less ocular than sensorial: one dependent on general organization. From consideration of the defect or peculiarity commonly denominated "colour-blindness," there is no such easy escape. Examples of it have been known to co-exist with the highest forms of intelligence. Thus, for example, Dalton, the renowned originator of the atomic theory was colour-blind. Throughout his whole life he never could distinguish between the colour of mud and the colour of vermilion. He consequently spoke of red sealing-wax as "mud coloured." Throughout his whole life he never could have seen as normally-constituted eyes are able to see—and most who read this see—the beautiful play of carnation tints which are so lovely. Use is second nature, the proverb informs us; but the tints of human flesh must have been to Dr. Dalton's eyes extremely ghastly. Still he was by no means insensible to the charm of a pretty face, as a page from his journal testifies. Coming from Manchester to London, chiefly to deliver a course of lectures at the Royal Institution, he recorded, in writing, some opinions, relative to the beauty of London ladies. "Some wear garments loose like sacks," he testifies, "others garments fitting tight; but," continues he, "I looked on the ladies more than at their dresses. *A pretty woman looks pretty however dressed.*" Pretty—forsooth with mud coloured lips, and cheeks blooming with the tint of pale sky—blue, mingled with yellow ochre! Colour-blindness so absolute for particular tints as Dalton's is rare. His case represents one end of the chromatic scale, as certain great colourists like Titian, Turner, and Holman Hunt represent the other. Certain eyes would seem to have the faculty of only discerning objects necessary to be discerned, remaining wholly unconscious in regard to others. The amphibious creature called *Squalus borealis*, otherwise the Greenland shark, seems to be thus circumstanced. "The eyes," says Dr. Scoresby, "are the most extraordinary part of the animal. The pupil is emerald green, the rest of the eye blue. To the posterior edge of the pupil is attached a white vermiform substance, one or two inches in length. Each extremity of it consists of two filaments, but the central part is single. The sailors imagine this shark is blind, because it pays not the least attention to the presence of a man. Indeed, it is so

apparently stupid that it never draws back when a blow is aimed at it with a knife or a lance. The *Squalus borealis* is twelve or fourteen feet in length, and six or eight feet in circumference; in its general form very much resembling a dog fish. It is a terrible enemy to the whale, which it bites and annoys when living, and feeds upon when dead. With its teeth, which are serrated in one jaw, lancet-shaped and denticulated in the other, it scoops out of the whale's body pieces as large as a man's head. Thus it continues scooping and gorging until it can hold no more. The creature is so insensible to pain, that although run through the body with a knife, it will return to its food; and for some hours after the heart is torn out, or its body cut in pieces, the severed part will continue to show signs of life."

When commencing this paper—at the very threshold of our eye-lore—the general proposition was discussed, whether the visual function, to the extent of knowing light from darkness, might not be performed without special organs. That such should be the case does not seem at a first glance at it half so extraordinary as that Nature, after furnishing eyes to an animal, should bury the eyes not merely under the skin, but under and within the flesh. These conditions, nevertheless, are obtained in the *Myxine Glutinosa*. To explain why conditions should be so is more than within our competence. Let it not be inferred that the *Myxine* cannot see, because of the strange place its eyes are set in. A human being can see light from darkness through the closed eyelids; and if the eyelids were five or six times re-duplicated, probably the power of knowing light from darkness would not depart.

And now, as regards the belongings and appurtenances of eyes, a good deal might be stated; many beautiful adaptations and provisions pondered and reflected upon. In human eyes consider the exquisite beauty of working economy! for example, the tears and tear apparatus. The tear-spring establishment is situated in the external corner of either eye. Welling as sources from these glands, tears constantly pass from the exterior to the interior corner of each eye; thence down into the nose, through two little water mains. By day, and awake, this unseen flow of tears is arrested in its course by the often-closing eyelids. Let the edges of each eyelid now be examined. The edges are not flat, but bevelled, it will be perceived; bevelled in such wise that when they approximate a triangular space is formed—a sort of triangular water drain, along which the tear-fluid courses—moistening the lantern-glass of the eye, and keeping it ever bright. That such is the function of tears may be gathered from the fact that in Fishes and Crustacea the lachrymal apparatus is wholly wanting.

Notwithstanding that vision-seeing is so commonly regarded as the ultimate appeal, this sense can be somewhat easily deceived. The success of all the prestidigitator's feats depends on the practical application of this fact. Hands are quicker to do than eyes to perceive; or else it would fare ill with professional thimble-riggers. It is absolutely necessary that

light fall upon the eyes during a certain extension of time, to beget the idea of motion : for which reason it is that rapidly revolving cog-wheels, and other parts of machinery in motion, seem absolutely at rest when viewed by lightning flashes, or artificially-produced electric sparks. Conversely, whenever a luminous impression has been conveyed to the eye, it lingers for a time. A very simple illustration of this truth shall suffice. When many of us were young, some nurse impatient of our cries, and willing to delight us, whirled round a burning stick ; thus begetting to our infant eye the motion of a bright fire circle. A glorious revelation is light, and a glorious privilege that of vision. All that have enjoyed that revelation, and this privilege, would surely miss the deprivation. Nevertheless, the totally blind—even through accident late in life, are perhaps happier, more self helping, than the totally deaf—to leave out of consideration the deaf and dumb. For lack of hearing there is no substitute ; but deprived of the power of vision, it is surprising to notice how well the other senses take on extra duty, and perform their vicarious offices. It is on record, that certain individuals born blind, and to whom sight has been given late in life through an operation, long preferred to judge of the form of objects by the touch. The case of one young man in particular is recorded in physiological books, illustrates this position very strongly. He could not tell a dog from a cat by the eye alone, for a long time after acquiring the sense of sight. One day, hesitating as to the decision, he caught the unknown animal, felt it over and over, then dropping it, said triumphantly, “ There, pussy ; I shall know you again.” This shows that vision like other senses, and perhaps even more than other senses, requires to be educated. Once the question was proposed to Locke, that profound metaphysician, whether a person born blind, yet able by sense of touch to distinguish a cube from a sphere, would on suddenly obtaining his sight be able to distinguish them by the latter sense. The question was answered by Locke in the negative, and that, on grounds plainly metaphysical. Since his time, actual practice has confirmed the truth of his answer.

BOTANY, BIOGRAPHY, AND EMBROIDERY:

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MELANGE.

THERE is an anecdote connected with the internal history of old Paris which necessarily combines in its narration something about Botany, a dip into two rather interesting Biographies, and a word or so, *en passant*, on amateur Embroidery in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

Henri, the fourth of the name, or rather let us say, Henri Quatre, reigned in France. Succeeding, as he did, to a regime, and an epoch which had reduced the kingdom to extreme misery and poverty, and with a view—perhaps a mistaken one—to mitigate these evils, he issued an edict in the early part of his reign, against the wearing of costly apparel, especially stuffs woven of gold and silver thread. In order to render the edict more effectual, it contained a special clause in favour of ladies of the *demi-monde*, who alone were allowed to appear arrayed in the expensive textures of the kinds generally forbidden. This proved a most wholesome and useful rider to the edict; as many a fair rebel would have been found ready enough to break the law in the cause of the toilet, but for the risk of being mistaken for one of the ladies exceptionally privileged by the law itself. Might not some edict of the kind succeed equally well against crinoline? The question is well worthy consideration.

But, to go back to the sixteenth century. With returning prosperity, under the successful government of the new King, the necessity which had suggested the edict against sumptuous dress disappeared. A wholesome re-action took place; and, so far from the fabrication of rich stuffs being any longer discouraged, their manufacture was in every way promoted, as conducive to the extension of commerce. Mulberry trees were for the first time planted in France, for the purpose of naturalizing the silk-worm; the looms of Lyons received Royal patronage and encouragement; and the manufacture of tapestry, of a high class, was established under Government protection. All those rich kinds of Embroidery which had received a temporary check became a fashion that rapidly grew into a rage; and the ladies of the court, especially, nothing loth to aid in this branch of the Royal policy, became inveterate Embroiderers.

Pierre Vallet, an artist of well-known taste in ornamental design, was appointed Director-in-Chief of the Court Embroidery; and there was not a boudoir in the old Louvre,* or the new chateau at Fontainebleau, in which Embroidery frames did not form the principal feature. But at last came a difficulty. Vallet could no longer satisfy the taste of his fair pupils with designs founded on the conventional ornaments in general use, although the *Gout de la Renaissance*, which, in a modified form, still prevailed, afforded extremely rich combinations of both form and colour. The ladies, “with that innate good taste which is peculiar to them,” called for natural flowers.

* Greatly enlarged by Henry IV.

Those of the gardens of the Louvre were soon exhausted. Vallet then went to the fields—the Woods of Monceaux—the Forest of Fontainebleau—and came home laden; but the Marguerite† was old-fashioned—it was a stock feature in the ornamental borders of the Mass-books of their grandmothers—so was the Ancolie, ‡ and so was the Lychnide ¶ All the wild flowers he could get presented, in short, but little novelty. The ladies were difficult to please. In France, fashions are still called *nouveautés*, and *nouveautés* were required by the Embroidery pupils of Monsieur Pierre Vallet, *Directeur-en-Chef de la Broderie des Dames de la Cour*.

On a lucky morning Vallet bethought himself that he had heard of beautiful flowers, from strange countries, cultivated by one Jean Robin and his brother, in the island of Notre Dame; and he fancied that in such a place, moistened on either side by the close proximity of the Seine, beautiful flowers, with the careful culture of science, must grow in great luxuriance. Like Cæsar, he went, he saw, he conquered; he found the garden of Jean Robin and his brother; he found flowers he had never seen—new forms, new combinations of colour met the eye of the artist in every fresh parterre; and, as coming from the Court, he succeeded in obtaining a bouquet, such as had never entered the boudoirs of the Louvre before. It was not without difficulty that, even backed by regal influence, Vallet obtained his prize. Robin was most jealous of his flowers; he would rather, it was said, destroy one of his rarest species than let another have an offshoot, or even a single seed. This feature in Messire Robin's character has been brought against him by rival botanists, with much ill-natured force; but we shall see that it gave way when he thought, as he did sometimes, that it was a public benefit, and not a private favour that he was asked to confer.

Let us imagine the ladies of the Louvre, not satisfied with a mere glimpse of the riches of Robin's garden which they got from the bouquet that Pierre Vallet had taken to them, determining to visit the mine itself from which such treasures could be obtained. The Quays of the Seine were not quite so passable then as now. The New Bridge to the island, the *Pont Neuf* was only just commenced; and the road near it none the better for great blocks of stone strewn about, nor for the deep ruts of the unwieldy wagons that had brought them from the quarry at Mont Martre. However, it was, perhaps, a fine day, and pretty dry underfoot; and so, with the sun shining on their plumes and silks, and on the smart accoutrements of their saucy pages, we will suppose they took the next bridge, the Pont de Notre Dame, and passing under the great grey buttresses, and past that matchless little doorway of the north transept, and past the priests' gardens, at last they arrived at the wall enclosing the garden of the brothers Robin, the spot where the Place Dauphine now stands. It was a grand day for the brothers Robin; but it no doubt had its drawbacks. One can imagine such royally-privileged visitors not keeping very strictly

† Daisy.

‡ Columbine.

¶ Lychnis.

within the bounds of such order as doubtless Messire Robin had established in his little flowery paradise behind the Notre Dame. He had only to turn his head for a moment from some cherished pet, which he was sagaciously watching, under such trying circumstances as the visit of a royal retinue of flower fanciers, to find, on looking round again, that it was gone, and stuck impudently in the cap-band of some impertinent, smirking page. Trying moments, these, for Jean Robin; but then his trials were followed by rewards, as we shall see; and perhaps, after all, the damage done by the visitors from the Louvre may not have been so great. Pierre Vallet, as cicerone, may have had some influence over his party, and kept the pretty fingers of his Embroidery class, and the pickers and stealers of the saucy pages, within due bounds.

No doubt, on the whole, the visage of Jean Robin wore its most smiling and beneficent aspect during that visit; and it was a visage well formed by nature to look smiling and beneficent without much labour on his part. Perhaps it was the habitual culture of flowers, the most smiling things of Nature, that gave to his face those rounded curves and laughing wrinkles, of which any one who has seen the jolly face of the "Producer," in a recent article in the *Cornhill Magazine*, on the fruits and flowers of Covent Garden, may form a tolerably accurate idea. Jean Robin's was just such another right pleasant physiognomy: it was, perhaps, Robin's decided likeness to that sunny face which led me to suspect that Horticulture may have the property of imparting a sort of glow to the general expression, and an unctuous jollity to the human smile. It is not from a mere fancy, that I have described Jean Robin's face as like that of the "Producer;" nor have I obtained my knowledge through any mysterious agency; he has not been "rapped up" for me by Mr. Forster, nor Mr. Hume; I have simply seen the life-like portrait of him drawn by his new acquaintance, but ever afterwards fast friend, Pierre Vallet.

The Court visit to the little garden was, as we shall see, the means of rescuing both the names of Jean Robin and Pierre Vallet from oblivion. Robin, born in 1553, some twelve years before Shakespeare, must have been a merry old bachelor of about 40 at the time of the visit of the Court ladies, which occurred probably about 1593-4. This may be conjectured from the fact, that it led to his eventual promotion a few years afterwards. His first appointment is dated 1597, and was intended as a reward for his introduction of many new plants to France from a journey into Spain, and a subsequent voyage to Guinea. He had also received seeds and bulbs from Canada.

But to return to Vallet:—in compliment to Robin, and also to gratify the taste of his lady patronesses, he made a series of accurate drawings from the rarest flowers in the garden of Jean Robin, which he got engraved by a very excellent hand, forming the series into an elegant volume, and dedicating it to the Queen Marie de Medicis. The plates of this volume are very beautifully coloured, in the authorized copies, and the

frontispiece richly illuminated. It was, indeed, allowed to be the most elegant book ever produced by the French press. The work, however, was not issued to the public till after the appointment of Robin to the curatorship of the "Jardins du Roy," which caused the book, to receive the title of "Les Jardins du Roy, tres Chretien Henri IV. dedié à l Royne."

The frontispiece is formed of a richly-becolumned portico, in all the glory of illuminated colouring. The columns are, gorgeous crimson; the cornices, gold, purple, &c. This is followed by the portraits, facing each other on opposite leaves, of Jean Robin and Pierre Vallet, in the costume of the time (happily not Romanized, as was the artistic fashion of the day). They are evidently very faithful likenesses—that of Robin having enabled me to draw a pen-and-ink portrait of him a few lines back. The dedication to the Queen is a poetical composition, in all the high flown hyperbole of the literary taste of the time, terminating with—

Je vous offre les fleurs, si vous les regardez,
Vous verrez les Lys de France et de Florence,*
Que vous avez unis, et bien contregardez.

This panegyric is succeeded by adulatory poems, both in Latin and Greek, by some of the fashionable scholars of the day.

Then follow some verses addressed to Vallet, as the author of the artistic portion of the work, and *Brodeur Ordinaire de sa Majesté*, describing how he has surpassed Nature, inasmuch as his exquisite flowers will endure for ever, while those of the field and garden quickly perish. Some verses in the form of a sonnet to Robin, follow—but they are not particularly good. Lastly, we have two pages of prose, all the room left, for the description of twelve plants, selected from among those which Robin himself brought to France from Spain, and Guinea. He does not describe the others, as they had most of them been fully described by preceding authors "*Ne voulant pas jeter la faux dans leurs moisson*," as he modestly says.

Most of the flowers which figure as rarities in this celebrated volume, are common enough now, with the exception of a few varieties, the result of cultivation; and three or four distinct species which are still rare. The plates, mostly, consist of such flowers as we read of in descriptions of old-fashioned gardens, such as Asphodels, Fritillaries, and a long list of old-world names. There is the *Narcissus Juncifolius*, or reed-leaved, from a corruption of which we have the name Jonquil. There is also a pretty variety of the small *Narcissus*, very double, which is no longer found in gardens; and a variety of the *Narcissus Poeticus*, with a purplish crimson cup, which he calls the purple-centred *Narcissus*, *Narcissus medio purpurea*. This also is a variety not known in modern gardens. The Double Daffodil which, as is well known, is only double in the central cup, he calls double-cupped, and not double-flowered (*flore pleno*) as in modern nomenclature.

* An allusion to the White Iris, the badge of Florence, commonly called the Florentine Lily, and the common White Lily, or Fleur-de-lis of France.

The Jacobæan Lily (*Amaryllis formosissima*) he calls *Narcissus Indicus flore rubus*—the Red-flowered Indian Narcissus. There is a Lily closely resembling in form the common orange Lily, but of a full rich crimson, which I have never seen, and which would be well worth looking after if it be a lost exotic. It has small bulblets at the axils of the leaves like the Tiger Lily, which however it resembles in no other respect. There are also varieties of the Hepatica, not common now; one a rich violet, and the other a soft cindry dove-colour. It was doubtless his "varieties," raised from seed by his own care and perseverance after many years of culture, like these Hepaticas and his red-centered Narcissus that he was so anxious should not become common, but remain the envied rarities of his own garden. It was these pets alone, most probably, which he guarded with that greedy and jealous watchfulness which obtained for him that name for illiberality, with which his rival botanists injured his reputation; for with his beautiful "sweet-scented Tuberose" which he brought from Provence, he was anything but illiberal—it was not a little beautiful pet montrosity, raised by his own skill, but merely a native plant, well worthy of cultivation; and he hastened to make its cultivation a fashion. He was equally liberal with the seeds and offshoots of that beautiful tree (the so-called) Acacia, which he was the first to raise in Europe, from seeds sent him from America. The introduction of this elegant tree he considered would be a public benefit—not only as regarded its graceful growth and beautiful snow-white flowers, as an ornament to every park and garden—but also for its wood, which he deemed most valuable; but which is still not prized as it might be, though the tree is actually grown in France to some extent for its wood alone, of which there are specimens in the present International Exhibition, both of French and Algerian growth. There is a common prejudice against Acacia wood as being brittle, which arises from the fact that branches are frequently torn off by the wind; but this only occurs at the fork, and so far from being brittle in the main fibre, it is extensively used for large hoops. It also resists exposure to alternate wet and dry without rot more effectually than the oak itself; and is from that well-known property employed for several important purposes in the French arsenals.

So convinced was Robin of the value of the tree which he had introduced, that he gave it his own name for its specific distinction, calling it Acacia Robinia. It was afterwards found that it did not belong to the genus Acacia, the only resemblance to which genus consisted in its elegant pinnate foliage, and was therefore called the Pseud Acacia, and more popularly Fausse Acacia. How long the good Jean Robin enjoyed his honourable post as director of the Jardin du Roy, to which he had been appointed, is unknown; but that his adopted nephew, Vespasian Robin, the son of that brother, who had shared with him all the pleasures and cares of the old garden in the island of Notre Dame, succeeded him in his honourable post is well known. Vespasian was no doubt for some time the associate and assistant

of his uncle, in the charge of the Royal Gardens, as we find Cornuti stating, in his history of the plants of Canada that, thirty-five species of Canadian plants were cultivated by "the Robins," in the Jardin du Roy. One of the favorite Fausse Acacias, was planted in those gardens by Vespasian Robin, in 1634, as shown by the existing records of the annual Works. The tree is still alive, and when measured by Van Hulther, in 1806, the trunk was found to measure seven French feet in circumference. It is possible, (seeing that the date of the planting of the tree is recorded, and still preserved by tradition among the employés of the garden) that Vespasian planted it in memory, and in honour of his uncle, who prided himself so much upon its successful introduction into French gardens. A more certain and permanent honour, has, however, been since awarded to Robin, by the great founder of modern botany, Linnæus. In assigning a scientific name to the genus which had been so incorrectly termed *Accacia*, and subsequently *Pseud Acacia*, he formed the generic name of the tree from that of its introducer—one of the patriarchs of botanical science, calling it *Robinia*, by which all the genus, six in number, are now known. The species in question being named *Robinia pseud acacia*, thus preserving the name eventually conferred upon it by the introducer, as well as the name of the introducer himself. But science percolates more slowly than popular feeling. Robin's incorrect name of his new tree travelled rapidly all over Europe; and still retains its ground while Linnæus', correct, scientific and complimentary designation, is only found in the Catalogues of nurserymen, or in scientific books.

That the younger Robin, the worthy Vespasian, was still alive between 1645 and 1650, and probably at a still later period, we know from a circumstance which links him on to the story of English horticulture. Our own celebrated botanist, Robert Morison, of Aberdeen, born in 1620, and educated as a physician, devoted nearly all his time to the study of plants; but, embroiling himself in the civil war, he was compelled to fly to France, on the failure of the Royal cause. There, as he informs us in his works, he became the botanical pupil of Vespasian Robin, probably about the year 1648, and obtained, through his influence with Gaston, Duke Orleans, the appointment to the office of director to the Royal Gardens at Blois, where he remained till the restoration of Charles II. Morison has been justly accused of unacknowledged plagiarisms, and of self-glorification, to an extent that greatly overshadows his undoubted merits; but he never forgot to express his gratitude, on all fitting occasions, to his protector (while in exile), Gaston of Orleans—and was ever ready to acknowledge his obligations to Vespasian Robin—from whose own lips he doubtless heard many a story about the old garden behind Notre Dame, especially that of the visit of the "Embroiderer-in-Ordinary," with his pupils, which led to the appointment of Jean to the directorship of the *Les Jardins du Roy*, a post in which he was one of the predecessors of the illustrious Buffon.

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

FIFTY years ago, if any one had the hardihood to advocate the propriety of educating the lower orders, the answer was that it would subvert society, make the people discontented; and the old cry of the "constitution in danger" was immediately raised. These were the Conservatives of that day—people who would not see that nothing stands still, that progression is the condition of our being, that the human mind is so constituted that it cannot rest. These Conservatives, with the usual inconsistency of *fixed ideas*, were perfectly willing to enjoy the fruits of new inventions, or improvements; to be surrounded by luxury and refinement, oblivious of the fact, that all their increased enjoyments originated from the progress made, under all disadvantages, by the lower orders. If we look back not so many years, we shall find that almost every great idea for the improved comfort of mankind has emanated from the working classes: men who, born in poverty and ignorance—obliged to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, with only spare minutes snatched at odd moments, for self-education—have, notwithstanding all these drawbacks, been the true benefactors of their fellow men. There are some persons with whom it is impossible to argue; whose reasoning (if such it can be called) carried out to its legitimate results would bring us back to a state of nature, and keep us there, were that possible. The force of progression, however, has pushed them aside to make way for those who know that we *must* advance. But as there is constant action and reaction, from complete indifference we have rushed into the opposite extreme, and began at the end instead of at the beginning. It would appear, however, that some glimmering of the fault has been discovered, and that there is an effort making to begin at the right end. Undoubtedly, notwithstanding the opposition of some prelates and others, the new Educational Minute is a vast improvement on the former one; and it is to be hoped that Parliament will so deal with it, that a really useful measure may be framed. The great fault has been that a very large expenditure has been made with little or no results; and, if we inquire into the system hitherto pursued, we shall be at no loss for the cause of failure. Before a child can run it must stand, and we have set the child running before it was steady on its legs. It is not sufficient to send children to school, unless we apply the kind of instruction which is suitable to them; and if what they are taught is either too superficial, or useless to them hereafter, we do very little good. Children are sent to School at four or five years of age, and in the case of boys they usually leave about eleven or twelve, as they can then earn something. Would it not be better that these pupils should be well grounded in the first elements of learning, than have a smattering of many things. Five or six years are not too much to teach a child to read, spell, and write well, to which may be added the first rules of arithmetic. But if history, geography, and mathematics are added, let us ask if anything like a solid

foundation can be laid? Of what use can it be to a working man to be taught, as a child, historical dates, the names of cities and their populations, rivers, &c.? If, however, he can read and write, he can teach himself all these and much more. A common gardener, who had educated himself to a high point said, it only required to know the twenty-four letters of the alphabet to learn everything else; and we need only refer to Mr. Smiles on "Self-help," to assure ourselves of this great truth. There is much taught in our Schools which is utterly useless; and what is useless is mischievous, inasmuch as it takes up the time which should be devoted to things of value. When we look around we shall see that the great majority of the lower orders will never be anything more than labourers; and if among them any great spirit arises, he will be sure to make his way. It is the natural condition of intellect to rise. But we have to do with the multitude; and, in all our arrangements for Education, we must address ourselves to the future well-being of the majority. There is, indeed, among all classes a disposition to *cram*, and any one attending the examination of a village school cannot but feel the absurdity of the questions put. Subjects are learned by rote, to be forgotten as soon as the examinations are over; and the manner in which the children read shows how utterly inefficient the teaching has been. According to the system at present followed, it is impossible for an ordinary child to read decently; they have no time to learn. There is a class, and each child has to read a sentence; this is repeated in a nasal sing-song tone, without any inflection of voice or proper emphasis; when the book is passed to the last child, it comes back to the first, until the lesson is over. How can there be any interest or emulation? even the sense must be lost. Children attend school from nine in the morning till twelve, and they return again at two till four. These are too many hours for any child to be sitting still, poring over lessons: three hours a day is as much as a child can apply, allowing for intervals; for it cannot be supposed that three hours' continuous study can be good for any child under ten years old. If a different system were established, there cannot be a doubt that more real learning might be imparted, and a great deal of practical information acquired beside. Suppose reading, writing, and arithmetic were only taught to children up to ten years old, all the day need not be spent in these; and if arrangements were made to occupy the children, in succession, in some active employment, by which their intellects might be sharpened and kept alive, there can be no doubt that a vast improvement would be apparent. The time given to teaching a child might be graduated according to age: those of five years old should, of course, be kept only a few minutes at a time, and during the intervals there are many occupations which would amuse while instructing them. A few black boards and pieces of chalk for some; a pair of scissors and some paste-board for others; working in a garden may supply healthy occupation to many; leaping, running, hopping, all should be encouraged; and, while

educating the mind, we should endeavour to train the body to healthy active movements. Nothing can be more heavy and brutish than our village children, as a rule or, perhaps we should say village youths. There are few villages where a good piece of ground is available for manly sport; yet how necessary it is. Cricket, quoits, running, leaping, wrestling, single-stick, are all games which develope muscle, render men active, and bring forth adroitness. We have of late years neglected all manly sports; but it is a fatal mistake to imagine that we can educate the brain at the expense of the body. It is extraordinary what little attention is generally paid to the development of the *animal*; and it is indeed lamentable, the utter ignorance shown as to the construction and powers of the brain. We do not scruple to work that delicate organization, and to keep it in a continual state of exhaustion, while we take rest for our weary limbs. A growing child requires a large amount of idleness, in order to secure to the brain that proper quantity of nourishment which it absolutely requires for its healthy use: by idleness it is not meant that the habits of a child should be slothful or self-indulgent; there are many things fit for children to do, which involve no unnecessary toil for the brain. While a child is being taught, it should doubtless attend thoroughly, and therefore, no child should learn long at a time; but the habit of throwing the whole mind into whatever we do cannot be inculcated too early, and it is only in a school that a village child can acquire such a habit. A great deal is thought of the mode of constructing Schools; but it appears to be a somewhat mistaken notion that Schools are to be so very superior to cottages. While children are born in places little above pigsties, live on stones and die on them, it does seem almost absurd to board the floors of Schools. A very short trial will prove that this kind of refinement is useless. Wooden floors cannot be kept clean and dry; the heavy hob-nailed shoes which boys wear soon roughens wood, and in winter they must have muddy boots. Bricks properly made, covered perhaps in winter with strong coarse cocoa-nut matting, would doubtlessly form a far better and more healthy flooring than boards, both for boys and girls. Very little attention is paid to ventilation, and this is a serious consideration, and unless some means are devised to prevent shutting up outlets, no School-room will be healthy; the best mean are height, for no schoolmaster or mistress can in that case render the room too close, which many do when windows are the only method by which ventilation is carried on. Attached to all Schools there should be a large space of ground, part for recreation and part as garden, and the children should be taught to cultivate it; while doing this they would learn much that will be useful to them hereafter, and they will acquire habits of industry and observation; nor would it be difficult to lead the thoughts of a child from "Nature up to Nature's God." Nothing interests a child so much as observing how things grow; and by giving it a direct interest in the work, a degree of emulation and love for the thing itself will be created, that would go very far to humanise the future man. If a

child is taught to cultivate vegetables, a portion might be allowed to be taken home, and the same with the flowers; and there is no reason why girls should not have such an occupation as well as boys. For boys beyond eleven or twelve there should be evening school, particularly in winter; for then they would not be idling about the village. In summer, if a good recreation ground were provided, the evening school might be discontinued, or at any rate held less often; and this would in no way really interfere with the progress of Education, that would be going on all the same, only under a different condition. There are always in villages some steady men who would undertake to keep order; and if the Squire, or Clergyman, or Nobleman, as the case might be, were to attend occasionally at these games, a great amount of kind feeling would be brought about, and a degree of refinement imparted, tending to future good. Some little distinction might be awarded to the most skilful, another to the most orderly—not involving a money payment, but something in the nature of a mark of merit; a red ribbon, for instance, for skill or activity, and a blue for correct behaviour, and this only to be worn on the ground. These appear trivialities, but it is surprising what an effect they have on men. Do we not see men rush into any kind of danger to be rewarded by a cross or medal, and is not that reward considered sufficient? We have spent twenty-five years in the experiment of educating the lower classes; we have paid large sums, and what is the result? Let us go among the country labourers, and what do we find? How many can read—how many write—how many make up a simple account? And in all these years, had the teaching been of the right sort, we might have expected some results. In towns it has been better, but then town populations have always been in advance of the country; but it is questionable if towns owe much to National Education. There are other and more powerful incentives to Education in towns.

The system of cramming pervades all classes, and we shall discover to our cost, that while we have been overcharging the mind, we have quite neglected the body; and we may perhaps see a set of puny, delicate, useless beings, in the place of fine, robust, stalwart men, who were the pride of our country. The teaching men give themselves is beyond all doubt more efficient than any which is imparted to them in Schools; and most of our greatest men in arts and sciences had no teaching at all: practical knowledge is beyond mere theory: in fact, the most useful theorists have been to a great degree practical, but they have not had time for both. The mere theorist is, and must be, a very useless person; and the mere practical man is generally wanting in liberality, in invention, and is too narrow-minded to take advantage of any novelty which may be presented to him. Therefore it is that the self-taught man who has a theory can test it by practice, and if he perseveres to the end will succeed. There are some things which no Schools can teach, unless it be our Public Schools, where a great degree of liberty and self-government

is practised ; but in National Schools, where children only attend during some hours in the day, the great aim and object should be to ground them well, provide some means of developing their bodies, and send them forth with habits which will give them the power of teaching themselves afterwards, and of directing their minds to higher thoughts than the gratification of mere animal instincts.

With regard to girls, the same rules may apply, modified of course to suit their sex, and future condition. Whatever may be the cause, it is unquestionable that no Charity School has produced a good servant. It is a common complaint with persons who engage young women from these establishments, that they never turn out fit for anything. They can neither scrub nor clean ; they do not know any of the duties they are engaged to perform, and they are not willing to learn. Some reason there must be for it. Either they are not well taught, or the superintendence is so constant, that they never acquire the habit of self dependence ; so, that whenever they are sent abroad into the world, they find themselves out of their element ; or they have not been taught the *duty* of labour. In short, it is impossible to suppose that their bringing up can be of the right kind. There is an appearance of listlessness, a dawdling gait, and want of energy, which must be bred in the atmosphere of a Charity School. In these places you have no noise, no children's voices ; nothing to remind you of the hearty enjoyments of infancy ; but all is orderly and quiet ; the girls go about silently, and without life : there is a sort of routine, which may appear very admirable to a casual visitor ; but to one who looks deeper, is painful and full of serious thought. It must be this oppressive existence that tells upon the female portion of the inmates and unfits them for the active duties of life. This is not the case with respectable, well-to-do working men's daughters who go out ; they have many defects it is true ; but they have *life*, and in numberless instances make good servants.

With regard to the girls brought up in National Schools, the same faulty training obtains with them, as with the boys. When they leave they can scarcely read, or write, and certainly not spell, and few can cast up a simple sum. They have no knowledge of needle-work, cannot cut out or even mend, and darning stockings is an unknown science. But at an examination, a few who are somewhat advanced, will write some lines on a slate, in a fair round hand, and cast up a sum, and the mistress will state that they are prepared to answer questions in history, or geography ! besides names of cities, &c., &c. No needle-work is ever displayed ; no questions are asked them on any subject which would be useful to them,—how, for instance, to boil a potatoe, or make a pie, or any other domestic duty : and for one very sufficient reason : the examiner being a gentleman, is not supposed himself to know any of these things, and it does not occur to the ladies who take an interest in the School, to pay the smallest attention to matters which are notwithstanding, all important to

the girls themselves. It cannot be good for children of any age or sex, to remain sitting or standing for some hours, and the younger a child is, the more injurious it is; therefore, a system should be established which would combine instruction with health and *happiness*, a great ingredient in the bodily and mental welfare of human beings. Girls may not require so much strong exercise as boys—we do not want to develop their physical forces to such a degree; but it is a very well-known fact that girls brought up to a sedentary life, suffer from painful, and indeed fatal disorders, which embitter their whole existence, rendering them unfit for the life they must come to, whether as servants, or wives, and mothers. Tight lacing is also added to these sources of disease, and it is no wonder that so many die from consumption. If we add needle-work, to reading, writing, and arithmetic, from five to twelve years, surely that is quite enough to teach any girl. The Germans have an excellent plan with very young children—they make them knit for a quarter of an hour every day; this gives them the habit of application, and of acquiring the power of keeping still, and it cannot injure their health.

The same system might be adapted with girls, as with boys. A place should be set apart for recreation during the intervals of the lessons, and the very young might have some amusing employment in the School room; they might be taught a few letters at a time, and engaged in picking them out of a heap piled up before them—half a dozen infants might do this together: in this way, they would learn their letters without that amount of suffering to which they are most assuredly exposed from learning by book. Children at a more advanced age might have other occupations suited to them, to relieve the tedium of lessons, and they would at the same time be learning something. Let us ask what can be the use of maps hung round the room? Do any of these girls look at a map afterwards; or do they understand in the least the formation of the globe they live upon? In after life, if they were asked what the earth was like, they would tell you they thought it a flat surface, and that *Heaven* was a sort of basin, with the rim resting on the earth! It would be very easy to teach a child what the earth's form is, and that it travels through space, and if their attention were called to the moon, they would see it at once, and this is all the astronomy which is needful for them. All of this they will be able to retain; and, as it is a fact, it will always be useful to them. In those places where there is a residence for a mistress, the elements of domestic economy might be taught, and a certain amount of cooking taught, otherwise it is not very clear how a girl will learn such things; but if their minds were in some degree prepared for the reception of such teaching, it would undoubtedly be attended with beneficial results. In all our plans of Education, too little attention is paid to the workings of Nature; and we are apt to force children into a certain routine without considering how far it may accord with the working of the mind, and this is the case in most schools of whatever class: young children have but small reasoning

powers; they *feel*, but cannot express these feelings, except by smiles or tears; but to render an account would be impossible for them, and yet they are taught as if their reason were developed. No child can see the utility of study, nor can it be made to understand why it is good for them to learn; and as long as the chief mode of inducement is in coercion, we cannot expect satisfactory results. The first thing is to make a child pleased with being taught, interested in the subject; this may be done in many ways, and if the desire to learn is once instilled, all the rest is easy. But to do this efficiently we must have masters and mistresses who love children and love the work; *who do not use the cane*, and who inspire their pupils with confidence. Cross teachers will never do good, and no person who does not possess a patient temper should be permitted to teach. There should be some means by which children could be allowed to make complaints, and these complaints ought to be attended to; and no teacher ought to be permitted to use a cane. Of course, causes for punishment will arise, and faults must be corrected; but it is more than doubtful if the cane or birch does not inflict far greater injury on the character of a child than any good it may do. Some children are exceedingly stupid and slow to learn; will a blow quicken their intellects? Others are petulant, some idle, many obstinate; but there are very few indeed on whom the infliction of corporal punishment will have a beneficial effect, especially in the matter of learning. A cane is an irresistible temptation in the hands of a teacher; it is less troublesome, takes up less time than other modes of correction, and it is used too often in anger. It breeds hatred and fear in the child; hardens some, crows many, and in all cases creates a rooted dislike to learning. A plan of superintendence would be devised, which would be attended with very good results. Unquestionably for girls' Schools a lady examiner would be preferable to a gentleman, and there could be no difficulty in finding women fully qualified to undertake the task. There are few places where well-educated women are not to be found who would be glad of the employment; and for a very moderate remuneration would give a large portion of their time to the superintendence of girls' Schools. Some such check there should be, for schoolmistresses have too much in their power; and in the discipline of a school they are not subjected to efficient supervision. As long as the girls look clean and keep quiet during the periodical examinations; and—being *crammed* for these exhibitions, say off their tasks glibly, and generally by rote, nothing more is required; and whatever harshness or injustice may be practised, it is never inquired into. A gentleman must take for granted a great deal in examining girls; and everything connected with female occupations and duties must be, as a rule, unknown to him. Not so with a woman; and, here it will not be superfluous to mention the fact, that plain needle-work is sadly neglected in schools generally. When reading and writing were not thought necessary for children, plain needle-work was attended to; but now not one girl in twenty, or even more, can handle her

needle with dexterity; indeed, too many cannot even sew decently. What is the consequence?—most of their earnings are spent in getting their clothes made for them, and they can never be neat because they cannot repair their old dresses, &c.; and as servants they are, in this respect, utterly useless. Surely it is more necessary for a girl to learn to work well with her needle, cut out and make clothing, than to have a smattering of history and geography; and no man can understand these matters. If children acquire industrious habits they certainly do improve their parents; for it is a well ascertained fact that many parents have been reformed by having sent their children to Schools where order and regularity and decency have prevailed. There are fewer sedentary occupations for boys, still there are some. In Holland and some parts of Germany it is the practice of men during the winter, to employ themselves in carving with a common knife, pieces of wood into the shape of animals, cottages, trees, birds, and so forth, and these they sell. Thousands of these toys come over to this country; some of the objects are really wonderfully executed, considering the materials, tools and opportunities, which the cottagers have. It must be remembered that some taste is necessary; considerable observation to produce a likeness, and great dexterity in the use of a very common implement are all essential; and it would be ridiculous to suppose that *naturally*, the Dutch boor or the German peasant is either more observant, or of quicker intellect than Englishmen. But there is no encouragement given to them; no habits of observing Nature inculcated; nor any taste for such things cultivated. In a School during moments of relaxation, on rainy days, such occupations might be taught; and it will be found that there are many young boys who have great aptitude, and what a resource it would be to the man to keep him from the public house! What is there to occupy the leisure of either boys or men at present? The lads idle their time away in the road, and men frequent the alehouse.

Where what are called Literary Institutes are established, there can be no question that the inhabitants, at least the male portion, are far superior to the common run of villagers; they read and are more sober, consequently are better off, and many form small libraries by the purchase of books which are periodically sold out of the Institutes. The manners of these men are milder and more polished; their houses are more decent, and their families all evince a higher tone. If boys were taught thoroughly the first principles of learning, very little higher instruction would be necessary; for in doing this a key is given them which will unlock all the treasures of art or science, and there is no bar to the highest advancement. If we make a move in the right direction with regard to the Education of boys, let us not be behindhand with that of females. Let us endeavour to raise them in the social scale, by giving them such teaching as will not be either useless or forgotten; by inculcating habits of order, cleanliness and industry, so that they may become fit mates for a higher class of men; they will then have their homes in better order, and, it may be, induce landlords to give

them better habitations, for this is the great want : and then, instead of an ignorant brutish population in our rural villages, we shall see industrious, orderly, and sober men and women, not discontented with work, but able to spend their leisure time in rational and instructive occupations ; moral in their conduct and cheerful in their manners. These are no Utopian ideas, but consequences which will naturally flow from improvement of the mind.

It may not be improper here to advert to the Education of the higher classes, inasmuch as it must keep pace with every improvement effected among the working people. Of late there appears to be a desire to adopt foreign systems, without a due consideration of the difference of climate, habits, manners, or political institutions between ourselves and other countries ; and, in many private establishments, a practice of constant supervision obtains, which is injurious in various ways. It is on a junior master that the task of supervision in play-hours is imposed. It lowers him in his own esteem, and it destroys any feelings of kindness or respect in the boys towards him, as they very justly and naturally look upon him as a sort of spy, and this he feels himself to be. There can be no real freedom among the pupils, if they have a master's eye constantly upon them ; they feel they are not trusted, and hence must arise a disposition to deceive, which cannot fail to produce the worst consequences. Besides these evils, by such a system we destroy that principle of self-dependence which has been the mainspring of all our greatness—that power of self-government and obedience to *law* which will be found wherever Englishmen congregate. In our Public Schools we cannot establish the system of continual supervision ; the numbers are too great, and most fortunately it is so. Dr. Arnold tried something of the sort by having monitors, but many very sad instances of boy-tyranny, and one fatal case resulted. To put absolute power into the hands of a boy, is nearly as bad as giving free scope to a maniac. At fifteen or sixteen a boy has all the passions of a man, with the inconsiderateness of a child ; he has not acquired self-control, and his only thought is coercion. But where boys are allowed perfect freedom there is a controlling power in public opinion, which keeps even the most violent in order, and instils a fine, generous, manly disposition to protect the weak against the strong. It may very well be doubted if the practice of fagging is beneficial ; it has been much modified of late years, still it exposes a young child to great wrong, and many dispositions must be injured by it. There are no greater tyrants than slaves, and the most hard and cruel men have generally been fagged by overbearing boys, and a fag is a slave ; besides it encourages all sorts of malpractices, lying, and deceit, and it often exposes a young boy to punishment for neglecting lessons which he is not allowed time to learn. It cannot be necessary for a gentleman to perform menial offices for any one ; let him wait upon himself, clean his own shoes, and brush his own clothes, but not do this for a master. With this exception, the system of our Public Schools is highly conducive to the development of great

qualities; and it is very desirable that Private Schools should copy as far as possible this beneficial rule. Foreigners are brought up in constant subjection, and young men of seventeen and eighteen are treated more like children than even children are in England. What do we find to be the consequence? If left to their own resources, do we see them capable of self-dependence—have they the smallest idea of self-government? in difficulty and danger, are they not generally found differing in opinion, fighting among themselves who should be master? never able to combine under one head. It is said that French soldiers are more intelligent than ours, for the reason that they are permitted to shift for themselves; but if an English soldier be thrown upon his own resources, he is found equally intelligent—equally active. It has been too much the practice to consider him a machine and to treat him as one. Why should sailors be more handy than soldiers—better able to turn everything to account? Because they are left in a great measure free to exercise their intellect; because they are more thoroughly imbued with the feeling of self-dependence, and moreover are freer in their limbs. In Private Schools too little attention is paid to physical development, and too much time is taken up in learning. It is not the amount of teaching a child receives, but what he has retained that will do him good.

There can be no sort of doubt of the efficacy of competitive examinations, if the system established answered the end proposed; but we do too much: we are not satisfied with what a young man of eighteen or nineteen can really know; we force him out of season, and so spoil him for really useful acquirements. It cannot be necessary for a lad to know exactly when certain persons were born; what is the position of insignificant towns or rivers. These do not prove a true knowledge of history, or geography, even if correctly answered. If the grand landmarks of history are known, the great events which have led to changes in the political existence of countries, the discoveries made, and some of the principal persons who have been instrumental in the progress of peoples, are well remembered, more real knowledge would be taken into the mind than all the "coaching" and cramming undergone at the present time can effect. Geography will go hand-in-hand with this kind of history. A young man going up for examination for the Army, for instance, works very hard for a short time, and fills his head with a certain amount of knowledge, to enable him to pass: after doing so, he throws away his books, and does nothing more to improve himself till he comes up for promotion. The subjects he is examined upon in the first instance do not generally bear upon the service he wishes to enter; they are not tests of study—indeed, it is impossible they can be, as to be really acquainted with the subjects upon which he is questioned would take almost a life to acquire. It would be better to trust to the general improvement in Education which has undoubtedly taken place. That a lad entering the Army or Navy should write his own language correctly is absolutely necessary; a thorough

acquaintance with a certain amount of mathematics is requisite; a knowledge of Latin, as also is a general knowledge of geography: the ability, at any rate, of translating a foreign language is most desirable; but there are many questions to answer which are not necessary, and which have no bearing at all upon the profession for which a boy competes. It is, as has been said before, not what a child learns at School, but what he is able to learn hereafter, by being well grounded at School, that will be of use to him. A young man may be stuffed with scientific knowledge, and yet turn out a useless prig; and the present system of over-educating will bring us into the predicament of having "too many cooks"—all will be masters. It is a well-known fact, that engineer officers cannot construct an ordinary barrack without making egregious mistakes; precisely because they have too much theoretical learning, and very little practical. They are so wonderfully scientific that they cannot do common things. A boy who has been well grounded at School, and has had free scope for his ingenuity, is more likely to become an efficient officer than the most strictly taught and trained youth whose mind has been kept continually fixed on theory. It would be very desirable in all Government establishments—and in these it would be possible—to have workshops, so that the students might acquire a practical knowledge of certain handicrafts, so useful to the soldier or sailor. Why should they not learn carpentering, joining, turning, &c., or even to handle a trowel? No practical knowledge comes amiss to any man; and as many boys have a great turn for such occupations, by affording them the means of following their taste, an immense amount of evil might be prevented; many idle hours spent in foolish, and often immoral, pursuits, would be occupied in interesting and most useful acquirements. What mechanical skill might not these young men attain to? And, moreover, their ingenuity might be turned to good account in repairing and fitting all sorts of things—book-cases, locks, shelves; and many would turn their talents to adornment, such as carving, and even decorating. No man can exactly foresee his future, none can know what may be in store, and it would be well to be prepared. Besides, to know when work is well done, we should have some acquaintance with it; and in giving orders, by showing our own knowledge, we go far to ensure the best execution. In war, more particularly, soldiers and sailors are exposed to many vicissitudes, and the power of handling tools and constructing would save much suffering. There is an opinion abroad that Englishmen are less able to make themselves comfortable in campaigning than men of other countries, and that our officers are less highly educated. This we believe to be a fallacy; but if it were so, we do not go the right way to render them superior. Mere book learning will never make an active, practical man. The hard work we give young heads only disgusts them, and when the ordeal is passed, the hated book is thrown aside; whereas if we teach them to put in practice what they learn, they never can forget it. For a soldier or sailor everything pertaining to his future

duties should be taught. Sailors do learn them from the moment they go on board ship; but soldiers are not taught anything of the sort. For instance, a Cavalry candidate might learn to dress a horse, shoe him—nay, make shoes; he might learn how to pack the private's kit, and much other useful knowledge could be taught him; the same for the Infantry, modified by the difference of the service—even some amount of cooking would not be amiss, and these occupations might be made to afford amusement, if we were to choose the right teachers, and put them in the right places. Everything that tends to make men, and women also self-reliant must be beneficial. No *work* should be despised, no one consider himself *above* being useful. A fondness for handicraft has often been of great service, and has lightened many a heavy and sorrowful hour; nay, some men have been obliged to go back to it after hard mental exertion. In Private Schools even, a good deal might be effected, when the master felt any desire for it; as by a small subscription among the pupils, all necessary tools could be procured, some rule established to pay for losses or repairs, a fund created for the purpose, and boys would be very willing to pay their small subscription for such an object. Voltaire said that all Englishmen were born sailors, and it would be no less true to say that most boys are born carpenters.

At the present time, a large number of young men of all ranks, rather than pass their lives in Government offices upon a miserable pittance, seek their fortunes in our Colonies, and well for them that there is that spirit of enterprise. What an immense advantage it would be to them, if while they are at School they could learn some handicrafts; and indeed without any great knowledge of such things, an intelligent young man who may perhaps at home, have used tools is in a far better position than one who has had no practice. How often we read of complaints, in accounts from our Colonies, of persons emigrating who cannot put their hand to labour, clerks, University men, and so forth. They are reduced often to menial offices from ignorance of the use of implements of labour. Men of education possessing such knowledge would be of untold benefit to Colonies—they would bring good manners; a certain refinement into societies which have a natural tendency to fall back from civilization, consequent upon the prevalence of *roughs* among their number; and it is only too true, that our men of education if they are compelled by want to descend in the scale, become at last lost among the uncultivated; whereas, had they been capable of undertaking any occupation requiring handicraft, there is no reason why they should not still keep all their mental superiority, and so form a kind of example, which would not be lost upon their more humble companions. Besides, it cannot be denied, that whatever a well-educated man does, is, as a rule, better done than by an ignorant one. A man of education will know "the reason why," and does not work by rule of thumb. He is able to modify his operations to circumstances; he can apply his mind to his work, and will not be content to plod on in the old

track, regardless of surrounding differences in the improvements which are continually offering themselves to his notice. These and many other advantages would be certain to follow upon the early acquirement of different handicrafts at school. In old countries the division of labour is a necessity ; in the new it is not so ; for where numbers are few in comparison to land, every man should, to a certain point, be self-sustaining.

Before concluding, let us throw a glance over the present state of Education in the higher Classes of Female Schools. It is really extraordinary the facility with which persons utterly unfit for the charge, do manage to establish themselves, and obtain pupils of many ranks. No examination—no certificate of ability, and conduct, is necessary. A person with a few hundred pounds, sets up on her own account, or is joined by another, and by degrees a School is formed—"A genteel Ladies' Academy." An ordinary house suffices ; young girls are packed in rooms, with no means of privacy, no provision for cleanliness ; they are often insufficiently fed, and never have proper exercise. They are confided to the care of teachers, whose morals are often anything but satisfactory, and there is constant jealousy, and bickering. The mistress always pays more attention, is more indulgent in proportion as the parents of the pupils are rich. The Education in these places is almost nugatory ; and there are influences at work, that destroy all morality, all purity in the young creatures consigned to such hands. The grand point is to be *genteel*. Stiff stays are thought requisite to produce a *good carriage* : no freedom is permitted, nothing natural is allowed, and when a girl returns home "finished," what has she learnt? Frequently not her own language, certainly not that of any other country. Of drawing, or music, only a smattering ; of any real knowledge not an atom. But on the other hand, she has learnt falsehood, meanness of every kind, selfishness, and a love of dress ; no useful occupation has been given her. She can perhaps embroider, work worsted ; but as to sewing she knows nothing of it. She cannot make a dress, nor do one useful thing. If anyone will give themselves the trouble of watching a young Ladies' School, out for a walk in the parks or neighbourhood of London, they would see cause indeed for sadness in the behaviour of these young creatures. If the School is in the neighbourhood of a Boy's School, what intrigues are carried on through the services of teachers ; correspondence is established, and although nothing absolutely criminal may take place, still the mind is polluted, all purity destroyed. Norwood is a frequent resort of Girls' Schools. The mistress and one or two teachers will be there, and they will be escorted by a music or dancing master. If we observe these we shall discover what a bone of contention these men are, what little arts are played off to appropriate their attention and yet what endeavours at concealment are practised ! We shall see certain signals of understanding pass between the master and one or even more of the pupils ; a sly look or squeeze of the hand—perhaps, if out of sight of the mistress,

a little romping : all sad evidences of the degradation to which poor girls are brought, by having improper persons to take charge of them. Do not all these exercise a fatal influence over young minds? Can it be possible that purity should exist under such circumstances? It is no doubt true that on returning home a rather better standard is attained ; still, the unholy contact must to a great extent debase ; and if we are careful to provide moral teachers for the Labouring Classes, could we not establish some sort of plan by which unfit persons should be debarred from bringing up our daughters, in the higher grades of society? Home education for girls is best when possible, public education for boys ; but inasmuch as we look for modesty and innocence in females, so should we endeavour to secure these qualities by some sort of supervision over Girls' Schools. Without interfering with private enterprise, it is the undoubted duty of the State to protect the people ; and it cannot be called centralising the power of Government if a system of examination were established, and no person allowed to set up schools who had not passed, and obtained a satisfactory diploma. A man is not permitted to practice surgery unless he has fulfilled these conditions. Should we be more tender of the body than of the mind? It is to early training, whether for good or evil, that we must look for the future conduct in life of men and women. That so many women do escape the baneful influences and examples of Schools, is really a proof of the *good* instead of *evil* inherent in human nature, but it is no reason for perpetuating a bad system. In many instances parents cannot very well educate their daughters at home ; but also there can be no doubt that a false ambition and vanity actuate parents in sending their daughters to school, fancying that they will become what is called "accomplished," which really means making them useless as members of society, and not attaining the desired end ; inasmuch as they do not learn, and cannot put in practice, these very accomplishments to which so much is sacrificed. It is not intended here to cry down refined pursuits in any class of society. Music is not a vain acquirement ; it tends to enliven home, and it is a means of exercising one of God's choicest gifts—a fine voice. Drawing is eminently conducive to improvement ; the study of languages also. In short, there is nothing in the shape of knowledge which should be neglected ; and we would even class dancing as a useful, healthy, and innocent recreation most natural to the young. All occupations which tend to make home happy must be good, and in families there is nothing more conducive to enliven the domestic circle than music ; it is a pity that it is not more cultivated among men. Where attempts have been made to form village bands, most excellent results have been produced ; men who love music, and desire to attain proficiency on any instrument, will be more likely to be sober and well conducted than the idle dullard who, knowing nothing, and having no pursuit, saunters to the public house to get rid of time, and comes home, perhaps to beat his wife. But, while we wish that our children should be

accomplished, we should also desire them to be virtuous and useful; there is time for all things; but it is absurd to make some children study that for which they have no aptitude; and make them spend hours, days, and years over what they can never learn well, and what they are sure to neglect as soon as the opportunity permits. The system in vogue at Girls' Schools is faulty from the first:—the persons are often unfit for the office; the *training* is worse than useless, for it is vicious, and the *teaching* is generally ineffective.

In France, we believe that no person may establish a School without having undergone an examination and received a diploma, and produced certificates of conduct; and there is no question that Girls' Schools are better conducted in France than in England. The pupils are not exposed to the same vicious influences; more care is taken in placing about them teachers of good moral conduct; and they cannot form improper acquaintances, nor intrigue with boys belonging to neighbouring Schools. It would not be difficult to establish a system of licencing; so that nobody could set up an educational establishment without producing testimonials of character, and undergoing an examination of fitness for the undertaking. We examine now for every vocation all young men entering life, why should we not make those who undertake the Education of Females undergo a similar ordeal? Such a course would tend most materially to the improvement of young women, and it would be a bar to all who only wished to make a School an object of mere profit, as well as to many who are unfit for the office by reason of their lax morals and gross ignorance. While so much attention is being paid to National Schools, while the improvement of the lower classes is such an object of interest, surely we should not neglect the culture, both intellectual and moral, of those classes which are naturally looked up to by the poorer people for an example of all that is right; and we should undoubtedly find that, by raising the training of women to a higher standard, we shall do more to refine and improve the people than by any other means we could adopt.

THE DISINHERITED;

A TALE OF MEXICAN LIFE AND ADVENTURE.

CHAP. XII.

A CONVERSATION BY NIGHT.

THE Major-domo's fainting fit, caused rather by the moral struggle he had sustained than by the physical fatigue he had endured, was not of any duration: when he re-opened his eyes, he was alone on the top of the hill. He threw off the furs and blankets laid over him, to protect him, doubtless, from the icy-cold of the night, and looked curiously around him. The tempest was still raging, but it had lost a great deal of its violence. The rain had ceased: the deep blue sky was gradually becoming studded with twinkling stars, which shed an uncertain light, and gave the landscape an aspect of strange and desolate wildness. The wind blew furiously, and formed waves on the seething top of the waters, which had now almost risen to the spot where the Major-domo lay. A few yards from its master, his horse was quietly grazing; it was eating the young tree shoots, and the tall close grass that covered the ground like a thick carpet of verdure. Another horse was browsing close by.

"Good!" Paredes muttered to himself, "my saviour has not gone away; I hope he is not far off, and that I shall see him soon. Where can he be? At his own business, of course, though I cannot guess the nature of his occupation at such a moment. Well, the best plan will be to wait for him."

The Mexican had scarce ended this soliloquy, ere a shadow stood out in the gloom, and the man, of whom he was speaking, appeared.

"Ah, ah!" he said, gaily, "you are all right again, I see: all the better, I would sooner have you in that position than the one you were in just now."

"Thanks," the Major-domo cordially answered. "I fancy I must have looked very pitiable, stretched out like a half-throttled *novillo*. Is it not disgraceful for a strong man to faint like a child or a feeble woman?"

"Not the least in the world, *companero*," the other said, frankly. "Accident decreed that I should be for a long time the involuntary witness of the contest you waged, though it was impossible to help you, and *Viva Dios*, I declare that you are a tough combatant: you sustained the shock bravely, and many others in your place—I the first, perhaps—would not have got out of the scrape so well."

This answer completely broke the ice, and made the two men comparatively friends at once.

"I confess," Paredes remarked, as he offered his hand to his new

friend, "that for a moment I believed myself lost, and had it not been for you, I should have been so."

"Nonsense," the other replied, as he pressed the hand offered him. "You owe me nothing, for, by Jove, you saved yourself all alone. But let us not dwell on this point any longer. Although we are in relative safety, as the water cannot reach us here, our position is not the most agreeable; and I fancy it would be the best for us to try and get out of it as quickly as possible."

"That is my opinion, too; but, unluckily, the means at our disposal are very limited."

"Perhaps so: at any rate, with your consent, we will hold an Indian council."

"That is the best thing we can do at this moment. However," he added, as he looked up to the sky, "day will not break for three hours."

"We have time before us, in that case."

During this short conversation, the storm had entirely ceased, and the wind only blew in gusts.

"Before all," the Major-domo said, "let us light a fire; now that the tempest has ceased, the wild beasts, whose instinct is infallible, will seek the shelter of this hill, swarm round us, and, if we do not take care, carry our position by assault."

"Excellently argued; I see that you are a hunter."

"I was one for some time," Paredes replied, with a sigh of regret, "but now it is all over; my adventures in the desert are ended."

"I pity you sincerely," the stranger said, with an accent of sincerity; "for no existence is comparable with it."

"The finest years of my life were those I spent in the desert."

While conversing thus, the two men had dug a hole with their machetes at the foot of an enormous larch tree, to act as a hearth. In this hole they piled up all the resinous wood they were able to procure, lit it with some gunpowder rolled up in leaves, and in a few minutes a long jet of flame sprang up and joyously ascended to the sky, while the wood crackled and emitted millions of sparks. Fire has an immense influence upon the human mind; among other benefits, it has the faculty of restoring joy and hope; and while warming a man with its reviving heat, it often makes him forget perils incurred and fatigues endured. The two men, who were as wet as if they had been in a river, dried themselves for a considerable time, enjoying the pleasing sensations which the heat made them experience, in proportion as it penetrated into the pores, causing the blood to circulate with greater vivacity, and restoring elasticity to their benumbed limbs. It was the Major-domo who was the first to resume the conversation.

"*Viva Dios!*" he said, shaking himself joyously; "I am now quite a different man. What a fine thing a fire is, when you are cold. Suppose we make use of it, comrade?"

"Do so, pray," the stranger replied, with a laugh; "but in what way?"

"Oh, that is very easy, you shall see. Are you not hungry?"

"*Carai*, it is fourteen hours since I have eaten; but unluckily I have no provisions."

"Well, I have, and we will share them."

"Very good. I see that you are a first-rate fellow."

The Major-domo rose, fetched the alforjas which were fastened to his saddle, and then seated himself again by the fire.

"There!" he said, displaying his provisions with some degree of complacency.

"*Caramba!*" the other remarked, with a laugh; "food was never more welcome."

The provisions which caused such delight to the two men would have made our European goodwives smile with pity. They consisted of some slices of *tasajo*, *cicuia*, a lump of goat's cheese, and a few maize tortillas; but the Major-domo produced a leather bottle, full of excellent mezcal, which had the privilege of restoring to the two adventurers all their merry carelessness.

The *tasajo* was laid on the coals, where it was soon done to a turn, and the two friends heartily attacked the supper. The frugal meal ended, they washed it down with a few sips of mezcal, fraternally passing the bottle to each other; then they lit their cigarettes, the *obligato* supplement of every Mexican repast, and began to smoke, while attentively surveying the heavy sky, which was already striped with dark bands under the influence of the early morning hours.

"Now let us hold a council, if you are agreeable," the stranger said, as he inhaled an enormous mouthful of smoke, which he sent forth through his mouth and nostrils.

"As you are my senior on this territory," the Major-domo remarked, with a laugh, "and are better acquainted with its resources than I am, you have the right to speak first."

"Very good: we are surrounded by water, and though the temporal has ceased, the streams will not return to their bed for several hours: moreover, the whole day will pass before the water is entirely absorbed by the sand."

"That is true," the Major-domo said, with a significant shake of the head; "and yet we must get away from here."

"That is the question. To do so, we can only employ two means."

"Yes, we must either wait till the ground is dry, and that unfortunately will take a long time which I cannot afford, as I am in a hurry: or, at sunrise we can mount our horses, and bravely swim off, and reach the mountains which cannot be very far distant."

"You forget another way which is still at our service."

"I do not think so."

“ We can get into a canoe, and tow our horses after us, which will tire them less than carrying us ; and enable us to reach the mountains to which you refer with greater ease ; and they are only two leagues at the most, from this point.”

“ Your opinion is certainly good, and I approve of it with all my heart ; unluckily we want one very important thing to carry it out.”

“ What is that ? ”

“ Why, hang it all—the canoe.”

“ You are mistaken, *Compadre*, we have one.”

“ Nonsense ; how can that be possible ? ”

“ While you were in a faint,” the stranger continued with a smile, “ I explored our domain. You know that, in this country, when the rainy season arrives, the inhabitants are accustomed to hide canoes in bushes, and even in trees, in order to give travellers who are surprised by the inundation the means of saving themselves.”

“ That is true ; have you found a canoe ? ”

“ Yes, and hidden behind the very tree against which we are leaning.”

“ Heaven be praised ! in that case we run no risk ; but is the canoe in good condition ? ”

“ I have assured myself of that fact, and even found two pairs of new paddles.”

“ Heaven is very certainly on our side. In that case we will start at sunrise, if that suits you.”

“ Excellently ; though I am not in such a hurry as you appear to be, and for certain reasons I must remain in these parts for some days longer.”

“ Shall we employ the few hours left us in having a sleep ? ”

“ You can sleep if you like, but, as I am not at all fatigued, I shall watch over our common safety.”

“ I accept your proposal as frankly as you make it. Yet, with your permission, I will not close my eyes, till I have become better acquainted with you.”

“ How so ? Are we not friends already ? ”

“ Certainly, I am your friend, at least ; but we do not know one another.”

“ That is to say ? ”

“ We do not know one another, I mean, who we are.”

“ Oh, when travelling what value can such formalities possess ? ”

“ A greater value than you suppose ; in a few hours we shall part, it is true, perhaps never to meet again ; but perhaps, at some distant period, we may require each others’ assistance ; now, how could I summon you, if I did not know your name ? ”

“ You’re right, comrade ; as for me, I am only a poor devil of a hunter, woodranger, or trapper—whichever you please, and my companions call me Stronghand, because, as they say, when I hold out my hand to a friend he can trust to it in perfect confidence.”

"*Viva Dios*, caballero! you are well named, as I can declare; your reputation has already reached me, and I am delighted at the chance that has brought us together, as I had already desired to form your personal acquaintance."

"I thank you," the hunter replied, with a bow.

"As for me," the Mexican continued, "my name is José Paredes, and I am Major-domo to the Marquis de Moguer."

"What?" Stronghand said, with a surprise he did not try to conceal; "you are the Major-domo at the Hacienda del Toro?"

"Yes; what do you find surprising in that?"

"The man whom his master sent, two days ago, to Hermosillo to receive cash for heavy bills drawn on an English banker?"

"How do you know that?" Paredes exclaimed, in his turn overwhelmed with surprise.

"What matter, so long as I know it?" the hunter replied. "Believe me," he added, with an accent that caused the Major-domo deep reflection, "our meeting is truly Providential, and Heaven led us towards each other."

"That is strange," Paredes muttered; "how is it possible that a secret which my master confided to me alone should be in your possession?"

The hunter smiled. "A secret known to three persons," he said, "does not long remain a secret."

"But that third person, to whom you refer, has no right to divulge it."

"How do you know that? I will say to you, in my turn, Master Paredes? Sufficient for you, for the present, to learn that I am aware of the cause of your journey. I think you said you had heard speak of me before we met?"

"That is true, Señor."

"What terms did the persons, who spoke of me employ?"

"The best, I must allow. They represented you to me as a man of unspotted loyalty and dauntless courage."

"Good! Does that report satisfy you—have you confidence in me?"

"Yes; for I am convinced that you are an honest man."

"I hope that your opinion of me will not alter. I will soon prove to you that it is fortunate for you and the Marquis that we have met at the moment when you least expected it; for I was looking for you."

"Looking for me? I do not understand you."

"You do not require to understand me at the present moment; but set your mind at rest, everything will be explained ere long."

"I hope so."

"And I am certain of it. Are you devoted to your master?"

"My family have lived on the estate for two hundred years."

"That is not a reason; answer distinctly."

"I am devoted to him body and soul, and would willingly lay down my life for him."

"That is the way to answer; however, I knew it already, and only desired that your lips should confirm what I had been told."

"My master has no secrets from me."

"I know that also. Well, now, listen to me attentively, Senor Paredes, for what I have to reveal to you is of the utmost gravity."

"I am listening to you, Senor."

"Your master is at this moment in danger of being utterly ruined. He is the plaything of villains who have sworn to destroy him. The sum you are going to fetch they intend to take from you, and everything is prepared to make you fall into an infamous trap, in which you will infallibly perish."

"Are you certain of what you assert?" the Major-domo exclaimed, in horror.

"I know all, I repeat to you: the men from whom I obtained your secret, who little expected that I was listening to them at the same time, revealed to me the means they intended to employ in assassinating you."

"Why, that is infamous!"

"I am completely of your opinion, and that is why, instead of setting my traps in the desert, as I ought to be doing, I am now here. I wish to foil the plots of these villains, and confound them."

"But what interest induces you to act thus?" the Major-domo asked, with a shadow of distrust.

"That question I cannot answer. You must, for the present, lay aside all curiosity: you must place entire confidence in me, and give me, in what I propose doing, as much help as I shall offer you. Does this suit you? I fancy that the bargain I offer is entirely to your advantage, and that you will run no risk beyond what I do myself."

There was a lengthened silence. The Major-domo was reflecting on what he had just heard, while the hunter, with his eyes fixed on him, was patiently waiting till he thought proper to renew the conversation. At length Paredes raised his head, and held out his hand to the hunter, who pressed it.

"Listen, Stronghand," he said to him: "all that you have told me appears extraordinary, and I confess that at once; but there is such frankness in your voice, and your reputation is so well established among your brethren, the woodrangers, who all proclaim your loyalty, that I do not hesitate to confide in you, without any reservation, for I am convinced that you can have no idea of betraying me, up to the moment when you think proper to reveal to me the names of the villains into whose hands I should have infallibly fallen, had it not been for you, and who have sworn the ruin of my beloved master. I will do what you ask of me, resign my will entirely: you may regard me as a thing belonging entirely to you. Come, go, act as you think proper, and I will obey you in everything, without asking any explanation of your conduct. Now, in your turn, say if it suits you?"

"Yes, my worthy friend, that pleases me. You have guessed my thought: I require this liberty to give me the means of succeeding in what I wish to do. Believe the word of an honest man. If anything can add to the confidence you have placed in me, and of which I am proud, I swear to you, by all that is most sacred in the world, that no one is more interested than I am in the Marquis de Moguer, or more sincerely desires to see him happy."

"We shall still start at sunrise, eh?"

"Yes; but not to proceed to Hermosillo. Before going to that town, we must take certain indispensable precautions. We have to deal with the most crafty bandits on the border, and must beat them by cunning. They are on our track, and we must cheat the cheaters."

"Good, good, I will call to mind my old hunter's profession."

"Remember, above all, the prairie proverb that, 'The trees have eyes and the leaves ears.' Fortunately for us, the villains who are watching for you do not disturb me in any way, I reckon principally on that ignorance to foil their plots."

"But if we do not go to Hermosillo, where are we going?"

"To-morrow when it is day light," the hunter answered sententiously, "when the bright sunbeams permit me to convince myself, that no one can hear us, I will tell you. For the present, sleep, rest yourself, so that you may be able to support the fatigue that awaits you."

And, as if to avoid fresh questioning, the hunter wrapped himself in his zarape, leant his back against the larch tree, stretched out his legs to the fire, and closed his eyes. The Major-domo, in spite of his lively desire to continue the conversation, imitated him; and a few minutes later, overcome by the fatigue of every description he had endured for some days, he was fast asleep.

CHAP XIII.

THE REAL DE MINAS.

FOR some years past, that is to say, since the day when Captain Sutter, while digging a well at his plantation in San Francisco, accidentally found a lump of virgin gold—the discovery of the rich mines of the New World has so aroused interest and excited admiration, by giving a fresh impulse to avarice and covetousness, that we consider it necessary to say a few words here about the mines. Of course, we shall allude to those situated in the country where our scene is laid—that is, in Sonora.

Sonora is the richest mining country in the world. We assured ourself by official data, that six hundred bars of silver and sixty bars of gold, worth together a million of piastres, were brought to the Mint of Hermosillo in 1839. To this large amount a nearly equal sum must be added, which is not brought to be assayed, in order to avoid the payment of

the duty, which is five per cent. on silver and four per cent. on gold. This country also possesses most valuable copper mines, but the population generally abandons the other metals to seek virgin gold.

No country in the world possesses auriferous strata so rich and so extensive (*criaderos* or *placeras d'oro*). The metal is found in alluvial soil in ravines after rain, and always on the surface or at a depth of a few feet. In the north of the province of Arispe, the placers of Quitoal and Sonoitac, which were found again in 1836, and to which we shall soon have to allude more specially, produced for three years two hundred ounces of gold per day, that is to say, reducing it to our money, the large sum of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

The gold-seekers restrict themselves to turning up the soil with a pointed stick, and only collect the nuggets that are visible; but if the streams were diverted from their course and large washings undertaken, the profits would be far more considerable. It is not rare to find nuggets weighing several pounds; we saw at Arispe, in the hands of a miner, one that was worth nine thousand piastres, or about eighteen hundred pounds; and the Royal Cabinet at Madrid contains several magnificent specimens. We will soon describe how and why the working of these strata was interrupted.

Most of the inhabitants of the *pueblos*, or Missions of Sonora serve as the gathering place of the nomadic workmen and traders who collect round any important mine so soon as its working is begun. The place where the workmen assemble takes the name of *Real de Minas* or *Mineral*; and if the mine promises to be productive for any length of time, the population definitively settles round it. Many important towns of Mexico had no other origin. The facility with which the miners earn large sums, explains the enormous consumption of European goods which takes place in the provinces. Simple rancheros may frequently be seen spending in a few days seven or eight pounds of gold, which only cost them a week's toil. Unhappily, the ruinous passion for gambling—that shameful leprosy of Mexico, whose inhabitants it degrades—prevents the great mine owners from keeping a large capital on their hands, and thus checks works on a great scale.

Before resuming our narrative, we must also give the reader certain information about the Indian nations that inhabit the territory of Sonora. There are in this province five distinct tribes:—the Yaquis, the Opatas, the Mayos, the Gilenos and the Apaches. The Yaquis and Mayos occupy the country to the south of Guaymas, as far as the Rio del Huerto; they let themselves out to the Creoles as farm labourers, masons, servants, miners, and divers. Their number is about forty thousand. The Opatas reside along the bank of the San Miguel de Horcasitos, the Arispe, the Los Ures, and the Oposina; they are very good workmen and excellent soldiers. They have always served the government faithfully, both Spanish and Mexican, and their number is estimated at thirty thousand.

The Gilenos spread along the banks of the Gila and Colorado rivers.

The Axuas and Apaches, who belong to the Sierra Madre, are confounded under the name of Papazos. These Indians are nomadic, and only live by hunting and plunder; they were formerly encamped to the north of Chihuahua and Sonora; but being driven back by the progress of the Americans and Texans, they threw themselves upon the Mexican territory, where they cause immense damage, for they are well supplied with fire-arms, which they obtained in exchange for peltry and cattle at the American establishments of the Arkansas, the Missouri, and the Rio Bravo del Norte. In order to complete this brief enumeration of the Indian nations of Sonora, we will mention a mission established at the gates of Hermosillo; and in which five hundred Seris Indians lived; a thousand members of the same tribe, formerly one of the most powerful in this country, but now almost extinct, dwelt on the coast to the north of Guaymaz, and in Tiburon or Sharkesland.

We will now temporarily leave Stronghand and José Paredes at the top of the hill, where they found a shelter from the inundation, and lead the reader to the Real de Minas of Quitoal, where certain important events are about to take place.

It was the evening. The streets and plazas of the pueblo were crowded with individuals of every description: Yaquis Indians, hunters, miners, gambusinos, monks, and adventurers who composed the motley population of the Mineral, mounted and foot, incessantly jostled each other, and bowed, spoke, laughed or quarrelled. Some were returning from the Placer, where they had been at work all day; others were leaving their houses to enjoy the evening breeze; others, and they were the larger number, were entering the drinking shops, through whose doors could be heard the songs of the toppers, and the shrill, inharmonious tinkling jarabes and vihuelas.

One of these *tendajos*, of a more comfortable and less dirty appearance than the rest, seemed to have the privilege of attracting a greater number of customers than all the rival establishments. After passing through a low door and descending two steps of unequal height, the visitor found himself in a species of hideous den, resembling at once a cellar and a shed, whose earthen flooring, rendered uneven by the mud constantly brought in by customers, caused persons to stumble at each step who visited the place for the first time. A hot heavy vapour, impregnated with alcoholic fumes and mephitic exhalations, escaped through the door of this den, as from the mouth of Hades, and painfully affected mouth and eyes, before the latter became accustomed to the close, obscure aspect of the place, and were enabled to pierce the thick curtain of vapour, which was constantly drawn from one side to the other by the movements of the customers. They perceived, by the dubious light of a few *candils* scattered here and there, a large and lofty room, whose once white-washed walls had become black at the lower part by the constant friction of heads, backs, and shoulders, to which they served as a support.

Facing the door was a dais, raised about a foot above the ground; this dais occupied the entire width of the room, and was divided into two parts; that on the right contained a table forming a bar, behind which stood a tall active fellow, with false look and ill-tempered face, the master of the tendajo. Above the head of this respectable personage, who answered to the harmonious name of Cospeto, a niche had been made in the wall, in which was a statue of the Virgin, holding the Holy Infant in her arms; in front of the statue a dozen small wax tapers, fixed on a row of iron points, were burning. The left hand portion of the dais was occupied by the musicians, or performers on jarabes and vihuelas.

On each side of the room, the centre of which remained free for the dancers, ran rickety, badly-made, and dirty tables, occupied at this moment by a crowd of customers, some seated on benches, others standing, laughing, talking, shouting, quarrelling; drinking mezcal, refino, pulque, or infusion of tamarinds, or else staking at monte the gold earned during the day at the mine, and which their dirty hands fetched from the pockets of the shapeless rags that served them as garments. A few women, creatures without a name, whose features were sodden with debauchery, and eyes deep sunk with drinking, were mingled with the crowd; and all, both men and women, were smoking either cigars or husk cigarettes.

Nothing can describe the hideous aspect of this infamous Pandemonium, the refuge of all the vices of the province, overlooked by the gentle, smiling face of the statue of the Virgin, whose features, in the light of the tapers, assumed an expression of wondrous pity and sorrow.

At the moment when we invite the reader to enter this drinking shop with us, the fun was at its height; the room was full of drinkers and dancers; and the whole mob laughed, yelled, and made a row which would have rendered the saint herself deaf. On the left, near the door, a man, wrapped up in a thick cloak, one end of which was raised to his face, and completely concealed his features, was sitting motionless at a separate table, looking absently and carelessly at the dancers who whirled round him. When a new comer entered the tendajo, this man looked toward the door, and then turned his head away with an air of ill-humour when he perceived that the new comer was not the person that he had been so long expecting, for he had been sitting alone at this table for upwards of two hours. Still no one paid, or seemed to pay, any attention to him—all were too much absorbed in their own occupations to think about a man who obstinately remained gloomy and silent amid this revelry. The stranger, so often deceived in his expectations, at length gave up looking toward the door; he let his head fall on his chest and went to sleep, or pretended to do so, either for the sake of not attracting attention, or else to indulge with greater freedom in his reflections.

All at once a formidable disturbance broke out at one end of the room; a table was upset by a vigorous blow; oaths crossed each other in the air, and knives were drawn from boots; musicians and dancers stopped short,

and a circle was formed round two men who, with frowning brows, eyes sparkling with intoxication and passion, a zarape rolled as a buckler round the left arm, and a navaja in their right hand, were preparing, according to all appearance, to attack each other vigorously. The tendajero, or master of the horse, then proved himself equal to the position he occupied—he leaped like a jaguar over the counter behind which he had hitherto stood coldly and indifferently, merely engaged in watching his waiters and serving customers; he closed the front door, against which he leant his powerful shoulders, in order to prevent any customer bolting without payment of his score, and prepared with evident interest to witness the fight.

The two men, with outstretched legs, left arm advanced, bodies bent forward, and knife held by the middle of the blade, were standing looking in each other's eyes, ready for attack, defence, or parry. All at once the mysterious sleeper appeared to wake with a start, as if surprised by the voice of one of the adversaries, took a hasty glance at the combatants, and then darted between them.

“What is the matter?” he asked, in a firm voice, the sound of which affected the duellists, who were astounded at an interference they had been far from expecting.

“This man,” one of them answered, “has lost three ounces to me at monté, through the unexpected turn up of the ace of spades.”

“Well?” the stranger interjected.

“He refuses to pay me,” the gambler continued; “because he declares that the cards were packed, and that consequently I cheated him, which is not true, for—*viva Dios!* I am known to be a caballero.”

At this affirmation, which was slightly erroneous, a smile of singular meaning, but which no one saw, curled the stranger's lip; he continued in a most serious voice—

“It is true that you are a caballero, and I would affirm it were it necessary; but the most honest man is subject to deceive himself, and I am convinced that this has happened to you. Hence, instead of fighting with this caballero, whose honour and loyalty cannot either be doubted, prove to him that you recognise your error by paying him the three ounces, which you claimed of him through an oversight; this gentleman will apologise for having used certain ugly expressions, and all will then be settled to the general satisfaction.

“Certainly, I am convinced that this caballero is a man of honour: I am ready to proclaim it anywhere, and I regret with all my soul the misunderstanding which momentarily divided us,” said the individual who had not yet spoken, though he remained on the defensive, a position that slightly contradicted the apparent good-humour of his remark.

The stranger then turned to the man whose friend he had so unexpectedly made himself, and gave him a sign which the other appeared to understand.

“Well, caballero,” he said, with an irony, whose expression was hardly noticeable, “what do you think of this apology? For my part, I consider it complete and most honourable.”

The man thus addressed hesitated for a moment; a combat was evidently going on in his mind; his furious glances seemed to challenge the company; and had he perceived on the face of one of the spectators an expression of contempt, however fugitive it might have been, he would doubtless have immediately picked another quarrel. But all the persons who surrounded him were cold and indifferent; curiosity alone was legible on their features. He unrolled his cloak, returned the knife to his boot, and held out his hand to his adversary at the same time that he gave him three ounces.

“Pardon me an involuntary error at which I am truly confused,” he said, with a courteous bow, but with a sigh he could not restrain.

The other took the ounces without pressing, thrust them away in his capacious pockets with far from ordinary dexterity, returned the salute and mingled with the crowd, who, through a lengthened acquaintance with the two men, did not at all comprehend this peaceful result.

“Now, Master Kidd,” the stranger continued, as he laid his hand on the shoulder of the adventurer, who stood motionless in the middle of the room; “I suppose that all your business here is settled; so, with your permission we will withdraw.”

“As you please,” Kidd answered carelessly, for this man was no other than the bandit we came across in the opening of our story.

The groups had broken up, the crowd had dispersed, musicians and dancers had returned to their places, and the two men could consequently leave without attracting attention. The stranger, when he reached the purer atmosphere of the street, took several deep inspirations, as if trying to expel from his lungs the vitiated air he had been constrained to swallow for so long. Then he turned to his companion who was walking silently by his side.

“*Cuerpo de Cristo!* Master Kidd,” he said, in a tone of ill-humour, “you are, it must be confessed, a singular fellow: you compel me, me the Commandant of this pueblo, to come and hunt you up at this filthy den, where, on your intreaty, I consented to meet you, and instead of watching for my arrival, you leave me among the most perfect collection of bandits I ever saw in my life.”

“Excess of zeal, Captain, so you must not be angry with me for that,” the bandit answered, with a cunning look. “In order to be punctual at the rendezvous I gave you, I had been for nearly four hours at worthy Senor Cospeto’s. Not knowing how to spend my time, I played at cards. You know what monte is; once I have the cards in my hand, and the gold on the table, I forget everything.”

“Good; good;” the stranger answered. “I am willing to believe you. Still, I pledge you my word, that if you dupe me in the affair you have

proposed ; and the information you offer to sell me is false, you will repent it. You know me, I think, Master Kidd ?”

“ Yes, Captain Don Marcos de Niza, and I suppose that you know me too ; but of what use is this discussion ? Let us settle our business first, and then you can act as you think proper.”

The Captain gave him a suspicious glance. “ It is well :” he said, as he rapped at a door ; “ come in, this is my house ; I prefer treating with you here to the tendajo.”

“ As you please ;” the bandit said, and followed the Captain into his house, the doors of which were closed behind them.

CHAP. XIV.

THE BARGAIN.

CAPTAIN DON MARCOS DE NIZA, whom we left commanding the post of San Miguel, and defending it against the Indians, had been a few days previously summoned to the political and military government of the Mineral of Quitoval, by an order that arrived from Mexico, and emanated from the President of the Republic himself. The fact was, that during the last few days certain events had occurred which demanded energetic action on the part of the President. All at once, at a moment when no discontent was supposed to exist among the Indians, the latter, after long councils they had held together, revolted, and had, without any declaration of war, invaded the Mexican territory at several points simultaneously. This revolt suddenly assumed serious proportions ; and had become the more formidable within a short time, because the revolters were the Gilenos, that is to say, the Comanches, Apaches, and Axuas, whose dangerous country, is known by the name of the Papazos.

The General commanding Sonora and Cinaloa, the two states most exposed to the depredations of the Indians, saw that he must oppose to the Indians a man who, through a lengthened residence on the borders, had acquired great experience as to their way of fighting and the tricks they employ. Only one officer fulfilled these conditions, and that officer was Captain de Niza ; he, therefore, received orders to quit the post of San Miguel after dismantling it, and proceed immediately to the Mineral of Quitoval. The Captain obeyed with that promptitude which old soldiers alone can display in the execution of the orders they receive. His first care, on reaching the Mineral, was to protect the pueblo, as far as was possible, from a surprise, by digging a large trench, throwing up entrenchments and barricading the principal streets.

Unfortunately the general commanding the provinces had but a very limited military force at his disposal ; scarce amounting to six hundred infantry and two hundred cavalry, without field artillery. Hence, in spite

of his lively desire to give the Captain a respectable force, as he was obliged to scatter his troops along the whole seaboard of the two states, he found it impossible to send to Quitoval more than one hundred infantry and fifty cavalry. In spite of the numerical weakness of his troops the Captain did not despair. He was one of those men to whom the performance of duty was everything ; and who carry out without a murmur the most extraordinary order.

Still, as he expected to be attacked at any moment by an army of ten or fifteen thousand veteran Indians, amply supplied with firearms, and who, though being accustomed to fight with Spaniards, could not be easily terrified, he had to augment the number of his soldiers, so as to have men enough to line the entrenchments he had thrown up round the town. He had two means by which to obtain this result, and he employed them. The first consisted in making the great mine owners understand that they must participate in the defences of the pueblo, either personally or by arming and placing under his orders a certain number of the peons they employed ; for if the Indians succeeded in seizing the Mineral, the source of their wealth would be at once dried up.

The great owners understood the Captain's reasons the more easily because their interests were at stake ; they therefore enthusiastically followed his advice, and raised at their common charge, a corps of one hundred and fifty Opatas—brave soldiers, thoroughly devoted to the Whites. They placed this corps under the Captain's orders, pledging themselves to pay and support it so long as the danger lasted. Don Marcos thus doubled his army at one stroke. This success, which he had been far from expecting, owing to his profound knowledge of the apathy and selfishness of his countrymen, induced him to try the second plan.

This was very simple. It consisted in enlisting, for a certain bounty, as many as he could of the adventurers who always swarm on the borders, and whose neutrality is at times more formidable than declared enmity. The sum offered by the Captain was two ounces per man, one payable on enlistment, the other at the termination of the campaign. This offer, seductive though it was, did not produce all the effect the Captain expected from it. The adventurers responded but feebly to the appeal made to them. These men, in whose hearts patriotic love does not exist, and who only care for pillage, saw in the insurrection of the Indians a source of disorder, and, consequently, of rapine. They cared very little about defending a state of things which their predacious instincts led them, on the contrary, to attack.

Thirty or forty adventurers, however, responded to the call, and these immoral men, who were impatient at the yoke of discipline, were rather an embarrassment than an assistance to the Captain ; still as, take them altogether, they were sturdy fellows, and thoroughly acquainted with Indian warfare, he attached them to his cavalry, which was thus raised to a strength of one hundred men. Don Marcos thus found himself at the

head of two hundred and fifty infantry and one hundred horse—a force which appeared to him, if well directed, more than sufficient to withstand, behind good entrenchments, the effort of the whole Indian army.

We are aware that this number of men defending a town will produce a smile of pity among European readers, who are accustomed to see on battle-fields masses of three hundred thousand men come into collision. But all is relative in this world. In America, where the population is comparatively small, great things have often been decided at the bayonet's point by armies, whose relative strength did not exceed that of one of our line regiments. In the last battle fought between the Texans and Mexicans—a battle which decided the independence of Texas, the two armies together did not amount to two thousand men, and yet the collision was terrible, and victory obstinately disputed. In the actions between White men and Indians, the latter, in spite of their indomitable valor, were almost always defeated in a pitched battle, in spite of their crushing superiority of numbers. Not through the courage of their enemies, but by their discipline and military skill. The latter is certainly very limited, but sufficient for adversaries such as they have to combat.

One night when the Captain returned home after his usual visit to the pueblo to assure himself that all was in order, a ragged lepero, more than half intoxicated with mezcal and pulque, handed him with an infinitude of bows, a dirty slip of paper folded up in the shape of a letter. Don Marcos de Niza was not accustomed to neglect anything. He attached as much importance to apparently frivolous events as to those which seemed to possess a certain gravity. He stopped, took the letter, gave a real to the lepero, who went away quite satisfied, and entered his house, which was situated on the Plaza Mayor, in the centre of the pueblo.

After throwing his cap and sword on a table, the Captain opened the letter. He read it at first rather carelessly; but ere long he began frowning, and read the letter a second time, attentively weighing each word. Then at the end of a moment he folded up the letter, and said in a low voice—

“I will go.”

This letter came from Kidd. The Captain had been long acquainted with the bandit, and knew certain peculiar facts about him which would have been most disagreeable to the bandit, had the latter suspected that the Captain was so thoroughly initiated in the secrets of his vagabond life. Hence Don Marcos fancied he had no right to neglect the overtures the other was pleased to make; while keeping on his guard and determined to punish him severely if he deceived him. The Captain, therefore, proceeded without hesitation to the place where the adventurer appointed to meet him. He had waited for him for several hours with exemplary patience, and would probably have waited longer still, had not chance suddenly brought them face to face in the way we have described.

When the two men had entered the house, and the door closed after

them, Don Marcos de Niza, still closely followed by the bandit, who, in spite of his impudence, looked around him timidly, like a wolf caught in a sheepfold, led him into a room the door of which he carefully closed. The Captain pointed to a chair, sat down at a table, laid a brace of pistols ostentatiously within his reach and said,

“ Now I am ready to hear you.”

“ *Carai?*” the bandit said impudently; “ that is possible; but the point is whether I am disposed to speak.”

“ And why not, pray, my excellent friend ? ”

“ Hang it, Captain,” he said, as he pointed to the pistols; “ there are two playthings not at all adapted to set my tongue wagging.”

Don Marcos looked at him in a way that made the adventurer involuntarily let his eyes fall, and then leant his elbows on the table.

“ Master Kidd,” he then said in a stern voice, though a certain tone of sarcasm was perceptible in it, “ I like a distinct understanding; let us, therefore, before anything establish our relative positions. You have led a very agitated life, Master Kidd; your vagabond humour, your mad desire to appropriate certain things to which you have a very dubious claim have led you into a few mistakes, whose results might prove remarkably disagreeable to you.”

The bandit shook his head in denial.

“ I will not dwell,” the Captain continued mockingly, “ on a subject which must make your modesty greatly suffer, and will come at once to the motives of your presence here, and the positions we must hold toward each other. I am Commandant of this pueblo, and in that capacity compelled to watch over its external safety as well as its internal tranquillity, I think you will agree with me.”

“ Yes, Captain,” the bandit answered, somewhat reassured at finding the conversation turned away from such delicate topics.

“ Very good; you wrote me this letter, appointing a meeting and offering to sell—that is your own word—certain most important information, as you say, for the continuance of the safety and tranquillity which I am bound to maintain. Another man might have treated you in the Indian fashion. After having you arrested, he would have ordered a cord to be fastened round your temples; or your suspension by your thumbs—as you have done yourself, if report be true, on various occasions with less valid reasons; and have so thoroughly loosened your tongue that you would not have kept a single secret back. I have preferred dealing with you as an honest man.”

The bandit breathed again.

“ Still, as you are one of those persons with whom it is advisable to take precautions, and in whom a confidence cannot be placed, as they would not scruple to abuse it on the first opportunity, I retain not only the right, but also the means of blowing out your brains if you have the slightest intention of deceiving me.”

"Oh, Captain, what an idea! Blow out my brains!" the bandit stammered.

"Do you fancy, my dear Senor," the Captain continued, still sarcastically, "that your friends would pity you greatly, if such a misfortune happened to you?"

"Hum! to tell you the truth, I do not exactly know," the adventurer answered, with an attempt to jest; "people are so unkind. But, since you accept the bargain offered to you—for you do accept it, I think, Captain?"

"I do."

"What, then, will you give me in exchange for what I shall tell you?"

"You sell; I buy; it is your place to make your conditions, and, if they are not exorbitant—if in a word they seem to me fair, I will accept them; so, speak, what do you ask?"

"*Carai!* Captain; it is a delicate question, for I am an honest man."

"That is allowed," Don Marcos interrupted him with a laugh. "Name your price."

"Fifty ounces; would that be too much?" the bandit ventured.

"Certainly not, if the thing be worth it."

"Then," Kidd exclaimed joyfully, "that is understood, fifty ounces."

"I repeat, if it be worth it."

"Oh, you shall judge for yourself," he remarked, rubbing his hands.

"I ask nothing better, but to buy and to prove to you that I have no intention of cheating you," he added, as he opened a drawer and took out a rather heavy purse, "here is the amount."

And the Captain made two piles each of twenty-five ounces, exactly between the pistols. At the sight of the gold the bandit's eyes sparkled like those of a wild beast.

"*Ravo de Dios!* Captain," he exclaimed; "there is a pleasure in treating with you. I will remember it another time,"

"I ask nothing better, Master Kidd; now speak, I am listening."

"Oh, I have not much to say; but you will judge whether it is important."

"Go on; I am all ears."

"In two words, this is the matter: the Papazos have not elected a Chief, but an Emperor!"

"An Emperor?"

"Yes."

"What do they assert then?"

"They mean to be free, and wish to constitute their independence upon a solid basis."

"Do you know this Emperor?"

"I have seen him at least."

"Who is he?"

“A man who is the more formidable because he appears to belong to the white rather than the red race; and is thoroughly conversant with all the means hitherto employed by the Indians.”

“Is he young?”

“He is sixty, but as active as if he were only twenty.”

“Very good; proceed.”

“Is that important?”

“Very important. But not worth fifty ounces for all that.”

“The Yaquis, Mayos, and Seris have allowed themselves to be seduced, and have entered the Confederation. They have taken up again their old plans of 1827—you remember at the time of their great revolution?”

“Yes; go on.”

“The first expedition the Chief of the Confederation means to undertake is the capture of the Real de Minas.”

“I am aware of it.”

“Yes; but do you know, Captain, that the Indians have spies even among the garrison; that all is ready for the attack, and that the Papazos intend to surprise you within the next two days?”

“Who gave you this information?”

The bandit smiled craftily.

“What use my telling you, Captain,” he answered, “if the information is correct?”

“Do you know the men who have entered into negotiations with the enemy?”

“I do.”

“In that case tell me their names.”

“It would be imprudent, Captain.”

“Why so?”

“Judge for yourself. Suppose I were to tell you their names, what would happen?”

“*Viva Dios!*” the Captain sharply interrupted him. “I should shoot them like the miserable dogs they are, and to serve as a warning to others.”

“Well, that is the mistake, Captain.”

“How a mistake?”

“Why, yes; suppose you shoot ten men?”

“Twenty, if necessary!”

“Say twenty, it is of no consequence to me; but those who remain, whom neither you nor I know, will sell you to the Indians, so that the only result will be precipitating the evil instead of preventing it.

“Ah, ah!” the Commandant said, with an expressive glance at the bandit. “And what would you do in my place?”

“Oh, a very simple thing,”

“Well, what is it?”

“I would leave the scamps at liberty to prepare their treachery, while carefully watching them; and when the moment for attack arrived, I would have them quietly arrested; so that the Indians would be surprised instead of surprising us, and we should cheat the cunning cheats.”

The Captain appeared to reflect for a moment, and then said—

“The plan you recommend seems to me good, and for the present I see no inconvenience in carrying it out. Give me the names of the traitors.”

Kidd mentioned a dozen names which the Captain wrote down after him.

“Now,” Don Marcos continued, “there are your fifty ounces, and I shall give as many each time you bring me information as valuable as that of to-day. I pay you dearly, so it is your interest to serve me faithfully; but, remember that if you deceive me, nothing can save you from the punishment I will inflict on you, and that punishment, I warn you will be terrible.”

The adventurer bounded on the money like a wild beast on a prey it has long coveted, concealed it with marvellous dexterity in his wide pockets, and said to the Captain with a bow—

“Senor Don Marcos, I have always thought that in this world gold was the sovereign master, and that it alone had the right to command.”

After accompanying these singular words with a smiling and almost mocking expression, Kidd bowed for the last time and disappeared, leaving the Captain to his reflections.

CHAP. XV.

THE PAPAZOS.

WE will now return to Stronghand and José Paredes, whom we have left too long at the top of the hill. The night passed without any incident; the Major-domo sleeping like a man overcome by fatigue; as for the hunter he did not close his eyes once. The sun had risen for a long time; it was nearly nine o'clock, but the hunter, forgetting apparently what he had said to his comrade, did not dream of departure. José Paredes slept on. It was a magnificent day; the sky, swept by the night hurricane, was cloudless; the sun darted down its glowing beams; and yet the atmosphere, tempered by the storm, retained an agreeable freshness. The water was disappearing with a rapidity almost equalling that it had displayed in rising, being drunk by the thirsty sand or by the hot sun-beams; the plain had lost its lacustrine appearance; and all led to the supposition that by mid-day the ground would be firm enough to be ventured on in safety.

As the canoe was unnecessary, the hunter did not try to get it down from the tree; with his back leant against the larch tree, his hands

folded, and his head bowed on his chest he was thinking, and at times taking an anxious glance at his sleeping comrade. At length the Major-domo turned, stretched out his arms and legs, opened his eyes and gave a formidable yawn.

"*Caramba!*" he said, as he measured the height of the sun; "I fancy I have forgotten myself; it must be very late."

"Ten o'clock," the hunter answered with a smile.

"Ten o'clock!" José exclaimed as he leaped up; "and you have let me idle thus instead of waking me."

"You slept so soundly, my friend, that I had not the courage to do so."

"Hum!" Paredes replied, half-laughing, half-vexed; "I know not whether I ought to complain or thank you for this weakness, for we have lost precious time."

"Not at all; see, the water has disappeared; the ground is growing firm again, and when the great heat of the day is spent we will mount our horses and catch up in a few hours the time you are regretting."

"That is true, and you are right, comrade," said the Major-domo, as he looked around with the practised glance of a man accustomed to a desert life. "Well, as it is so," he added with a laugh, "suppose we breakfast, for that will enable us to kill some time."

"Very good," the hunter replied, good humouredly.

They breakfasted as they had supped on the previous night. When the hour for starting at length arrived, they saddled their horses and led them down the hill; for the ascent which they had escalated so actively by night, under the impulse of the pressing danger that threatened them, now proved extremely steep, abrupt, and difficult. When they mounted, Stronghand said—

"My friend, I am going to take you to an *atepetl* of the Red-skins. Do you consider that disagreeable?"

"Not personally, but I will ask what advantage my master can derive from it?"

"That question I am unable to answer at the moment. You must know, though, that we are taking this step on your master's behalf, and that his affairs, instead of suffering by it, will be greatly benefited."

"Let us go then. One word, however, first. Are the Red-skins, to whom we are proceeding, a long distance off?"

"It would be almost a journey for any persons but us."

"Hum!" said Paredes.

"But you and I," the hunter continued, "who are true guides, and who have also the advantage of being well mounted, will reach the village at three or four o'clock to-morrow afternoon at the latest."

"In that case it is not very distant?"

"I told you so."

"And in what direction is the village?"

"You must have often heard it spoken of, if chance has never led your footsteps thither."

"Why so?"

"Because it is only a dozen leagues at the most from the Hacienda del Toro."

"Wait a minute," the Major-domo said, frowning like a man who is collecting his thoughts; "you are right, I have never been to that village, it is true, but I have often heard it spoken of. Is not one of the chiefs a white man?"

The hunter blushed slightly.

"So people say," he answered.

"Is it not strange," the Major-domo continued, "that a white man should consent to abandon entirely the society of his fellows to live with savages?"

"Why so?"

"Hang it! because the Indians are devoid of reason, as everybody knows."

The hunter gave his companion a glance of indefinable meaning, slightly shrugged his shoulders, but made no reply; probably from the reason that he had too much to say, and considered the Major-domo's rather heavy mind incapable of appreciating it. The day passed without any occurrences to interrupt the monotony of their ride, which they continued with great speed till night, only stopping from time to time to shoot a few birds for supper. Galloping, talking, and smoking, they at length reached the spot where they intended to bivouac. The road they had followed in no way resembled the one the Major-domo had taken on leaving the hacienda, although they were returning in the direction of Arispe. This resulted from the fact that Paredes had kept in the regular road, while this time the two men rode Indian fashion, that is to say, straight a-head without troubling themselves about roads. They galloped on as the bird flies, crossing mountains and swimming rivers whenever they came to them, without losing time in seeking a ford.

This mode of travelling, generally adopted by the wood-rangers of the Savannah, where the only roads are tracts made by the wild beasts, would not be possible in civilized countries, where there are so many towns and villages; but in Mexico, especially on the Indian border, towns are excessively rare: by riding in this way distances are marvellously shortened and a considerable tract is covered between two sunrises. This is what happened to the two adventurers; for in one day they went a greater distance than Paredes had done in eight and forty hours, though he was well mounted. At night they camped in a wood beyond the Hacienda del Toro, which building they saw rising gloomy and tranquil like an eagle's nest on the top of its rock, and they passed close to it during the afternoon.

The country assumed a wilder and more abrupt aspect; the grass was

thicker, the trees were larger, older, and closer together; it was evident that the travellers were at the extreme limit of civilization, and would soon find themselves in the Red territory, although nominally, at least on the maps, this territory figured among the possessions of the Mexican Confederation. This feature, by the way, is found everywhere throughout the New World. Even in the United States, which pretend, erroneously, we believe, to be more civilized than their neighbours, towns with high-flown names may be seen on the maps of their large possessions, which only exist in reality as a name painted on a solitary post, planted in the centre of a plain or on the bank of a river, without even a keeper to watch over the preservation of this post, which, worn by wind and sun, eventually disappears, though the town never sprung up in its place. During our travels we were too often the victim of this humorous Yankee mystification not to feel angry with this eccentric nation, which repeats to every new comer that it marches at the head of civilization, and has a mission to regenerate the New World.

The two men, after lighting their watch fire, supped with good appetite, rolled themselves in their zarapes and fell asleep, trusting to the instinct of their horses to warn them of the approach of any enemy, whether man or wild beast, that attempted to surprise them during their slumbers. But nothing disturbed them; the night was quiet; at sunrise they awoke, mounted and continued their journey, which would only take a few hours longer.

"I am mistaken," the hunter said suddenly, turning to his companion.

"How so?" the latter asked.

"Because," Stronghand replied, "I told you yesterday we should not reach the *atepetl* till the afternoon."

"Well?"

"We shall be there by eleven o'clock."

"*Caramba!* That is famous news."

"When we have crossed that hill we shall see the village, a short distance a-head of us, picturesquely grouped on the side of another hill, and running into the plain, where the last houses are built on the banks of a pretty little stream, whose white and limpid waters serve as a natural rampart."

"Tell me, comrade, what do you think of the reception that will be offered us?"

"The Papazos are hospitable."

"I do not doubt it; unluckily, I have no claims to the kindness of the Red skins. Moreover, I know that they are very suspicious, and never like to see white men enter their villages."

"That depends on the way in which white men try to enter them."

"There is another reason which, I confess, supplies me with reason for grave thought."

“What is it?”

“It is said—mark me, I do not assert it—”

“All right; go on.”

“It is said that the Papazos are excited, and on the point of revolting, if they have not done so already.”

“They rose in insurrection some days ago,” Stronghand coolly answered.

“What?” the Major-domo exclaimed, greatly startled, “and you are leading me to them?”

“Why not?”

“Because we shall be massacred, that’s all.”

The hunter shrugged his shoulders.

“You are mad.”

“I am mad!—I am mad!” Paredes repeated, shaking his head very dubiously; “it pleases you to say that, but I am not at all desirous, if I can avoid it, of thus placing myself in the power of men who must be my enemies.”

“I repeat that nothing will happen to you. *Viva Dios!* do you fancy me capable of leading you into a snare?”

“No; on my honour that is not my thought; but you may be mistaken, and credit these savages with feelings they do not possess.”

“I am certain of what I assert. Not only have you nothing to fear, but you will have an honourable reception.”

“Honourable?” the Major-domo remarked, with an air of incredulity, “I am not very certain of that.”

“You shall see. Woe to the man who dared to hurt a hair of your head while you are in my company.”

“Who are you, to speak thus?”

“A hunter, nothing else; but I am a friend of the Papazos, and adopted son of one of their tribes; and every man, though he were the mortal enemy of the nation, must, for my sake, be received as a brother by the sachems and warriors.”

“Well, be it so,” the Major-domo muttered, in the tone of a man forced in his last entrenchments, and who resolves to make up his mind.

“Besides,” the hunter added, “any hesitation would now be useless, and perhaps dangerous.”

“Why so?”

“Because the Indians have their scouts scattered through the woods and over the plain already; they saw and signalled our approach long ago, and if we attempted to turn back, it would justly appear suspicious; and then we should suddenly see Indians rise all round us, and be immediately made prisoners, before we even thought of defending ourselves.”

“*Demonio!* that makes the matter singular, comrade; then you believe we have been seen already?”

“Would you like to have a proof on the spot?” the hunter asked, laughingly.

“Well, I should not mind; for I should then know what I have to expect.”

“Well; I will give you the proof.”

The travellers had reached the foot of the hill, and were at this moment concealed by the tall grass that surrounded them. Stronghand stopped his horse, and imitated the cry of the mawkawis twice. Almost immediately the grass parted, an Indian bounded from a thick clump of trees with the lightness of an antelope, and stopped two yards from the hunter, on whom he fixed his black intelligent eyes, without saying a word. The apparition of the Red skin was so sudden, his arrival so unexpected, that, in spite of himself, the Major-domo could not restrain a start of surprise.

This Indian was a man of three-and-twenty years of age at the most, whose exquisite proportions made him resemble a statue of Florentine bronze; the whole upper part of his body was naked; his unloosened hair hung in disorder over his shoulders; his clothing merely consisted of trowsers sewn with horse hair, fastened round the loins by a belt of untanned leather, and tied at the ankles. A tomahawk and a scalping knife, weapons which the Indians never lay aside, hung from his belt, and he leant, with careless grace, upon a long rifle of American manufacture. The hunter bowed, and after stretching out his arm, with the palm turned down and the fingers straight, said, in a gentle voice—

“Wah! the Wacondah protects me, since the first person I see, on returning to my people, is Sparrow Hawk.”

The young Indian bowed in his turn with the native courtesy characteristic of the Red skin, and replied in a guttural voice, which, however, was very gentle—

“For a long time the sachems have been informed of the coming of the Great Bear of their Nation; they thought that only one chief was worthy of saluting Stronghand on his return. Sparrow Hawk is happy that he was chosen by them.”

“I thank the sachems of my nation,” the hunter said, with a meaning glance at the Major-domo, “for having deigned to do me so signal an honour. Will my son return to the village with us, or will he precede us?”

“Sparrow Hawk will go ahead, in order that the guest of Stronghand, my father, may be received with the honours due to a man who comes in the company of the Great Bear.”

“Good! my brother will act as becomes a chief. Stronghand will not detain him longer.”

The young Indian bowed his head in assent, leapt backwards, and disappeared in the thicket whence he had emerged, with such rapidity, that if the grass had not continued to undulate after his departure, his apparition would have seemed like a dream.

"We can now start again," the hunter said to the Major-domo, who was utterly confounded.

"Let us go!" the latter answered mechanically.

"Well," answered Stronghand, "do you now believe that you have anything to fear among the Papazos?"

"Excuse me; as you said. I was a madman to fear it."

They crossed the plain, following a wild beast track which, after numberless windings, reached a ford, and in about an hour they arrived at the bank of the river. Twelve Papazo Indians dressed in their war-paint, and mounted on magnificent horses, were standing motionless and in single file in front of the ford. So soon as they perceived the two travellers, they uttered loud shouts and dashed forward to meet them, firing their guns, brandishing their weapons, and waving their white female buffalo robes, which, by the bye, only the most renowned sachems of the nation have the right to wear. The two white men, on their side, spurred their horses, responding to the shouts of the Indians, and firing their guns. All at once, at a signal from one of the chiefs, all the horsemen stopped, and arranged themselves round the travellers, to act as their escort. The whole party crossed the ford and entered the village, amid the deafening shouts of the women and children, with which were inharmoniously blended the bark of dogs, the hoarse notes of the shells, and the shrill sounds of the *chichikouès*.

FOR THE YOUNG OF THE HOUSEHOLD.
IN COZY NOOK.

HAPPY DAYS, NOT IDLE ONES.

HOLIDAY time has come again and we are off to the sea-side or the country. I fancy that my young friends will like to know how a party of boys and girls managed to spend a month last autumn in a very quiet little village on the coast usefully, as well as healthfully. Of course our friend James was one of our number, and he did not forget to take his microscope, besides several other preparations for his natural history studies. Each of the children old enough to write clearly kept a note book, or as they called it, a Diary, in which they put down a short account of each day's doings, what they saw worth remembering and especially what they found worth observation. I will give one or two extracts from these diaries presently. Our preparations for this attempt to learn something, as well as to enjoy ourselves, consisted of some good useful books of reference for such things as are sure to be met with at the sea-side; and each young naturalist wishing to follow up a special subject was provided with a book on his or her own pursuit, and any desirable implement. Thus, two of our elder girls wishing to make a collection of wild plants, to dry them and learn something about them, had with them "Bentham's Hand-book of British Botany," several quires of Botanical drying paper, enclosed between two thick boards, 16 or 17 inches long, and 10 or 12 wide, tightly strapped together with two strong leather straps, and a little pocket magnifying lens. The boys think Geology a charming study, so they had their hammer and a chisel and a linen knapsack each, with a strap to hang it over their shoulders to hold such fossils as they found. A good strong pickle bottle or two with tough handles made of string, were smuggled into the hamper containing the cake and groceries; and were found very useful at low tide in securing some of the beautiful creatures which inhabit the rock pools. So much has been written about the flowers of the ocean; the sea anemones and their companions, the curious star fishes, hermit crabs and such like interesting creatures, that I will not say more about them, than that we very soon established a colony of them in a large footbath, which was placed on the balcony outside the window. Our geologist's hammer here stood us in good stead, for with it we knocked off at low tide, pieces of rock on which the bright green sea-weeds *Ulva latissima* and *Ulva Linza* were growing profusely; and other pieces on which the beautiful sea anemones *Actinia crassicornis* and *coriacea* had already established themselves. These pieces of rock were carefully removed to the foot-pan which was filled up with sea-water; and very soon the inhabitants began to feel themselves quite at home; and to show themselves to our admiring gaze as pleasantly as though they had been in one of their native pools. Some adventurous crabs in making the tour of their abode, appeared to find it rather confined; and became so troublesome in their objections to their new residence that we were glad to get rid of them, and to retain only their more peaceable but not less amusing cousins, the hermit crabs, in our colony.

Our great temptation to bring home fresh inhabitants for our vivarium had to be resisted; for like all other apartments when overcrowded it became

unhealthy, and our favourites pined and died in consequence; so we had to learn by experience that we must content ourselves with just so many living creatures as could find enough oxygen in our bath to exist comfortably. The sea-weed soon began to grow nicely, and thus to give out oxygen to the water, as all plants do in growing—this is why in vivariums where plants are, the water does not require changing, but will support animal life. Our youngest little ones were charmed to peep into this curious little world of life. The expanded actinæ seemed like lovely living flowers; the sea-egg (*Echinus*), with its spiney round shell, adhering to the sides of the vessel with its almost invisible suckers, and the transparent shrimps darting along were an endless source of wonder and delight. One day an unfortunate hermit crab was found in a pool with a broken shell. James took him out of his dilapidated habitation, and put him into a basin with several nice whelk shells, forming most tempting mansions for a houseless wanderer like himself. It was the funniest thing in the world to see him peep into first one shell, and then into another, to see which would suit him best. At last the thought struck James to take out all the shells but one, and then to introduce another houseless hermit crab to dispute possession with him. The battle that followed was most amusing; each house hunter endeavouring to prevent the other from being the first to gain possession. At last the most active or the most wily quickly turned the shell over and popped his ugly unprotected tail into the opening thus exposed, which he effectually closed with his head and throat, holding firmly on by one of his claws, and apparently winking in derision at his defeated opponent. What might have become of the defenceless and disappointed wanderer I cannot say; but I soon afterwards saw him comfortably settled in a house of his own, which James had compassionately provided, and which he dragged about on his back as long as he lived with us. The fishermen on the coast say that the hermit crab (*Pagurus Bernhardus*) does not always wait for an empty tenement to present itself; but that when he wants a new house, either from accident, or because he has outgrown his own, he seizes on his victim—a whelk, for instance, or any other peaceable inhabitant of a pleasant looking shell—kills him without mercy, eats him out of house and home, and then proceeds to occupy the vacant residence.

But to our diaries which shall form the texts of what I may say here. I find on opening one kept by a little girl of ten years old.

“August 10th:—Last night the sea was all on fire; we were just going to bed when papa called out to say we might come on to the beach with him, and there were lines of bright light all along the waves. James and I threw in handfuls of stones and pebbles, and the light shot out brighter—almost like fireworks. Papa called it *phosphorescence*, and to-day we saw all about it under the microscope, and read about it in Mr. Gosse’s book. It turns out not to be fire after all, but a curious little jelly-fish called *Noctiluca*. Emily ran back for her little wooden pail and got some of the water where the light was. This we put by till the morning and then we saw under the microscope one of the tiny little jelly-fishes which cause the brightness.” The diary goes on to describe this interesting creature; but as our young naturalist is not quite correct in every particular we will not follow her further just now.

The history of the creatures so common on our coasts known as jelly-

fishes is a very interesting and curious one. They are of many different sizes and appearances; from the large *Cyanea capillata*, the stinging sea-nettle as it is called, to the tiny little transparent floating globes known to naturalists as *Cydippe pileus*. These creatures which appear at first sight so much alike differ very considerably from each other in structure; and by recent naturalists are very widely separated. More or less they are all luminous. The little *Noctiluca* which we found so abundantly in the water after the phosphorescent appearance of the waves is not a true jelly-fish. To the naked eye it appears not larger than a pin's head, but under the microscope it has a very pretty appearance.

It resembles in structure an animalcule, and in reality belongs to the same class of animals, which rank lower in the scale of Nature than that under which the jelly-fishes or *Medusæ* are placed. Professor Huxley describes this curious little creature as having the form of a peach, about 160th part of an inch in diameter, perfectly transparent, and with a sort of hanging stalk, or tentacle, waving to and fro as it moves about, depending from its mouth. We usually found the sea crowded with these little creatures after the phosphorescent appearance; and with them would be sure to appear multitudes of other transparent beings, *Medusæ* of various kinds, all of which, doubtless, assist to illuminate the waves.

"Oh, look what a lovely little glass drop I have found," cried a little man, spade in hand, as he came toiling up the bank on which we were sitting. Fortunately a glass bottle containing water for sketching was close at hand, which was emptied of its contents at once, filled with fresh sea water, and the "Crystal drop" popped into it. There it floated about in the most graceful manner, the long threads gradually uncoiled themselves and waved about as if to guide its movements. "A Berœe," cried our young naturalists; "see how the sunshine changes its colours, and how curiously it is fringed with bands of tiny hairs or cilia, which keep moving to and fro." Nothing can be more beautiful than the varied movements of this elegant little creature. These threads or tentacles seem to have the power of propelling the little crystal sphere to which they are attached rapidly through the water; of gently and gracefully suspending it midway; or of anchoring it safely at the bottom of a vessel. They appear to be almost as elastic as india-rubber; for they can be drawn in and stretched out in a moment; and the numberless little threads which are attached to the main filament seem to act both as delicate paddles and as fishing organs for the capture of food. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;" and truly the recollection of the bright flashing colours of this crystal sphere, with the sunlight glancing through it—its elegant wavy movements and exquisite delicacy, is pleasant and refreshing in the midst of winter work and city smoke. Notwithstanding the refinement of our lovely little Berœes, they have voracious appetites, and eagerly devour minute crustaceans and such like game that may come within the reach of their long tentacles.

Mr. Patterson who has done so much to instruct and interest young folks in Natural History by his little books on Zoology, and by his beautiful plates which should be hung up in every school-room, gives us a very amusing account of a captive Berœe he had in his possession.

One year we were in the Isle of Wight, and there we found other forms of *Medusæ* than those which frequent the Eastern coasts. The lovely little

Zurris neglecta is like a tiny little bell, with an elegant white fringe around its edge, and a bright red coral bead in its centre.

The *Sarsia prolifica*, so funnily described by that most humorous and genial of all naturalists, the late Professor Edward Forbes, is a remarkable instance of the curious way in which the young ones bud or sprout off from their parent Medusæ at certain seasons of the year. "Fancy an elephant," says this fun-loving philosopher; "with a number of little elephants sprouting from his shoulders and legs; bunches of tusked monsters hanging epaulette-fashion from his flanks in every stage of advancement: here a young pearly dam almost shapeless, there one more advanced, but as yet all ears and eyes. On the right shoulder a youthful Chuny, with head, trunk, and toes, but no legs, and a shapeless body; on the left an infant elephant, better grown and struggling to get away, but his tail not sufficiently organized as yet to permit of liberty and free action."

When Professor Forbes wrote his book on the Medusæ much remained to be worked out and discovered of their nature and organism. He threw out hints of their probable nature, which have been followed up by later naturalists; and no one would have rejoiced more than himself, had he lived to see that his own conclusions were proved not to be final, but the mere beginning of discoveries which had to be carried on. Until lately the Medusæ, or Jelly-fishes, have been regarded as complete and perfect animals in themselves, and although we have long known that the tiny little Berœes and such like are by no means the young of the larger and more formidable jelly-fishes, we have scarcely known how to account for the production of the young, or to recognise them in their earliest stage of growth. Frequently during our stay at the sea-side whole swarms of the larger jelly-fishes would fill the sea, and be thrown up dead on the shore. In bathing they were often very troublesome, and several times we experienced their stinging powers on our uncovered limbs. They were objects of interest to our little inquirers, both when swimming gracefully about in the open sea and when lying dead on the beach, like a mass of transparent jelly, with a white mark like a cross in their centre. This cross is produced by the eggs which are thus carried about by the creature, whose history is even yet a subject of curiosity and interest.

Experiments and observations have clearly proved that the larger Medusæ are produced from a little fixed polyp, known formerly to naturalists by the name of *Hydra tuba*. This discovery was made, not from observations on the Medusæ themselves: but from carefully watching the habits of the *Hydra tuba*, which at first sight appears like an ordinary colourless polyp, surrounded with tentacles like spun glass, which spread out on every side seeking for food for their voracious owner. The animal is stationary; generally found firmly fixed to a rock or the back of a shell. If well fed and vigorous, at certain seasons of the year the *Hydra tuba* begins to show signs of uneasiness and change; its body elongates, and in a short time numerous folds or divisions make their appearance, dividing the body into rings or segments. These become more and more distinct, resembling almost a pile of soup plates or saucers. At last the uppermost ring begins to writhe and struggle about, and with sundry tugs and pulls, manages to escape from its companions, and launches into the surrounding water a free and perfect Medusa. Others follow in rapid succession until

the *Hydra tuba* is left unincumbered by these infant Medusæ, which grow larger and perform their circle of life, generate eggs in large quantities, which in their turn produce not *Medusæ*, but the *Hydræ tuba*. These eggs have cilia attached to them, swim about, and are likewise luminous. The *Hydra tuba*, however, is a singular instance of a double mode of development. Not only are its young produced from these eggs of the Medusæ, but it has the power of budding off perfect young individuals of its own kind from its substance, just as we have described in the Sarsia. This mode of production is called *gemmation*.

Although this history of the Medusæ takes some time to give, it must not be imagined that we "saw nothing but jelly-fishes." Every day something fresh turned up, and in seeking for materials for the diaries our young folks were constantly alive to anything new. It would be impossible for me to tell you even one-half the interesting objects which came under our notice. The pebbles on the beach, the fossils in the cliffs, the sea plants growing on the green benthills, as the Suffolk people call the sandy mossy grass close to the sea, each would form a chapter of itself; but, in order to select another text for a short history, let us betake ourselves again to the diaries. We will open one kept by our little sea-weed collector—

"In looking for sea-weeds to-day, I found a great many things which I thought were sea-weeds at first, and I tried to dry them in the same way. They were much thicker, however, and would not dry so easily, and I was told they were zoophytes, or animals, not plants at all. One of them is quite fleshy, and is like a sponge, only very small. I find in Patterson's book that it really is a sponge."

Well done, little naturalist, older and wiser heads than yours have been puzzled by the plant-like appearance of many of the zoophytes, and surely the history of a sponge, from its first little gemmule, to its death and decay in the interior of a flinty sepulchre, formed by its own substance, would not be a wearisome lesson. Almost all branches of natural history study are connected together, and in order to understand any one thoroughly some general knowledge of others is needed. Thus our geologist boys, who, at first, seemed to care for nothing but their fossils and the strata in which they were found, soon begun to feel that, to know anything of the old shells and remains of animals which they dug out of the hard rock or soft sandy cliffs, they must have learned something of the nature and habits of the creatures now living on our shores. In many instances they found shells and remains of animals buried deeply in the sandy rock, exactly resembling those which their sisters brought up every day from the beach; but so far inland were those remains discovered, that they could not have been left by the same sea which now washes our coast. This circumstance gave rise to a good deal of inquiry and conversation. A large whelk shell, *Fusus antiquorum*, which they constantly dug out of the crag cliffs seemed to resemble exactly the whelk shells which filled the little baskets of the pet baby boy, as he toddled up to show his treasures; but on comparison—No, they were very different. The old fossil whelk has its ear turned in exactly the reverse direction from the recent one lying on our shores. Well, then, comes the question whence came all these shells and remains of animals? Ages and ages ago, before God made man on the earth, the sea rolled on as it does now, doing the same wonderful work it never ceases to carry on; heaving

here islands and mountains, filling up new valleys in old continents, and large tracts of land. All this mighty work has gone on noiselessly, and with no hurry or bustle, century after century, and now it is going on so gradually that we scarcely notice it, but not the less sure and certain is it. Animals, great and small, lived in those times, and died, leaving their remains behind them on the earth. Great whales gamboled about in those old Suffolk seas, and left their huge bones there. Those old seas rolled over the land, and in course of time deposited the solid matters they contained—shells, bones of great whales, the teeth of mighty sharks, and even the remains of soft sponges are found, now that the sea has once more left the land dry, and gone to cover some other tract of earth. Where we spent our pleasant summer holiday was once the bottom of a great ocean, where sea monsters played and roamed about, and creatures as lovely as those we now find in our rock pools had a happy existence. This we know from finding their remains deeply buried in the earth. Their hard parts still remain as monuments for future generations; but the softer parts, and the delicate tender creatures with no skeletons leave not a trace behind.

I said that we found sponges, or rather their horny skeletons, occasionally, not lying buried in the earth; but as I said, in flinty sepulchres. All boys love to put forth their strength; and if they have not a proper and healthful demand for it where it may harmlessly be exercised, they are often tempted to do mischief. The geological hammers must break something, and as they certainly are not meant to destroy chairs and tables, try what they will do with the stones on the beach. Crack! crack! here is a yellow looking flint, and here is one quite black; in the centre of one is a tiny hole with a little sponge almost filling up the cavity. This discovery led us to crack as many flints as we could, and in many of them we found either sponges, or the remains of shell fishes, sea-urchins, or the like. To understand this, a great many things have to be considered. How did the animal remains get inside the flints? and how do the flints get on to the beach? Where do they come from? I have said that the sea is the great agent of all changes on the surface of the earth. If we could cut down into the earth for some miles we should discover layers of different kinds of earth or clay; these are called strata by geologists, and have all been at one time the bottoms of great seas or rivers. These strata do not all lie regularly one at the top of the other; for they are often displaced, and sometimes one appears at the top and sometimes another. In Scotland and some other places, the oldest and first-formed rocks, in which no animal remains are found, comes out high above all others, evidently having been thrown up by some great convulsion. In many places in England the uppermost strata is composed of chalk. I have often seen it, and have cut fossils out of it, where they are preserved very perfectly. Any one who has looked at a chalk cliff at Dover, or Ramsgate, or elsewhere, will have seen lines of black-looking flint running along them. It is from this flint-bearing stratum of the chalk that all flints come. Chalk is the original birthplace of flints, and they are formed in this way. The great sea which left the chalk behind it, contained numbers of creatures, such as sea-eggs (echini), sponges, and shells, besides quantities of carbonate of lime or chalk. These were left in the chalk, when it gradually sank to the bottom of the sea. For ages this process of depositing from a chalky sea went on. The chalk, fall-

ing with the animals, formed a sort of mould all round them. Either the same sea, or another which afterwards flowed over the chalk, contained, as all salt water does, small quantities of *silica* or quartz in solution. This gradually filtered through the chalk into the moulds formed around the shells, sponges, and such like, century after century, until it became hard and solid, as we find it now, a mass of flint. The long lines seen in the chalk cliffs are doubtless occasioned by a crack or fissure in the chalk becoming filled up in the same manner. These pieces of flint, large or small, that we find on almost every coast, have been washed by recent seas out of the chalk. Some of them contain remains of the original little object which formed the mould; others have no such interior. The yellow or brown flints have been coloured since they left their chalk beds. We found many such in Suffolk, which had come in contact with the iron which is extensively present in clays and the red crag of the district.

In our quiet sea-side abode our attention was often attracted to boys and girls of all ages and sizes—and women too, who seemed to be busy picking up stones from the beach and carrying them along in baskets. They did not pick up any stones, but were careful only to select those of a certain form and appearance. These they called *coprolites*, and our own little party easily learnt to distinguish them from pebbles; and whenever the little baskets were not filled with pretty shells or cornelians, they served to hold these curious brown-looking nodules which were often added to the store of some shoeless little collector, who said he could get money for them. This excited the curiosity of our young folks, and we had to find out all about them. These coprolites, as they are called, are supposed by some to be the excretions of gigantic animals—whales, and other creatures. They contain large quantities of phosphate of lime, as do all bones; and this material is of the greatest service to farmers, as manure to their fields. The hard solid pieces have to be ground up finely in a powerful mill and mixed with sulphuric acid; and then the powder is spread on the surface, and the earth, by the aid of rain, takes up the super-phosphate of lime of which it is composed, and the wheat and other grains are nourished by it.

A better name for these nodules than coprolite would be phosphatite, inasmuch as it is very doubtful whether the generally-received theory of their origin be a true one. It is more probable that they are the remains of a huge sepulchre of whales, sharks, and other creatures, which having been broken up by the sea which deposited them, assume the appearance of this water-washed nodules as they are dug out of the Red Crag. A short time ago many poor people on the Suffolk coast got a good deal of money by collecting them and selling them to farmers. Lately, however, their sale has greatly diminished, for in Cambridgeshire a better kind of material has been found, containing more phosphate of lime and less iron, and this is preferred in the making of the manure known as supersphosphate. My space is filled up, and I have not told you one-half the pleasant and interesting things we learned during our happy days in Suffolk. Idle days they were not; and so pleasantly were they employed that when they were over they seemed to have flown away far too quickly; and I believe that every one of our eight boys and girls came home happier, better and wiser, than they went, and with fresh thoughts in their heads and materials in their collections to supply many a winter's evening conversation and employment.

THE ST. JAMES'S MAGAZINE.

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THE MID-DAY SUN.

BY CAPTAIN DRAYSON, R.A.



OUR source of light and heat, the ripener of our fruits and crops, the great vivifier of nature, THE SUN, stands pre-eminent amongst the orbs of heaven. No star, planet, or satellite can for an instant compete in power or splendour with our mid-day sun — which, as it first lights the various portions of our globe, calls into activity men, beasts, and birds, and seems to bring to life all that, during its temporary absence, was rehearsing death.

In the midst of our boasted knowledge, how little do we really know! For there is our glorious sun, to which we are so much indebted, and yet we are left in ignorance as regards the means by which it gives its heat

and light. We know not the cause of the rotation, or turning round of so vast a sphere; and we can but observe the fact that changes occur on the sun's surface, but of the result or cause of these we know nothing. Thus, in connection with the principal sphere of that system in which our earth is but an inferior member, we have yet to discover the very elements of

these laws, which are the most important to every living being, whose material existence is to be passed in some one of the worlds which constitute that which is termed the solar system.

Confining our attention to the sun alone, we will first speak of that which is really known in connection with it, and then refer to those matters which cannot, according to our present means of gaining knowledge, be accounted for with any degree of certainty, but which will probably long remain subjects for speculation or conjecture.

Let us now suppose that we have taken up our position in any locality suitable for making observations—Brighton, for instance; we should observe that to our south, and extending nearly to the east and west, there was a fine open sea, and all the conditions suitable for making observations connected with the heavenly bodies, such as an uninterrupted view, a clear sky, and a sea horizon, &c.

A few preliminary steps having been taken, we should then easily comprehend the apparent movements of the sun, and could understand the cause of these.

The preliminary arrangements would be simply as follow :—

1st. To ascertain which was the exact south point on the horizon.

2nd. To imagine a line to be drawn from this south point, up the sky, to that spot which was exactly overhead.

3rd. To consider the line which commenced at the south point of the horizon and terminated above us, to be divided into ninety equal parts, each of which we should term a degree.

4th. To consider the sea line, or horizon, to be divided horizontally into degrees, counting each way from the south point, so that south-east would be forty-five degrees from the south; east, ninety degrees; and west also ninety degrees, which would be counted from the south.

Having considered the horizon and a portion of the sky to be thus subdivided, we can refer to the position of any celestial body at once, either when it is setting or rising; for we could say, for example, that the sun rose sixty degrees east from the south, and set sixty degrees west of south; whereas, if we had not divided the horizon into degrees, we could not have defined the points of sunrise or sunset: and any person, with the aid of even a piece of cardboard, may make a circle, and divide this so as to indicate where the various degrees should be.

We will suppose that we are at Brighton on the 1st of July, and observing the rising sun. The sun would first become visible in a north-easterly direction, and if we measured the number of degrees from the south to that point on the horizon at which we first saw the sun, we should find these to amount to about one hundred and twenty-eight; that is, the sun would rise about thirty-eight degrees north of east.

On the 1st of July, during the early morning, the sun would rise very rapidly above the horizon; but the nearer the time approached to noon, the more nearly would the sun's course be parallel to the horizon, until at

the instant when the sun crossed that imaginary line from the south point to the spot above our heads, it would be neither rising from nor falling towards the horizon, but would be moving horizontally.

When exactly south, the sun has attained its greatest height above the horizon, and half its daily course has been accomplished. On the 1st of July, at Brighton, it would be at noon nearly sixty-two degrees and a half above the sea horizon, therefore slightly more than two-thirds of the distance between the horizon and the point overhead.

It is a very singular fact, but one for which I can vouch from personal experience, that out of a dozen persons who may be asked where the sun will be at noon, at least half that number will either be unable to answer, or will positively affirm that it *is directly overhead*.

From whence this popular idea arose of the sun being directly overhead at noon in England, it is difficult to say; but that such an opinion does exist I have frequently proved.

For a reason which we will shortly give, it is impossible for the sun ever to be seen higher above the horizon, from any part of England, than sixty-three degrees and a half, which places it at very little more than *two-thirds* of the distance between the horizon and the *zenith*, as the point overhead is termed.

From London the sun could never be seen higher in the heavens than sixty-two degrees; whilst from Edinburgh it would never appear more than fifty-seven degrees. We will, however, now return to Brighton, and will observe the remaining course of the sun during the day.

As soon as the sun had passed the south, it would begin to fall, gradually at first, but towards evening very rapidly; until at length it would set about thirty-eight degrees north of west.

If we examined the course of the sun during a winter month, from the same locality, we should find a very marked difference from that just described. We will take the 1st of January, for instance, and trace the sun's daily journey.

The sun would now rise above the horizon from a point only about fifty-two degrees east of south. It would attain at mid-day a height of only about sixteen degrees and a quarter; so that, instead of its being at mid-day more than two-thirds of the distance between the horizon and zenith, it would on January 1st be not quite one-fifth of the distance: hence a vast difference takes place between these two periods.

The following rules, however, hold good throughout the whole of Great Britain as well as Europe, in connection with the sun's movements. From the 21st of December until the 21st of June the sun will be higher each day at noon, and will remain longer above the horizon; it rises each day from a point more and more distant from the south, and sets at a point also more distant from it. During March, the sun rises each day about its own diameter, or a little more, to the eastward of the point from which it rose on the preceding day, and sets similarly more to the west. But

during the earlier part of January, and the latter part of May, it does not vary more than half its diameter.

In January also the daily height of the sun above the horizon at noon varies very slightly at the commencement of the month, but increases as the spring approaches, until during March the *rate* is the greatest. After the 21st of March the daily *rate* goes on decreasing, although the sun still rises until the 21st of June. The following table will show how high the sun is at mid-day in London on the 1st and 15th of every month during the year. The term "about" is used in consequence of leap-year causing a slight difference from year to year; but the data given hold good for 1862 and every fourth year afterwards, whilst but a slight difference will be produced by other causes.

The least height of the sun above the horizon in London is about fifteen degrees and a quarter, and this is on the shortest day, viz., the 21st of December. Then its height at various dates will be as shown below:—

Date.	Degrees above the horizon at mid-day in London, about
January 1st	15½ degrees.
15th	17½ „
February 1st	21½ „
15th	26 „
March 1st	31 „
15th	36½ „
April 1st	43 „
15th	48½ „
May 1st	53½ „
15th	57½ „
June 1st	60½ „
21st	62 „

After this date the height decreases as follows:—

Date.	Height at mid-day, about
July 15th	60 degrees.
August 15th	52½ „
September 15th	41½ „
October 15th	30 „
November 15th	20 „
December 1st	17 „

It will be seen from the first list how much more rapidly the sun rises in March than during any other month, for from the 1st of March to the 15th there is a rise of five and a half degrees, and from the 1st of March to the 1st of April one of twelve degrees. Yet from the 1st of January to the 1st of February there is only an increase in the sun's altitude of six degrees. This is the cause of the rapid increase in the length of the days during

March and the early portion of April; for during those periods the summer seems to come quickly, hence the days to “draw out” very perceptibly.

The latitude of London is about fifty-one degrees and a half, north, and every additional degree of latitude would decrease the sun’s greatest height by one degree; therefore we could, from the above table, find the height of the sun for any other localities.

For instance, the latitude of Edinburgh is fifty-six degrees north—correctly speaking, fifty-five degrees fifty-seven minutes, or about four and a half degrees more than London. Hence, on the 15th of October, the sun’s height at noon at Edinburgh would be only twenty-five and a half degrees.

The reason why the height of the sun varies on different days, and at different times of the year, is because the earth moves round the sun in a sort of up and down manner; thus, if we consider the north pole of the earth to be up, then the earth is *below* the sun from March to September (from *M* to *S*, see diagram), but above it during the winter months.

The following sketch will aid to explain the cause of the change in the height of the sun during summer and winter :—

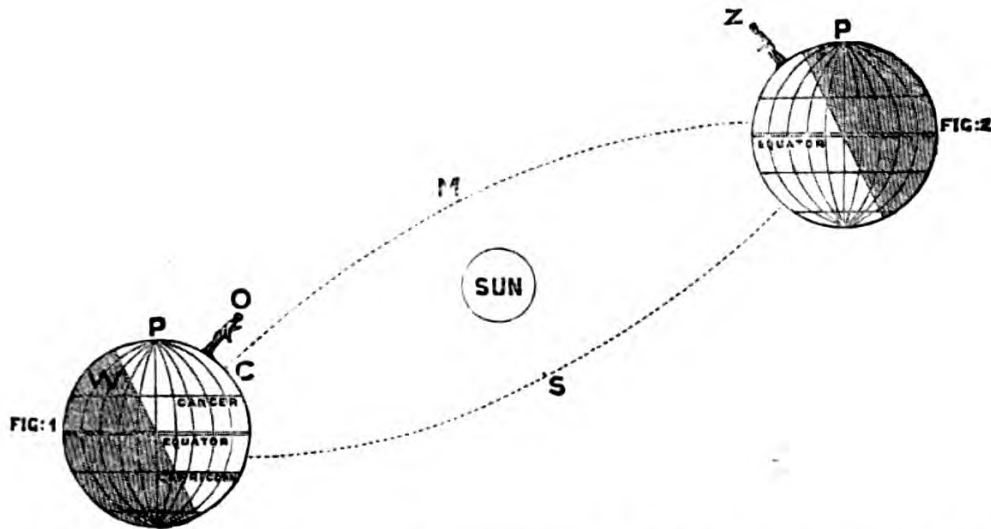


Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 represent the positions of the earth during June and December. *O* represents a person standing on the earth’s surface at noon in June, in a locality such as London. To him the sun would appear very high up at mid-day, and when it set in the evening it would apparently have passed round until it came to the mark *W*, on the line between light and darkness.

Let us now examine Fig. 2, which is the position of the earth during December, it having moved, since June, round the line past *S*. On Fig. 2, *Z* represents the position of a person on the earth at noon in London, just as *O* did in Fig. 1; but we see that the sun is now far away from the point overhead, and is really low down; it is, in fact, only about fifteen degrees and a quarter above the horizon, as before mentioned. Here, then, we see the cause of the sun’s change in height from summer to winter, and hence the cause of the seasons.

We will now speak of but one more fact connected with the relative position of the sun, if viewed from various parts of the earth, and we will then show the *use* of the information which we have endeavoured to sketch.

Referring to Fig. 1, we will suppose that the person at *O* were to travel until he reached the point *C*. He would, at *C*, have the sun exactly over his head at noon, and as he passed on towards the equator, the sun would be visible at mid-day to his *north*.

By simply reversing the argument, we may perceive the *use* of thus knowing the sun's position. For if we said that on the 21st of June a person found the sun at mid-day exactly over his head, we should immediately know the locality from which the person had made the observation. So also, if we know that at this date the sun were two, three, or four degrees from the zenith, we should know that the person thus situated was two, three, or four degrees from the tropic of Cancer; and if the sun were north of his zenith, then he would be to the south of the tropic, but if to the south, then he would be north of it.

It is by this means that the position of a ship is found on the pathless ocean, when the nearest land may be distant five hundred miles, and when no other sign or guide remains but the sun, moon, and stars. The process is so very simple that we may venture to describe it, even in the pages of an unscientific periodical.

In the first place, the position of the sun is foretold from year to year, and printed in an almanack, which states that on such a day the sun will be so many degrees north of the equator, that is, at mid-day it will be vertical at all places which are that number of degrees north of the equator; on the next day it will be so many degrees, and so on. A person in a ship observes with an instrument, and finds how many degrees the sun is at mid-day from the point over his head. These degrees, added to the degrees that the sun is from the equator, will give the latitude of the ship.

Some other details are requisite, which need not here be mentioned, it being merely our object to show the popular use of those facts which we have endeavoured to explain.

In our article entitled "Space," a slight outline was given of the method of obtaining the distance of the sun. No sooner is its distance from the earth found than we can also find the size of the sun: the process is as follows.

The actual diameter of the sun, in degrees or parts of a degree, is measured with an instrument, and is found to be rather more than half a degree. The distance of the sun from the earth is known, it being about ninety-five million miles. Knowing these two facts, we can then draw on paper two lines, which make an angle with each other equal to the angular diameter of the sun, and if these lines be ninety-five inches in length, we should know that each inch would represent a million miles; then if we

measured how far apart the two lines were at the ninety-fifth inch, we should discover the actual size of the sun. For if the lines were one inch apart, then one million miles would be the sun's diameter, and so on.

Of course, the problem can also and more accurately be solved by calculation, but we have given the most simple method.

It is found by accurate observation and calculation that the size of the sun is immense, its diameter being no less than eight hundred and eighty thousand miles, whilst that of the earth is less than eight thousand. Thus, if the earth's size were represented by a common billiard ball, the sun's corresponding size could only be shown by a ball that was eighteen feet high.

The reader, therefore, must not judge of the relative size of the earth and sun from the diagram on page 143, which is merely drawn, out of proportion, in order to show the earth distinctly.

We have mentioned that the sun is distant from the earth about ninety-five million miles; but this distance is not the same at all times of the year, in consequence of the sun not being in the exact centre of the earth's annual course. The earth is nearest to the sun during the first two or three days of January, and furthest off during the early part of July, the difference in distance being nearly three million two hundred thousand miles, the actual distances being—

Early in January 93,280,945 miles;

Early in July 96,478,967 miles.

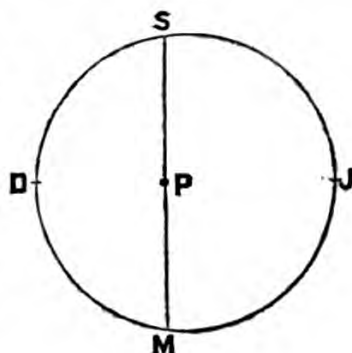
In consequence of the distance of the sun from the earth varying at various times, the apparent size of the sun also varies, because the nearer he is the larger must he appear. Therefore, when accurate observations are requisite, and the sun is the celestial object observed, it is necessary to know the angular size of the sun, in order to correct these observations. All such details are supplied from the Observatory at Greenwich, where the best instruments are used, and where the most experienced observers lend their aid to the cause of science.

In consequence of the sun not being in the centre of the earth's annual course, a difference is produced in the length of the seasons; because, when nearest to the sun, the earth travels more rapidly in its course than when farthest off. This increase in speed is due to the same law that causes a weight tied to the end of a string to oscillate more quickly the shorter the string may be.

In the following diagram, suppose *P* the position of the sun, which is not in the centre of the circle, *D*, *M*, *J*, *S*, round which the earth travels each year.

The distance from *S* round by *D* to *M*, is less than the remaining portion, viz., from *M* round by *J* to *S*.

Now the letters *S*, *D*, *M*, *J*, stand for September, December, March, and June, and



represent about the position of the earth, as regards the sun, during those periods.

From what we have said about the earth's speed being greatest when nearest the sun, and the distance S, D, M , being less than M, J, S , it is evident that the earth passes over the first-named distance the more quickly. Thus the period from autumn round to spring is a shorter one than that from spring round to autumn. But this only holds good as regards the northern half of the world; because, when it is winter to us, it is summer in Australia, and *vice versa*.

If, then, we take the duration of a year at about $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, we find that during only 178 days and about two-thirds the sun is in the southern, whilst he remains 186 days and more than a half in the northern half of the world.

To examine the sun with a telescope, it is necessary to protect the eye from the burning rays, which would otherwise blind us; for the telescope acts like a burning-glass. The best and most common protection is to have a very dark-coloured glass, which can be fixed on at the eye end of the telescope. Any optician can easily supply this article, and we can then observe the mid-day sun without difficulty. For my own part, I prefer a very dark yellow glass to one of any other colour, as I find long and continued examination of the sun, through a yellow medium, less distressing to the eye than when the medium is red or blue. It may be that this is due to the same important cause which renders yellow light less harmful to photographing processes than is either blue or red-tinged light.

A small piece of coloured glass may be even lashed on to the telescope, so as to protect the eye from the glare, if no regular eye-piece be at hand; but to attempt to smoke the object-glass of a telescope, is a proceeding fraught with danger; several glasses having, to my knowledge, been thus cracked, and the telescope consequently rendered temporarily useless.

When using even moderate magnifying powers, we soon perceive that the surface of the sun, which appeared to the unaided eye so universally brilliant, is really rather foul and speckled,—a kind of network of dullish lines and streaks extends over the whole visible body of our great luminary, whilst on various parts of his surface there are groups of spots which are or appear to be quite black. These spots are nearly always similar in their general appearance, consisting, usually, of a very dark nucleus, or centre, round which there extends a fringe-work of a lighter and more subtle description. There seems to be a regular outline between the dark centre and the exterior fringe, the two not shading, as it were, into one another, but a distinct boundary being defined and perceptible.

During the month of June, 1862, there were several groups of spots, some of which were of large size. On the 9th of June, the following group was the most important, and when examined by the aid of a large telescope, showed that the principal spot was of enormous size. The form

of this spot was irregular, and we cannot, therefore, correctly speaking, give its diameter, but the distance across it, in the broadest part, was fully thirty thousand miles. It was very much darker than the other spots, and its surrounding fringe extended farther than that of either of the other spots, which formed the entire group. The following diagram shows its form and appearance.

These spots upon the sun serve to indicate that our great central body *rotates upon an axis*; that is, it turns round just in the same manner as does the earth; for the various spots appear upon one side of the sun, pass across his centre, and disappear upon the other side; whilst, after a time, they reappear, and move as before. These changes are exactly those which would occur if the spots were upon the sun's surface, and the sun turned round. And as we find that this rotation is general throughout the solar system, there is no difficulty in believing that the sun, vast body as he is, yet rotates like a planet.



If we were to note the relative position of any one spot, we should find that it occupied a period of rather more than twenty-seven days in appearing to depart from and to return to the same position. During this period the earth moves over a considerable portion of its orbit, and we should, therefore, in our second position, observe the spot from a different place from that at which we first noted it. Thus we have to make a reduction from the twenty-seven days already mentioned, and this gives about twenty-five days nine hours for one single rotation of the sun,—this rotation taking place in the same direction as that of the earth, and of every other planet in the solar system. There seems to be no law of regularity connected with the time of year at which the greatest number of spots are seen on the sun; sometimes it is during our winter, and sometimes during the summer, that they seem to accumulate in the greatest quantity. It is already becoming generally believed that the greatest number of spots appear at intervals of ten years, while the least number are seen half-way between these periods. Thus, in 1828, 1837, and 1848, there were very many groups of spots; so also in 1858. But this assumed law seems liable to variations; for during the present year there have been very many large spots, visible almost with the naked eye. The fact is, however, that we as yet know little or nothing in connection with the laws, or even the causes of these spots; we having merely collected certain imperfect data, and attempted to frame theories which are scarcely tenable half a dozen years after they have been formed.

We do know that every sun-spot is surrounded by a light sort of shade, called an "umbra," the boundary between the two being always distinct: that the spots gradually increase, and then as gradually disappear; the dark centre being the first to become imperceptible, the umbra the last to do so. It is also well ascertained to be an extremely rare phenomenon to find any spots beyond lines which would extend about one-third of the way from a

central line on the sun. Thus they exist merely in what we may call the equatorial regions, but never in the high latitudes on the sun.

Great and powerful, however, as our mid-day sun appears, he is so to us merely because he is comparatively near. Each twinkling star that illumines the midnight sky is a sun, giving out heat and light to an attendant family of planets. Many of these distant orbs are far larger than our central sphere; some being so much so as to make our sun, by comparison, dwindle into insignificance.

Although the sun would extend, from side to side, nearly four times the distance that the moon is from our earth, yet the bright star, Sirius, is a sun compared to which our sun is but a satellite, though in our small planetary coterie he is indeed a lion.

Some systems in the universe are possessed of two, three, or four suns, one of which, however, is always the principal, and around it the others revolve, just as do the planets around our sun. In all cases, however, the movement of the attendant star or stars is slow, thus showing that the various members must be distant from each other. In some instances, the attendant star, or second sun, revolves around the primary sun in thirty or forty years, but in other cases as much as two hundred years are occupied in this movement.

In our own system we see a very singular variation in the construction of a world; the planet Saturn being an unique example of a planet furnished with a ring. Thus we are in a measure prepared to find further variations from that order of things which seems to us usual. Yet, in spite of this preparation, it is difficult to avoid some feelings of wonder and admiration if we travel in imagination to some distant system, and picture to our minds a strange world, strange beings, and strange customs,—some created beings, probably furnished with additional powers and senses, compared with which our limited capacity and fine senses are weak and imperfect. In some of these spheres we should perceive in their heavens two, three, or more suns, each, probably, possessing different attributes, and producing results as important as those which ensue from the light and heat of our sun.

There, in that midnight sky, are thousands of double suns, and hundreds that are arranged in triplets, each moving according to one law, and each obeying this law with a power and regularity that most palpably proclaim the presence of a Supreme Being. In these distant but glorious realms, there is a vast volume yet unread; its pages not even cut; and in many instances, the wish even to peruse them does not exist. To those, however, who do feel an interest in reflecting upon the unrevealed wonders of creation, and in obtaining even a slight glance of a portion of them, there are not wanting opportunities during each day and night of the year.

“THE BEAUTIFUL PERDITA.”

THERE was unusual excitement in the brilliant audience that had been attracted to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on a certain evening, a little after the commencement of the last quarter of the last century—though the interest then felt for the drama by the British public very far exceeded anything of the kind exhibited in this degenerate age of screaming farces and extravagant burlesques. It was the close of the Garrick epoch—that extraordinary genius having recently retired from the management of the theatre he had directed for many years with consummate judgment. Notwithstanding, however, that he was now a magistrate in the country, and a personage of still greater importance in London, he contrived to maintain a well-earned influence in all that affected the interests of the community of which he had long been so worthy a member.

It was not the first night of a new play, but it was that always equally exciting experiment, the first night of a new actress—a *débutante* who appeared to enjoy all the advantages that could by any possibility have been brought together as special recommendations to a discerning public. She was young—very young; beautiful—extremely beautiful; and, according to the most trustworthy sources of theatrical gossip, unusually gifted in mind as well as in person. Moreover, she was said to have been Mr. Garrick’s pupil, and was the *protégée* of the fashionable Duchess of Devonshire.

She possessed other claims to consideration, which a British audience were equally sure to recognise and appreciate; this fair and youthful adventuress had been induced to seek the trials of a dramatic career, with the object of securing the means of support for those who were nearest and dearest to her, and had been prevented by unmerited misfortune from maintaining their proper position in society.

Such rumours, with others a good deal more romantic, but not quite so true, had filled the pit, the boxes, and the galleries with the best portion of the London play-going world; and, as regards the first two divisions particularly, such an assembly of social notables was not often brought together. Conspicuous among the front benches, in the lower part of the house, might be seen the heavy frame of Dr. Johnson, in his ordinary mien and his very ordinary wig: that greatest of literary lions had left his pleasant den in the friendly brewer’s country-house in Surrey, with his faithful jackall, Boswell, to witness the first appearance of his friend David’s pupil. Not far off was the more courtly person of Sir Joshua Reynolds—his trumpet to his ear—fresh from the easel that held his immortal “Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse,” listening to a critical discussion between Burke and Cumberland, who bawled on each side of him; while behind, the equally well-known figure of Dr. Burney sat by his daughter, then enjoying the success of “Evelina.”

But it is impossible to particularize the celebrities the pit contained on

that eventful night. Nearly all the members of the Literary Club in Gerrard Street were there, and a vast number of other notables, legal, artistic, and medical, besides; for every person of taste and education liked to be seen in such places, whenever there was unusual attraction.

Equally difficult would it be to describe all deserving mention in the boxes, for they included the leading members in the world of rank and fashion, of whom many had already been placed on the canvas by Sir Joshua and Gainsborough.

A few had claims to distinction which I cannot entirely pass over. Among the towering head-dresses of the ladies, their turbans and caps, might be observed the classic head of the great tragic actress—Mrs. Siddons—of that truly theatrical epoch, unadorned either by lace, pearl, feathers, beads, or ribbons. Beside her noble figure sat one who was at once the most charming of female novelists and the most edifying of female dramatists, Mrs. Inchbald. Near them beamed the homely features of old Thrale and his pleasant wife, the former nodding good-humouredly to his friends in the pit, yet thinking of the last time he was there with Polly Hart, before his days of greatness; the latter intensely conscious of her fashionable appearance in a new Polonese, fresh from Paris, and totally unapprehensive of the terrible fall the future had in store for her, from a brewer to a singing-master. She sat beside the beautiful and learned Sophy Streatfield, whose taste for elderly lovers was evinced in her attentions to her friend's husband, and in the smiles she lavished on the more distant Doctor of Music.

In the next box might have been discerned the now thin and wrinkled face of an aristocratic author, who chose to be his own printer and publisher. He had once been a beau as well as a wit, and still put forth pretensions to both titles; as the two beautiful girls in court suits, between whom he sat, and to whom he had offered his coronet, could have stated. Not far off, it was easy to recognise a physiognomy still more celebrated in the annals of gallantry, familiarly known between Piccadilly and Richmond as "Old Q——;" as usual, very intent in his observations on the prettiest women near him.

At a little distance was a noisy group, laughing and talking among themselves in a manner that attracted towards them a good deal of attention. They were members of one family, a titled one, belonging to a nation famous for the production of human eccentricities; but a more eccentric, reckless set than the occupants of that box it would have been impossible to have collected. They were well known about town by peculiar cognomens, derived from particular characteristics. One brother, who had been often in prison, was called "Newgate;" a second, who was lame, was "Cripplegate;" a third, who had a fearful habit of swearing, was known as "Hellgate;" and a sister, who enjoyed the reputation of speaking her mind much too freely, had obtained the unenviable name of "Billingsgate."

In one of the stage-boxes sat two ladies, evidently of the highest fashion; the one with three feathers in her head was the beautiful Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire; the one with seven was her lovely friend, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland. They were for a time "the observed of all observers," till a stir in the opposite box drew all eyes away from their rich jewels and magnificent dresses.

Presently a young man of handsome features and distinguished figure, his dress in the first style of fashion, wearing a brilliant star on the left breast of his carefully fitted coat, came in front. The boxes and pit rose at his appearance, and there was much clapping of hands from all parts of the house. The gentleman with a star acknowledged this recognition with a graceful bow, a bow which had a world-wide celebrity, as the most perfect form of courtesy ever accomplished. He spoke in an animated manner to a group of noblemen and gentlemen who stood in his rear, among whom were seen the familiar face and figure of a popular statesman, as well as those belonging to other well-known public characters, now—so short-lived is political fame—almost entirely forgotten.

There was more applause, and another perfect genuflexion. Then every one sat down with a delightful feeling of satisfaction, as the gentleman with a star, first making an eloquent sign to his fair and fashionable neighbours across the stage, took his seat.

Now ensued a mighty rustling of lutestring and tiffany around the boxes; feathers became in a state of extreme agitation; Ranelagh tippets were simultaneously cast aside, revealing many a fair neck, rendered more attractive by folds of blonde, falls of lace, and chains and necklaces of dazzling lustre, which rose and fell with singular distinctness and unanimity, as the fine eyes of the gentleman with a star sent a discriminating glance over the dress circle. Then, as if by word of command, there was a display of ivory arms, their graceful shape enhanced by the delicate long glove and the flashing bracelet.

Somehow or other, *all* the charming creatures wanted a gold *vinaiquette*, or a French cambric handkerchief, which was daintily applied to the nostril or the lip, in many instances with extraordinary care, to avoid disturbing the little round black spot near the smiling mouth, or the delicious bloom upon the dimpled cheek—every belle looking as radiant as if a sunbeam had suddenly illumined her beauty.

In the stage-box fronting the object of this homage, there began a lively nodding of plumes, one against the other, accompanied by arch looks, that evidently possessed a good deal of pleasant meaning, for the most seductive little bursts of mirth were sure to follow, which gave a wonderful attraction to their rosy mouths, and the bright enamel with which they were lined; but whether they were laughing at the city banker's fat wife in the second tier, with her head like a pyramid of artificial flowers, ornamented with monstrous butterflies and caterpillars in blown glass, or were similarly amusing themselves at the expense of the

drysalter's tall daughter in the pit, with a half-moon *toupee*, and a gown with a long stomacher, in which an enormous bunch of roses had been placed, it was impossible to affirm. All that is known is comprised in the fact that they were in a state of the most exalted good humour, and that the gentleman with a star, by the expressive looks he occasionally threw across the space between them, appeared to share in their amusement.

At last the green curtain, that had hitherto fronted the audience, slowly drew up at the close of some indifferent music—which apparently had had very few listeners—and Shakspeare's play of "The Winter's Tale" was commenced by "His Majesty's servants," as the bills of the evening somewhat disingenuously stated.

Everybody knows the story. The youthful aspirant for dramatic honours played the part of Perdita; and when she made her appearance, it seemed allowed, by general consent, that a more satisfactory personation of that very interesting heroine had never been beheld. There was much encouraging applause—the gentleman with a star setting the example, with a singularly benevolent expression irradiating his handsome features. General clapping, of course, came from that box—and, in truth, from almost every pair of masculine hands throughout the house. Dr. Johnson nodded his approbation—a movement of the head as potent as Jove's, and as suggestive as the shake of Burleigh. There was a whispering together of the critics around him. The ladies looked pleased, and began to open their fans—the gallants looked interested, and seemed inclined to open their hearts; and the two fair duchesses shook their graceful plumes, and adorned their bright countenances with "nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles," in endless variety.

The charming creation of the poet was thoroughly realized. Well might Polixenes exclaim,—

"This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
Ran on the green sward. Nothing she does or seems
But smacks of something greater than herself:
Too noble for this place."

The representative of the character was not a low-born lass, and every one was satisfied that she looked noble enough for any place. That the distinguished personage in the stage-box thought so, there could be no doubt. Extremely interesting was her performance, and it reflected credit upon her instructor. Her genuine timidity added greatly to the effect she produced on the audience, and the severest critics regarded her with increasing satisfaction.

It was easy to see that Dr. Johnson was pleased; and of course Boswell was enraptured. Sir Joshua's trumpet was never a moment from his ear when she delivered the sentences set down for her; and Dr. Burney pronounced her voice to be the most musical he had ever heard speaking any language. The Earl of Orford smiled in the fullest sense of contentment on the youngest of the fair Berrys, and the old Duke of Queensberry

leered on the stage all the masculine gratification, and all the feminine patronage, he could venture publicly to exhibit.

Great as was the applause the gentle Perdita received from every part of the house while she remained in their presence, it seemed to come with more cordiality from the stage-box, near which she found herself placed more than once during the performance—sometimes so near, that she could distinctly hear compliments intended exclusively for her ear, and distinctly see looks as exclusively intended for her vision. Indeed, the gentleman with a star exhibited his approbation in a way that was peculiarly flattering to the youthful actress, and she blushed with a delicious consciousness of the enviable distinction she was receiving.

Never had that well-known patron of the drama seemed so deeply attentive to the poetical dialogue of Shakspeare, as when the modest and beautiful daughter of Hermione and Leontes appeared before the foot-lights. It looked as though he envied Florizel the privilege of talking to her. Now and then he would address a few words of commendation to the popular statesmen in his rear, which could be heard across the stage, in part of the pit, and in several of the boxes. It was of course heard by the actress he had condescended to notice, and a rosy flush over her lovely face again declared that it had reached its destination. His gaze became more and more eloquent—exhibiting tenderness and admiration as warmly as a handsome, manly face, influenced apparently by a singularly sensitive heart, was capable of expressing.

In the opposite box, the two plumed arbitresses of fashion were constantly in the closest juxtaposition, as if comparing notes—occasionally diverting their bright glances from the object of general interest below, to one who had at least equal claims on their attention above! They nodded, they smiled, they chatted, they laughed, with indescribable grace—and their fans deserved to have been regarded as sceptres in the regalia of their beauty, they being accepted as emblems of a power as absolute as fascination could render it.

“She will do, Duchess!” cried one, enthusiastically.

“I never saw him so interested!” replied the other, in the same cordial tones.

The contentment they felt in the success of the *débutante* was not shared by the whole of the fairer portion of the audience. The younger beauties, it is true, displayed intense sensibility, which ought to have shown how completely they sympathised with the gentle and modest princess in her change of fortune; but the more mature belles, there could be little question, watched the unmistakable feeling she was exciting in a certain quarter, with manifest dissatisfaction. Fans were flirted, and *eau de luce* sniffed, with a vigour that denoted anything rather than contentment of mind; and when Leontes asked, “Is this the daughter of a king?” and Florizel answered, “She is—when once she is my wife,” and the gentleman with a star was seen to express his approbation in a

significant manner, there was a stir among the towering head-dresses, that expressed, quite as plainly as the cloud upon the faces beneath them, a terrible amount of indignation. The glass butterfly on the blooming pyramid that adorned the banker's fat wife, appeared about to take flight; and the gaudy bunch of flowers in front of the drysalter's scraggy daughter, to wither, by way of virtuous protest to the entire proceeding.

The success of the youthful actress, nevertheless, was unequivocal and complete. Garrick must have been satisfied with his pupil—if his pupil she had been; and his successor in the management of the theatre was easily induced to offer her an engagement on terms that rendered her mind quite at ease as to her future.

The *beau monde* talked of nothing but "the beautiful Perdita," and it became quite the fashion to seek her acquaintance. Mrs. Thrale sent her an invitation; Dr. Johnson spoke highly of her at the club—Boswell everywhere; Sir Joshua Reynolds painted her portrait. Dr. Burney would have set her to music, if possible, but the young lady neither gave herself airs, nor cared to have them given her. Moreover, the critics were unanimous in recording a favourable judgment upon her performance.

In their gay equipages, ladies of rank sought out her humble lodging. Among the earliest arrivals came her distinguished patroness, with her ducal friend, who overwhelmed her with courtly compliments and feminine adulation. They dwelt with extraordinary fervour on the opinions respecting her they had heard delivered by the leaders of *ton*. First in the list of her numerous admirers they placed a certain illustrious friend of theirs; and they rivalled each other in affirming the depth and intensity of the favourable impression she had created in that quarter.

"He raves about you!" cried one.

"He is ready to worship you, my dear!" exclaimed the other, with equal amiability.

"You are the most enviable creature in the world, child!" affirmed the first, with a most tender embrace.

"All the court ladies would tear you to pieces!" added her friend, with an affectionate caress.

Although their *protégée* did not clearly understand why the prospect of so tragical a termination of her career made her an object of envy to the rest of the community, she felt the intoxicating influence of the adulation she was receiving from persons so high above her in social position; but the idea of the gentleman with a star professing devotion to her, sent a thrill of womanly pride through her heart, that seemed to fill her entire nature with a delirious sense of pleasure hitherto unknown to her.

Scarcely had she lost sight of her visitors' fantail hats and cinnamon-coloured silk cloaks, trimmed with ermine, and while the atmosphere of the room was still redolent of the musk they had brought with them, one after another dropped in noblemen and gentlemen known to be in the prince's

confidence. After rapturous congratulations on their own account, each dwelt on the impression they assured the young actress she had made on their “distinguished friend,” who, they asserted, was impatiently awaiting her permission to express in person the extraordinary gratification he had received from her memorable first appearance.

What could the inexperienced aspirant for a stage reputation do, under such extremely trying circumstances? What, but grant the interview so flatteringly requested? She must have been more or less than woman had she been insensible to such a compliment. With a fluttering heart, she at last named a time when she would do herself the honour to receive the proposed visit. Poor Perdita!

Punctual to the minute, her illustrious visitor alighted from his horse at the door of her obscure home, and presently entered her humble apartment. In his riding suit he looked even handsomer than he had appeared in full dress; and as he came before her, uncovered, bowing gracefully, with his right hand pressing his left breast, smiling so very sweetly, and addressing her with such expressive winningness, ardour, and sincerity, the timid, blushing, bewildered actress was only restrained from throwing herself at his feet by a pair of strong arms, that caught her form very tenderly before it could reach the carpet. She had a confused recollection of certain of the heathen deities visiting the fair objects of their adoration, as she found herself carefully lifted till her rosy face was nearly on a level with that of the young Apollo of her morning dream. He said everything that was particularly kind, and a good deal that was wonderfully tender; her brain seeming all the time in a whirl of rapture.

She was very young, very enthusiastic, very impressionable, very credulous. Poor, poor Perdita!

This homage of this distinguished patron of the drama was evinced by repeated visits to her lodgings, which were soon in a more fashionable part of the town, and much more handsomely furnished; and he was rarely absent from the stage-box during the nights of her performance. His attentions could not be concealed; and they made the young actress so popular, that the theatre continued to be crowded during her engagement; to the infinite satisfaction of the manager, as well as to other persons who had no pecuniary stake at issue, as at least half a score of poetic pens, kept in constant requisition to do justice to her merits, could have testified.

For three years she maintained this ostensibly proud position, mistress of a fine mansion and a well-appointed household; and not only had the prospect of securing for her life an honourable provision by means of her theatrical engagements, but having displayed considerable literary talents in various productions she had been induced to submit to the public, with a perfectly satisfactory result, there seemed every reason for anticipating a large increase in her resources through this channel.

This agreeable state of things did not last. The distinguished amateur

of the drama interposed. He condescended to assure his charming friend, with that intense expression of sincerity which always illumined his handsome countenance, when tenderly excited, that he was quite ready to make any sacrifice she could require,—marriage, unfortunately, as she must be well aware, being out of the question; or else nothing could have gratified him more than to have made her share his destiny in the face of the entire world. It was, however, in his power, he continued, to make her position equally agreeable to her. He then made what would have been thought by most actresses of her standing, splendid proposals. They were coupled with one condition only—that she should leave the stage.

Perdita thought not of the advantages thus enticingly presented; she was far too disinterested to wish for sacrifices, particularly from such a source. Her heart was bound for ever to one who honoured her, as she was pleased to think, above all other women; and she loved with all the sincerity of a grateful passion; but she was somewhat reluctant to abandon the profession which had given her competence, and struggled hard to maintain the integrity of her feminine character. Her lover was, however, untiring in his assiduity, and she found it more and more difficult to withstand the fervour of his attachment. Finally, convinced that one person only ought to be called upon to make a sacrifice, with perfect trust in the honour of him by whom it was required, she made it without reservation or security. Poor lost Perdita!

She retired from the theatre, very much to the regret of the manager, and scarcely less to the disappointment of his patrons, and went to live in a larger house, more luxuriously furnished, where she was attended by domestics in handsome liveries. Her life was, for some time, very happy,—at least, she fancied it was. She possessed the means of doing good, and her benefits were lavishly distributed wherever they were most required, or most deserved. Her companion played the lover on a grand scale. "All for love, or the world well lost," appeared to be his ruling idea. He was most delicate in his attentions; most ardent in his devotion; most considerate in his arrangements—*at first*. After an interval, he became less assiduous, less regular, less respectful, and, finally, less liberal. He pleaded important engagements, that kept him away several days. Although she was well aware that only a few months before she had been his first consideration, she thought it selfish to expect him to neglect everybody for her. Poor Perdita!

About this period she was obliged to make a long journey on an errand of charity. The post-chaise in which she travelled in very inclement weather, had become extremely damp, and she was shut up in it, while in a delicate state of health, for nearly a whole day. The result was, she caught a severe cold, which brought on a violent fever, that confined her to her chamber for a prolonged period, and finally settled in her lower limbs, of which she entirely lost the use. She became an invalid for life.

A short time before this lamentable accident occurred, in “a cottage of gentility,” charmingly situated on the brow of a hill that overlooked an extensive prospect, in a pretty village on the Surrey bank of the Thames, only a few miles from Hyde Park Corner, resided a lady possessed of remarkable personal attractions. She was dazzlingly fair in face, singularly elegant in person, and particularly fashionable in dress. Possessed of a small fortune of her own, she was able to enjoy moderately the gratifications most prized in good society, and being well connected, found no difficulty in moving in the best circles. She was considered a very charming woman, not only in the neighbourhood of the fashionable locality she had selected for her retirement, but in the gayest quarter of the gay metropolis, in which she occasionally made her appearance. There was much talk about her at Court, and a good deal of gossip respecting her in circulation at the clubs.

One lovely day near the close of the autumn, in the year 17—, this lady was reading the “Castle of Otranto” in an elegantly furnished morning room overlooking the celebrated landscape, when a visitor entered, announced with more than usual emphasis. There was no mistaking his graceful form, or his eminently handsome face, though he wore an overcoat that partly concealed his figure.

The lady rapidly put aside her volume, and rose with a heightened colour that made her beauty resplendent. She wore a sacque of dark lilac satin, trimmed with large puffs down the sides, and chenille silver, with Italian lappets, filigreed with flowers. The gentleman advanced with that refined grace of manner for which he was celebrated, then bowed over and kissed the white and jewelled hand extended to him. Very gallant was the language he employed, and very musical the voice that gave it utterance; while the sincerity with which it was delivered was attested by the fervour of his glance. Presently he opened his outer coat, and took from a pocket a gold chain, with a miniature of himself, encircled with diamonds, which he threw over her ivory neck. The lady blushed rosily, and smiled divinely as she murmured her inarticulate thanks. Her fine eyes sought the ground as she met the passionate admiration of his gaze.

Other interviews followed, in which this distinguished Lothario became more ardent in his demonstrations. He was again most movingly eloquent, offering to make any sacrifice that could be demanded of him,—marriage, unfortunately, being out of the question (the speech had been got by heart, if the passion had not),—and he expressed his readiness to abandon an empire to secure the more enviable sovereignty of her affections.

The lady listened, blushed, and smiled, with increasing power of fascination. The incense thus offered to her vanity was, doubtless, sufficiently grateful; but to the impossibility of marriage she did not feel disposed to reconcile herself. Like a prudent woman, with as much self-respect as self-possession, she heard the flatteries and promises addressed

to her with undiminished amiability, wore the presents of her lover, and accepted his attentions; but seemed content to remain in her position, in the safe and quiet enjoyment of her own little fortune, and the admiration of her friends.

"The gallant, gay Lothario" persevered. He took care to meet this charming creature whenever she ventured to appear in society, paying her almost as much attention in public as in private; and as her company seemed to be in great request by the female leaders of *haut ton*, their meetings were frequent. Indeed, it seemed as though parties were made at Devonshire House, and other aristocratic mansions in town and country, for the sole purpose of affording them opportunities of seeing and conversing with each other. At last, however, the gentleman became so importunate, that the fair object of his tender persecution began to think that, in a woman's case, as well as in a man's, the better part of valour was discretion. She suddenly disappeared; and presently it became known that she had gone abroad.

The ardent lover was much more distressed by this extraordinary step than he had been by the lamentable incident that had so heavily afflicted the now totally deserted Perdita. He contrived, after many inquiries, to discover where the object of his more recent attachment had transported herself, and sent after her the most pressing, the most enticing communications. The lady belonged to a faith then to some extent proscribed in England, and one of the great obstacles to her union with so desirable a suitor, was difference of religion. While on the Continent, she took counsel with persons well qualified to advise in matters of conscience, and they put before her such arguments as induced her to comply with the urgent requests she continued to receive to return to England.

On her reappearance in the best society of London, her distinguished friend became more assiduous, more tender, more earnest, and, in language at least, more self-sacrificing than ever. Still the obdurate beauty would not relent. Ill-natured people thought she wanted a satisfactory pretext. What they meant is not quite clear; a pretext, however, came.

One day she was surprised by the sudden intrusion into her house of one of her illustrious suitor's most confidential associates, accompanied by an eminent London surgeon, who alarmed her with the very startling announcement that the Prince, impatient of the sufferings he had endured, had stabbed himself, and desired to see her before the flood of life had entirely ebbed away.

Having been assured that his state was extremely critical, and that time was very precious, she hurried away; but,

"Mistress of herself, though China fell,"

prudently called at Devonshire House, and, with the brilliant Duchess as a safeguard, proceeded to the Prince's residence. They found him stretched on a sofa, looking very bad indeed—as though the vital stream had oozed away to the last drop; nevertheless, he appeared almost as

handsome as ever, and his fine eyes beamed with unutterable tenderness as he caught sight of the cruel beauty who had brought him to that hapless condition. She flew to his side in an agony of mingled fear and self-reproach, and at once whispered in his ear the promise he had often in vain attempted to extort. The effect was miraculous.

The reader, fair or unfair, wise or otherwise, doubtless will imagine that the lady, so readily imposed upon by this transparent deception, was a simple schoolgirl or village lass, totally ignorant of the gay world, very young, and exceedingly romantic. I take the liberty to undeceive her or him. This “victim of sensibility” was a matron thirty years of age, long familiar with fashionable life, and had already buried *two husbands*.

In the mean time how fared it with poor Perdita? Though deserted by nearly all her aristocratic friends, and unable to return to the stage, of which she had been an acknowledged ornament, she was neither friendless nor without resources. She had ceased to be under any obligation to the gentleman with a star; but though her body was comparatively helpless, her intellect was unimpaired. She wrote novels, plays, and poems with considerable success, and a fair recompence. It must be acknowledged that her ideas sometimes shaped themselves too closely on the model a certain Mr. Merry had contrived to render popular in polite circles, till the relentless Gifford crushed the poor poetaster under his satire; but much she wrote was far above the Della Cruscan level, or it would not have gained her the esteem of some of the best judges of poetry in England.

She found friends among the gifted, and spent the last years of her retirement in a little cottage near Windsor—where the greatest poet, the first humorist of his day, and a popular dramatist, rivalled each other in respectful attention and heartfelt sympathy—till she found her final resting-place in a modest grave in the neighbouring churchyard.

As justice has not been done to this victim of a misplaced attachment, and she seems to have been too hastily judged as one who played her cards badly, I venture to add a few more particulars of her career from a trustworthy source.

The father of Perdita was a brave naval officer, who distinguished himself in the Russian service, and was the first Englishman who landed at Gibraltar after that memorable rock had set at nought the combined artillery of France and Spain, when he received a hearty welcome from its illustrious defender. His uncle was DR. FRANKLIN, whose name, though not in the “Peerage,” may be found in the *Libro d’Oro* of genius and science.

Her intimate associates equally deserve recognition; and among them were persons of high rank and social influence. First in order of precedence I am bound to name the Duke of Leeds—“of the faithless many, faithful found”—whose friendship his Grace placed on record, in a highly creditable poem he wrote in honour of the young actress, when she was neglected by the fickle crowd. Next comes General Burgoyne (brother-in-law of the Earl of Derby), whose “Heiress” and “Lord of the

Manor" are still favourably remembered by old play-goers. He also invoked the Muse in her praise. Dr. Walcot, better known as Peter Pindar, made her the subject of a fashionable ballad, "Farewell to the Nymph of my Heart," that I have often heard the most gentlemanly of concert-singers, Bartleman, sing with exquisite pathos.

But a higher distinction than these, and of many more that I could enumerate, was a poem addressed to her by her attached friend, SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, only a few weeks before the termination of her sufferings. It was entitled, "A Stranger Minstrel;" and commenced, "As late on Skiddaw's mount I lay supine." The bard, apostrophizing the spirit of the mountain, exclaims,—

"I would, old Skiddaw, she were here!
A lady of sweet song is she;
Her soft blue eye was made for thee.
O, ancient Skiddaw, by this tear,
I would, I would that she were here!"

The author of the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" presently continues,—

"But ancient Skiddaw, green and high,
Heard and understood my sigh;
And now, in tones less stern and rude,
As if he wished to end the feud,
Spake he, the proud response renewing,
(His voice was like a monarch wooing,)
'Nay, but thou dost not know her might,
The pinion of her soul how bright,
But many a stranger in my height,
Hath sung to me her magic song,
 Sending forth its ecstasy,
 In her divinest melody,
And hence I know her soul is free.
She is, where'er she wills to be,
Unfettered by mortality.

* * * * *

I too, methinks, might merit
The presence of her spirit.
To me, too, might belong
The honour of her song and witching melody,
Which most resembles me.
Soft, various, and sublime,
Exempt from wrongs of Time.'
Thus spake the mighty mount, and I
Made answer, with a deep-drawn sigh,
'Thou ancient Skiddaw, by this tear,
I would, I would that she were here!'"

This fine bardic effusion is dated November, 1800.

It was some years later that I heard the story of poor Perdita from the most earnest and most intellectual of her friends, at a time when I was able to contrast her fate with that of her more fortunate rival. Both had played, with a hand that seemed equally strong, in the same suit; but there was as marked a difference in their play as in its result.

THE GIFTS. AN ARAB PARAPHRASE.

FIRST SONG.

I.

IN an ancient Arab story
 Lies a meaning to my mind ;
 'Tis as pure as sweet snow-fairies,
 And as vagrant as the wind.
 'Tis as pure as sweet snow-fairies,
 When they weave in silent hours,
 O'er the tranced and dying winter,
 Strange, weird visions of the flowers.
 And the story holds a moral,
 And a meaning fit for rhymes,
 Soothly writ for fireside readers
 In the busy modern times.

II.

Years ago, there lived a maiden
 In whose sunshine-crimson'd blood
 Dwelt a spirit, like the odour
 In the rose's swelling bud.
 On her face that tender spirit
 Was as tremulous for speech,
 When the winds of feeling swept it,
 As the shivering silver beech ;
 And she long'd to set to kisses
 Such sweet songs as young souls sing,
 'Till she grew too fair for any
 Save a lover or a king.

III.

Lo ! her hair was black and fragrant,
 And it floated to the knee ;
 And her lips were riper, richer,
 Than the palace of the bee ;
 Slender was her form, and lovely
 As a cloud in summer skies,—
 As a small white cloud by distance
 Shaped to grace for human eyes ;

And her radiant eyes were troubled
 With sweet pictures manifold ;
 And she was a chieftain's daughter
 In an Arab tribe of old.

IV.

For the nut-brown men and women,
 Of whose race the maid was one,
 Faced the sunshine, and their faces
 Took the brightness of the sun.
 And they wander'd eastward, westward,
 In a pastoral content ;
 And the chieftain, like his children,
 Pitch'd an ever-changing tent ;
 Ever changing, ever stirring,
 By the winds blown to and fro ;
 But the sun and stars went with them
 Wheresoever they might go.

V.

When the sun and stars, that follow'd
 Wheresoever they might ride,
 Brought a bashful boy, Oneddah,
 To the Arab maiden's side.
 He was fair, and tall, and comely,
 And his heart was bravely meek ;
 And the moon that shines on lovers
 Met the sunshine on his cheek.
 He was lowly born and humble,
 Of no mark, and no degree ;
 But she said, " I love Oneddah,
 For his face is fair to see."

VI.

And in secret, when blue heaven
 Bared her starry-veinèd breast,
 Met the maiden and Oneddah,
 In a love that lips confest.
 Vows were spoken, and the token
 Made Oneddah sweetly proud ;
 While the maiden's eyes were brighter,
 And her laughter was less loud.
 Fondly meeting in the darkness,
 Though the clouds were in the skies,
 They could glimpses catch of heaven
 Thro' each other's lovelorn eyes.

VII.

But the maiden wept in secret,
 Wholly helpless and forlorn,
 O'er the gulf that hung between her
 And Oneddah, lowly born ;
 And to bridge the gulf with flowers
 Well she knew was all in vain,
 Though whene'er they met she labour'd
 At the bridge of flowers again.
 Till at last the dark cloud gather'd
 O'er the white tent of her life,—
 For the chieftain, Abd-el-Azig,
 Came to woo her for a wife.

VIII.

Quoth her sire, "The Abd-el-Azig
 Bringeth wedding gifts in store ;
 And for every gift he bringeth,
 Child, he loveth thee the more.
 He is noble, he is gentle,
 And his house is like a king's ;
 And his courser on the desert
 Flieth like a bird with wings ;
 And his words are truly spoken,
 And his vows are truly said,—
 So array thee white and saintly
 For the Abd-el-Azig's bed."

IX.

Then the life-blood of the maiden
 Curdled icy as it ran ;
 But a father's will was gospel
 In that rude, untutor'd clan.
 Deaf to hope, and blind to sorrow,
 Low the maiden bent her head ;
 And she dress'd her white and saintly
 For the Abd-el-Azig's bed.
 Then the Abd-el-Azig raised her
 To his saddle by the hands,
 And amid a mist of lances
 Bore her swiftly o'er the sands.

SECOND SONG.

I.

THEN the Abd-el-Azig gave her,
 As the custom went, a place
 Deck'd to be her own to dwell in,
 With a veil upon her face.
 He was white with fifty summers ;
 On his cheeks his age did burn ;
 And his snowy beard before him
 Swept his heart, and kept it stern.
 So he gave her food and raiment,
 Silent maids to wait upon her ;
 And from eyes of all, save maidens,
 She was vineyarded by honour.

II.

And the woman—maid no longer,
 Very patient in her place,
 Felt the shadow of Oneddah
 Dark upon her marriage face ;
 But her thoughts were calm and steadfast,
 And her heart could think at last
 Of Oneddah, as of something
 Very holy in the past.
 If a sympathy unhallow'd,
 Looking on her, seem'd to doubt her,
 Lo ! she rose her height, and calmly
 Drew her marriage veil about her.

III.

Came a knave from Abd-el-Azig :—
 “ Lo, my master sends thee these
 Gifts of raiment rich, enclosed in
 Costly boxes made of trees.
 They are pure and perfect pledges
 That he loves thee next to Heaven ;
 And my master bids me greet thee
 With the gifts that he has given.”
 Veil'd, and chastely proud, not deigning
 To unveil her matron face,
 Said the woman, “ Tell thy master
 That I thank him for his grace.”

IV.

So they set them in her chamber,—
 Gifts a matron's heart to please ;
 Gifts of raiment rich, enclosed in
 Cumbrous boxes made of trees ;
 And they spread them out in secret—
 Being vineyarded by honour,—
 And the dress that seemed the purest
 Took she forth and put upon her.
 From the rustling dress there floated
 Clouds of perfume through the room,
 And the boxes savour'd sweetly
 Of the barks of trees in bloom.

V.

Came a maiden, briefly saying,—
 " Lo ! there standeth at the gate,
 Very footsore, pale, and weary,
 One—a man of poor estate ;
 And his lips are parch'd and hungry,
 From the thirsting desert ways ;
 Hither, o'er the yellow desert,
 He has journey'd many days.
 Burning tears are on his eyelids
 Where he standeth at the door ;
 He is named, he saith, Oneddah,
 And he craves to see thee sore."

VI.

Then began a bitter struggle
 In the matron's heart and brain ;
 For her heart, with bitter longing,
 Craved to see him once again ;
 And she murmur'd, " I will see him,
 Very pure in sight of Heaven,
 Like a matron, and array'd in
 This, the gift my lord has given."
 Veil'd she murmur'd, " Bid him enter !"
 And he shone upon the place,
 Mean and ragged, with the radiance
 Of the past upon his face.

VII.

Came Oneddah, like a famish'd
 Pilgrim to a saintly shrine ;
 And she set rich meats before him,
 With a fountain for his wine.

Him she greeted, not unveiling,
 In a calm and measured phrase,
 While around her pure heart coiling,
 Stirr'd the snake of other days ;
 And with wistful tender gazes
 Young Oneddah look'd upon her,
 But his sorrow seem'd the sweeter
 For her wifhood and her honour.

VIII.

Then the gift of Abd-el-Azig,
 Round her wrapt rich fold on fold,
 Kept her master's form before her,
 Press'd her heart, and kept it cold.
 But a footstep sounding thither
 Startled thro' her firm repose,
 And her breath was like the odour
 Frozen in a winter rose.
 Fearing taint of chiding voices,
 "Hide," she said, "in one of these
 (Quickly, for the foot draws nearer)
 Cumbrous boxes made of trees."

IX.

Quickly flew the pale Oneddah,
 In the cumbrous box he hid
 Whence she took the dress that clothed her,
 And she closed the heavy lid.
 Came the knave behind her, greeting,
 "Lo! my master craves to know
 If those eyes, or bright or weary,
 Will behold his face, or no?"
 Scarcely knowing that she utter'd,
 In her sinless fear half dumb,
 Veil'd and trembling said the matron,
 "Certes, bid my master come."

X.

Fearful of the words thus spoken,
 In her stainless wifely fear,
 Fearful for the young Oneddah,
 Made by very honour dear,
 Sat the veiled Arab woman
 Stately, waiting for her master.

Flew the knave to Abd-el-Azig
Than the wingless ostrich faster :
“ In thy lady’s scented chamber,
Underneath the cumbrous lid
Of the gift thy servant gave her,
One, a stranger youth, lies hid.”

XI.

Abd-el-Azig, wroth and angry,
Smote the knave upon the cheek,
Gnaw’d his beard, and spat it from him,
Ere he moved his tongue to speak :
“ Knave !” he cried, “ I know thou liest !
Tell me, did thy mistress say
If, thy master’s greeting given,
She would welcome me to-day ?”
Being answer’d, Abd-el-Azig
Bade the trembling knave unfold
Where amid the rest was lying
That one box of which he told.

XII.

In the scented room the chieftain
Kiss’d the cold and trembling wife,
Where she sat, all veil’d and stately,
With the white sin of her life.
Then he sat him down, with greetings,
On the box made of a tree ;
Stooping downward, smiling, lock’d it ;
Rising, cast away the key.
Then he sought again, with kisses,
That one gift that he had given,
Whence she took the dress that clothed her
Purely then in sight of Heaven.

XIII.

Trembling, fearful to refuse him,
Robb’d of all that made her brave
By her sinless pride, the matron
Gave him back the gift he gave.
Calling five strong men, he bade them
Bear it to the sandy plain,
Thinking gladly, “ She refused not,
She is white without a stain.”

Then he follow'd that great burthen,
 Borne with pain in ten strong hands :
 " Dig me here a pit, I pray ye,
 Deep among the desert sands."

XIV.

Deep they dug, while Abd-el-Azig
 Close beside them smiling paced.
 Two short hours, and in the bottom
 Of the pit the box was placed.
 Then the chieftain bade the toilers
 Leave the pit unfill'd, and go ;
 And they left him in the desert,
 Gravely pacing to and fro.
 Leaping quickly to the bottom,
 Abd-el-Azig bent his head,
 Put his proud lips to the keyhole,
 Though they scorn'd himself, and said :

XV.

" If so be that flesh of living
 Man in this broad box doth lie,
 Let him pay the debt he owes me ;
 He has wrong'd me—let him die !"
 Fearful lest a voice might answer,
 Upward leapt he, stauncher, stouter ;—
 " I believe her pure and holy,
 Act of mine shall never doubt her ;
 If, as I believe most duly,
 In the box there lieth none,
 Let the gift earth gave be given
 Back to earth—no wrong is done."

XVI.

Then with strengthen'd hands he labour'd,
 Heaping down the solid sands :
 " Meet it is a matron's wrongs be
 Buried by her master's hands."
 Then the box was cover'd over
 With a crust of solid soil,
 And the smiling chieftain rested
 From his fears and from his toil.
 Calling then his knaves unto him—
 " Sacred as your father's bones
 Be this spot, and, best to show it,
 Pile me here a cairn of stones."

THIRD SONG.

I.

In the early desert morning,
 With the desert for a bed,
 Pillow'd by the cairn, they found her,
 Calmly smiling, cold and dead ;
 Often had she linger'd near it,
 Shaking parting hands with life,
 Sad and calm, but ne'er forgetting
 Patient duties of a wife.
 Veil'd her face, as veil'd when living,
 There the matron slumber'd—drest
 In the gift her master gave her,
 With his baby on her breast.

II.

Abd-el-Azig, grave and solemn,
 Gnaw'd his snowy beard, and said :
 " Be she buried where ye found her,
 With these stones above her head ;
 Place the child upon her bosom,
 Wrap them in the gift I gave,
 Let her slumber as a matron
 Very holy, in this grave ;
 Dig to the box of price, and in it
 Lay her down ; but on your oath
 Hold it sacred, look not near it—
 Pile the solid sands on both !"*

R. WILLIAMS BUCHANAN.

* The rude outline of this story—which was capable of the subtle poetic interpretation which I have tried to give it—is to be found in some French MSS. The whole beauty of the idea is to be measured by the limits of primitive ethics.
 —R. W. B.

A TANGLED SKEIN.

A ROMANCE.

BY ALBANY FONBLANQUE, JUN.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHAT MR. LAGGER THOUGHT ABOUT THE LETTERS, AND HOW HE VISITED CRAIGSLEIGH CHAPEL.

THE wayfarer whose appearance had drawn from Mr. Lager the preconcerted signal and observation, was a wretched, ragged, hungry-looking tramp; who slunk along slowly, with his hands in his pockets, and his eyes upon the ground, as though he had left nothing behind him, had nothing to hope for at his journey's end, and nothing to do from one day to another, but slink onward—here and there—towards that *somewhere* where his weary pilgrimage should end in a pauper's grave. There was such an appearance of dejection and hopelessness in the fellow's manner as he approached and climbed the stile, that our soft-hearted Steevie's hand stole involuntarily towards his purse, from whence he took a small coin, in anticipation of an appeal to his charity. But no such an appeal was made; on the contrary, when the tramp came near to the spot where Steevie and the detective sat, he struck across the meadow so as to avoid them, and rejoined the path by a *detour*.

"Humph!" reflected Mr. Sampson Lager, watching the retreating figure with a professional eye, "I shouldn't wonder if somebody wanted *you*. You've got the 'I've-been-and-gone-and-done-it-and-everybody-as-sees-me-knows-it' look in your eyes, my fine fellow—that's about what *you've* got! But, I say, Captain," he added, turning to Stephen, "you missed your cue. When I sez, 'He won't give more than five-and-twenty shillings a bushel for it,' you should have re-plied, 'Oh, he won't, won't he?' according to agreement. Don't you forget that again, now, next time as anybody comes along, and I say 'Humph!'"

"Well, well, well!" replied Steevie impatiently, "but you were going to tell me what you deduced from the letters I have just read."

"What I de-duce from them there letters is—but where's the marriage certificate you had in your hand last night when I came in up yonder?"

Stephen handed it, and the detective examined what remained decipherable of its contents carefully. I say "what remained decipherable," because, like the paper in which it was folded, the extremity of the right-hand side was more or less eaten away by rats. In this mutilated shape it remained as follows:

1835					
Marriage Solemnised in the District Church of Craig in the Parish of Exington, in the County of Derby					
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profes.
57	11 th June 1835	George Howell	of full age		
		Mary Bruce	of full age	Spinster	

"Ah!" said Lagger, when he had turned it over and over after the manner of persons who don't exactly make out what they read—"ah! and if them there cursed rats had taken counsel's opinion on the matter, they couldn't have gnawed it better; but, Lord! what does it matter? We only have to go to Craigsleigh Chapel to see the original."

"The original!"

"Of course; this 'ere's only a copy. I went to the parish church here this afternoon before you arrived, just to see what particulars a marriage certificate as had not been grubbed by rats should give, and I find that it will tell us, over and above what is set down here, the 'condition' of the bridegroom—that is, whether he was a bachelor or a widower at the time of this marriage—his rank or profession, his place of residence (but that we know), the surname of the father or mother of the bride, and *their* rank or profession. Bruce ain't an uncommon name, no more ain't Howell—that is, if so be as his name really *was* Howell."

"Why should you doubt it?" asked Stephen.

"I'll tell you by-and-by—everything in its turn. I say these ain't uncommon names, but when we get a clue to the father of the young lady—if so be as she *was* a young lady—and know what he was, and where he lived, and the profession of this 'ere George Howell, why that's business, that is."

"And we can find out all this at the church?"

"In the registry book. We can go over there in the morning. You ain't in a particular hurry to get to London, are you, Captain?"

"I am, indeed; I have an appointment—at least, I must see some one on a matter of considerable importance to-morrow."

"Well, then, I'll go alone, and I'll bring you a faithful copy of what I find. Will that do?"

Stephen assented, determining in his own mind that as soon as he had arranged his father's affairs with Messrs. Puddle and Snap, he would run down to Craigsleigh and make inquiries for himself.

"That's settled, then," said Mr. Lagger. "I'm going to be all fair and above-board with you, Captain, in this affair; all through 'cordin to contract. So now I'll tell you what I de-duce from these 'ere love-letters.

"If it hadn't bin for what Sarah Alston sez just at the last, I should 'a come to a different con-clusion; but settin' down what she sez as truth, if George Howell was to come to me, and say, 'Well, now, Mr. Lagger, what do you think of me?' I should up and re-ply, 'Mr. Howell—if so be as your name *is* Howell—I think it belongs to a blackguard, that's what *I* think.'"

"But why—why so?" demanded Stephen impatiently.

"What does he do?" asked the detective, in a severe and judicial tone. "He becomes bekknown to Mary Bruce. He gets talking poetry and sich-like to her—for I'll be bound that them books he lent her was poetry books—and visits at her house verry often—so often that the governor, he cuts up grumpy. Why does he cut up grumpy? Because he sees Master Georgie a-spooning his daughter. Who is Master Georgie? He sends tickets to see a review, so I'm in-clined to think he's a officer in the army; and when you finds a young fellow prancing about in scarlet and gold before a gal in Hyde Park in the daytime, and a-reading poetry books with her in the evenings, and when this young gal goes and tells a friend that this young man is 'offended' with her because he does not come to see her as often as he used, why there's something up between them as *ought* to end in church on a week-day. Why shouldn't it end in church, both parties being agreeable? Because the governor of the young lady won't have it—that's why! And why won't the governor have it? Because there's a dis-parity of rank between them; that's what 'Georgie' means when he sez, 'Your father,' sez he, 'will preach to me about "unequal marriages."' At first," continued Mr. Lagger, in a reflective tone, "I thought that the—the—that what ain't equal, you know—"

"The inequality."

"That's the very word! I thought the in-equality was on the gentleman's side, but if he had married into a rich or a distinguished fam'ly he'd never have deserted his wife as he did."

"He writes of her father's *pride*," suggested Stephen.

"Poor chaps are proud—prouder than rich ones in some things," replied Lagger. "I may be wrong, but I fancy this Howell was a man of po-sition in the world, and Miss Bruce a young lady who wouldn't be his mistress, and whom he hadn't the pluck to acknowledge as his wife. Well, he goes to this 'ere ball they mentions, and there he speaks his mind. He gives her a bookay of flowers, and he talks to her like one of his own poetry books; and she—poor little thing!—she locks up the fine flowers in her box, and the fine words in her heart, and goes out to meet

him every day unbeknown to the governor, and frets and worries till he sez, sez the govenor, ' You're a-fretting and a-worrying after that feller. You sha'n't stop any longer in London. You shall go and live with your aunt down in Derbyshire—that's what you shall do.' Now what happens when she goes down to live with her aunt is as clear as mud in a wine-glass. They get married—secretly. Then, when it's time for her to go home again, he meets her on the road, and they stop a day or two at Leamington."

"How *can* you tell that?"

"This here Bible," answered Lagger, producing the book which had been found in the bundle with the papers, "was bought there; look at the ticket pasted in the cover!—'Sold by Smith, Bookseller, Leamington.' I should not wonder, now, if they bought two—one for him to give to her, and one for her to give to him. This is what he gave to her, and he's bin and wrote in it, 'To my wife, 2nd July, 1835;' but he don't sign his name. Not he! He knows better. Afterwards she goes home to her governor, and Master Georgie cuts away *somewhere*."

"To Guernsey. Do not let us lose sight of facts in forming conjectures," said Stephen. "Let us not forget that the father of the child that was born at Mangerton Chace, in the month of April, 1836, was living in Guernsey and Jersey during the months of December, 1835, and up to the 20th of the following February."

"Humph! leastwise he makes belief to have bin there."

"Why, man, he describes the scenery of the islands, and his letters are dated from thence."

"How comes it, then, that there's no direction? and more—no post-mark on any of 'em?"

"Because they are sent by a private hand," replied Stephen, a little too eagerly, for he knew well that Sir George Tremlett—then Frankland—was in England at the dates mentioned. "Observe how that letter from Jersey commences, 'I seize this opportunity,' &c., &c. This shows that it was sent by hand; and as to the others—"

"Well, what of them?"

"They may have been sent by post, but under cover, to some person whom he could trust to deliver them into the hands of his wife. It is impossible to doubt that he was where he represents himself to have been."

"Now that's as it should be," said Mr. Lagger, looking complacently at Stephen, with one eye shut, and his head on one side, much as a respectable magpie would behold the well-directed attentions of his son and heir towards a silver fork which had fallen in his way, "that's as it should be! I likes to see a gentleman sharp. I likes to see people as has cut their eye-teeth a-using on 'em. Why, if you was a counsellor at the Old Bailey, a-trying to make out a halabi, you couldn't be sharper."

The word *alibi* jarred upon Stephen's ear, though it was strictly in harmony with the thought which was uppermost in his mind. He forced a laugh, and replied,—

“What possible interest can I have in making out that he was in one place more than another? I do not know the man.”

“Never heard tell of him?”

“Never.”

“And you don’t know how he come to send his wife to Mangerton Chace?”

“No.”

“Then I’ll tell you,” said the detective. “You’ll excuse me, but I’ve been pretty busy with your family affairs for the last fortnight, and I know as much about them as most people.”

Stephen flushed, and bit his lip.

“You see, Captain,” Lagger continued, “knowing that you was up to *some* little game, I made my investigations with a view of finding out what it was likely to be. And knowing, as I did, that poor Mr. Brandron left England a little more than twenty years ago, and con-cluding that whatever happened to rile him like, took place about that time, I naturally set to work to find out what your people was a-doing just then. *You* couldn’t have bin up to mischief, leastwise *this* sort of mischief, then; for you was a little curly-headed boy, you was; and an out-and-out little cock-o’-wax too, I’ll be bound.” This compliment did not soften the frown which was darkening over Steevie’s brow. “Go on,” he said curtly; “never mind what I was.”

“Well—not to mince matters—your governor Sir George, he was up a tree just then—wery high up a tree he was. My! what a fine gentleman he was while the money lasted, and before these mines went to the bad!”

“You may spare me all this.”

“Wery good; well then, being hard up, why, he let his house and land to Lord—but there ain’t no good mentioning names. He let it to a fam’ly as went to the bad—all on ’em—horse, foot, and dragoons soon afterwards, and rum scenes went on in Mangerton Chace while they had it, I can tell you. They had to bolt in the autumn of 1835. *They* went up a tree too—they did! and never come down again. It wasn’t till some time after Sir George’s second marriage, when they built that fine front part, that any of your family lived down yonder.”

“Consequently, we know nothing of this George Howell.”

“Ex-actly; but putting this and that together, I shouldn’t wonder if it was that rackety young lord’s brother, or else one of his harem-scarem friends, who married this poor young lady. She, naturally enough, ran off to the place he named, when she could no longer conceal her secret, and he, like a villain, absconded abroad with the rest on ’em, leaving her to die, may be of grief.”

“You think she is dead, then?”

“Sartin. That letter which we found at Westborough—the one from this Susan, or Sarah what-do-you-call-her, sez so.”

"But the child is alive!"

"Not a doubt of it, and now we comes to business. Who has an interest in keeping this marriage dark, except this 'ere un-natural parent, who—"

"Stop one moment. Why should he do so? It is not as though his wife were alive, and he were a rich man. He levanted from his creditors, and has long been free to marry again. Why should he not acknowledge the child?"

"Ah! there's the pinch. *Some* one has an interest in concealing its parentage. You can't get over that."

"No; and that *some one* was in England—at Mangerton Chace—soon after its birth," mused Stephen, carried away, in spite of himself, by the interest which these inquiries aroused.

"Oh, Mr. Brandron said so, did he?" asked the detective quickly.

"No—yes; that is, ah—well, he did not say so in as many words, but I gather the fact from the letter you have already referred to—"

"And which corroborates my idea about his being a great man."

"Just now you set him down as an absconding spendthrift!"

"Look you here, Captain Frankland, I don't disguise it from you that I'm a-guessing in the dark. It may be that he was one of them young scamps—it *must* be that it was some one connected with 'em, else how could he get the run of Mangerton Chace? Now a young nobleman may be ruined, and come round all right again by a good marriage or what-not, and a ready-made child might be a spoke in his wheel in after life. That this child *is* a spoke in *some one's* wheel is plain, or Mr. Brandron would never have been sent to India, and might have been alive to this day. P'r'aps it was a friend—may be one of them kind friends who used to play lansquinet and blind hookey with the young lord and his brother all night, when they lived over yonder—perhaps it wasn't. But this 'ere is not a Christmas riddle as has got to be *guessed*. It's a puzzle as has to be worked out by you and me in different ways. I've got to put the murderer of John Everett Brandron into the dock, and to hunt up such evidence against him, as will make a jury say he's guilty. What happens to him afterwards is no affair of mine. You've got to find this 'ere child—a young man or woman by this time, and see that it has its rights. It ain't a lively look-out for it, though," mused the detective, "to pick up its regulars off its father's gallows."

"I don't see what right you have to assume his guilt," said Stephen angrily; "some relation of the mother might be equally interested in suppressing the marriage."

"Might be," replied the detective, rising; "we shall see in good time. Meanwhile it seems to me, Captain, as we ought to hunt in couples."

"You have promised me your assistance, and so of course you will require money—"

"Not a sixpence. What I does, I does pro-fessionally, only I com-

municates unprofessionally with you 'cordin' to contract. Where's your house of call in London?"

"East India Club—but no, don't call there. I will leave a letter for you, whenever you please, stating an address, where you can see me always."

"Good; send your letter to care of Mrs. Wantley, Little Union Street, Boro'."

Stephen took down the address in his note-book carefully; packed up the letters and Bible, and, still accompanied by Lager, returned to the Derby Railway Station, and took the mail train for London, whilst the detective remained, for the purpose of going, on the next morning, to Buxton, to search the registers of the district church at Craigsleigh. Before he left Derby, however, he provided himself with a butterfly net, and a pair of green spectacles; and when he made his appearance at the little parsonage, it was as an elderly gentleman of entomological tastes, who had lost his way on the hills, and was so tired as to be obliged to ask permission to rest himself there for a while.

Like Sir George Tremlett, you see, he had a round-about way of doing things.

But whatever may have been his original plan for gaining the information which he desired, it was modified by a circumstance which occurred soon after his arrival at the little parsonage.

I think that one of the principal causes of that reserve and surliness which Continentals lay to the charge of us Britons, is our inability to judge, by external appearances, of the station, profession, tastes, or habits of those with whom we are thrown in contact. Modern fashion, the disappearance of special costumes, and the cheapness of gentlemanly apparel, make us all externally alike, so that the person whom we encounter on the railway or steamboat, or who occupies the next table to us in the hotel or club, may be a duke or a dust-contractor, a Rothschild or a Redpath, a Peabody or a pickpocket, for anything that we can tell; and so we hold our tongues respectively, and glare at each other in mutual distrust. But let one of us have a fishing-rod, or a cricket-bat in his hand, a hunting-coat on his back, or a sketch-book amongst his luggage, and if the other is not a snob, we shall get into conversation in ten minutes, because there is one subject, clearly indicated, upon which we can begin to talk. Thus it was with Mr. Lager and Mr. Thomas, the Incumbent of Craigsleigh. The butterfly net, carried by the former, was their introduction.

"And so," said the clergyman, "you're an entomologist?"

"A what, Sir?"

"An entomologist."

"Can't say that I am, Sir," replied the detective gravely. "To tell truth, I was brought up in the muffin and crumpet line, and when I growed up I went into the po-lice."

"I meant to ask you if you were fond of the study of insect life," said the clergyman, with a smile; "they call people who are, Entomologists."

"Now, do they really!" rejoined Mr. Lagger, in a triumphant tone. "Lord, what fine things a man may be without knowing! But there ain't no *study* about it with me—leastwise what gentlemen like you calls 'study.' You see I've bin kep' pretty close to the collar all my life in London, and when a man re-tires into private life, he must give his mind up to something, else I'm blowed—asking your riverence's pardon—if his mind won't give *him* up."

"You are quite right."

"Some," continued the detective thoughtfully, "gives it up to skittles, and some to raising green gooseberries out of season, and some goes into the private inquiry line. I'm wery partial to the country, because I've seen so little on it. Why, bless my soul! there ain't a bush, or a rock, or a tuft of fuz hereabout as is not full of cu-riositys for such as me; and there ain't no harm, is there, Sir, in liking to look at things, and to turn 'em over, even though you don't know nothing about them skientifically?"

One glance through the parsonage windows had shown this fox that Mr. Thomas was a naturalist; and having struck the right chord, harmony was instantly established between them. The good clergyman was only too glad to find an auditor for discoveries upon his favourite hobby, and had not the faintest notion that it was being converted into a pump, through which most of the information which his disciple required flowed freely. Thus did Mr. Lagger become aware that the predecessor of his instructor was the Rev. Richard Stourton, who had been appointed Bishop of Scalptown, somewhere on the east coast of Africa; that his clerk—poor old man!—had died last Christmas, and had been succeeded by a very superior young person, who had been recommended by some charitable people in London. That "The Elms," a neighbouring mansion, was formerly occupied by a Mrs. Chappel, who, however, had not lived there since Mr. Thomas's arrival. That very few marriages took place in the little church; so few, that all which the present incumbent had celebrated did not half fill one registry book. That this volume was in use in Mr. Stourton's time, but that there were others which the new clerk had discovered in shocking bad condition, huddled away in a vault, and which he had removed to his own lodgings in a neighbouring farmhouse. Very warm in praise of this new clerk was Mr. Thomas, and why so well-spoken and fairly-educated a person should be content to fill so humble a position in that out-of-the-way spot, the good gentleman could not think.

There were those who asked the selfsame question respecting the new clerk's master.

Between each stroke of the pump, Mr. Lagger craftily led his entertainer back amongst the ferns and zoophites in which he took delight, plunged him deep into the old red sandstone, where his choicest treasures had lain hidden, and, after allowing him to revel there for a short space, drew

him off imperceptibly into the shallower regions in which the facts that the detective desired to ascertain were embalmed. And so pleasant was their converse, that Mr. Thomas forgot all about some letters of importance which he had to write before the lad who carried the post-bag to Macclesfield should arrive. Having suddenly remembered this obligation, he begged Lagger to excuse him; "And, oh! by the bye," he said, "of course you'd like to see the church (there is a general but harmless mania amongst clergymen that everybody wants to see their church); so I'll send for Ferrers—my clerk, you know, and he will show you over it. If you will not mind waiting in the other room, he will be with you in a few minutes. His school is close at hand, and it is just time for him to break up for the day."

So the detective left Mr. Thomas to his letters, and retired to the apartment indicated, from the window of which he could see down the lane towards the farmhouse in which the new clerk lived, and had set up his village school. He saw the messenger run down; then came a shout, and a rush of smock-frocked urchins up the path, and after them, proceeding more leisurely, the new clerk, swinging the heavy keys of the church in his hand, and looking hot and tired, but still having that indescribable *something* in his mien which belongs to a man who has put his heart into an honest day's work, and has done it well. Mr. Thomas was quite right. Ferrers did not look the sort of young man who would be content with £25 a year as a parish clerk, and the weekly pence of the little hedge-side school. But the instant that he entered the room where the detective was waiting, a change, awful to behold, came over him, and he fell on his knees, as if struck down by a blow.

"My God! my God!" he groaned, "you have come to ruin me. Oh, it is cruel, cruel! Have I not been punished enough?"

Mr. Lagger started from his chair, and though, as we are aware, not given to be taken aback, was certainly not a little surprised by this strange appeal. He quickly made a rough guess at the state of affairs.

"Now don't you get talking anyhow, like that," he said roughly. "That there sort of gammon won't do you no good, and so I tell you. Get up!"

The new clerk rose, and eyed him sullenly, trembling the while in every limb. "And so," continued Mr. Lagger, "you call yourself Ferrers! What next?"

"I do not deny that the name is a feigned one," replied the clerk. "What could I do? Would any one give me employment under that which I have disgraced?"

"Then you don't deny that you are—"

"I deny nothing. Why should I? Did I not plead guilty at the trial?"

"In course!—that's about the only sensible thing you done. Why the evidence was con-clusive, and they'd have hit you if you'd a' had the Lord Chancellor to defend you, and the Archbishop of Canterbury as a witness to character."

"I was driven to it by sheer hunger. Laxton lied when he said his firm discharged me because my accounts were not properly rendered;" and the new clerk's pale face flushed, and his eyes brightened, at the recollection of this injury. "They discharged me because—no matter now, but it was not for fraud. I tell you I was starving, but with hope of employment—mind that! It was promised, and when I drew that bill of exchange, I had every reason to suppose I should have been able to meet it before it became due, and never meant to defraud a soul."

"So everybody says when they commit forgery."

"Well, be it so," replied the new clerk wearily. "I have committed a crime, and I have suffered for it. Is that not enough?"

"And a pretty fellow you are to set up for a parson's clerk, and get them innocent kids grown up to *your* teaching. Ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

"No; I am getting a living—poor as it is—honestly."

"Under a false name!"

"Yes—and why? Because you, and such as you, never give a wretch who has once fallen, a chance of recovery. In spite of all my precautions, you have hunted me out here, just as you hunted me out before. You will betray my wretched secret to Mr. Thomas, and I shall be driven from a place where I am doing my duty, where I am striving to retrieve the past, where I am liked, and—perhaps respected a little; and then, if despair should drive me again—which God forbid—into sin, you will say, 'See here, this fellow is incorrigible; transport him, rid the country of a confirmed felon!' But for this cursed cruelty and injustice, I might have lived and died an honest man."

"You're just talking anyhow again," said Lagger. "Did I say I was a-going to split upon you?"

"Then why are you here?"

"That's my business," replied the detective. "I ain't one to interfere with a young man as has been in trouble, when I find him going on on the square; but I tell you plainly there's bin some hankey-pankey tricks played with church registry books lately, and when the au-thorities find a chap as has signed other folk's name by mistake, instead of his own, on a bill of exchange, in a po-sition of trust over the legal records of honest people's marriages,—why the au-thorities likes to know how that 'ere trust is dis-charged, that's what the au-thorities likes to know."

"Well?"

"And when they finds that a chap con-victed of forgery has bin and took church registry books out of their proper place, and bin a-meddling with 'em at home without anybody by to see fair play, why, the au-thorities, they likes to know what's what—and small blame to 'em for it, say I."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Ferrers, "has *this* been made into a charge against me? I thought I was doing a praiseworthy action! I found these books mouldering away in a most unfit place, and my sole

endeavour and object has been to repair, as far as possible, the damage that has already been done, and to preserve them for the future."

"Wery well, then; you satisfy me of that, and it's all right," said Lagger, scarcely able to repress a twinkle that would come into his eye.

"But you have been speaking with Mr. Thomas, you have told him—"

"Nothing about you, and if I find all right about the books, I sha'n't tell him nothing—there now! If you likes to let out why I've come down here, why of course you can. I sha'n't. Come, none of that," the detective continued, as the new clerk sprang forward, in a paroxysm of delight and gratitude, and tried to seize his hand—"I'm a-going to do my duty, I am; you wait till that's over, and *then* we see about shaking hands. You come along and show me the church 'cordin' to orders, and when that's done, if there's anybody by, you sez to me, 'Will you step up to my little place,' you sez, 'and take a cup of tea, Mr. Brown? you must be dry after your long walk;' to which I shall re-ply, 'Thank you kindly, Mr. Ferrers, I will.' Then I shall ac-company you home, examine them books, and if I find them all serene—why I don't mind if I *do* have a cup of tea, and so I tell you. Now you go on ahead and open the doors."

"Sam Lagger," mused the detective as he passed through the parsonage garden, "it's high time you re-tired from business. Your memory ain't what it used to was, my man, or what it ought to be. If this 'ere young chap had not made a fool of hisself, and split upon hisself, you wouldn't have known him. He knew *you* sharp enough. You've had a finger in his pie, that's clear; and not so wery long ago neither. But I'm darned if you can remember him, or his right name, or if you know any more about how he come to get into trouble, than he has been flat enough to tell you. Seems a good sort of young fellow too, though he has made a slip. Ex-pose him to his governor! Not I."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MARRIAGE REGISTERS.

IT must be confessed that the little district church did not contain any object of interest to Mr. Lagger, with the exception of the place where the registry books had been huddled away by the old clerk, and, in his own mind, he felt perfectly convinced that it was not a safe repository for them. Appealed to, however, on this point, he could by no means admit the excuse advanced by Ferrers for their removal.

"Now you just answer me this question," he said. "Is this 'ere a Church of England Es-tablishment, or is it not?"

"Church of England, no doubt."

"Well, then, a Church of England Es-tablishment has a parson, to do what the prayer-book orders him to do, and a clerk to say A-men to what he sez, and wardens, dooly chosen, to take charge of and be responsible for

this, that, and t'other, necessary for the celebration of this, that, and t'other service—that's what a Church of England Es-tablishment has. Now what are you? Are you the parson, or the clerk, or the two church-wardens of this 'ere Es-tablishment?"

"The clerk."

"Very good! Then you stick to your A-men, and let the others stick to their business."

"But I thought—"

"You thought! What call has a parish clerk got to *think*? Wait till you're a parson, or two church-wardens, and then you may think, and welcome."

"Mr. Thomas thoroughly approved of what I did."

"And what right had he to meddle with them books any more than you? Now don't you go argufying the point with me, young fellow, or you'll find yourself in the wrong box," said Mr. Lager severely. "You've bin and com-mitted a mistake, to say the least of it. You prove to me that you ain't bin and done *woss*, and I'm not the man to be hard upon you. Now tell me. The marriage registry book now in use—where's that?"

"In the vestry."

"How long does it go back?"

"I cannot say exactly; about twenty or thirty years."

"Well, then, you go and fetch it, for I must re-port upon 'em all. You've bin in the habit of carrying the books to your place, so no one won't notice your taking this. Cut along, and I'll wait for you outside."

This conversation had taken place at the foot of the belfry tower, in a sort of vault, below the level of the church floor, in which the bell was rung with a long rope, and where—in a sort of cupboard rough-hewn in the wall—the old books had been discovered.

Mr. Lager found his way out again into the churchyard, where he was soon joined by the new clerk, carrying the required volume under his arm.

"That's right," said the detective: "now come along home, and let's overhaul these books while there's daylight to see what's what. There ain't no one to hear you, so you need not ask me to tea; only when we come to your lodgings, you sez to your landlord or his good lady, whichever you meets fust—sez you, 'Mr. What's-his-name, or Mrs. What's-her-name, this gentleman's an old ac-quaintance of mine (which is true, you know), and he's come to have a chat over old times.' True agin—for them registers go back to the days of our godfathers and godmothers in our baptism, and afore then."

"I have done no wrong," replied Ferrers, "and see no occasion for this secrecy and deceit."

"Wery well!—wery well! Then you bring down the books to the parsonage, and we'll have a public in-quiry; only, of course, I must tell the parson the reason why it is to be held."

Ferrers turned deadly pale again, and gnawed his nether lip till the blood trickled.

"Have it your own way," he said at last, in a half choking voice. "I am in your power. God help me!"

"You help *yourself*. God made you a reasonable being, not a pig or a idiot, that you should be *helped* along."

"Follow me, and I will do as you desire."

"Not a bit of it. Old friends just met, arter a separ-ation, don't march along in single file. You take my arm, and carry this 'ere butterfly net; and look pleasant too—that's about how old friends should go along."

Ferrers shuddered, as he felt the grasp of the detective tighten on his arm. He conducted him down the lane in silence, and they were soon seated in the new clerk's pleasant, but homely quarters, with the heavy registers spread out upon the table.

"Before we begin this 'ere in-quiry," said Lagger, "tell me one thing. You gev a wrong name when you was took up; didn't you now?"

"No, Clarke was my right name—an honest one once."

"Clarke, eh, so it was!" said the detective, slapping his thigh. "Forgery at the Old Bailey, three years' penal servitude, Mr. Justice Wightman; I know; you'd a dozen witnesses to character, you had; but the judges, they're always down hard and heavy upon forgers. You may smash a man's skull in (so as you don't quite kill him) for twelve months, but if you forges his name you catches it hot. This ain't nothing to the purpose, though. Let's get on with the registers."

The books were sadly the worse for damp and mildew, but so much care and ingenuity had been expended by the new clerk upon their restoration, that the bindings were firm, and the contents perfectly legible. There were three in all, the one in use making the fourth.

"This," said Ferrers, drawing forward one of a smaller size, and more ancient-looking manufacture than the others, "is the first."

"How am I to know that," asked Lagger.

"Because it commences in April, 1697—the month in which the church was first consecrated."

"And how am I to know *that*?"

"I will show you the deed by which it was endowed."

"What! you've bin and took the deeds away too! I say, young fellow, you've bin going it!"

"I took away everything that hole contained. A crack in the external wall had widened, and the rain came in, and the recess was half full of water when I opened the door. If I had waited till I could get leave from the wardens, the entire contents might have been destroyed."

"And what odds was it to you if they had been?"

"None to me, certainly; but it might have been of the most vital importance to some one else."

"Humph—m!" mused the detective, turning over the pages of the

old book, "this seems to be all square enough, and not so badly mended either."

"When does the next begin?"

"The first entry is the 22nd September, 1748, Elizabeth Carter and Herbert Wentworth."

"Good! go on a page or two. Stop! there's something scratched out."

"Yes, but if you look to the bottom of the page, you will find a note explaining why this was done. The woman gave her mother's maiden name, as they sometimes do still, in these parts, when the father is dead. The clergyman found out her mistake, and corrected it. The note is in the same handwriting as the entry, and signed with his initials."

"This book seems as if it had been wellnigh all to pieces," resumed Lagger, turning over page after page; "but how do you know that the leaves you have stuck in belong to the places where you have bin and stuck 'em?"

"I compared the dates of the several entries, and sometimes an entry ran from one page into the next, and so guided me."

"They ought to have bin drawn up in a regular form, and numbered."

"You will find that that is done, when you come to the time when the Act of Parliament was passed, which—"

"Now don't you go jabbering to me about Acts of Parliament," interrupted Lagger,— "just as if I didn't know the law!"

"Here, then, you find it complied with," said Ferrers, opening the third volume. "I suppose it was not thought worth while to have a new book, as this was not quite filled up; so the few entries under the new system have been made in a form ruled by hand. The book now in use is printed, but the entries run on regularly from the first—year after year."

The detective continued to make his feigned scrutiny with much apparent care, dwelling upon an entry here and there, in order that when he came to that which alone he cared to see, no suspicion might be aroused as to his motive in closely scanning its details. Habit had made him careful, and long experience as a hunter of criminal men, had taught him what remote and trifling mistakes will sometimes suffice to put the quarry on his guard, and lengthen, if not break off, the chase.

"Just so," he said, as he came to the more formal entries; "*Number—When married—Name and Surname—Age—Condition—Rank or Profession—Residence at time of marriage—Father or mother's surname—Rank or Profession of father.* Right! When you marry," observed the detective, shaking his forefinger at the new clerk, "it ain't sufficient for you to know who was your wife's father and mother, and what they was; or for your wife to know who was *your* father and mother, and what *they* was. The law steps in and sez, 'Des-cribe yourselves, every one of you. I want to know all about the lot,' that's what the law sez! 'I ain't a-going,' sez the law, 'to have you making a row when you get tired of each other, or any one else making a row for you when you're dead, and saying, 'This 'ere

John Smith was John Smith, but he wasn't the identical John Smith as married Mary Brown!" I ain't a-going to stand none of *those* little games,' sez the law, and so I tell you; consequently the law will make you dis-cribe yourself and your fam'ly, and your lovely bride's fam'ly too, so that there may be no mistake about it,—that's what the law does."

"I am perfectly aware of the regulation and its intention," said the new clerk humbly.

"Wery well, then; don't you get a-trying to e-wade 'em, or else you'll catch it hot, and so I tell you." This warning was delivered by Mr. Lagger with much severity of tone and gesture, as though the new clerk were on the point of leaving the room to contract a marriage in defiance of the legal forms.

Ferrers could not help smiling—troubled and anxious as he was. "*When* I marry," he replied, "you may depend upon it that I shall observe all due formalities."

"You'd better," said the unrelenting Lagger; "but where are we now? Oh, March, 1834, when you enter the certificates properly; hem! not many of 'em; January '35—more people married about Christmas time, I see, than any other season of the year. April, four entries—one a week. April's got a page to itself. Well done, April, 1835" (the detective was getting gay), "and the merry month of May's only got one. I wonder now," he continued, quoting from the entry, "what has become of Georgina Bosser, who was 19 years of age, and a spinster, the daughter of Mark Bosser, of this parish, farmer—and who married William Cox, widower of full age, whose governor's name was likewise Bill, and farriers the pair on 'em? I wonder how that there young gal got along with her second-hand article? Did he get a-naggin' at her about the virtues of the dear departed, or are they a comfortable old couple? Lord! if any book-writing gentleman could put down here what all these couples *said* they'd do, and what they intended to do, and after all what they really *done*—what a rum story-book a marriage register would be! But let's get on—let's get on. June, 1835, has one, two—ah, and here the book ends. Hand over the last volume, young man," said Lagger, leaning back in his chair and whistling a tune, "and let's get along with June, 1835."

The new clerk removed the books through which the scrutineer had passed, and spread the last open at the first page before him. Mr. Lagger was in no hurry to look at it. He examined his boots, he examined his finger-nails, he examined nothing at all, very fixedly, out of the window; at last his attention returned to his task. "And so," he remarked, in the most casual of tones, "this 'ere new book—leastwise this 'ere book which is the one in use now—begins in June, 1835: good! How many entries was there in the last one for this month of June, 1835?"

"Two; one on the 2nd, and the other on the 9th," replied Ferrers, referring to the older volume.

“And here we have—. What were the names in the other two?” asked Lagger quickly.

“Job Stokes and Hannah Barnardiston, on the 2nd, and Jane Crofter and Charles Shelmordine, of Manchester, on the 9th.”

“And the numbers—the numbers?” demanded the detective, his face getting flushed, and his manner full of excitement, in spite of him.

“Stokes’ marriage is No. 54.”

“Shelmordine’s, then, is 55?”

“Of course! It is the last entry in the book. The next will be that where your hand is now.”

“That,” replied the detective sternly, but in a very different tone from his assumed severity of a few moments before, “that is dated July 28th.”

“Well,—what then?”

“Where are the entries of marriages which took place in the mean time?”

“There were none, I suppose,” replied the new clerk. “You find only one for May. Why should you suppose that there should be more than two in June?”

“There were four marriages celebrated in June and July which are not entered in this book, or of which the certificates have been destroyed,” replied the detective decisively.

“How can you possibly know that?” said Ferrers, smiling incredulously, but turning a little pale. “Excuse me saying so, but guess-work—”

“Goes for nothing of itself,” said Lagger, looking at him hard and full in the face; “but it leads to a good deal, as you shall find, my fine fellow. I guessed there was some’at wrong about you, and like-wise about these books; pretty much as a beagle guesses there’s a hare cutting along somewhere, when he comes upon her scent. Guesses is scent to me; and here” (bringing his fist down upon the first page of the newest book, with a thump which made the old table creak again), “*here’s* my game run into and chopped up.”

“I cannot see anything to complain of there,” replied Ferrers; “there is not an erasure or a blot, and every particular filled in as regularly as can be. What fault do you find?”

“The last entry in the other book is numbered 55; the first in this is number 60. There are four certificates in every page, *consequently a whole page is wanting!*”

“Good God!” exclaimed Ferrers, “it is so, indeed! But you do not think that I— You cannot accuse me of—of—”

“For the present,” replied the detective, in his quietest manner, “I say a whole page is *wanting*. I don’t accuse nobody of nothing, but I must have this ’ere page. Where is it?”

“I cannot tell you. I have never seen it. Never till this moment noticed that there was a gap in the dates.”

“And yet you noticed the dates in the other parts?”

“Because there were a lot of loose pages which I had to fit in at their proper places.”

“Where did you put them? You may have forgotten this one.”

“No; I am perfectly certain that I fixed them all.”

“All that you brought from the church, perhaps; but it may be in that hole this very moment.”

“Impossible! I searched it thoroughly. Besides, it was only about the middle of the third book, where it was open,—having fallen from the shelf,—that the leaves were loose. If you look at the end, you will see that they are all intact. Look at the back, under the binding, and you will see for yourself that what I say is true.”

“Then how do you account for the gap in the numbers?”

“Probably the clergyman, or his clerk, made a mistake. These entries in the commencement of the new book are in the latter’s handwriting. He was an old man even then. He might have forgotten the number of the last entry, or made a guess at it, to save the trouble of referring back. Oh, really,” added the new clerk, with an attempt at a laugh, “there are a dozen ways of accounting for such a trivial error.”

“It ain’t trivial,” replied the detective sternly; “and it’s not to be accounted for anyhow. I *know* there is another page somewhere or other, and it’s for you to find it.”

“For me? I have nothing whatever to do with it.”

“Now, you jest attend to me,” said Lager; “I ain’t a-going to be too hard upon you, and I ain’t a-going to shirk my duty. If you’d a let these ’ere books alone, and stuck to your A-men, as you ought to have done, you *would* have had nothing to do with it; but you goes a-meddling with things as don’t concern you; as usual, you burns your fingers. Suppose I goes to the parson, or the two church wardens, and sez, ‘There’s an entry as I knows was made, and which I can’t find in your books,’—what will they say? They’d say, ‘The clerk’s a been and meddled with these volumes. He’s routed ’em out of their proper place. He’s took ’em, and a lot of them loose leaves home; and we can’t be held res-ponsible for any fraud he’s com-mitted.’”

“Fraud! What possible interest could I have in suppressing anything?”

“I ain’t here to answer your questions,” replied the detective; “I’m here to ex-amine these books, and to re-port upon their con-dition. Now, what I says, I means; and what I means, I sticks to; and what I sticks to is this ’ere:—You find these ’ere missing entries. Not a word. I won’t hear it. Be they made on a leaf torn out of either book, or be they contained in another odd book, or a piece of odd paper,—you find ’em, or you dis-cover who’s got ’em.”

“But how am I to do this?”

“That’s your business,” replied the detective, rising, and taking up his hat.

“You have no authority to require me to make such a hopeless search,” said Ferrers moodily; “and I refuse to attempt it.”

"Wery well, *wery* well ; then I must make it myself."

"That will be far the better way."

"Ex-actly. So come along with me to Mr. Thomas, and listen whilst I tell him *why* I'm a-going to ask a lot of seemingly impertinent questions in his parish. You young ninny-hammer! Don't you see that you can make in-quiries without suspicion agin you, having already took to meddlin' with the books? It's one way or the other, you know ;—either you have stole these entries, and destroyed 'em, or you haven't."

"I swear to you most solemnly that I have not."

"Well, then, if you haven't, you take the high hand, and you go to Mr. Thomas and the wardens, and you say, 'Here's four entries wanting ; and it's your dooty to in-vestigate the case ; or else it's *my* dooty to write to the bishop, and ask him what he thinks of it.'"

"But you say I had no right to look into the books."

"And *you* said as Mr. Thomas ap-proved of your doing so."

"According to you, he also is without authority to give such approbation."

"Humph—m! Never you mind. You're on the popular side, and if you're wrong in re-moving the books, the wardens are wrong in keeping 'em where they did, so *they* can't say nothing. Any way, you do what I tell you. It'll be better for you to be turned out for ex-ceeding your dooty, than for being a con-victed felon."

"And if I fail in my search for the missing leaf?" asked the miserable Ferrers.

"Well, then I shall be o-bliged to form my own con-clusions as to how it come to be missing, that's all," was Lagger's reply. "No, I sha'n't take no tea," he said, in answer to a gesture from the new clerk ; "I never breaks bread with those as I has my eyes on pro-fessionally. You fill up a cup, and chuck the stuff out o' winder, dirty a plate, and make belief as though I'd had some grub. And look here,—I shall stop at Macclesfield for a week. It ain't far for a young fellow like you to walk, so you come over next Thursday, and let me know what you've done. You'll find me at the Stork inn. D'ye mind? Rout out them entries, or discover the man who's took 'em ; or, as sure as eggs is eggs, you'll never say A-men again after next Sunday."

And with this, the detective took his leave.

"You've been precious hard upon that young fellow, Sam Lagger,—precious hard," he mused, as he passed along ; "but what are you to do? You *must* find that page ; and if you can get hold upon a likely cove to help you, why,—pro-fessionally,—you'd be an ass not to squeeze him pretty tight. As to the mo-rality of the thing,—you jest wait, my man, till you're retired into private life, before you goes bothering yourself about morals."

CHAPTER XXVI.

NANCY.

STEPHEN FRANKLAND, in the mean time, had arrived in London, and settled affairs with Messrs. Puddle and Snap, whom he found most accommodating gentlemen, with almost a repugnance to ready money, when presented in the form of a payment in full of all demands. They would take the captain's I O U; they would take the captain's guarantee; they would take the captain's bills at six, twelve, eighteen months,—anything rather than his crisp new bank notes for the entire sum due on Sir George's acceptance. They would renew, they would extend, they would accept part payment, and leave the rest to run on, with interest, till it was *quite* convenient to the baronet,—anything rather than be paid and have done with it. If people in difficulties will borrow money—and there must be such a class as bill discounters,—what a blessing it is that these latter will sometimes put their business into the hands of such delightfully courteous gentlemen as Messrs. Puddle and Snap, attorneys-at-law! How fortunate for impecunious humanity that this respectable firm exercised such a great influence over their clients! Why, they could make them do anything. “My dear sir,” Puddle would say to some bewildered youngster who had received some peremptory demand, “never mind what that fellow, Smith, says. He's a vulgar fellow is Smith, and does not know how to deal with gentlemen. Let me have a couple of ten pound notes for him by the day after to-morrow, and take my word for it that he will renew.” Considerate Mr. Puddle! “Proceed to execution!” would exclaim Mr. Snap, under similar circumstances, “not if I know it. If Brown wants to go on like this, he must find another solicitor; I sha'n't distress a gentleman who means well. Give him a new bill for principal and interest, and let him wait.” Honest Mr. Snap! These things, however, were done only for those who were sure to pay in the long run; and since the result of such indulgences was that the original debt would be paid half a dozen times over, as in Sir George Tremlett's case, *some one* was no loser by them. In short, Messrs. Puddle and Snap farmed the turnpike on the road to ruin, and kept it in remarkably good travelling order.

Our Steevie, like most young Indian officers, had gone a short stage upon that famous and much-frequented thoroughfare. He was a little behind hand with his agent; there were a few figures against his name on the wrong side of the book in a Calcutta bank. He had slightly anticipated the rents of his small patrimony, and he had been obliged to dip somewhat further, to provide for the expenses of his visit to England, and return. You know of his resolve not to touch a shilling of Brandron's money. How then did he procure those crisp new bank notes, the acceptance of which caused Mr. Puddle so much grief? Why, he went to Cuddy Lindsay, and said,—

“Cuddy, I owe just a thousand pounds. Hitherto I have not quite managed to live upon my pay, and it will be three or four years before my rents run off the mortgage on the farm at Durmston. I want a hundred directly. Will you lend it me?”

And Cuddy made no reply whatever, but only asked him “how he’d have it?” when he had drawn a cheque for the amount, and put on his hat to get the cash from Twining’s.

But what a goose he was, observes the reader, not to take the money from his mother, when she offered it to him, instead of telling a fib, and placing himself under an obligation to a mere friend! Well, he *is* a goose; I don’t pretend to deny that: only don’t talk about “mere friends” in that way; because there’s many a man who would rather be under a heavy obligation to a “mere friend” like hearty little Cuddy, than owe a shilling to such blood relations as Stephen Frankland had. Only fancy how delighted “dearest Francis” would have been when, in his systematic management of his mother’s accounts, he discovered that Stephen was indebted to her for his father’s release! No; he got the money he required from Cuddy, paid the greater part of it to Mr. Puddle, and then went off quietly and insured his life, so that his friend should not possibly lose by his prompt and kindly assistance. Nor was there the least shyness between them afterwards. Steevie took it quite for granted that he was welcome to the money till he could return it; and Cuddy thought it the most natural thing in the world that his old schoolfellow should have asked him for it, and should keep it as long as he liked.

Then, in a few words, Steevie gave him to understand that there were reasons which had made his home not so pleasant as he had hoped to find it; that the business upon which he had spoken on a former occasion, was anything but completed; and that he intended to remain in London till it was, and then rejoin his regiment.

“I am sorry for you—very sorry, poor old boy!” said Cuddy; “but, to tell you the truth, not one bit surprised. I have heard fellows talk of your brother, and can easily imagine your turning your back on Tremlett Towers. I know a little of that affair at Westborough, and can understand what you wish to see done before you leave England; but, in the mean time, I’m not going to have you sulking and wasting your substance in hotels, or giving yourself up a prey to lodging-house keepers. You’re coming to live here. Gigas,” said the little man, addressing Jackson, who just then entered the room, “Captain Frankland—to be known henceforward in these regions of the blessed as Steevie—is coming to live with us; so be careful, sir, and behave yourself properly.”

“I’m sure I shall be delighted to have him in the chambers; and we’ll get up a revolution, and raise barricades against you, you small despot, in no time!”

“But I shall be inconveniencing you. You’ve no room,” said Stephen, to whom, however, the idea was an agreeable one.

"We have the apartment which once used to be inhabited by the person formerly beloved here, and known as Lorimer, but of whom we have been obliged to get rid."

"Say rather, who has been obliged to get rid of us," laughed Jackson.

"Gigas has expressed himself in his usual brutal manner, but there is some truth in what the creature says. Several attorneys whom, in the interests of justice, I hope soon to see struck off the rolls, on account of their confirmed and rapidly increasing lunacy, have given Lorimer so much business, that he has taken a first-floor in Paper Buildings, and become a rising man. The very day after you left, he got two special jury briefs, and became unendurable; so he has gone, as the dew-drop is blown from the bough; and you are to have his room, and conform to the regulations of the establishment."

And so it was arranged, greatly to the satisfaction of all parties.

"Not that we shall be able to amuse you," said Cuddy. "People who come to London in September must take the inevitable consequences. There's not a soul in town,—only about two million and a half. The odd thousand or two have gone abroad."

"Are you not going anywhere?" asked Stephen.

"Presently. Gigas has an idea that he is going to Italy."

"I am,—next week."

"Gigas, I repeat, has an idea that he is going to Italy, but he is not. Gigas is going where I am going; and that is not to Italy."

"Did you ever hear such a little tyrant?" said Gigas. "I declare one cannot call one's soul one's own, for him!"

"The lower animals, and bipeds over six feet two in height, have no souls; therefore your complaint is trivial and impertinent," replied Cuddy, with much gravity.

"Cuddy, my child," said Jackson, "you are getting fractious. You require to be nursed; you know you do. You have only been dandled in these fond arms once since the captain was here last. Come here!" and the jolly giant approached his small friend with outstretched arms, who uttered a burlesque shriek of despair, and fled for refuge behind Steevie's chair.

"Save me!" he cried, dodging from side to side, "save me from this monster! The man who would see his Cuddy in distress— Ah, Steevie!—if you don't come to my rescue, I'll chop up all the hair-brushes in the chambers, and fill your bed with the bristles every night."

"If you do, you shall sleep in it."

"Thus shamefully betrayed and abandoned, I surrender at discretion; which means that Gigas is to be supposed to have the usual number of organs, moral and physical, and that he is to let me alone. In token of which we will smoke the calumet of peace. What, ho! Dagon! In the name of the prophet,—pipes!"

So tranquillity was restored, and Cuddy took an early opportunity of telling Steevie what a splendid fellow Gigas was; and Gigas, as soon as the little man's back was turned, launched out in his praises, narrating how he had nursed him (Jackson) through the scarlet fever, having found him, quite by accident, living alone in other chambers, deserted by every one, and too weak to seek, or even call for assistance; till Steevie became almost gay again in their pleasant, hearty companionship.

Immediately upon his becoming settled in the Temple, he wrote to Mr. Lagger, according to agreement, giving his address, and requesting the detective to call upon him there. He directed this letter to Little Union Street, and posted it with his own hand; but having received no reply, he wrote again at the expiration of a day or two, and this time the missive was entrusted to Dagon, otherwise Charley Wantley, for deliverance into the charge of Her Majesty's Postmaster-General. The features of this youth expanded into a broad grin, when he saw the address; and with open mouth, and hands extended behind his back, he winked, after the manner of small boys who burn to disclose the depth of their knowledge or observation, to Steevie, and cried,—

“Oh, sir! if you please, sir, it's no use sending this. The gentleman ain't come back yet.”

“How on earth do you know that?” said the surprised captain.

“Please, sir, he lodges with us, Mr. Lagger does. Mrs. Wantley's mother, and we live in Little Union Street, with Nancy.”

“And, pray, who may Nancy be?”

“Nancy Riley, sir,” replied Dagon; and then sinking his voice, and assuming a mysterious mien, he added, “and if you'll believe it, Captain Frankland, she's a-getting better.”

“Very glad to hear it, I'm sure. What has been the matter with Nancy?”

“Why, please, sir, she *was* mad.”

Stephen started. “Nancy Riley—mad! By heaven, it must be the same! Has she a brother with her?”

“No, sir, not with her; but he comes to see her sometimes,—not often. At first, mother thought he had played her a trick, and cut away, and left Nancy to be took care on for nothing; but he came back all right. He tea'd with us last Sunday.”

“Where does he live?”

“Don't know, sir.”

“Do you think your mother does?”

“Don't know, sir; but I'll ask her,” added Dagon, with a jerk, delighted at the prospect of having something to do.

“You will do no such thing,” replied Steevie. “Where is Little Union Street?”

“Down in the Boro', please, sir. You go over Blackfriars Bridge, and take the fourth turning to the left, and the first to the right, and then cross—”

"Never mind telling me now. You shall show me the way yourself, when you go this afternoon."

"Lor, sir! are you coming to see Nancy?"

"Never mind whom I'm coming to see. What time do you leave here?"

"Six o'clock, sir."

"Then at six I shall be ready to go with you."

In due time, Dagon, bursting with importance, rushed into his mother's little back parlour, and, to her great surprise, announced that a gentleman, one of his masters—the new one, a great captain from India—wanted to see her. The good lady had been cleaning up, and was hardly presentable, at that moment, to company. Bang went the door, and Steevie was left waiting in the shop, whilst its mistress performed a hasty toilette. At first he thought he was alone, and began to fidget and worry at the idea that he was intruding on strangers; for Steevie had the idea that it is quite as bad taste to intrude upon your inferiors, as upon your equals or superiors,—an idea which the better judgment of many of his contemporaries has scouted as it deserves. He was roused, however, by a voice which proceeded from behind him, and asked what he pleased to want. He turned, and saw a rather good-looking girl, poorly, but very neatly dressed, who had evidently just risen from a seat behind the counter, and who, with her knitting in her hand, came forward and put the question which had turned the current of his thoughts. He came prepared to see Nancy Riley, but could not recognise the poor witless slattern whom he had encountered in that green Westborough lane, in the pale and almost refined-looking young woman that stood before him.

"I have come to speak with Mrs. Wantley," Steevie replied; "is she at home?"

"Yes." And she sank back into her chair, and resumed her knitting, without another word or look.

"Am I right in supposing that your name is Riley?"

"I'm Nancy Riley. I live—I live with Mrs. Wantley, Little Union Street."

"Do you not remember me?"

"No."

"I saw you once at Westborough."

"I must not talk about Westborough."

"Why not?"

"Because I live here now. I live with Mrs. Wantley, Little Union Street."

She spoke as a child would speak, looking him full in the face, and deliberating over her words.

In a few minutes Mrs. Wantley appeared, looking very hot and red about the elbows, and wafting along with her a powerful odour of yellow soap. I do not know which was the more shy or embarrassed of the two;

but after a profusion of apologies on both sides, Stephen came to the point, and made his inquiries after the erratic Jim.

Mrs. Wantley was very sorry,—very sorry indeed,—but, upon her word and honour, she did not know. Jim was here to-day, and gone to-morrow. He never would tell her where he lived; though, to be sure, he acted quite honourable, and paid his money like a man. Did she know when she would see him again? No, she did not. Perhaps he would come that very night,—perhaps not for a month. It was quite uncertain. He was working hard at his trade, and— Well, he was doing something else as well. Did the captain know him?

“I met him once,” replied Steevie; “and I think if you will mention my name, and ask him if he will give me a call at Mr. Lindsay’s chambers, that he will come. I should like to see him much, for two reasons,—one personal to myself, and the other relative to that poor girl,” he said, sinking his voice, and indicating Nancy.

“Oh, ho!” replied Mrs. Wantley, assuming that mysterious air peculiar to matrons of her class; “about Nancy, is it? Then I’m sure he’ll call. Do you know, sir, he’s working night and day for that girl?”

“I rejoice to hear it, and so will some friends of mine, who took a great interest in her, having known her mother.”

“Her mother!” cried Mrs. Wantley, “this is news! So you know who her mother was, do you, sir?”

“Certainly, though I never saw her. She died the day before I came into that part of the country in which she lived; but I heard much about her from my friends.”

“You’ll excuse me, sir, if I’m making too bold,” said the good woman, still in a state of high excitement, “but I’ve taken such an interest in poor Nancy, that I cannot help asking. Might one know who her mother was?”

“Of course. She was a highly respectable, though humble person, and lived at Westborough, in Kent.”

“O dear, dear, dear!” replied Mrs. Wantley, in a tone of disappointment. “Is it only that you know? I hoped you had come to tell us who’s child she *really* was.”

“Why, what can you mean? Is she not Riley’s sister?”

“Not she! She’s— But I’ve no business to talk about what don’t concern me. I ask your pardon, Captain Frankland, I thought you knew more than you do, and therefore I’ve said more that I ought.”

“Mrs. Wantley,” said Steevie earnestly, “I assure you that I am not actuated by any mere curiosity. I assure you, most solemnly, that I have no motive but a good one in following up the clue you have let fall. May you—will you tell me what makes you suppose that she is not Mrs. Riley’s child?”

There was no resisting the appeal of those honest, earnest eyes; and, indeed, Mrs. Wantley did not require much pressing to enlarge upon a

subject which she had long burned to have a gossip about. But the shop was not a fit place for it; so having explained, by way of a salve to her conscience, that as the captain was friendly to all parties, and she was friendly to all parties too, there could not be much harm in such friendly persons exchanging friendly information, especially as he (the captain) was a great gentleman, and might be able to help them all,—she showed the way up to Mr. Lagger's room, where (after having dislodged its usual invader, the haughty Flora) she then unbosomed herself of what had been weighing like lead upon her mind for many a long day.

"Well, sir," she began, "I don't mind confessing that things were not going smooth with us when poor Nancy came; and she hadn't set foot in the house a week, when they began to mend; and they've gone on mending ever since. My eldest boy, sir, has come home, and is behaving like an angel—though, poor fellow! he is a cripple for life; and Flora,—that's my daughter,—she's engaged to be married to a very respectable young man, a chemist and druggist, next door. Add to this, that Mr. Lindsay has raised Charley's wages; that Helen, my second girl, has been put on in speaking parts,—she *was* in the ballet, sir; and that the shop is taking at least five shillings a week more than it did last year, and you will see that we've much to be thankful for, sir. I can't help thinking that it's Nancy who has brought us good luck; and therefore I'm all one with those who try to bring good luck to her."

"Your feelings do you credit; but you were going to tell me what makes you think that she is not Riley's sister."

"Mr. Riley told me so himself, Captain Frankland, in as many words. He's a rough, rude sort of man, is Jim, but I don't think he 'as a bad heart. You see he was badly brought up, and soon settled down to a vagabond life. He couldn't bear to live at home, and, from what I have heard of poor Mrs. Riley's way of life, it was not one to suit a wild young fellow like him. I don't know that it had not a good deal to do with poor Nancy's weakness of mind. Why, she brightened up wonderfully directly she came here. But I'm wandering from my text, ain't I, sir?"

"Well, you are slightly—pray go on though."

"Thank you, sir. Well, the second time I ever saw him was about a fortnight ago. We thought we should never see him again, but that's neither here nor there; and I put it to him roundly, What are you going to do with Nancy? She's got quite bright and handy about the house, I said; and though I don't pretend to say that she's got *all* her wits about her, she's got enough to take charge of a little place for you, to keep it clean, cook your dinner, ay, and buy it, too; for she's uncommon sharp about money. She's welcome to stay here as long as you like, I says; but supposing anything was to happen to me, I says, where would you be? She's your sister, says I, and you ought to provide for her. 'To tell you plain truth, Mrs. Wantley,' says he, 'she's not my sister.' Not your sister, Jim? says I. 'No,' says he. Then whose child is she?"

says I. 'I wish to God I knew,' says he, thumping the table with his fist; 'but I'll find out. Mark my words, missis'—he always calls me missis,—'I'll find out, sooner or later.' And with that, he up and told me all about it."

Stephen drew his chair closer to the speaker.

"He told me that his mother,—she *was* his mother, you know,—was very fond of Nancy, and used to moan about what was to become of her when she was gone; for she was a long time ailing before she died. And she used to beg and pray Jim to steady down, and be able to take charge of her, giving him to understand that there was a money payment—she would not say how much—which came in regularly every quarter day, on her account. Upon this, Jim he asked her straightforward if the poor creature was not some gentleman's child, that was to be kept out of the way? and she did not deny it. Many a time he begged and prayed her to tell him all she knew, so that Nancy might not want for friends when she died; but she wouldn't speak. No, she used to say, 'Not now,—not now. Wait. They may own her; they may send for her. I cannot trust you, Jim.' For you see, sir, what with poaching, and rows at fairs, and what not, poor Jim had got a bad name, and even his own mother dursn't tell him a secret which would put other folks in his power. 'Still,' she used to say, 'I'll tell you some day,—I'll tell you some day before I die.'

"Well, the 'some day' came, in which, perhaps, she would have told him, but he wasn't there to be told; and so she died, and the secret with her; but in searching over her things, he found what convinced him that Nancy was a lady's child."

"What did he find?"

"Ah! that I can't get him to tell; but he says he has a clue, and is working on it hard. He's not a man to be beaten by trifles, isn't Jim Riley; and, depend upon it, he'll hit the mark some day or other."

"On the contrary," said Stephen, "he appears to me to be a very foolish fellow, and to be taking the worst possible course to gain his end. Why, the persons of whom I have spoken would have done ten times more than he can ever do to get Nancy her rights; but he stole her away from Westborough in a most reprehensible manner, and frustrated all their kind intentions."

"Jim Riley's not so black as he's painted, Captain Frankland; but he's not an angel, for all that. He looks after number one, like most of his betters; and he's not going to give up the credit or the *profit* of finding out whose child Nancy is, to any one; and I don't blame him for it."

"I see," said Stephen coldly. "It will be much the same to him whether she be acknowledged or remain as she is, so that he gets his price."

"No," replied Mrs. Wantley firmly, "I don't think so badly of Jim

as that. Jim's been cried down enough. He's tired of a vagabond life, and his aim is to make an honest name. He'll make it, Captain Frankland, as sure as you sit there; and I wouldn't, for a thousand pounds, be in the shoes of those who have an interest in keeping Nancy's birth a secret; for it will come out. Mark my words, Captain, it will come out, and before long, or I don't know Jim Riley."

"Do you know where he is now?"

"No more than the child unborn, sir. As I said, he may be here to-night, and he may not turn up for a month."

"And I believe that Mr. Lagger's movements are equally unknown to you?"

"Oh, as for *him*, he's always uncertain. If you want to know where he is, you'd better go to Scotland Yard. *They* know where to find him."

"A capital hint!" said Stephen, "and I will follow it."

"But now turn and turn about's fair play," said Mrs. Wantley, whom the lengthened gossip had put entirely at her ease; "I've told you what you want to know, as far as I can; now you tell me what you want with Jim Riley."

"Certainly. There was a murder committed at Westborough the day he left it with Nancy. At first, suspicion fell on him, but there is reason to think that it was unfounded. Another person, a stranger, was there also, on whom grave suspicion still rests. It is possible that Riley may have encountered him, and therefore I wish to ask him a few questions,—that is all."

Steevie had sample enough of his entertainer's garrulity to make him keep silence respecting the new suspicions which her story had raised in his mind. What if this poor half-witted girl were the child towards whom the *act of justice* was to be done,—the abandoned and disdained offspring of George Howell? What if Mrs. Riley were connected in some way with the writer of the letters found in Brandron's room,—with the Susan or Sarah Alston who had helped him to hide the other papers in Mangerton Chace? The idea was a mere guess. That there were thousands of other unclaimed children in the country, he knew; but the presence of this one, in the very place chosen by Brandron for the meeting with the person undoubtedly interested in concealing the identity of such a child, was at least strange and suggestive, and, for want of any other clue, a circumstance well worthy of deep consideration.

Stephen soon took his leave, having received Mrs. Wantley's promise that as soon as she saw or heard of Jim Riley, or Lagger, she would let him know by Charley, otherwise Dagon, at his chambers. As he passed through the shop, he heard the quick thumping of a crutch behind him, and a gaunt, sickly-looking lad shambled forward and opened the door. Stephen thanked him, and passed into the street without looking into his face.

Messieurs et Mesdames,—enemies to those in whom I hope the reader

feels some interest,—*garde à vous!* The hunters are out, and woe betide you if any one of them fall upon your track! Jim Riley is working on in his own way. Ferrers, the new clerk at Craigsleigh, must find that marriage certificate, and shortly, too, or he is a lost man; and Lagger, the long-headed, the cool, the ambidextrous, is not idle, we may be certain, *somewhere*. A poor cripple, reclaimed from a gaol, opens the door to Stephen Frankland, the most earnest, but perhaps less skilful of the huntsmen, and the chase has well begun. Will the race be to the swift?—the prize to the strong? Who can tell?

The following morning Stephen betook himself to Scotland Yard, and made inquiries for Mr. Sampson Lagger. Of all people in the world who know the least about the police, commend me to policemen. Lagger's name was a household word in that locality, but where to lay a finger on its owner, no one knew; but every one could direct Steevie to some one else who did, and who, when applied to, was just as much enlightened as the individual who had suggested him as omniscient. Every official agreed that Lagger was "on duty," but where, and what about, no tongue could tell. Eventually, Steevie, being in downright earnest, pushed his inquiries up to the fountain-head, and poured them on the able and courteous head of the metropolitan police. From him he got an answer. He was happy to make the acquaintance of so distinguished an officer as Captain Frankland. He was sorry to find him inquiring for a person in Lagger's department. He trusted that the case was not a serious one; but his rules did not permit him to divulge where a detective was employed on secret service. Lagger was so employed; and much as he (the chief) desired to oblige Captain Frankland, he must decline to give him the information he asked.

"One thing, perhaps, you will find yourself at liberty to tell me," said Steevie. "In some dealings—no matter what—which I have already had with this man, he referred me to you for his character, as an honest and trustworthy man. What is your opinion of him?"

"A little headstrong, and fond of his own way. Slow, but sure. The most incorruptible and straightforward man in the force. Were he otherwise, he would not be employed as he is. Good morning!"

And so Stephen was left in the dark.

In the mean while, what had the little great world down in Derbyshire to say about him? It had a good deal to say. It saw him, by a credible witness, walk over to the station that morning, which we remember, with his carpet bag in his hand. It heard, by a credible witness again, that he had sent a fly from Derby for his luggage. It concluded, and not without reason, that something had gone wrong at Tremlett Towers; and it drew its own conclusions according to its light. He had fallen out with his father; he had fallen out with his mother; he had fallen out with his brother Francis; he had run away from the snares of Laura Coleman; he had run away from the snares of Grace Lee; he had eloped with the under housemaid; he had been jilted by each one of those ladies; he had been

arrested for debt; he was obliged to go abroad, on account of that affair down in Kent, which never had been cleared up; he was going to be knighted, and receive a lucrative appointment in Ceylon; he was going to be tried by court-martial, for being absent without leave. Lastly, he was not quite right in his mind, poor fellow! and don't you remember the fit of *delirium tremens* which he had that night when he frightened Miss Lee so, in the old Hall? The balance of testimony was certainly against him, and even kind-hearted Mr. Coleman shook his head when he remembered the conversation which they had had at the garden gate, and the cavalier manner in which Steevie had thrown off his warnings about Grace Lee.

Meanwhile, the object of all these conjectures lived in the dark, in blissful ignorance of all that the great little world said or thought about him. No day passed in which he did not expect to hear of Lagger or Jim Riley, and in this state of uncertainty, he had written to Lord Rossthorne, postponing his promised visit, but promising that the next month should not pass without seeing him. London became very dull and still. Cuddy remained in the Temple, and Gigas did not go to Italy, but was allowed two days' barbel-fishing at Teddington Lock, as an equivalent. So time passed on, and Steevie—who had devised a hundred plans of working out his clue, but found himself unable to take the first step in any of them—began to fidget at double Frankland power, when, one morning, Charley Wantley glided mysteriously into his bed-room (he had a bad habit of smoking in bed of a morning), and gave him a note from his (Charley's) mother, in which that lady informed him that she had heard of Riley, and that, to the best of her belief, he was, at that moment, in or near Westborough, making inquiries about Nancy.

Frankland dressed quickly, and joined Cuddy and Jackson at breakfast. They were in close converse.

"May we venture to inquire," asked the former, "to what we are indebted for this unusual honour?"

"I'll tell you. I'm going to leave you this afternoon for a day or two."

Jackson looked at Cuddy with a queer expression on his great face, and Cuddy smiled a smile of pity, not unmingled with surprise.

"And pray where do you think you are going in this unceremonious and highly reprehensible manner?" asked Cuddy, "without asking permission too!"

"I am going to Westborough."

The two friends burst out into a roar of laughter.

"Steevie, you've been playing the eavesdropper, and are making a virtue of necessity," said Cuddy severely; "this is a lamentable example to show our young friend here."

"Playing the eavesdropper," replied Steevie, colouring, "what do you mean?"

"It has been arranged ever so long—for the last ten minutes, in fact—that you are going to Westborough this afternoon," said Cuddy; "it has

been arranged ever so long that Gigas and I should go, though Gigas did not know it, and pretended he was going to loaf his unwieldy carcass about the Colosseum. A letter received this morning from my uncle, with a postscript from Gertrude Treherne, which profane eyes are not permitted to read, has settled the *when*, and ordered that you are to be brought. Therefore, Gigas, you will please to see that a supply of clean shirts and other necessaries proper for the captain's appearance amongst ladies, be packed in his portmanteau, and you will both be ready to escort me to the station at half-past three o'clock;—so, thank goodness, *that's* off my mind."

"But," stammered Steevie, "I could not think of—"

"It is not necessary that you should think at all, sir," responded Cuddy; "the exercise of intellectual powers in these chambers has long been confided solely to me. Brute force, when necessary, is performed by Gigas. As for you, being a distinguished officer and accustomed to command, your duty is to do as you are told and to hold your tongue. Eat your breakfast. Do you imagine that we should leave you in these chambers alone with the silver spoons? Preposterous!"

"What a fellow you are, Steevie!" he added shortly afterwards, in a more serious tone; "how on earth did you know that we were going?"

"I had determined to revisit the place for purposes of my own, quite irrespective of your movements," replied Steevie.

"I am glad of that—very glad of that; for do you know I was afraid that the reminiscences you have of it would be too painful to make you care about coming."

"I tell you frankly, I would not go there, if I had not a purpose in view, other than visiting Mr. Treherne, much as I like him and his daughters; but as it is, I do not see why I should not accompany you."

"Which means that it is a horrid bore our going, but that you will try and make the best of a bad job," said Cuddy. "Never you fear, old fellow; no one shall interfere with you. You shall do exactly what you like; go where you please, and no one shall ask questions."

"I wish to God, Cuddy, I could tell you all, and ask your guidance and help in this wretched—you know not *how* wretched—case. It looks so unfriendly. But I cannot, I dare not;" and Steevie bowed his head and moaned.

"Poor dear old man," said Cuddy, laying his hand affectionately on his friend's shoulder, "don't you see that you make me respect and love you more than ever, by the noble way in which you are keeping this confidence? No! I'm horribly curious, I own, but I would not have you let me into the secret for worlds. As for my guidance and help—set me to do anything you like, and I'll do it without asking why or wherefore: yes, and I'll be hanged if Gigas sha'n't, too; and if he opens his ugly mouth to ask questions, I'll very soon stop it."

So the trio went down to Poundbridge, where they found Mr. Treherne's carriage waiting for them. Cuddy insisted upon driving, and away they

went towards Kerndew merrily, but it was not without a shudder that Steevie passed the lane that led to the wood and the old sawpit behind Westborough Church. The road was full of associations for him. Here it was that Nancy Riley sat—here where he had parted with Jim—here where he had met his father. Pondering over these recollections, he fell into a sort of dream; and the little carriage had drawn up at the rectory, before he knew where he was. Suddenly roused from this reverie, he was the first to descend. He strode into the porch, and began to rub the dust off his boots on what he took to be a small rug placed there for the purpose; but the rug gave a howl, rushed into a corner, and barked at him furiously.

The rug was Doggie!

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE.

THE moon look'd down, and what did it see?
 A deep vow breathed betwixt you and me:
 One, a girl in her fair spring-time;
 One, a man in his earnest prime.
 A vow of friendship, and faith, and truth,
 That should keep through years the pledge of youth.

The moon looks down, and what does it see?
 A broken vow between you and me.
 Careless words and a whispering tongue
 A veil of doubt o'er the heart have flung;
 Weakness in you, and pride in me;
 Two several paths where one should be.

The moon will look down, and what will it see?
 Two graves, two stones, for you and me.
 Sad that immortal souls can play
 With love, as a toy to be cast away!
 Hard to get, and harder to keep!
 This is the sight that makes angels weep.

CAROLINE M. KING.

THE BATTLE OF THE BAKERS.

THE battle of the journeymen bakers and their masters has now been waged for some time, and the public have looked on as patient spectators. Not so, exactly; for the battle is a sort of triangular duel, in which the journeymen bakers, their masters, and the public are the principals,—the last being not the least interested.

Let us examine the main features of this panary war.

The journeymen bakers have numerous grievances to bring against the masters; whilst the masters, on their part, shirking the direct responsibility of their deeds, politely throw the *onus* of blame upon that many-shouldered Atlas—Society. The journeymen complain—and righteously so—that the hours of labour are beyond human endurance; that, as boys, they are introduced to work which is beyond their physical powers; that they thus become prematurely weak and old, liable to the attacks of every kind of disease, and,—

“Like ripest fruit, fall earliest to the ground.”

These allegations have not been entered without justification, or without attracting attention. In fact, so gigantic are the evils connected with the business of baking, that the Legislature itself has, in its wisdom, deigned to interfere, and made the subject matter of Parliamentary investigation.

“It’s an ill wind that blows nobody any good.” In this instance, however, it appears more than probable that the storm of censure which blows will be productive of unmitigated good, not only to the journeymen bakers, but to every consumer of a wheaten, or what ought to be a wheaten, loaf.

Moreover, according to nursery ethics, we are all bound, in our lifetime, to eat a peck of dirt. Doubtless this is a consolatory reflection, and calculated, on the principle of “what must be, must be,” to reconcile us to those anti-cathartic conditions which we may not evade whilst treading our earthly path. From the investigation, however, to which we have alluded, it would appear that the peck of dirt has multiplied into the bushel, and the bushel into any measure of magnitude you choose to conceive. The dirt, too, which we are compelled to eat now-a-days, is by no means an aromatic dirt, but is, in the intensest degree, an exceedingly bad quality of dirt. How beautiful is a new loaf, smoking and steaming from the oven! How delicious are those little rolls, with the rich fresh butter melting and dissolving into them, becoming an essential part! What a substantial ornament do they not form to the breakfast-table! And that *fine* bread, for which we pay an extra price, how it seems to satisfy all the intuitive demands of a hungry stomach! Nay, how it excites even a plethoric stomach! Yet how are they prepared? and where are they prepared? We pass over the question of ingredients. We leave this to Dr. Hassall, and the committee

of the *Lancet*. It is not the question of adulteration that we would deal with here; it is simply with the filthy and disgusting places, and the no less filthy and disgusting manner, in which our bread is made.

But, first, let us glance at the baker himself. In London, including confectioners, there are supposed to be nearly fourteen thousand. Of these, upwards of two thousand two hundred are between the ages of fifteen and twenty; that is to say, labouring as men, before their constitution has become thoroughly settled—before their strength has been properly developed, and whilst they are sensitive to all the influences of hard work, want of sleep, and close confinement. Take a London journeyman baker; it will be found, as a rule, that his work begins about eleven at night. At that hour he “makes the dough,”—a heavy, laborious process, which takes him from half to three quarters of an hour, according to the batch, or the labour bestowed upon it. When this is prepared, he lies down to rest,—but where? Not on a bed; not on a couch; not in a hammock; not even on a heap of straw. He lies down upon the kneading-board, which is also the covering of the trough in which the dough is made; and with one sack under him, and another rolled up as a pillow, he sleeps a feverish sleep, in this uncleanly condition, for a couple of short hours. When he wakes up, for about five hours he is engaged in rapid and continuous toil,—throwing out the dough, “sealing it off,” mauling it, putting it into the oven, preparing and making rolls and fancy bread, taking the batch brought out of the oven into the shop. When this portion of the work is done, the distribution of the bread begins. Now it is that he is seen emerging from his subterranean den out upon the pavement of the street. Pale as the cap on his head, emaciated, with sunken eyes, and not unfrequently a hectic cough, with his vestments covered with dirty flour and dirty dough,—there he is, a miserable scarecrow antithesis of the Jolly Miller,—carrying baskets, or wheeling hand-carts,—labouring, in fact, in open day, as hard as he had been labouring during the night. The occupation of taking round the loaves continues till late in the afternoon, and then he retires back to the dark, ill-ventilated shop, to go through some fresh drudgery, or to seize a few moments of hurried slumber, till the hour of eleven warns him again to begin anew another four-and-twenty hours of almost uninterrupted toil. Can flesh and blood stand all this? and that, too, in a heated atmosphere, varying from seventy-five to upwards of ninety degrees? Nevertheless, such is the life of a poor plodder at the dough-trough. No wonder, then, that he has been sowing the seeds of disease; and that when he presents himself to the secretary of a life insurance society, he should be summarily rejected, or only accepted at a very high premium.

Let us for a few moments go round with the inspectors, and examine one or two of the bakehouses in which these men not only toil, but sleep; and let it, moreover, be premised, that, although the worst features may be found at the east of London, Tyburnia and Belgravia are not exempt,

in too many instances, from the charge which is about to be preferred against the bakehouses of the metropolis.

As a rule, the locality in which the bread of London is made, is what is known as the coal-hole and the front kitchen; the back kitchen being the place where the small store of flour is kept, together with other things—no matter what—in daily use. The oven, or ovens, are usually placed under the street; but in many instances the arrangement is reversed,—the ovens being towards the back of the house, and the space under the street appropriated partly to the flour, and partly to the manual portions of the work. According to the number of sacks disposed of, is, of course, the number of ovens constructed; some master-bakers having only one, others two, and others, again, three at work.

Here we are beneath the roof of a very fair bakehouse. It is eight feet high, and the oven under the parlour. Cobwebs, however, are numerous, and in some parts hang in heavy masses: dust and dirt prevail everywhere. Ventilation is extremely imperfect, and the apertures are small. There seems to have been some conscience about the proprietor, or at least an eye to profit and loss, for the drains have lately been made with pipes and furnished with traps, and another oven under the shop has been disused, because the place was so infested with ants and vermin, which used to run over the dough and loaves in swarms, so that the bread became spoiled. Now we will step over the way, and inspect another bakehouse. It has recently been improved, but for many years all sorts of filth from the drains stagnated in one corner of the room, whilst sulphur pervaded the house, and affected the health of the inmates. We must not remain here long, otherwise we shall be sick with disgust. The rafters are black, and hung with cobwebs; and many animals are crawling about the troughs, and on the walls. There are, moreover, accumulations of dirty flour, dust, and ashes on the floor; whilst large holes in the walls have been perforated by rats. The temperature of the air out of doors, at the present moment, is fifty degrees; in the bakehouse, where two of the men are working, it is eighty-five degrees; this is again increased to five more degrees, that is to say, to ninety, when the men open the oven door to take out batches, and put fresh ones in.

Shall we extend our exploration? No; this, it appears to us, is enough to show the condition and the temperature of the bakehouses of our metropolis. We are sorry to say, without any material reservation, "*Ex uno disce omnes.*"

Having, then, satisfied ourselves, or, perhaps, should it not be "dissatisfied ourselves?" as to the locality in which our bread is kneaded and baked, and proved that there cannot be the slightest doubt as to our realizing the fatalistic old proverb about the peck of dirt, let us examine, if we can so unsavoury a subject, the man himself. We have caught a glimpse of him in full day light above ground, wheeling his hand-cart, or carrying his basket; and we have observed his dingy look, his unwashed, dust-

besmeared habiliments. How should it be otherwise? He rarely changes his linen. The state of his body when he goes to work may, therefore, be well imagined. We will not again descend into the bakehouse, but peering down through the area, where that gleam of light flashes across the street, we can as well see him at his trough. He is labouring hard, struggling with a heavy mass of dough, pulling it backwards and forwards; now digging his arms up to the elbows in the sticky compost, now turning it over, now pressing it together, now tearing it apart, until every portion of it has been penetrated by the leaven. Can such ponderous labour—a labour straining every muscle of the body—be carried on, and in so close and heated an atmosphere, without producing profuse perspiration? By no means. The body is a perpetual wellspring of perspiration, which streams out of every pore, and hangs in large bead-drops on the brow and the chest. Let us hear the testimony of some capable of proffering a statement upon this subject. One witness says:—"The place of work being so hot, of course, the men are always in a state of perspiration. As a rule, I think the journeymen bakers pay attention to cleanliness. Being so constantly in great heat, they are so much reduced, that they do not perspire as men would who are unaccustomed to the work. Nevertheless, it must be confessed that many men do perspire very much; and that, considering that their hands are covered with the dough in making it, *they cannot wipe it off from the face, and it must often get into the dough, especially in hot weather.*" Another journeyman baker throws the following light upon the mysteries of the cavernous bakehouse:—"In all the small shops in which I have worked, it is the universal custom for the man who stirs the sponge to wash his arms in a pail of water, and leave it standing until the next dough is made; it is then thrown in amongst the dough."

We leave it to the housewives and mistresses of households to take these rose-water (?) facts into consideration.

We have not, however, yet gone the full length of our tether; "though bad begins, yet worse remains behind." It is rumoured, and the rumour is not without a good foundation, that the men—"an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination"—feeling the fatigue of reaching over into the trough too great (especially when youths), take off their nether habiliments, their shoes and stockings, and plunge right into the trough, and knead the dough with their bare feet, like the treaders of the wine-press. On this subject, however, our witnesses have been rather chary of information; still one of them is reluctantly brought to confession: "I must confess," he says, "that I have occasionally, in former times, unknown to my master, done it myself. If it is ever done, it is done in making fancy bread, the dough for which requires to be very stiff, and is consequently hard to work." Hear this, O ye lovers of cottage loaves, bricks, twists, and other sorts of fancy bread!

We bid adieu, however, to these sickening facts. As our object in

unmasking, for the benefit of the public, the manner and the places in which the "staple" of life is prepared, is not to disgust them without offering at the same time a cure, we will revert at once to the new system of bread-making by machinery, which is intended to supersede this old-fashioned and disgusting process of manipulation.

The chief evils of which the journeymen bakers have to complain are, the inhaling the flour-dust, as well as the carbonic acid gas given off by fermentation. To these, of course, might be added those evils which we have expatiated upon,—laborious exertions and long hours of toil. Nor should we omit those debilitating influences—want of ventilation, and a high temperature. All these causes combined have unmistakably rendered the baker sensitive, more peculiarly than other men, to "those ills which flesh is heir to." Nor is this Demon of Destruction at work amongst them in England alone. It is historically recorded that, during the Plague of Venice, bakers and other persons in similar employments suffered the most severely; during the Plague of Marseilles, in 1720, it is authentically stated that *all* the bakers died; whilst again at Hamburgh, during an epidemic of rheumatic fever, one-half of the bakers fell victims, only one-fourteenth of the cabinet-makers and one-fifteenth of the tailors being cut off.

Does it not seem, then, very like constructive suicide to perpetuate a system which thus decimates its members, especially when it can be proved that no *necessity*, no fate, drives them to this fearful consummation? On behalf of the journeymen bakers of England, on behalf of the purity of the bread which we should eat, let us plead for that which ought long ago to have been introduced into the making of bread—machinery. It is strange that whilst mechanical ingenuity has been employed upon the fabrication of silks and woollens and cottons, in ploughing, in reaping, and threshing, and in ten thousand departments of human industry, Bread-Making should have remained where it was five hundred years ago, and that we should not have actually improved a step upon the mode of our ancestors. Strange that, whilst our mental energies have been directed to the development of engineering science, and we have our miles of tunnels, colossal aqueducts, and mighty bridges, spanning the sea itself—whilst we have our *Great Easterns* and *Warriors*, and railroads innumerable—whilst we have our miraculous telegraphs, and communicate instantaneously with the most distant part of the world by means of our speaking wire,—the preparation of "the staff of life" should still be made according to an antiquated system, and left in the hands of petty capitalists, who have not the means, if they had the will, to resist the temptations thrown in their way by competition, and who cannot lend themselves to any new invention, or encourage the efforts of scientific investigation. What is the consequence to the public? The poor baker feels himself necessitated to undersell his neighbour, and in order to be able to undersell his neighbour he is compelled to

adulterate his flour, and to use all kinds of cheap and unwholesome ingredients; so that if Mind is ever at work in this country in the making of bread, it is unfortunately directed to the deception of society and the injury of the national health.

Within the last decade, however, two enterprising men have come forward and endeavoured to break through these fetters of tradition, to set at nought the prejudices of veteran master-bakers, and to prove to the British public that their real interests lie in the adoption of mechanical appliances to the production of bread, thereby exalting what is now but a cook's business into a manufacture. We allude to Mr. Stevens and Dr. Daugleish.

The dough-making machine of Mr. Stevens has been at work something like five years, and consists of the following parts,—the mixer, the feeder and duster, the scoop. The advantages resulting from the use of this machine are—cleanliness, prevention of all waste, health for the journeyman, saving of time.

It must be confessed that these are a quaterne of benefits. By the new mechanical process—from the setting of the sponge, the breaking it up, and the kneading the dough, to the moulding the bread previous to its being put into the oven—the hand does not touch it. By the ordinary process of mixing and kneading, a great deal of the flour flies about the bakehouse as dust. This is admitted by all scientific men to be the finest particles of the flour, and consequently the most nourishing. When the work is done, the sweepings are put into a sack, and sold to the feeders of pigs. This occasions a considerable loss. Now all this is prevented by the machine; there is no such waste, since the trough is covered down. But there is another advantage to be gained from Mr. Stevens's process; a greater number of loaves can be made from the same quantity of flour. The dough thus mixed yields, on an average, three four-pound loaves more per sack of flour than hand-made dough,—that is, about a loaf and a half more than is due to the saving of waste above mentioned. This arises from the more perfect amalgamating of the dough, every particle of flour being brought into contact with the ferment and the water, of which the more perfect mixing causes it to take up a greater quantity, whereas in hand-mixed dough numberless particles of the flour can be discovered quite dry. The machine-made bread also gives a thin top and bottom crust, besides which there are no crumbs. Whilst, moreover, there is this public, there is also a personal gain—the health of the journeyman is preserved by Mr. Stevens's system. It relieves him from the very severe and arduous labour of mixing and kneading, the work of turning the machine being comparatively light; it confines the particles of flour which would otherwise fly about the room, and be inhaled by the journeymen; and it effectually prevents the escape of the carbonic acid gas, which is so fatal to them.

We will now revert to the Daugleish system.

In a paper on his new system of aerated bread-manufacture, read by Dr. Daugleish before the Society of Arts on the 26th of April, 1860, the subject was briefly but clearly stated. "My system," he observes, "does away entirely with fermentation, and with all those chemical changes in the constituents of the flour which are consequent upon it. It evades the loss consequent upon the decomposition of the portion of starch or glucose consumed in the process of fermentation, estimated at from three to six per cent. This loss may be estimated at about £1,500,000 sterling in the total quantity of bread made annually in the United Kingdom. It reduces the time requisite to prepare a batch of dough for the oven from a period of four, eight, or twelve hours, to less than thirty minutes; its results are absolutely certain and uniform; it does away with the necessity for the use of alum with poor flour, and the temptation which bakers are under to use it with all. It has the recommendation of absolute and entire cleanliness, the human hand not touching the dough or the bread from the beginning of the process to the end; even in weighing the dough, if a piece must be added to turn the scale, it is added by the use of a knife and fork. The journeymen are relieved from the circumstance most destructive to their health—that of inhaling the flour dust in the process of kneading. Their place of work, also, in my process, would always be above ground, and well ventilated; and their hours of work would never be more than the usual hours in ordinary occupations, with the recognised hours for meals. It will produce a healthier condition of the baking trade, and thereby diminish, to a great extent, the inducements which lead to the extensive system of fraud now practised upon the public by the production of adulterated and inferior bread. It will effect an immense saving in the material from another source, namely, by preventing the escape of at least ten per cent. in the nutritive portion of the grain, hitherto lost as human food, by the method of grinding and dressing necessary in the preparation of flour for making white bread by fermentation. Together with the preservation of this large proportion of the entire quantity of wheat converted into flour, there is also the important result of the preparation preserved, the cerealine being a most powerful agent in promoting the easy and healthy digestion of the food. This agent is retained uninjured by the aerated bread process, but is destroyed by the process of panary fermentation."

After the explanation we have given, almost *currente calamo*, after all this demonstrative evidence, what is to be said in favour of hand-made bread? We have shown that it is a filthy process; we have shown that it is an unhealthy process; we have shown that it is not an economical process; whereas, on the contrary, manufactured bread possesses all these three virtues. Those, then, who patronise the latter process are trebly fortified in their practice. When we consider the vast amount of bread that is made for the whole nation, and the immoderate proportion of waste which takes place under the old system, it follows that if this vast propor-

tion of waste can be saved, so much is saved for the nation; that bread will consequently be by so much more plentiful; and that it will therefore be so much cheaper for the poor. But the most potent argument in favour of machine-made bread is, after all, as we have stated, the question of health, not only for the maker, but for the consumer. If we could arrive at the true statistics, we should be startled to find how large a proportion of our ailments is due to the bread indigestive which we daily eat. This is not a question to be treated *couleur de rose*. Many facts which have risen to the surface during this investigation have not been at all savoury; nevertheless, it was necessary to tell the truth, and to open the eyes of the public. Who, then, is for clean and pure bread? Who will raise the standard against adulteration and inferior "qualities"? Let us eschew altogether the old system, and adhere to the new; with a little encouragement we shall find that a new order of things has arisen, and that that which is now a national bane will become what it ought in reality to be, a "Staff of Life."

THE EMPRESS EUGENIE.

SCARCE had Louis Napoleon been made Emperor of the French, by the will of Heaven, the *coup d'état*, and the hireling voices of seven millions of his countrymen, ere he gave orders that the interior of the Tuileries, which had been besmirched by the waves of so many revolutions, should undergo a magnificent restoration. The new Napoleonic dynasty selected for residence the ill-fated palace of the last kings of France. Napoleon I. had commenced imparting an imperialist character to the Tuileries, and his nephew inherited the plan, like all the other Napoleonic ideas, and continued the work. He had the names of the Restoration, the July Monarchy, and the Revolution of 1848, effaced from the rooms and walls, as if in this way causing a painful story to be forgotten; and he gave a marked imperialist stamp to the old monarchical character of the chateau, by large and splendid buildings, and by connecting it with the Louvre. He made all the arrangements himself as to how matters should be done, and was assisted in this by his young wife, who had those rooms fitted up to her own special liking, in which she hoped to obtain peace and relief after the tedious court ceremonies. A boudoir, and a bedroom opening out of it, form the sanctuary of the Empress. The windows of both rooms look out on the garden of the Tuileries; and no one is able to peer through the windows, save the chaste morning sun, or the curious moon; though in summer, it is true, the merry sparrows, or twittering goldfinches, which revel in the foliage, possess the same privilege. Who can say what persons, in former times, had loved or pined in these apartments? Perhaps it was here that Gabrielle d'Estrée gossiped with Henri IV. Perhaps young Louis XV., the *bien aimé*, forgot here all his good determinations, in the arms of beauty. Perhaps, too, the Princess de Lamballi may have passed here the long September night during which the murderers were seeking her, in order to cut off her proud head. A prince of the Restoration may have resided in these rooms, or one of the children of Louis Philippe spent a happy life in them, until the people of February yelled before the windows, "Down with the King! Long live the Republic!" Who knows, at the present day, how many sighs, how many peals of ringing laughter these walls may have heard?

A woman has now converted these apartments into a temple of taste. Luxurious, and yet elegant splendour, most refined judgment, and a poetic temperament are revealed in the arrangements of the boudoir of the Empress Eugenie. The doors are made of ivory, inlaid with gold; the furniture is rosewood, of graceful shape, and inlaid with gold, mirrors, or ivory; the sofas and chairs are covered with pale red silk; the walls hung with a dark paper, and the ceiling is an exquisite fresco. A magnificent Syrmian carpet voluptuously deadens the sound of footsteps. Around hang the most valuable paintings of the old masters, borrowed from the

Louvre gallery and Versailles, as well as two family portraits in oil, overshadowed by palms, ododendra, and camellias. The window-ledges are constantly adorned with fresh flowers; and on the writing-desk lie splendid portfolios, and books bound in tortoiseshell, inlaid with gold. Nothing is wanting which a sense of complete luxury can devise; not even the toning of the light. The red silk curtains, heavily edged with black velvet, throw a subdued hue over every object, and any one who enters the room may imagine that he is inhaling poetry.

A magnificent clock has just struck twelve. Suddenly the folding doors are thrown open, and we are able to take an indiscreet glance at the other room, and the close white curtains draped round the Empress's bed. A lady in waiting appears in the doorway, and then steps on one side, with a deep reverence. Directly after, the fairy-like form of the Empress Eugenie is visible, as she walks, with a light, elastic step, into her boudoir. She proceeds to a sofa, and sinks into the soft cushions. She then dismisses her waiting-woman by a gentle nod; the doors close again noiselessly, and her Majesty is alone. She leans back on the cushions, as if fatigued by the bath which she has just taken, so that her light muslin dress, with its countless lace-edged flounces, is gently raised, and exposes her dainty feet, in the white silk stockings and shoes, as high as the ankle. She seems to have been longing for the quiet and solitude of this room; for she has thrown back her beautiful head, surrounded with the pale golden hair, and appears to be in a reverie. The soft azure eye is only half visible beneath the inimitable eyelid, and her entire appearance indicates exhaustion and fatigue. The lines of the face are so fine, so noble, and run into each other so harmoniously, that it seems as if a sculptor had incarnated his ideal. But the colour of the cheeks is no longer that of youth. The forehead, broad, and slightly arched, displays those fine ripple-marks which the woman of thirty fears, and the woman of thirty-six—for so old is the Empress—endures with a sigh. The whole expression of this wax-like countenance, with its enchanting blending of the Moorish and Germanic types, displays somewhat of southern languor; but if she were to smile, if words were to pass those exquisitely-carved lips, the coldness of this face would melt away; the eyes would open to their full size, and sparkle like stars in a tropical heaven; and beauty would reappear, as if by enchantment, on those pale cheeks. At present, however, we are merely able to notice the graceful, though imposing beauty of her figure; her rounded arm, white as freshly-fallen snow; the nobility of her bust, and the graceful, well-set neck, on whose pink, transparent skin, there is a simple row of pearls. At present she seems poetical and gentle; but she would be enchanting were she to burst into passion, and all the feelings she possesses display themselves in their might and fulness. At such times there flashes from her eyes something unexpected,—a look of hatred, contempt, triumph, and craft,—which forms the most wondrous contrast with this St. Cecilian countenance.

Her image is still ineffaceable on the memory of those who saw her when, as Countess Montijo, she rode the wildest horses over hedges and hurdles. She was the loveliest and boldest of horsewomen; and at that day—long before the empire,—there was not a lady in Paris who would have refused to allow that this Spanish maiden was the prototype of the “Diane Chasseresse.” At that day, when these eyes flashed, and the long riding-dress was thrown up by the galloping horse—when she was at the head of the cavalcade of the Elysée, and the Prime President could not remove his eyes from her form, no one believed that she would ever be Empress of the French. And yet she had come for that purpose, with her mother, almost as an adventurer, to the court of the Napoleonic adventurer; and what no one was able to forebode, was already settled in the minds of both ladies.

There was nothing, however, connected with Eugenie that could disqualify her from becoming the wife of the leader of the Napoleons. She belonged to a proud family, and though a foreigner, on that account produced an even higher charm. Eugenie, Countess of Montijo, was heiress of the names of Porto Carrero, Parcarota, Guzman, Cordova, Leira, and La Cerda, which recal the most glorious pages of Spanish history. In her were united three grandezas of the first class—Teba, Banos, and Mona, as well as an infinity of other titles. Her father was a duke; while her mother was descended from the Scottish Kirkpatrick of Glassburn, relatives of the Stuarts, who settled in Andalusia after the overthrow of that family. Her sister was wife of the Duke of Alba and Berwick, and her whole family was one of the most illustrious among the Spanish grandees. The common ancestor was a Genoese patrician, Bocanegra, brother of the Doge of Genoa, who, in 1340, led a small corps of the troops of the republic to the aid of King Alphonso XI., of Castile, who was then fighting the Moors. After gaining the victory, the King raised Bocanegra to the rank of Admiral and Conde de Palma, and he settled in Estremadura. He left to his descendants a marriage policy, to which they have ever most religiously adhered; and thus, within a few generations, the foreign family was allied with the most illustrious in the country; and first with the Porto Carreros, Counts of Montijo, whose name and arms the Bocanegras assumed. The first offshoot of this grafting became a grandee of Spain, and was ambassador to several courts. He, too, managed to follow the marriage policy; for through his union with the sister of the Conde di Teba, of the old Guzman family, he obtained the title of Count for his house. From this branch is descended the present Empress of the French, who was born at Granada.

The connection between the Montijos and the Napoleons led to a series of events during the first empire; and it seems as if that destiny to which Louis Napoleon attaches such importance, had really arranged matters. In the first place, Eugenie's father, the Count of Montijo and Duke of Penderanda, joined the French in Napoleon's war against Spain.

Wonderful to say, he sided against his own country, and helped to bring it under the yoke of France. It was no great honour, after all, that one of the first grandees of Spain should become one of the best officers in the French army. As Colonel of Artillery, he lost an eye at Salamanca, and a cannon ball smashed his leg. Anglo-Spanish weapons rendered the grandee of Spain a cripple. Still, his devotion to the Napoleonic dynasty must have been sincere; for after the expulsion of the French from Spain, the Count of Montijo left his home, and again took service in the French army. He went through the campaign of 1814, and was decorated by Napoleon himself. He was a favourite of the Emperor, and constantly in his company; and what confidence the latter placed in him, is proved by the fact that he entrusted the defence of Paris to him, and placed him at the head of the polytechnic students, to cover the heights of St. Chaumont, which the Prussians carried by storm. After the fall of the Napoleon family, the Count returned to his native country, where he died an influential senator, in 1839. But fate decreed that the Montijos should remain connected with the Napoleons by a symbol, which was destined to unite the following generations of both families, many years after. This symbol was, strange to say, the betrothal ring of the Empress Josephine; and the following story is told of the way in which it came into the possession of the Montijos.

Eugenie's father, during his service with the French army, had selected Paris as his home; and there too resided his brother, who left Spain with the ex-king, Charles IV., and his family. Among the latter was a girl of three years of age (the circumstance occurred in 1809), of the name of Maria, who frequently played in the gardens of the Tuileries, under the supervision of her nurse. On one occasion, a little boy, about a year old, made her a present of a plain gold ring, and neither of their nurses was aware of the fact. As the boy was a stranger, and was not seen again in the gardens, no inquiries were made as to the ownership of the ring, and the little Spanish countess kept it as a valuable plaything. This ring was the betrothal ring of Josephine, which little Louis Napoleon, the son of that Hortense whom Napoleon loved so dearly, had taken off his uncle's finger unnoticed. Napoleon soon after marched off to fight the Austrians, and the ring was forgotten; but it was an evil omen for Josephine, who, a year later, had to make way for a daughter of the Hapsburgs. Little Maria Montijo felt an inexplicable attachment for this ring, on which the word Josephine was engraved; she took care of it while a child, and when she grew up, placed it among her most valued ornaments. She had no idea to whom it had belonged, or that it was the Emperor's nephew who had given it to her. When she attained the age of sixteen, she was married to her uncle, the Duke of Penderanda, and French Colonel of Artillery, in order to reunite the two branches of the Guzman family, and thus became the mother of Eugenie, who was born on May 5, 1826. It was another remarkable coincidence, that May 5

was the anniversary of Napoleon's death,—the most sacred day to the Bonaparte family.

Eugenie's mother had the date May 5 engraved on Josephine's ring, in memory of her daughter's birth, and afterwards gave it to her. And it is another remarkable circumstance, that Eugenie, when a child, visited her relations, the Kirkpatricks, in London; and here Prince Louis Napoleon, who had just arrived from Italy at a Carbonaro, formed the acquaintance of the little Montijo. He saw the ring among her ornaments, noticed the inscription, had the date of May 5 explained to him, and now knew that Napoleon's lost ring was in the possession of the Countess Eugenie de Montijo. From this day the young, fatalistic heir of Napoleon I. regarded the little Countess Montijo Teba as attached to his house by a higher inspiration; and this really came to pass twenty years later. Eugenie at that time had no idea of all this; indeed, it was not till a later date, when the mother learned the importance of the ring, and the fatalism which Louis Napoleon attached to it, that the Montijo family formed their plan. The old traditional marriage policy of the family made her resolve that Eugenie must form an alliance with the Bonapartes, so soon as a wish to that effect were really entertained by the other side. For the present, it was merely a question of marrying a pretender; but the pretender might have a future, and the ambition of the Montijos might aid in advancing it. That is the principal reason why so lovely and rich a girl as Eugenie had attained the age of twenty-six, which is doubly dangerous for a Spanish woman, without being married. She was chosen to fulfil a "destiny;" and in 1848 the family were doubly ambitious to fulfil it, because Napoleon had, in the mean while, attained supreme power in France. Even before this period, the predestined couple had met at watering-places, and calumny had already begun to adhere to Eugenie, because it was deemed impossible that a Spanish girl should have attained such a ripe age without some gallantry. Hence tempters and speculators swarmed round her; but the fools did not know Eugenie, who was a true Montijo; they did not suspect why this glorious woman allowed the freshness of youth to fade, without accepting one of the offers that were daily made to her.

The marriage policy of the Montijos was also followed in the case of Eugenie's sister, who was united with the Duke of Alba, the richest and most noble grandee of Spain. The Empress has just raised her languid eyes to one of the pictures behind the camellias, which displays the small, pale face of a man. Perhaps she is thinking of her sister, the Duchess of Alba, who died in the flower of her age. She is dead for ever, and will not rise from her coffin again, as her husband's mother did. This lady fell into a state of catalepsy at the time when she bore under her heart the brother-in-law of the Empress of the French. She was placed in the coffin, and solemnly laid in the family vault of the Albas. In the night came robbers, who took off the coffin-lid, and began stripping her of the

ornaments buried with her according to custom ; and as the robbers could not pull off a valuable diamond ring, they simply cut it away. The pain recalled the fancied corpse to life ; she rose in her white cere-cloths, and walked about the castle, to the terror of the family. At length, however, they were convinced that it was not the ghost of the Duchess, but herself in flesh and blood : she recovered, and gave birth to a son, who, possibly through this apparent death, had a corpse-like complexion in childhood, and has ever since retained it.

The opposite folding doors are thrown open, and arouse the Empress from her reverie. Little Napoleon comes in, followed by his *gouvernante*. He is tall for his six years, though rather delicate ; but his round, healthy face, with his mother's large blue eyes and fair hair, contradict all the rumours about the imperial Prince being bodily and mentally weak. He is simply dressed in a kilt, and a fine white chemisette, with a loose black neckerchief ; and his plaid stockings are not fastened with garters, but by elastics to his belt. He merrily runs up to his mother, battledoor and shuttlecock in hand, to bid her good morning ; he also adds that his father will soon come to fetch the Empress for a walk in the garden. Eugenie rises, walks to her desk, and while writing a note hastily in long, delicate characters, the child of France plays with the shuttlecock, and prattles merrily with his nurse. There are many rumours about this boy ; the most of them declaring that he is the child of a political necessity. In truth, little Napoleon has not the slightest trace of resemblance with his imperial father, and none of the characteristic features of the Bonapartes. He is very like his mother ; and that is all we can venture to affirm. The elect of seven millions raised Eugenie to his throne that she might bear him an heir, and she did so in the second year of her marriage.

The door opens once again, and the Emperor walks in, in a plain black frock coat, and hat in hand ; with the exclamation, " *Mon todo !*" the Empress rises, and walks to meet her husband, not lovingly, but as if thoughtfully trying to read his face. Napoleon invites her to accompany him in a walk, and she rings, and orders an attendant to bring her bonnet and shawl. The Emperor is playing with his son ; and Eugenie gazes at the scene, not without sympathy ; but her eyes seek before all to read something else, something interesting to her, upon Napoleon's face. She is more to him than a mere wife ; she is a portion of his existence ; and however enamoured the Prime President may have been of the Countess Montijo, he would not have married her, had he not seen in her the spirit of a zealous and rare ally, who was more valuable to him than the doubtful advantages of an alliance with a princess of some reigning house. Eugenie attracted Napoleon by her charms ; but not for the sake of being loved by him, so much as to satisfy the ambition of the Montijos. She promised him her hand ; but he must first become a real power in France,—Emperor. Still she laboured zealously in order to attain this object. She agitated ; gained men who admired her over to the Napoleonic cause ; and, under the mask

of an enthusiastic woman, made all the preparations for the *coup d'état* with the chief leaders. On that December night when it was carried out, she sat with Napoleon at the telegraphic instrument. Hence she worked with her own hands in restoring the Napoleon dynasty; and Napoleon never for a moment overlooked the fact. In the case of any eventualities, he appointed her Regent, for he knew her energy, her sharp-sightedness, her presence of mind, her political foresight, which were eminently displayed during the Italian campaign. He allows her to preside at the Council of State; for no one understands so well as she does Napoleon's inmost thoughts, or can judge so well the consequences of events. There is something prophetic about her; and the Emperor regards her as a portion of his fate. She is the head of the clerical and legitimist tendencies in the Napoleonic family; just as Prince Napoleon is the head of the revolutionary ideas. Both act from conviction and after a settled plan, and in many instances spontaneously; for the Emperor considers that the best way of weakening his foes is to act as their leader, and guide them astray, or to the brink of a precipice. The Empress, as St. Cecilia, hence moves with the clericals and legitimists; while Prince Napoleon, as Hotspur, weakens the revolutionists by glorifying them.

The beauty of Eugenie has made the Parisians almost forget the insult to their pride in the fact of their mistress not being of royal blood; and this has ever been the vulnerable point of French republicanism. The ladies, who regulate public opinion more in Paris than elsewhere, have also felt an affection for Eugenie since the day when she placed herself at the head of the modes. She spread the use of Spanish fashions; and the novelty had a powerful attraction for the Parisian dames: they learned to imitate the proud, sensuous movements of the Iberian fair, to play the castagnettes, to sing Spanish romances, and assume the passion of the southern glance. Black dresses came up again, and crinolines even conquered the world. The extravagant dress in Paris made all the milliners partisans of the Empire; and how great this extravagance is, is proved by the fact that fashionable ladies in Paris are utterly unable to settle their bills at the mercers', and have made arrangements merely to pay the interest. Toilette ruins families, and with them the State; but what matter? the State is also ruined in another and less agreeable way. And then the flowers which cover all the misery and ruin intoxicate the senses with their perfume. Eugenie is the Empress of Flora, and can only be depicted as amid a band of floral nymphs, paying her homage; and in the enchanting colouring and fragrance the prose of life is forgotten, and people do not see cold calculation and selfish thoughts behind this gentle, angelic countenance, which is so full of tender poetry.

REGINALD MARSDEN'S ATONEMENT.

ALICE GRAFTON, the gentle heroine of this brief record of real life, had been committed to her aunt's charge, when her father, Captain Grafton, and his beloved wife sailed for India, where, after three years' residence, Mrs. Grafton fell a victim to anxiety and an unhealthy climate. At the termination of the Scinde war, Major Grafton returned to England sick and wounded. His native air, the tender assiduities of his maiden sister, Laura Grafton, and his young daughter Alice, and the peace and tranquillity of an English home, partially restored his health. To the unspeakable joy of Alice he rallied for a time, and travelled with her and his sister for three years in Switzerland and Germany; but an old wound having opened afresh, from over-exertion, he returned to England in a precarious state. Feeling that probably he might not recover, he summoned to Atwood his old schoolfellow and most intimate friend, Mr. Marsden, under whose guardianship, conjointly with that of Miss Grafton, he desired to place Alice. Mr. Marsden was accompanied by his eldest son, Reginald. It was during this visit that an incident occurred, which had a powerful influence upon the after life of the three persons concerned in the occurrence. Reginald Marsden, at that time eighteen years of age, had rescued Alice from drowning, and had also saved the life of little Jessie Moore, a motherless child, whom Alice, pitying her neglected state, had made her little attendant and companion.

This Jessie Moore was one of those bright little beings whose faces sometimes beam upon us from beneath the shadows of a rustic porch, or from out of a frame of foliage clustering round a cottage window. She had a fervent and enthusiastic nature, an intense love of the beautiful, and, alas! perhaps an innate distaste for the rough realities of poverty. Two years after the handsome dark-eyed lady had saved her life, poor Jessie was taken away from her gentle young mistress, to accompany a drunken, brutal father to London, where she was apprenticed to a West-end milliner. Before the first twelvemonth of this apprenticeship had elapsed, Jessie disappeared, leaving no trace by which she could be followed. Alice Grafton had been cruelly distressed at hearing this bad news of her favourite. Too pure to impute evil, she attributed Jessie's disappearance to some ill treatment or unkindness from her mistress or her father. Miss Grafton caused an advertisement to be inserted in the "Times," imploring the wanderer to return, and she consulted Reginald Marsden as to the propriety of searching further for the missing girl. But he had answered her letter coldly, telling her that all that could be done had been done, and that further interference in the business would be useless.

Shortly after this Major Grafton died, and nearly five years elapsed before Alice and Reginald again met. During the interval Mr. Marsden

had died, and on Reginald now devolved the guardianship of Alice. Previous to her coming of age, a few law matters requiring arrangement, Mr. Reginald Marsden had paid a visit of some weeks at Atwood.

Alice and he had met with mutual pleasure. Neither had forgotten the beloved playmate of childhood. The delight they felt in each other's society was soon perceptible to Miss Grafton, who neither promoted nor discouraged the growing attachment, but allowed—how often the wisest plan!—things to take their own course.

The evening before he was to leave Atwood, Reginald asked Alice to take a favourite walk, and view the sunset from a neighbouring hill. Both felt that it was their last walk for a long time together, and both were sad and silent. As they were gazing on a splendid autumn sunset, "Alice," said Reginald abruptly, "as yonder sun sets below the horizon, so will sink the sun of my happiness when I leave Atwood. I am unworthy to claim even a friend's place in your pure thoughts, yet I must tell you what your influence over me has effected. Do you remember, even in our childhood, how your sweet pleading eyes could calm my wildest passions? and through the years during which we have been parted, never have I done wrong but their mournful gaze was upon me. And now I feel that henceforth you are my guardian angel. If ever I shall achieve anything great or good, it will be your work." Alice answered not, but her hand trembled on his arm. "Alice," continued Reginald, after a pause, "if in future years I become less unworthy of you, may I—dare I—hope? Or if you withhold your love, will you at least think of me as a friend?" Alice held out her hand. "I will be ever your friend, Reginald," she said; "more I dare not say. It was my dear father's last wish, that before I promised more, a paper, which he left in your father's care, should be consulted." "That paper is in my hands now," said Reginald. "May I give it you to-night? But, Alice, supposing your father sanctioned our—our union, what would your heart answer?" Alice placed both her hands in his. Reginald covered them with kisses.

The paper that Reginald opened that evening, contained a wish that Alice's choice might rest on one of the sons of his valued friend, Charles James Marsden. Alice lay down to rest that night, doubly blessed in the thought that her father had sanctioned her love.

The engagement between Alice and Reginald rendered a visit to London absolutely necessary, and Miss Grafton wrote to her family physician and intimate friend, Dr. King, requesting him to engage apartments in the neighbourhood of Russell Square, where he himself lived. Alice felt a childish pleasure in this visit, and she determined to seize the opportunity of endeavouring to gain tidings of her lost *protégée*, Jessie Moore.

A happy month had passed away, almost like a dream, so swiftly had the days flown by in quiet visits to the picture-galleries, museum, and concerts; Alice always happy with Reginald by her side, to direct her judgment and improve her taste. In the bright days of early summer they made frequent

excursions to favourite spots within easy access of the metropolis. Charles Marsden now paid a visit to his brother; and, by his cheerful manners and well-stored mind, made a pleasant addition to the party. Though less accomplished and fascinating than his brother, Miss Grafton preferred Charles to Reginald, and wished that her niece's choice had fallen on the younger brother.

But Alice loved Reginald with the unquestioning devotion of her earnest, enthusiastic nature, with the perfect trust of an innocent heart. The very essence of this trustful first-love is its faith in the worthiness of the beloved. Shatter that quiet confidence, that perfect reliance, and you strike a blow to the very root of love. Pity, regret, sympathy, affection, may remain; but the love that has faith has perished.

Alice and her aunt sat one evening in their pleasant drawing-room, overlooking the Foundling Gardens, expecting Mr. Marsden, who came every evening, from his chambers in the Temple, to drink tea with Miss Grafton and her niece. Alice was silent, but it was the silence of content. She had spent the previous day with her aunt, Reginald, and Charles, at Windsor. The splendid old palace and the noble park had claimed their admiration. They had rambled round the lovely Virginia waters, and lost themselves in the spreading forest, with its bright oases of flowers. A bright June sun had wrapped the young foliage in radiance, and with sunshine in their hearts and around them, they had all agreed that it had indeed been a most happy day. Many years passed before one of them could remember that day without a pang.

Alice sat at the window listening for Reginald's step, when a poorly clad, but respectable-looking woman caught her attention. A double knock sounded on the door below, but was not the familiar rat-tat, every stroke of which was music to Alice's ears. Mr. Charles Marsden was announced, the servant adding, that a poor woman was waiting below, who begged to see Miss Alice. Charles brought his brother's excuses, whom earnest business detained at his chambers. Alice, with a sigh, went to the woman. In less than ten minutes she returned to the drawing-room. "Aunt, dear," she said, "I want Charles to go with me a little way; I think we may, perhaps, hear something of poor Jessie. Charles, will you come?" Mr. Marsden gladly assented.

"Charles," said Alice, as they left the house, "I did not wish to alarm my aunt, but I fear something terrible has happened to poor Jessie. Look here!" She handed him a slip of paper, blotted with tears, containing these words:—

"Dear Miss Alice, I am so very, very miserable, that, weak and guilty as I have been, I know you will pity me. Last week I saw your sweet face as you got out of a carriage, but I dared not speak to you—you so good and pure, and I so fallen and wretched. Oh, why did you not let me die six long years ago? When I saw you I resolved to write and entreat your pity for my poor baby, but it is useless now." The poor

scrawl broke off abruptly, and the last words were almost illegible, so blotted were they with the tears that had fallen upon them.

It was a mean, narrow street to which the woman had directed Alice. She was watching for them at the door of a poor-looking house, and conducted them up a narrow, close staircase into a small room, which was scantily furnished, but neat and clean. In a cot lay a pretty child, about twelve months old. A smile rested on the little thin face, but the eyes were closed in death. Alice's tears fell fast as she looked at it, and listened to the woman's sad story of its mother.

"She was quite a young thing, Miss, though so pale and wan. She came here just before baby was born, nigh a twelvemonth back. How she did dote on it, to be sure! She was so sad, and never would speak to any one but me; and I think she took to me because I noticed baby. It was a nice little thing, with beautiful dark eyes; but it never throve. It had been ill some days, and its cries distracted its poor mother. Yesterday she said to me, 'Baby must have a doctor. I want you to go to such a house' (your house, Miss), 'and see Miss Alice, and tell her that little Jessie Moore, that she was so kind to years ago, entreats her to send a doctor to her little boy.' Then she told me, Miss, how you tried once to save her from drowning, and how she wished you had let her die then, that she might have been spared so much misery and sin. This morning, quite early like, she knocked at my door; never shall I forget her look as she said, 'Baby is dead! I am going out.' She was quite calm, and didn't shed a tear, but her eyes looked wild like. I went up—I soon went up to her room, and there lay the poor little thing dead. I washed and dressed it, and laid it in its little cot; all day I watched and waited for its poor mother to come back, but she never came. So I thought, Miss, I would make bold and come to you, as mayhap you might have seen her. I found the bit of paper with name on it, and there is another letter or something on that table, if you would please to look at it."

Almost mechanically, Alice moved to the table, followed by Charles. The letter of which the woman had spoken lay there open, as the wretched girl had left it when she rushed from the house. At the same moment, their eyes rested on these words: "Abandoned by you, I had still my child to cling to: it is dead; I can bear life no longer! May God have mercy on us!—Jessie."

"I think this is the address, Miss," said the woman; "I took a letter for her there once, soon after baby was born. How she did long for an answer, poor thing! but it never came." The woman held towards Alice a torn, crumpled envelope; the name upon it was Reginald Marsden, Esq.

Alice took the crumpled paper from the woman's hand, and gazed at it with a strange, half vacant stare. Presently, rousing herself as from a trance, she whispered, "What can we do? think for me, Charles, for I cannot."

Charles Marsden's first thought was to hurry Alice away. As they

left the house they met Dr. King. "Dear Miss Alice," said he hurriedly, "I have just left your aunt; I called to tell you that I think I have found your Jessie. It is a sad tale, though. A poor young woman, picked up out of the river, was brought to the hospital just as I was leaving to-day. The house-surgeon asked me to see her. It was a long time before they could get life into her again, so I tried a remedy which I once found succeed when other means had failed. Gradually she came to, and was able to speak before I left. As the nurses were chafing her hands, a ring fell off. I took it up, and inside were engraved the words, Jessie M. Moore, I think you told me was the name. This poor thing does not look more than eighteen, so it is very likely your Jessie. But if you do not mind coming with me to-morrow, you can judge for yourself." The doctor soon left them.

"Charles," said Alice, "I cannot go in just now, let us walk round the square."

They walked up and down the smooth gravel path for some time in silence. Charles Marsden looked, from time to time, at his companion's sweet face. It was as white as death, but as calm as the face of an angel. No tears quivered upon the soft dark lashes that drooped over the tender blue eyes; the delicate mouth was now and then disturbed by a faint, tremulous motion, painfully expressive of the speechless grief which had fallen so heavily on the untried heart. At last she murmured, rather to herself than Charles, "Oh, how dreadful the thought that he should have been guilty of such cruelty—such dishonour! Jessie—the girl whose life he saved, whom he knew in our happy home!"

Charles attempted not to console her; he felt too keenly that he could give no comfort here. No mortal voice, no mortal pity, could console her in such a grief as this. How mournfully they paced those pleasant leafy enclosures which Alice had looked upon so lately from her open window, listening to the merry voices of the children, and taking a pleased interest in their games! And now, in the bitterness of unutterable sorrow, she looked back at her past life, and wondered at its happiness. After a long silence, she stopped at the gate of the enclosure, and gave Charles her hand. "No one must know this but him," she said; "I will take care of Jessie. Charles, I trust to you."

When Alice re-entered the house, she found her aunt occupied with some friends; and leaving them together, she retired to her room—retired, not to sleep, not to think, but to pray. A dreadful blank had blotted out the bright picture of her life, yet she thought not of that, she thought only of Reginald and Jessie; with her whole heart and strength she pleaded for the guilty and the unhappy. She thanked God, oh how fervently! that life had been spared. A holy calm at length succeeded the agitation of her spirits; she rose from a sleepless couch, and opened her window. The cool air of early morning fanned her heated cheek, the first bright streak of dawn shone through the trees, and shed a ray of

hope on her heart. It seemed like a bright messenger from heaven, sent to bid her not despair. She laid down and slept.

With a calm demeanour, but a beating heart, Alice accompanied Dr. King to the hospital. In a small room off the accident-ward lay Jessie, a blank image of despair. She raised her hot, heavy eyelids, as the doctor entered, but when she saw Alice a burning flush suffused her features, and she covered her face with her hands. Alice bent over her in silence. At length a tear fell on the bowed head, and a tender voice murmured, "My poor Jessie!" The doctor left them together.

Tears now trickled through the thin fingers that were clasped before Jessie's face. "Dear Miss Alice," sobbed the wretched girl, "if you knew all, you too would shun me; you would shrink from me like the rest, and—"

"Hush, Jessie, not now," murmured Alice, in a soothing tone; "when you are better you shall tell me all. God has been very merciful in saving your life, and in bringing us together. In our greatest trials He will not forsake us if we trust in Him."

"Yes, you who are so good, but I —" A gentle hand covered her mouth.

"I have not had your temptations, my poor girl, but I too have suffered." The anguish of the tone went to Jessie's heart. The hand was pressed fervently to her lips. "Listen to me, dear Jessie," Alice continued more calmly. "You are very weak now, quiet alone can restore you. Leave everything to me. I have seen your little boy."

Another flood of tears came to Jessie's relief, and Alice wept with her. With the quick perception of affection, Miss Grafton soon perceived that Alice suffered from a deeper rooted grief than she could naturally feel from poor sinning Jessie's misfortunes. She missed from her niece's finger the ring that Reginald had given her, but she forbore to solicit a confidence that was not freely given, and with the tact of true sympathy avoided all allusion to Mr. Marsden. Poor Alice felt that hers was a grief too sacred even for affection to share.

In the evening Charles Marsden called, and he also shunned all reference to his brother, except while Alice was out of the room, when he apologised to Miss Grafton for Reginald's absence. When he left, Alice followed him into the hall, and gave him a small packet for his brother. It contained the ring.

That evening Jessie Moore was seized with the wild delirium of a brain fever. It was an anxious time for Alice and her aunt, who both spent many hours by the sufferer's side; and when reason at last returned tried every means in their power to soothe and cheer her. When all danger was over, Miss Grafton proposed to Alice that they should leave London, and go for a few weeks to the seaside, and at Alice's request took a lodging near them for Jessie Moore, whose unaffected penitence had secured for her the pitying tenderness of the kind old lady. Once Miss

Grafton spoke to her niece of Reginald Marsden: "I take it for granted, dear Alice, that all is over between you and Mr. Marsden. I seek not, darling, to know your secret, and I have such confidence in your strong sense and noble heart that I am sure that it is no girlish pique, no foolish misunderstanding, that has separated you." "It is not indeed, my dear aunt." "And Mr. Marsden submits to your decision?" asked Miss Grafton. "He does; because he feels that I am right. The secret is of so painful a nature, dearest aunt, that if you would make me happy, pray never speak of it again."

Settled quietly at Eastbourne, it was a balm to Alice's heart to watch the bloom of health gradually return to poor Jessie's wasted cheek. The sea breezes invigorated her drooping frame, and the sweet companionship of Alice elevated and strengthened her mind. Like most English women, Alice was undemonstrative; her mind, like her beauty, was less suited to dazzle the imagination than to win the heart. She had loved deeply, devotedly, yet she could judge justly for herself and others. The calm strength of her character, her firm trust in Divine love, gave her an unconscious influence over all who loved her.

Jessie, warm-hearted and impetuous, with more vehemence of character, and a far less regulated mind, clung to her with child-like devotion. Alice also rejoiced in the love she had inspired, and strove, like a ministering angel, to pour balm into the wounded heart, to awaken Jessie's mind to a just sense of the duties and responsibilities of life, and inspire her with that faith in the Divine love which shed so bright a light over Alice's own path.

Jessie's story was listened to with gentle pity, but never referred to afterwards. Before she left London, Alice received one communication from Reginald. He wrote thus: "Teach me what atonement I can make to you and to her. I cannot love her, but I will marry her if you think it right."

When Jessie opened her heart, Alice had said, "Jessie, if he offered to marry you, not loving you, but from a sense of duty, would you marry him?" Jessie murmured, in a broken voice, "If his child had lived I might have answered, Yes; but it is so different now. Do not think me proud, dear Miss Alice, but I cannot accept his pity." Alice conveyed Jessie's answer to Reginald, and only added these words: "Jessie is my charge now."

Alice and her aunt now consulted seriously on Jessie's future. They thought it best that she should make a living for herself. She had a fine soprano voice, which, if cultivated, might give her independence. Alice's former singing-master was willing to receive the penitent girl into his family, and give her instruction in singing for three years, at the end of which time she might be able to gain her own living. Jessie parted with her noble young protectress with tears of gratitude, and resolutely and industriously began her new career. Mr. Leslie was so well satisfied with

the beauty and flexibility of her voice, and pleased with her aptitude and gentleness, that he begged that, if he succeeded, as he hoped, in preparing her for a first-rate concert-singer, she would come out under his name.

Alice and her aunt went home to resume their old life at Atwood. Years passed on. Miss Grafton and Alice often saw Mr. Reginald Marsden's name in the newspapers, as leading counsel in the Northern Circuit; he had early gained some standing in his profession. His ambition was gratified, Alice thought, but was he happy? Charles occasionally paid them a visit; he had for some years left college, and entered on the duties of a country clergyman. An old friend of his father had given him a small living in a pretty Somersetshire village. He confided to Alice his own plans and prospects, but he dared not venture to speak of his brother's.

A half-yearly visit to Atwood, and a regular and intimate correspondence only increased Jessie's devotion to Alice, who was her guide, her counsellor, and friend; and when in her profession her great beauty and brilliant voice laid her open to flattery and temptation, the memory of the one blot on her early life, and the love of the gentle being who had rescued her from ruin, preserved her from danger. Mr. and Mrs. Leslie, who had no children of their own, were as proud and almost as fond of her as if she had been their daughter, and she still resided with them. Six years had passed when Alice received a letter, written in a hand whose well-known characters she could not, even now, trace without emotion. It contained these words:—"Forgive me if I dare to break the long silence between us. For the pain which you suffered six long years since, I ask not forgiveness; I cannot forgive myself. In the calm sufficiency of your own pure life you cannot realize the desolateness of mine. The bright hopes that I once cherished blasted through my own crimes, I shunned society, and wrapped myself in my profession. I gained repute which brought no satisfaction, for I was alone. An angel once blessed my path, and though my own guilty madness had forfeited the blessing, still the memory of that pure love rendered all mercenary and unholy ties odious.

"You are, and have been for years, the loadstar of a far nobler heart than mine. I would not have it otherwise; still there is one who once loved me, whose tenderness I feel I could repay with devotion, if she would only let me make reparation for the dreadful past."

This letter caused Alice much anxiety. There could be so little sympathy now between the misanthropic barrister and the beautiful songstress, whose short career in public had been one ovation of applause. True, Jessie still wore the ring he gave her, and Alice thought that, at all events, they had better meet. She therefore begged her aunt to invite the two brothers to meet them at Christmas, which festive season Jessie was to spend at Atwood. Miss Grafton, not a little surprised at the request, acceded to it, and sent an invitation to both the brothers.

One evening Reginald Marsden sauntered into Exeter Hall. It was unusual for him to visit any place of amusement, as he shunned any chance of meeting with his former friends. He was late, and seated himself under the orchestra. A lady was singing one of the beautiful airs of the *Messiah*. The earnest tones of the pure, clear voice seemed like a breath of the past, wafted over his hard, joyless life, summoning him to a higher existence. His heart was softened; he longed to live a different life. Engrossed with these thoughts, he left the hall without even casting a glance at the singer.

It was a snowy afternoon when Charles and Reginald Marsden arrived at Exeter, and proceeded on the branch line to Atwood. The train, impeded by the snow, which had only been partially cleared from the line, moved slowly on. It had nearly reached the Atwood station, when the danger-whistle sounded, and a red light gleamed in the distance. There was a sudden jerk—a crash. The engine was off the lines. Shril screams of terror now arose on all sides. Lights and help were quickly on the spot. The two carriages next to the engine were shattered; several persons were seriously injured. Charles Marsden was not hurt; Reginald was taken up insensible.

An invitation to Atwood had been Alice's only answer to Reginald Marsden's letter, but he understood her motives, and felt that she had yielded to his wishes, and that he should meet Jessie Moore at Atwood. It was with strange, conflicting emotions that he had looked forward to meeting Alice and Jessie, and began the journey which had ended so unhappily.

Alice and her aunt were momentarily expecting the brothers. Their pretty drawing-room, gay with winter foliage—for Miss Grafton loved old Christmas customs—was lit up by a crackling log fire, which gilded even the snow-covered shrubs round the low bay windows. A servant entered hurriedly, and said, "James has just come back, ma'am, and says there's been an accident on the railway, and one of the Mr. Marsdens is hurt." "Send James instantly with the carriage for Dr. Wilmhurst."

In half an hour the carriage returned, and Alice, with a death-like shudder, beheld Reginald, still insensible, carried into the house. The Doctor was with him, who said the internal injuries were not dangerous; the brain was affected—slightly, he hoped. Great care and quiet were needed. An hour elapsed before consciousness returned.

For a month Reginald was confined to his room. Alice, with thoughtful kindness, had put off Jessie's visit, who happened to be with the Leslies, in Edinburgh, and so did not hear even of the accident; and Alice had given her no intimation of whom she was likely to meet at Atwood.

Charles had been obliged to return to his parish duties. It was with a sad, yet strangely sweet feeling, that Reginald had, through his illness, felt himself the object of unceasing care from Miss Grafton and Alice. It was pleasant to know himself dependent on them alone.

Miss Grafton paid him daily visits; brought him books of Alice's choosing—not the romantic poetry that they had once read together, but Spenser, Longfellow, and those wholesome fictions that have strong plain truths in them. There was such a home-like feeling, too, at Miss Grafton's. Reginald thought with regret of going out into the world again; his world of toil and money-getting, where men's wits are sharpened, and their hearts become stone. He trusted there might one day be a link between Alice and himself; not the one the breaking of which had caused such agony to both, but one of brotherly, sisterly affection. He had insisted, while his brother remained, that he should not bear him company; he liked to think of Alice and Charles being together, and had once or twice from his window watched them walking in the shrubbery.

With a languid step, Reginald, for the first time, entered the sitting-room. Alice rose. She was very pale, and held out her hand. They looked into each other's face. What a change in both! he, with the lines of care and thought deeply graven on his features, haggard with recent illness; she with the trace of a deep sorrow on her sweet face. She wheeled a chair for him to the fire, and gently expressed her pleasure at his recovery. For some minutes he could not speak; at last, with a choked voice, he muttered, "Alice, your forgiveness." She gave him her hand. His hot tears fell on it, as he bent over it, and pressed it to his lips.

On the next evening, Alice, her aunt, and Reginald were together in the quiet little drawing-room, in the dusky winter twilight, when Miss Leslie's arrival was announced. The young concert-singer, now an elegant-looking woman, greeted Alice and her aunt with the warmth of gratitude and affection; then, seeing a stranger, paused. Miss Grafton hurriedly introduced Reginald, as a friend who had met with an accident on the railway. Mr. Marsden and Jessie saluted each other with the cold recognition of strangers. Alice drew her friend away—they evidently did not remember each other—she would tell her quietly next day. How daintily Alice arranged poor Jessie's collar and hair, in the pretty little bed-room which had been prepared for the expected visitor! Jessie smiled at the trouble her friend took with her simple toilette. Certainly the beautiful face and graceful figure needed not the ornament of dress.

They returned to the drawing-room. The lamp had not yet been lighted. Reginald Marsden was seated in an easy chair, between the fireplace and the piano, which had been moved into a cosy corner, close to the angle of the chimney-piece. The red blaze of the fire rose and fell, sometimes vividly illuminating the chamber with its cheerful light, sometimes leaving all in shadowy obscurity. Jessie and Alice seated themselves near the window, and at a considerable distance from the invalid. Presently, however, in the course of an animated conversation about music, the young songstress alluded to a duet which she wanted Alice to learn.

"I have arranged your music on the piano, dear," Alice said. "Will you fetch this wonderful duet?"

Jessie glanced shily at the fancied stranger; but rising from her seat, crossed the room towards the open piano.

Reginald watched the graceful figure with a listless glance; but as she approached him the blaze flashed suddenly upwards, and for a moment all was as bright as day.

Reginald Marsden started from his half-reclining position, as if he had seen a ghost.

"Merciful heaven!" he exclaimed; "Jessie, Jessie, my wronged, unhappy girl."

He fell on his knees at her feet, lifting his pale face towards her own. He remembered nothing but her sorrows and her devotion.

"Alice," he cried, "Alice, angel of my life, this is your work."

"It is, Reginald," sobbed Jessie; "but for that noble friend I should, indeed, have been utterly lost."

"But you have been saved, Jessie, and it is not yet too late to atone. Alice has taught me my duty. My poor girl! to think that I should not have known you!"

Two months later there was a quiet wedding. Charles Marsden, Alice, and Miss Grafton alone were present.

Mr. and Mrs. Marsden went to pass some months in Italy. Reginald's constitution had sustained too severe a shock to permit him, for a long time, to resume his profession, even if he should ever be able to do so. It was likely that the railway company would be obliged to give him large damages; still his wife felt with honest pride that she, too, could contribute to his support.

A few weeks after the wedding Alice received the following letter:—

"DEAR ALICE,—Feelings of delicacy towards you, and of pity towards my brother, have made me lock up in my own heart sentiments of admiration, affection, reverence; which to have revealed would have been the happiness, the glory of my life. Can you, will you accept them now? I ask not for that angel's love you once felt for another. Alas! I loved you then, and would cheerfully have given my life to have saved you one pang. From boyhood you have been the bright star of my life. Alice, I love you with the whole trust of my soul—with the whole strength of my being. Will you accept this love? "CHARLES."

In a few months, there was a second wedding, as simple in its arrangements as the first, and almost immediately afterwards, Alice and her aunt left Atwood, and went to live at the parsonage-house of Charles Marsden's new parish.

AWAY TO THE MOUNTAINS!

IF, among the changeful months of the English year, I have one especial favourite, that month is September. Not because it is pre-eminently the month of harvest, when the rich yellow ears burst into gold on sunny fields, when the reapers shout, and when the bright sheaves are piled slantedly to make graceful bowers for those who woo by moonlight. Not because it is the month when the stars uncurtain all their jewels, and when Cynthia steals in shining sandals to kiss the boy Endymion, where he lies asleep on Latmos' hill. Not because it is the month when Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson shoulder their guns, take tickets to obscure railway-stations, and dream they are happy for a fortnight while ransacking well-feathered manors, and performing on the gun-barrel feats more astounding than the startled rustics who gape at them have ever done on the ale-barrel. Not because, in spite of that grotto delusion on the 5th of August, it is the first month of the season when the oyster is really eatable and wholesome. Not because it brings me fruit from the orchard, wines from the vineyard, and bivalves, with pearls in their mouths, from the bottom of the sea. Not for these things, ye poets, ye farmers, ye sportsmen, and ye gourmands, do I love our English September—not for any one of these things especially. The poet, *lentus in umbra*, may watch the mellowing woods and muse sentimentally, in his soft mood, over the loveliness of human decay and dissolution; the farmer may chuckle over his fat crops, and cart his guano for the season which is to come; Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson may bang away at the speckled partridge, and carry each other home, wounded in the calf of the leg, on village wheelbarrows; the oyster-eater may gorge himself with his beloved dish at will. I envy not these pleasures. Pent up like a caged lark, pent up in city chambers at a time when London is a hollow and deserted mockery, I yearn for freer air and clearer sunshine, and long to follow all the rest of the world Away to the Mountains.

It is provoking, to say the least of it! Here am I, a man with legs to climb with the best of you, held choking over a hot sewer by the horrible Medusa of business, crushed helplessly into dusty crannies with badly-cooked victuals, driven along deserted streets inhabited by melancholy cabmen; and this at a time of year when the mountains have put their glory on, and when cheap excursion trains enable even my butcher to disdain the Isle of Thanet.

“As yet the bluebell lingers on the sod
That copes the sheepfold ring; and in the woods
A second blow of many flowers appears—
Flowers faintly tinged, and breathing no perfume.
But fruits, not blossoms, form the woodland wreath
That circles Autumn's brow; the ruddy hands
Now clothe the half-leaved thorn; the bramble bends
Beneath its jetty load; the hazel hangs
With azure branches, dipping in the stream.”

Everybody is out of town. Everybody has got a gun. Everybody is away to the mountains. When I say everybody, I mean everybody of whom society—*nihil tetigit*, you know, *quod non ornavit*—takes the slightest notice. I try to amuse myself by staring into the shop-windows; but the very tradesmen mock me. “Blank will have a suit of tweed,” cries the tailor and clothier, in his placards, “wherewith to face the mountain breeze and stem the mountain torrent; if Blank be wise, he will straightway clothe himself in these knickerbockers.” Blank wants a Bradshaw. Blank can’t possibly get along without a knapsack. Blank will have a rough and sturdy walking-stick. Is there anything else with which we can oblige Blank, who (of course) is going out of town? Here is a plaid to keep his legs warm on the journey. Here is the cheap edition of “East Lynne.” Here is a handy article, with six blades and a corkscrew. Let Blank don this wide-awake. If Blank sketches, here are pencils, crayons, and paper. See, Blank, these lovely stereoscopic views of Highland scenery. Sleek young counter-jumpers mock me with delusive cries of “Shop!” The driver of the Hansom’s cab, which I have *not* hailed, asks facetiously after my luggage. If this continues much longer, I shall certainly go mad. I shall rush into the various shops in despair; forthwith invest in a suit of tweed, a gun, a fishing-rod, a straw hat, a knapsack, a plaid; and, armed with Bradshaw, a cheap edition of the last sensation novel, and a walking-stick, forthwith set my teeth together, climb Ludgate Hill, strain to the topmost pinnacle of St. Paul’s, and, casting my eyes around me, delude myself into the belief that I am monarch of all I survey, and that yonder puddle of water is Loch Lomond!

Don’t tell me of Paris, Spa, Antwerp, Munich, and the rest. Don’t talk to me about shooting matches at Vincennes, rambles in Swiss glens, visits to German picture-galleries, flirtations at Boulogne, and promenades on the *Boulevards*. Don’t talk fudge about new associations and the glorious antique. I am a home bird, and love to keep in sight of my nest. I never found it necessary to go many miles out of my way in my search for the picturesque and the beautiful. You all know the story of the landed proprietor who, although he had travelled all over the world in search of scenic sensations, had never seen the lovely waterfall on his own grounds. A visit to Switzerland is well, for those who can afford it; but as I am writing to instruct as well as to amuse, it will be my task to point out the fact that the British Isles, however much despised by the pure tourist, are not altogether a Gehenna of brickbats and ditch-water. By all means let the tourist climb Mont Blanc, at the risk of breaking his neck down a crevasse, or freezing to stone on a bed of Alpine snow; but let him also have a run up Skiddaw and Helvellyn. The latter can be accomplished cheaply and without danger. Does it never strike the home tourist that he is a public benefactor? Does the Irish tourist who drives from inn to inn among the Wicklow mountains ever reflect that he is fructifying the resources of his own country? And is the cockney tourist aware that, in

allowing himself to be fleeced by a Highland innkeeper, he may patriotically be giving a mite towards the liquidation of the National Debt? Such, however, is the real state of the case. Tourists, like the rest of the community, are bees of progress, bound by fixed codes and regulations to increase the store of the national hive; and they should not take all their honey to the Continent. Once in a while—if only once in a while—let them drop their French accent, and talk their native tongue with the rustics. I don't know how it is, but too many men, who are in the habit of running abroad, visit foreign places for the purpose of returning with exaggerated notions of the inferiority of our English civilization. A mania for everything French is very common and very silly, as silly as the other notion that the French are frivolous. The impression left by a chance visit to a strange place is in the highest degree delusive. A vulgar friend of mine—call him Robinson—once paid a visit to the French capital: he was so captivated with everything Parisian that, on his return home, he startled his wife and innocent olive branches by appearing in full Parisian costume, with hair, beard, and moustache trimmed in French fashion, and armed with a barbarous *patois*, which struck me as bearing a strong resemblance to double Dutch. The atrocity went down with that absurd woman, his wife; but not so with his acquaintance. He is a harmless man, Robinson, but his friends cut him. The sooner we again begin to encourage our old rough insular notions, the better for our prosperity. John Bull, however offensive, is John Bull all the world over. I think the insular spirit would reassert itself if the tourists would patronise home scenery a little more; and now is the time to begin, while

“Wealth hangs in each tangled nook,
In the gloaming of the year.”

Besides, I hold that English inns are infinitely superior to Continental hotels. The prices are not exorbitant, and the comforts are much more realizable. Say what you please about the Palais Royal, give me a chop at a certain cozy little hostelry at Cladich. I dislike an abundance of animal life in my bed-room. Beer seems to be a more invigorating beverage, for one about to take violent exercise, than *vin ordinaire*. Who would compare the clean, tidy, and pretty Phyllis of the English roadside inn with the pert French *garçon*? I have been vulgar enough to add these last remarks, though I fear that they will not be appreciated by certain people who travel from inn to inn, eat and drink, sleep, and look at the surrounding mountains from their bed-room windows. This, if I recollect rightly, is what is called “doing” a place. With such persons I have no sympathy. These lines are not meant for their eyes, and they had better go to Baden-Baden or Bath. My reader, I hope, is my fagged-out fellow-citizen, who, unlike myself, is about to leave work behind him for a time, and get an appetite for his next Christmas dinner. Let him take my advice, and, in other than the poet's sense, keep to the kindred points of heaven and home. Let him set out with the determination to enjoy

everything, and "do" nothing, when he shoulders his knapsack, grasps his staff of thorn; and, locking up in his chambers the ghosts of his past reading, hies Away to the Mountains.

Here I sit alone in grey chambers, while holiday-seeking London fades away in the distance with a waving of pocket handkerchiefs and a rattle of cabs. Parliament will not summon, until October next, with its far-pealing horn, the honourable members whose duty it is to hunt down well-breathed local bills. The members of Her Majesty's House of Commons are blown up and down all quarters of the globe, like the leaves of a political blue-book. Legal London is lounging in German Spas, flirting, gaming, reading, and dreaming of briefs. Literary London has rushed wildly away from Fleet Street, with a copy of Tennyson in its pocket, and is

— "wandering over hill and glen,
Far as it may for the gentlemen."

Enough: give me Bradshaw! Bound as I am by inexorable duty to this Ugolino of great fires and sewers, I will comfort myself by poring over the mysterious pages of the great guide-book. First let me look at the advertisements. Mockery again. "Blank wants to go to Scarborough," cry the railway directors, "and he can have a ticket there and back, available for one calendar month, for thirty-five shillings." A pleasant prospect, forsooth! White villas and dingy dwelling-houses sloping down to a shore white with sand, and red with dulse; fishing-boats, which never seem to catch any fish, but are a part of the prospect, in the distance; officers with eye-glasses, military papas, pretty horsebreaking, weak young men who read books, and girls with pork-pie hats, perambulating on the shore. So much for Scarborough, which, by the way, is, thanks to home tourists and the steam-engine, gradually becoming less and less stuck up. "If Blank has a good lady and little ones, and is an affectionate father, he will go to Brighton, where his family will derive lasting benefit from the sea-bathing, while their musical tastes will be cultivated by the stirring strains of the brass band." Brighton—chain-pier, Marine Parade, middle-class missis, blacklegs, and *ennui*. No, thank you. "Perhaps Blank is an honest tradesman, rough and independent, part of England's bulwark; if so, let him spend a week at Margate or Ramsgate." Ramsgate, Margate, bathing-machines, horribly vulgar women with babies, native boys, odoriferous of shrimps and seaweed, milliners and their sweethearts, periwinkles! Enough of the sea-side! Well, then, Blank will find lovely lanes in Surrey, gorgeous hop-fields in Kent, mild salubrious hills and nice society in far-away Devonshire. It won't do. My heart is among the hills. O ye deluded mortals, who, instead of taking proper advantage of your liberty, try to be snobbish at Scarborough, bored at Brighton, jolly at Ramsgate and Margate, pastoral in Surrey, agricultural in Kent, and poetical in Devonshire,—would that I possessed the opportunities ye let slip so ungratefully! We do not run

out of town to be respectable, to lounge, to pick shrimps, to stare whole days from stiles at imbecile sheep, to smell unbrewed beer, or to read idle verses. The breath of the great city has blown upon us for three-fourths of the year; we are weary, brain-sore, over-wrought, feverish; and we seek exercise, fresh air, stirring associations, and innocent excitement. Business intercourse with plodding men, ball-room misery with half-dressed women, bill discounting, omnibus travelling, scarcely tend to lift the eyes and develop the sympathies of a man. Your quiet pastoral pictures suit not the necessities of the freed citizen. He pants for an atmosphere in which he may breathe freely, lift up his eyes, and feel his soul expand, while the strong breeze plucks up roses to his cheek from the very dregs of his faded blood. Hie away, pilgrims! Grasp your sticks, shoulder your luggage, put on thick boots, and then, fast as the steam-engine can carry you, rush joyfully Away to the Mountains.

O the Mountains—the Mountains! Towering their purple heather-clad shoulders against a sky distinct with purple fleecy cloud; mirrored like Titans in the burnished bosom of the calm and wooded lake; clothed on with sudden mist, from which the spirit of the storm, murmuring for a moment like a homeless voice, dies away with a gleam of amethyst and gold; bleating with innumerable flocks, haunted by distant cries of shepherds, murmuring with hidden torrents; jewelled here and there with fallen sunbeams, and threaded by rills that distance freezes to sparkling ice. O the Mountains, the Mountains! inspirers of great thoughts, makers of mighty poets; dwelling, the epics of the earthquake, in silence,—

“Struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars;”

lifting their lofty foreheads, Atlas-like, to Orion, and bearing on their shoulders the eternal skies; throwing the eagle down like a thunderbolt, level to the browsing lambs! Without the mountains, Earth would be a languid and voluptuous garden of Armida. They teach lofty thoughts, and noble deeds and contemplation, and the holy thirst for fame. They fell, like the shadows of a further life, over Byron's cradle, and overburthened his rest with thoughts that lay too deep for tears. Mark how Shelley draws his images from the grand old hills. They were part of the souls of Coleridge and his wrecked son Hartley! They were the constant companions, the daily admonishers, the mighty inspirers of the noblest poet of the century, William Wordsworth.

And inexpressibly beautiful, peculiarly impressive, are the mountains in this pensive month of English September. They are grand in winter, wrapped in their snowy mantles and torn by unseen lightnings. They are gorgeous in summer, when the sunshine nets them in a golden veil, and, like richly-attired kings, they quiver visibly through the winking heat. But their one characteristic in September harmonizes with the vegetable season of the yellow leaf and the ripe season of human life; it is that

of golden repose. Murmuring with innumerable half-audible echoes, burgeoning into purple bloom of thyme and heather, tinkling with mimic falls that the summer has left half dry, they sleep in their mightiness under a quiet, fleecy sky ; surrounded by bleating pastures and by russet woods, and looking proudly over miles of harvest laced with silver rivers, and dotted here and there by distant towns. Are there poets among you, O ye tourists? Let them seek sermons and philosophy among the mountains. Are there men of money among you? The mountains will teach them that their guineas are not omnipotent, and that the mountain thyme is nearer to heaven than their ledgers. Come away, worn and weary pilgrims! gaze up yonder, feel a sense of your own littleness, and then—aspire! Smith, this is jollier than Scarborough. Brown, this is sublimer than shrimps at Margate. *Excelsior!* Go ahead, guide, for we follow. We mean to see the sun set up yonder; to see the sun sink royally to sleep, with his golden chin pillowed on a bed of bulging, blushing cloud. No lagging behind. Is it not rich? is it not rare? Aha! these breezes are finer than those one meets on Primrose Hill. Higher still. Drink of this cold stream; more delicious to parched lips than London gin, champagne, *vin ordinaire*, or any other adulterated beverage. Mark yonder boulders, hoary with lichens and rough with the mists of a hundred years. Do your limbs ache? Strain along, tug along manfully; for yonder little cairn of stones is the summit. See, the further skies grow rosy, and the lower vale grows shady. Here we are! Now sit, and drink in glory enough to last you for a twelvemonth. Don't you feel like a god up here, with the red sun tinting the lesser hills around you, and dying (as Alexander Smith has it) in his own blood? You send up your exultation in a shout. The health and beauty of the mountains have entered into your lungs and heart. Rest awhile; and then tumble down through the shadows as speedily as you may. The little inn lies waiting for you far below. The sheep-dog barks, the flocks bleat, the valleys darken, the world is retiring to its rest. Ah! my city friend, won't your sleep be sound, and your dreams be sweet, this night?

What drags me down unto the common day? A terrible vision of a remorseless national vampire, another demon of the Drachenfels, who haunts the Scotch mountains, and against whom I warn all Scotch tourists. Hear his name, ye tourists; tremble, and be *boná fide*. Forbes Mackenzie! He is powerful, he is relentless, he is invincible. Like the *gens d'armes* who asked for your passport, he makes you miserable by his air of suspicion. He blocks up the door of empty inns when you are weary and footsore, and torments you for hours with his questions before he permits you to enter. He induces spurious distillers in a small way to sell you certain Scotch whiskies, compound of oatmeal and peat-reek. He it is who forces hardy highland wights to refuse to row you o'er the ferry on Sundays. He is the author of those abodes of fly-blown pictures, cold meat, and intoxicated waiters—the Temperance Hotels. He yields to

only one golden talisman, which careful husbands and fathers do not care to exhibit. He meets you with a grin on his face, in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, where you least expect to see him; and his charge for moving on, with his kilts and his soda-water, is never less than one shilling. I must also warn my readers against a certain large hotel at Tarbert, on the banks of Loch Lomond, where, if you drop in from the coach, they charge you a shilling for a bottle of bad porter, five shillings for a slice of stale chicken and ham, and I don't know how many more shillings for being stared at, in an imbecile way, by an insane waiter with a white neckcloth.

But go your ways to the mountains, all of you. There are mountains in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales; and all are lovely after their kind. The scenery and the associations of the English lakes are potent to dispel from your brain the remnants of London fog. Ben Lomond, Ben Nevis, Ben Cruachan, Blaavin, and Glencoe—all have their peculiar glories. You will find pleasant, quiet loveliness, sometimes roughening into sublimity, among the Wicklow mountains; and for lovely mountain prospects, without water, there is no place like Wales. Go your ways, my friends; roll along with your luggage, Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson. I shall be with ye in imagination, as I plod along Ludgate Hill. May health and joy go with you, as ye run, eye-sore and brain-sore, seeking relief from the incubus hand of toil,—Away to the Mountains!

OLD ENGLISH LOVE SONG.

COME not near my roses,
 With that cheek of thine;
 Lest, beholding its rich dye,
 They should pale for jealousy:
 Come not near my roses.

Come not near my lilies,
 With thy brow of snow;
 Lest, beholding aught so white,
 They should shed their leaves for spite:
 Come not near my lilies.

Warble not so blithely,
 In my shady grove;
 Lest the birds should, envious, fly
 From that sweeter minstrelsy:
 Warble not so blithely.

Gaze not on my heavens,
 With thine eye of blue;
 Lest, angry with the beauteous thief,
 They should seek in showers relief:

Gaze not on my heavens. CAROLINE M. KING.

THE DISINHERITED;

A TALE OF MEXICAN LIFE AND ADVENTURE.

CHAP. XVI.

T H E A T E P E T L.

MANY persons imagine that all Indians are alike; and that the man acquainted with the manners of one tribe, knows them all. This is a serious error which it is important to dissipate. Among the Indians, properly so called, that is to say, the aborigines of America, will be found as many differences in language, dialect, etc., as among the nations of the Old Continent, if not more. The number of dialects spoken by the Indians is infinite; the manners of one nation form a complete contrast with those of another living only a few leagues away; and any person who after travelling for some time in the Far West, asserted that he was thoroughly acquainted with the character of the Indians and their mode of life, would be quite deceived; and more serious still, would deceive those whom he pretended to instruct.

The Indians are divided into two great families: the cultivating Indians, that is to say, those who are sedentary and attached to the soil they till; and hunter or nomadic Indians, who have a great resemblance to the Touraricks of Africa, and the Tartars of Asia. The hunting Indians, known as *Indios Bravos*, inhabit leathern huts, easy of transport from one place to another; and only remain stationary so long as the country supplies them with the necessary forage for their horses and the game indispensable for the men. The tame Indians, or *Indios Mansos*, on the other hand, are permanently established at a carefully selected spot; they have built actual houses in which they shelter themselves and keep their winter provisions. These Indians, though they follow the customs of their fathers, recognise the Mexican laws, obey them ostensibly, are apparent Christians, though they secretly practise all the rites of their old faith; and their chief assumes the title of Alcalde. In a word, they are nearly as much civilized as the majority of the Creoles.

The confederation of the Papazos was composed of several nations, combining both *Indios mansos* and *Indios bravos*. The latter, though harmless, and consequently nomadic, had, in the heart of unexplored forests or the gorges of the Sierra Madre, their winter villages; a collection of huts made of branches and covered with mud, where in the event of war, their squaws found refuge, and which served them, after an expedition, to hide the plunder they had made.

The Gilenos, whose powerful nation was composed of one hundred and eighteen distinct tribes, each of which had its private totem or standard, formed the principal branch of the Confederation of the Papazos.

The Gilenos are essentially agricultural. At a period which it would be impossible to state with certainty, because the Indians do not write anything down, but trust to tradition, the Comanche nation, which proudly calls itself the "Queen of the Prairies," and asserts, perhaps justly, that it is descended in a straight line from the Chichimeques, the first conquerors of Mexico, was divided into two parts after a council held by the chiefs, for the sake of terminating a dispute that threatened to degenerate into a civil war. One half the nation continued to wander in the immense prairies of the Far West, and retain the name of Comanche. The other tribes settled on the banks of the Rio Gila, gave up hunting for agriculture, while retaining their independence, and only nominally obeying the Spaniards and Mexicans. Eventually they received the name of Gilenos, from the river on whose banks they originally settled. But, although separated, the two divisions of the Comanche nation continued to maintain friendly relations, recognised each other as springing from the same stem, and helping one another whenever circumstances demanded it.

The Gilenos piously preserved the faith of their fathers, maintained their customs; among others that of never drinking spirituous liquors; and never permitted the Mexican Government to establish among them that system of annoyance and rapine under which it mercilessly bows the other Indian mansos. The Gileno villages are distinguished from all the others by their singular construction, which admirably displays the character of this people. We will attempt to convey an idea of them to the reader.

Stronghand had pointed out to the Major-domo clusters of storied houses suspended as it were from the flank of the hill. But these houses were only built temporarily, and in case of an attack on the village would be immediately destroyed. The hill, doubtless in consequence of one of those natural convulsions so common in these regions, was separated into two parts by a quebrada of enormous depth, which served as the bed of an impetuous torrent. On either side of this quebrada the Indians had built an enormous construction of pyramidal shape, upwards of two hundred and fifty feet in height. These two towers contained the lodgings of the inhabitants, their granaries and storehouses. More than eight hundred beings, men, women, and children resided in these singular buildings, which were connected together at the top by a bridge of lianas, boldly thrown across the abyss. These towers could only be entered by a ladder, which was drawn up each night; for, as a last and essential precaution, the doors were sixty feet from the ground, in order to guard against surprise.

Nothing could be more curious or picturesque than the appearance offered at a distance by this strange village, with its two massive towers, having ladders for stairs, up and down which people were constantly moving. A few days previously, for greater safety, and to guard the village from a surprise, the chiefs had a trench dug, and a palisade

erected composed of stakes fastened together by lianas. The Indians had taken this precaution to prevent their horses, on which they especially calculated for the success of the meditated expedition being carried off by surprise, as so frequently happens on the border.

The travellers were conducted with great ceremony by the chiefs who had come to receive them at the entrance of the village to the square, on one side of which stood the "Ark of the First Man;" on the other, "The great Medicine lodge, or council hut." During the ride the Major-domo fancied he saw among the crowd several individuals belonging to the white race, and mentioned it to his comrade.

"You are not mistaken," the latter replied; "several Mexicans reside in the village and trade with the Indians, but that must not surprise you, for you are aware that the Gilenos are mansos. Stay, here is a monk."

In fact, at this moment a stout, rubicund monk crossed the square, distributing blessings right and left, of which the Indians seemed to take but little notice.

"These worthy Frayles," the hunter continued, "lead here a rather monastic life, but in spite of the trouble they take they cannot succeed in making proselytes. The Comanches are too attached to their religion to accept another; still, as they are too savage to be intolerant," he added ironically, "they allow these poor monks entire liberty on the express condition that they do not interfere with them. They have even permitted them to build a chapel, a very poor and simple edifice, in which a few passing adventurers offer up their prayers; for the inhabitants of the village never set foot in it."

"I will go to it," said Paredes.

"And you will act rightly. However, I will do this justice to the four monks who, through a love of proselytism, have confined themselves to this forgotten nook, of stating that they bear an excellent reputation, do all the good they can, and are generally beloved and respected by the population. This praise is the more valuable because the Mexican clergy do not enjoy a great reputation for sanctity."

"But now that war is declared, what will become of these monks?"

"What do you think? They will remain peacefully without fearing insult or annoyance. However savage the Indians may be, they are not so savage, be assured, as to make the innocent suffer for the crimes of the guilty."

"Forgive me, Stronghand, if I remark that I notice with sorrow, in your mode of expressing yourself, a certain bitterness which seems to me unjust. The secret sympathies of an honest man ought not, in any case, to render him partial."

"I allow that I am wrong, my friend. When you know me better you will be indulgent, I doubt not, to this bitterness which I frequently unconsciously display in my language. But here we are at the square, and other more urgent matters claim all our attention."

The plaza, which the travellers now reached, formed a parallelogram and rose with a gentle ascent to the foot of the tower on the left of the village. Several streets opened into it, and the houses built on either side of it had an appearance of cleanliness and comfort which is but rarely found in Indian villages; and if this pueblo had been inhabited by white Creoles it would certainly have obtained the title of *ciudad*. In front of the council lodge stood three men whom it was easy to recognise as the principal chiefs of the village by their hats of racoon skin, surrounded by a gold golilla, and the silver mounted cane, like that of our beadles, which they held in their right hand. The Mexicans, among other customs they took from the Spaniards, have retained that of investing the Indian chiefs with authority. This investiture, generally performed by a delegate of the governor of the province, consists in giving them the hat and stick to which we have referred. These three chiefs, therefore, ostensibly held their power from the Mexican government, but in reality the latter had only obeyed the feudal claims of the tribes assembled at this village, by conferring the authority on these men whom their countrymen had long previously recognized as chiefs.

The procession halted before the Alcaldes, or, to use the Indian term, the sachems. The latter were men of a ripe age, with a haughty and imposing mien. The eldest of them, who stood in the centre, had in his look and the expression of his features something indescribably majestic. He appeared about sixty years of age, a long white beard fell in snowy flakes on his chest; his tall form, his broad forehead, his black eyes, and his slightly aquiline nose, rendered him a very remarkable man. He did not wear the Indian costume, but that adopted by the hunters and wood-rangers; a blue cotton shirt fastened round his hips by a leather girdle, which held his arms and ammunition, wide *calzoneras* of deer hide buckled below the knee, and heavy boots, whose heels were armed with formidable spurs, the wheel of which was as large as a saucer.

In conclusion, the personage we have attempted to describe, did not belong to the Indian race, as could be seen at the first glance; but in addition, the fine, elegant, nervous type of the pure Spanish race could be noticed in him. The Major-domo could not check a start of surprise at the sight of this man, whose presence seemed to him incomprehensible at such a place and among such people. He leant over to Stronghand, and asked him, in a low voice, choked by involuntary emotion,—

“Who is that man?”

“You can see,” the hunter replied drily, “he is the Alcalde Mayor of the pueblo. But silence! the persons surrounding us are surprised to see us conversing in whispers.”

Paredes held his tongue, though his eyes were obstinately fixed on the man to whom the hunter had ironically given the title of Alcalde Mayor. A little to the rear of the Chiefs, a warrior was holding the totem of the tribe, representing a Condor, the sacred bird of the Incas. A crowd of

Indians of both sexes, nearly all armed, filled the square, and pressed forward to witness a scene which was not without a certain grandeur. So soon as the procession halted, Sparrowhawk dismounted and walked up to the sachems.

"Fathers of my nation," he said, "the Great Bear of our tribe has returned, bringing with him a pale face, his friend."

"He is welcome," the three chiefs answered unanimously, "as well as his friend, whoever he may be; so long as he pleases to remain among us he will be regarded as a brother."

The hunter then advanced and bowed respectfully to the sachems.

"Thanks for myself and friend," he said, "the journey we have made was long, and we are worn with fatigue. May we be permitted to take a few hours' rest?"

The Indians were astonished to hear the hunter, a man of iron power, whose reputation for vigor was well established among them, speak of the fatigue he felt. But understanding that he had secret reasons for asking this, no one made a remark.

"Stronghand and his friend are at liberty to proceed to the calli prepared for them," one of the chiefs answered: "Sparrowhawk will guide them."

The two adventurers bowed respectfully, and, preceded by Sparrowhawk, passed through the crowd which opened before them, and proceeded to the calli appointed for them. Let us state at once that this calli was the property of Stronghand, who inhabited it whenever business or accident brought him to the village. By the order of the chiefs, however, it had been prepared for the reception of two persons. So soon as the travellers reached the calli, Sparrowhawk retired, after whispering a few words in the ear of the hunter. The latter replied by a sign of assent, and then turned to the Major-domo, who was already engaged in unsaddling his horse.

"You are at home, comrade," he said to him; "use this house as you think proper. I have to see a person to whom I will introduce you presently. I will, therefore, leave you for the present, but I shall not be absent long."

And without awaiting an answer, the hunter turned his horse, and started at a gallop.

"Hum!" the Mexican muttered, so soon as he was alone, "all this is not clear; did I do wrong in trusting to this man? I will be on my guard."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SPY.

AFTER installing the Major-domo in the calli, Stronghand proceeded through the village, taking an apparently careless glance around, but, in reality, not letting anything unusual escape his notice. The Indians whom the hunter

met addressed him as an old acquaintance; the very women and children tried to attract his attention by their hearty bursts of laughter and their greetings of welcome. For all and for each the hunter had a pleasant remark, and thus satisfied the frequently indiscreet claims of those who pressed around him. Thus accompanied, he went right through the village, and, on reaching the foot of the left-hand pyramid, dismounted, threw his horse's bridle to a boy, bidding him lead the horse to his calli, and forced his way with some difficulty through the crowd, whose curiosity seemed to increase instead of diminishing. He walked up to the ladder, and after waving his hand to the Indians, hurried up it, and disappeared inside the pyramid.

This strange building, which was almost shapeless outside, was internally arranged with the utmost care and most perfect intelligence. The hunter, who was doubtless anxious to reach his destination, only took a hurried glance at the rooms he passed through; he went up an internal staircase, and soon reached the top of the pyramid. Sparrowhawk was standing motionless before a cougar's skin, hung up in lieu of a door; and on seeing the hunter he bowed courteously.

"My father has not delayed," he said, with a good-tempered smile.

"Has the council begun yet?" Stronghand asked.

"For four suns, the elders of the nation have remained without taking rest round the council fire; the arrival of my father was alone able to make them suspend their labours for an hour."

The hunter frowned.

"Cannot I speak to the great Sachem for a moment?"

"I cannot give my father any information on that point."

"Good!" the hunter continued, apparently forming a determination.

"Has Sparrowhawk no instructions for me?"

"None but to await Stronghand, and announce his arrival."

"Wah! here I am; my brother's instructions are fulfilled."

Without replying, Sparrowhawk raised the curtain, and allowed the hunter to pass into the council-hall.

In a large room, which was entirely destitute of furniture—unless that name can be given to dried buffalo skulls employed as seats—some twenty persons were gravely seated in a circle, smoking a calumet silently, whose mouthpiece constantly passed from hand to hand. In the centre of the circle was a golden brasier, in which burned the sacred fire of Moctecuzoma, a fire which must never go out. According to tradition, the last Emperor of Mexico shared it among his dearest partisans on the eve of his death; and this fire, it is also said, derives its origin from the sun itself.

The presence of this fire in the room, which was generally kept in a subterraneous vault, inaccessible to the sight of the common herd, and which is only shown to the people on grand occasions, proved the gravity of the matters the council had to discuss. Moreover, the appearance of the chiefs

assembled in the room had about it something stern and imposing that inspired respect. Contrary to Indian habits, they were all unarmed. This precaution, which was owing to the advice of the principal sachem of the nation, was justified not only by the considerable number of chiefs present, but also by their belonging to various nations. Each tribe of the grand confederation of the Papazos had its representative in this assembly, where were also the sachems of nations ordinarily at war with it, but who, in the hope of a general revolt against the whites, the implacable enemies of the red race, had forgotten their hatred for a season. Here could be seen Yaquis, Mayos, Seris, and even free hunters and trappers, white and half-bred, in their grand war paint, with their heels adorned with wolves' tails, an honorary distinction to which only the great braves have a right.

Thunderbolt, the old man whose portrait we have just drawn, presided over the assembly. On the entrance of Stronghand, all the warriors rose, turned to him, and after bowing gracefully, invited him to take a seat among them. The hunter, flattered in his heart by the honour done him, bowed gravely to the members of the council, and seated himself on the right of Thunderbolt, after handing his weapons to Sparrowhawk, who carried them into an adjoining room. There was a rather long silence, during which the hunter smoked the calumet which had been eagerly offered him. At length Thunderbolt began speaking.

"My son could not arrive at a better moment," he said, addressing Stronghand; "his return was eagerly desired by his brothers. He has come from the country inhabited by our enemies; without doubt he will give us news."

The hunter rose, looked round the meeting, and replied,—

"I have been among the Gachupinos, I have entered their towns, I have seen their pueblos, presidios, and posts; like ourselves, they are preparing for war; they understand the extent of the danger that threatens them, and are trying to neutralize it by all means."

"The news is not very explicit; we hoped that Stronghand would give us more serious information about the movements of the enemy," Thunderbolt remarked, with a reproachful accent.

"Perhaps I could do so," the hunter replied calmly.

"Then why are you silent?"

The young man hesitated for a moment beneath the glances fixed on him.

"The white men have a proverb," he said, at length, "whose justice I specially recognise at this moment."

"What is it?"

"Words are silver, but silence is gold."

"Which means?" Thunderbolt continued eagerly.

"The most formidable weapon of the white man is treachery," the hunter continued, not appearing to heed the interruption; "they have

even conquered by treachery the Red-skins, whom they did not dare meet face to face. Questions so interesting as those we have to settle, such serious interests as we have to discuss, must not be treated in so large an assembly ere it is quite certain that a traitor has not glided in among us. So long as merely general questions are discussed, this is of slight consequence; but so soon as we discuss the means to be employed in carrying on the war, it is urgent that the enemy should not be warned of the result of our deliberations.

“We cannot act otherwise than we are doing. Yes, and that is why the whites are cleverer than we: so soon as war is declared, they appoint a commission, composed of three members, or five at the most, who have to draw up the plan of the campaign. Why do we not do the same? Nothing is more simple, it seems to me: choose, among the chiefs assembled here, a certain number of wise men accustomed to command; these men will assemble in secret, and decide on the means to be employed in conquering our enemy: in this way, if the Spaniards are informed of our movements, the traitor cannot escape us for long. The other chiefs, and the deputies of the friendly natives and confederated tribes, will settle in the Grand Council the common interests of the Indian natives, and the terms to be established among them, in order to stifle for ever those germs of discord which frequently spring up from a misunderstanding, and almost always degenerate into sanguinary and interminable quarrels. I have spoken: my brothers will determine whether my words deserve being taken into consideration.”

After bowing to the audience, the hunter sat down again, and seemed to be plunged into deep thought. One of the instinctive qualities of the Indian race is good sense. The chiefs, in spite of the circumlocution in which the hunter had thought it necessary to envelop his remarks, had perfectly understood him: they had caught the justice of his reasoning, and the advantage of a speedy decision on a subject so interesting to the entire confederation: they guessed, under the hunter's reticence, a name, which, for secret reasons of his own, he did not wish to utter, and hence his speech was greeted with a buzz of satisfaction, which is always flattering to the ears of an orator, no matter the nature of his hearers. Thunderbolt questioned the members of the council by a glance; all replied with an affirmative shake of their heads.

“Your plan is adopted,” the chief said; “we recognise the necessity of carrying it out. But this time again we must apply to you to choose the members of the council whom we have to elect.”

“Charm alone must decide the solution. All the sachems collected in this hall are great braves of their tribes, and the picked warriors of their nations. No matter on whom the lot falls, the members will behave honourably in the new council.”

“Stronghand has spoken well, as he always does, when he is called upon to give his opinion in the council of the chiefs; now let him finish what

he has so well begun, by instructing us of the way in which we are to consult chance."

"Be it so: I will obey my father."

The hunter rose and left the hall, but his absence lasted only a few minutes. During this interval the chiefs remained motionless and silent. Stronghand soon returned, followed by Sparrowhawk, who, as he had been ordered by the sachems to keep the door, had not taken part in the deliberations, though he had a right to do so. This chief carried a blanket tied up so as to form a bag.

"In this blanket," the hunter then said, "I have placed a number of bullets equal to that of the chiefs assembled in council: I have taken these bullets from the ammunition bag of every one of the chiefs. I have noticed that our guns are of different bores, and hence some of the bullets are larger, others smaller. Each of us will draw a bullet haphazard; when all have one, they will be examined; and the three chiefs, if you fix on that number, or the five if you prefer that number, to whom chance has given the largest bullets, will compose the new council."

"That is a simple way, and will prevent any annoyance," Thunderbolt said; "I believe that we shall do well by adopting it."

The chiefs bowed their assent.

"But," the sachem continued, "before we begin drawing, let us first settle of how many members the council shall consist; shall there be three or five?"

A white trapper rose and asked leave to speak. It was a man of about forty years of age, with frank and energetic features, and muscular limbs, well known all over the western prairies by the singular name of the Whistler.

"If I may be allowed," he said, "to offer my opinion on such a matter before wise men and renowned warriors, for I am only a poor rogue of a hunter, I would call your attention to the fact that, with a committee whose duties are so serious, three men are not sufficient to discuss a question advantageously, because it is so easy to obtain a majority. On the other hand, five men mutually enlighten each other, by exchanging their ideas and starting objections: hence, I am of opinion that the council ought to be composed of five members. I will add one word: will the white and half-bred hunters and trappers here present take part in the election?"

"Do they not fight with us?" Thunderbolt asked.

"That is true," the Whistler continued; "still, it would be, perhaps, better for you to settle the matter among yourselves: we are, in reality, only your allies."

"You are our brothers and friends; in the name of the chiefs of the confederation, I thank you, Whistler, for the delicate proposal you have made; but we do not accept your offer, for all must be in common between you and us."

“ You will do as you please. I spoke for your good ; and if it does not suit you, say no more about it.”

While these remarks were exchanged between the trapper and Thunderbolt, the chiefs had decided that the military commission should be composed of five members. The drawing at once began ; each warrior went, in his turn, to draw a bullet from the bag held by Sparrowhawk ; then the verification was begun with that good faith and impartiality which the Indians display in all their actions when dealing with one another. On this occasion chance was intelligent, as happens more frequently than is supposed, when it is left free to act : the chiefs chosen to form the committee were exactly those who, if another mode of election had been employed, would have gained all the votes through their talent, experience, and wisdom. Hence, the sachems frankly applauded the decision of fate, and in their superstition, derived from this caprice of accident a favourable augury for the result of the war. The committee was composed as follows :—

Thunderbolt, Sparrowhawk, Stronghand, the Whistler, and a renowned Apache chief, whose name was the Peccary.

When the election was over, just as the chiefs were returning to their seats, Stronghand approached a trapper, who, ever since his entrance, had seemed to shun his eye, and conceal himself, as far as possible, behind the other chiefs. Tapping him on the shoulder, he said in a low but imperative voice,—

“ Master Kidd, two words if you please.”

The adventurer, for it was really he, started at the touch, but immediately recovering himself, he turned his smiling face to the hunter's, and said, with a respectful bow,—

“ I am quite at your service, caballero ; can I be so happy as to be able to help you in anything ?”

“ Yes,” the hunter answered drily.

“ Speak, caballero, speak ; and as far as lies in my power—”

“ A truce to these hypocritical protestations,” Stronghand rudely interrupted him, “ and let us come to facts.”

“ I am listening to you,” the other said, trying to hide his anxiety.

“ This is the point, rightly or wrongly—your presence here offends me.”

“ What can I do to prevent that, my dear senor ?”

“ A very simple thing.”

“ What is it, if you please ?”

“ Leave the tower at once, mount your horse, and be off.”

“ Oh !” the bandit said, with a forced laugh ; “ allow me to remark, my dear senor, that the idea seems to me a singular one.”

“ Do you think so ?” the hunter remarked coldly ; “ well, opinions differ. For my part, I consider it quite natural.”

“ Of course you are jesting.”

“ Do you fancy me capable of jesting—before all, with a man like

you? I think not. Well, I repeat, be off; be off as quickly as possible. I advise you for your own good."

"I must have an excuse for such a flight. What will the Indian chiefs who did me the honour of summoning me to their grand council, and my friends, the hunters, suppose, on seeing me thus abandon them without any apparent motive, at the very moment when the war is about to begin?"

"That does not concern me; I want you to be off at once; if not —"

"Well?"

"I shall blow out your brains in the presence of all as a traitor and a spy. You understand me now, my master, I think?"

The bandit started violently; his face became livid, and for some minutes he fixed his viper eye on the hunter, who examined him ironically; then bending down to his ear, he said, in a voice choked with rage and shame, "Stronghand, you are the stronger, and any resistance on my part would be mad; I shall go, therefore; but remember this, I shall be avenged."

Stronghand shrugged his shoulders contemptuously; "Do so," he said, "if you can; but, in the mean while, be off if you do not wish me to carry out my threat!" and he turned his back on the bandit. Kidd gave him a parting look of fury, and, without adding a word, left the hall. Ten minutes later he was galloping on the road to the Real de Minas, revolving the most sinister schemes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNCIL OF THE SACHEMS.

ALTHOUGH the chiefs had guessed from Stronghand's gestures what was going on between him and the American bandit, not one of them made the slightest allusion to Kidd's departure, or even seemed to notice it. The Canadian trapper named Whistler alone went up to the hunter, and pressing his hand, said, with a coarse laugh,—

"By heavens, comrade, you did not miss your game, but brought it down at the first shot. Receive my sincere congratulations for having freed us of that skunk, who is neither fish nor flesh, and whose roguish face did not at all please me."

"It would please you much less, my good fellow, if you knew him," the hunter replied, with a smile.

"I beg you to believe that I have no desire to form a closer acquaintance with that picaro; only too many like him may be met on the prairies."

The chiefs had resumed their seats, and the council, which had been momentarily interrupted, was reopened by Thunderbolt. The Indians, though people think proper to regard them as savages, could give lessons

in urbanity and good breeding to the members of parliamentary assemblies in old Europe. Among them a speaker is never interrupted by those coarse and inopportune noises for which some M.P.'s seem to possess a privilege. Each speaks in his turn. The speakers, who are listened to with a religious silence, have the liberty of expressing their ideas without fearing personalities, which are frequently offensive. When the debate is closed, the speaker—that is to say, the oldest chief, or the one of the highest position, either through bravery or wisdom—sums up the discussion in a few words, takes the opinion of the other chiefs, who vote by nodding their heads, and the minority always accepts, without complaint or recrimination of any sort, the resolution of the majority.

Before going further, we will explain, in a few words, the cause of the dissatisfaction which had induced the Indians to revolt once again against the whites. At the period of the Spanish conquest, the Indians, in spite of the obstinate assertions to the contrary, were happy, or at any rate were, through the intelligent care of the Government, placed in a situation which insured their existence under very satisfactory conditions. It is indubitable that if Spain had retained her colonies for fifty or sixty years longer, she would have gradually succeeded in converting the aborigines of her vast territories, attaching them to the cultivation of the soil, and making them give up a nomadic existence, and adopt the far preferable life in villages.

All Spanish America, both North and South, was covered with missions; that is to say, agricultural colonies, established on a large scale; where monks, in every way respectable, through their complete abnegation of the enjoyments of the world, and their inexhaustible charity, taught the Indians not only the paternal precepts of the Gospel, and their duty to their neighbour, but preaching by example, they became weavers, labourers, cobblers, and blacksmiths, in order to make their docile apprentices more easily understand the way to set to work. These missions contained, at the time of the War of Independence, several hundred thousand Indians, who had given up their nomadic life of hunting, and patiently assumed the yoke of civilization. This magnificent result, obtained by courage and perseverance, and which would have speedily resulted in the solution of a problem declared to be insoluble—the emancipation of the red race, and its aptitude to assume the sedentary condition of a town life, was unhappily not carried further.

When the Mexicans had proclaimed their independence, their first care was to destroy all that the Spaniards had raised, and utterly overthrow the internal governmental system established by them. Naturally, the missions were not exempted from this general overthrow; they were perhaps more kindly treated than the institutions created by the old oppressors. The philosophic spirit of the eighteenth century, when it forced its way into Mexico, was naturally misunderstood, and ill appreciated by men who were plunged into the grossest ignorance, and who

believed that they displayed the independence and nobility of their character by deadly hatred of the clergy, and abolishing their prerogatives at one stroke. It is true that, by an inevitable reaction, the Mexicans, whose revolution was almost entirely effected by priests, and who, at the outset, displayed themselves as such daring sceptics, ere long fell again, through their superstition, beneath the power of the same clergy, and became more devoted slaves to them than ever.

Unfortunately, the death-blow had been dealt to the missions or agricultural colonies, although the Government recognised its mistake, and sought by all means to palliate it. They never recovered, only languished, and eventually the majority of them fell into ruin, and were utterly abandoned by the Indians, who returned to that desert life from which they had been drawn with such difficulty. Nothing is so heart-rending as the sight now offered by these missions, which were once so rich, so full of life, and so flourishing; only a few Indians can be seen, wandering about like ghosts in the deserted cloisters, led by an old white-haired monk, whom they would not leave, and who had vowed to die among his children.

The Mexican Government did not stop here. Returning to the old errors of the conquistadors, it grew accustomed to regard the Indians as slaves; imposing on them exorbitant tariffs for articles of primary necessity, which it sold to them through special agents, bowing them to any Draconian law, and carrying their injustice so far as to deny them intellect, and brand them with the name of *Gente sin razon*, or people without reason. The consequences of such a system can be easily comprehended. The Indians, who, at the outset, contented themselves with passively withdrawing, and seeking in the desert the liberty that was refused them, on finding themselves so unjustly treated, and urged to desperation by such insults, thought about avenging themselves, and requiting evil for evil.

Then recommenced those periodical invasions of the Indian borders which the Spaniards had repressed with such difficulty and such bloodshed. Murder and pillage were organized on a grand scale, and with such success, that the Comanches and Apaches, to vex the whites, gave the ironical name of the "Mexican moon" to the month they selected to commit their periodical depredations. The subjected Indians—that is to say, those who, in spite of the constant vexations to which they were victims, remained attached to their villages—revolted several times, and on each occasion the Mexican Government succeeded in making them return to their duty by promises and concessions, which were violated and forgotten so soon as the red-skins had laid down their arms. The war, consequently, became generalized and permanent in the border states of the confederation.

But, with the exception of a few invasions more serious than others, the Indians had almost entirely confined themselves to keeping the whites

on the alert, when the great insurrection of 1827 broke out, which all but succeeded in depriving Mexico of her richest provinces. This insurrection was the more terrible, because, on this occasion, the Indians, guided by experienced chiefs, possessing firearms, and carrying out tactics entirely different from those they had hitherto employed, waged a serious war, and insisted on retaining the provinces they had seized. The red-skins elected an emperor and established a government; they displayed a settled intention of definitively regaining their independence and reconstituting their nationality.

The Mexicans, justly terrified by these manifestations, made the greatest sacrifices in order to quell this formidable revolt, and succeeded, though rather owing to the treachery and disunion they managed to sow among the chiefs, than by the power of their arms. But this uprising had caused them to reflect, and they saw that it was high time to come to an arrangement with these men, whom they had hitherto been accustomed to regard as irrational beings. Peace was concluded on conditions very advantageous to the Indians and their forces; and the Mexicans, owing to the fright they had endured, were compelled to keep their promises, or, to speak more correctly, pretended to do so.

For several years the Indians, satisfied with this apparent amelioration in the relations between them and the whites, remained peacefully in their villages, and the Mexicans had only to defend their borders against the attacks of the wild or unsubjected Indians. This was a task, we are bound to confess, in which they were not very successful; for the Indians eventually passed the limits the Spaniards had imposed on them, permanently established themselves on the ruins of the old Creole villages, and by degrees, and gaining ground each year, they reduced the territory of the Mexican Government in an extraordinary way.

Still, when the remembrance of the great Indian insurrection seemed to have died out, and the *Indios mansos* had apparently accepted the sovereignty of Mexico, the annoyances recommenced. Though at first slight, they gradually became more and more frequent, owing to the apathetic resignation of the Indians, and the patience with which they uncomplainingly endured the unjust aggressions of which they were made the systematic victims. The concessions granted under the pressure of fear, were brutally withdrawn, and matters returned to the same state as before the insurrection. The Indians continued to suffer, apparently resigned to endure all the insults it might please their oppressors to make them undergo; but this calm concealed a terrific storm, and the Mexicans would shortly be aroused by a thunder-clap.

The red-skins behaved, under the circumstances, with rare prudence and circumspection, in order not to alarm the persons they wished to surprise. They would certainly have succeeded in deceiving the Mexicans as to their plans, had it not been for the treachery of the agents of the Mexican Government, continually kept in their villages to watch them;

among whom was Kidd, whom Stronghand had so suddenly unmasked and contemptuously turned out. Still these agents, in spite of their lively desire to make themselves of importance by magnifying facts, had only been able to give very vague details about the conspiracy the Indians were secretly forming. They knew that an emperor had been elected, and that he was a white man, but they did not know who he was, or his name. They also knew that the confederation of the Papazos had placed itself at the head of the movement, and intended to deal the first blow, but no one was aware when or how hostilities would commence.

This information, however, incomplete though it was, appeared to the Mexicans, on whose minds at once rushed the sanguinary memories of the last revolution, sufficiently serious for them to place themselves in a position to resist the first attack of the red-skins, which is always so terrible, and to place their frontiers in such a state as would prevent a surprise,—a thing they had never yet succeeded in effecting. The Mexican Government, warned of what was going on by the commandants of the states of Sonora and Cinaloa, the two most menaced of the confederation, and recognising the gravity of the case, resolved to send troops from the capital to reinforce the border garrisons. This plan, unfortunately, could not be carried out, and was the cause of fresh and very dangerous complications.

It is only in the old Spanish colonies, which are in the deepest state of neglect and disorganization, that such acts are possible. The troops told off to proceed to Sonora, so soon as they learned that they were intended to oppose the Indians, peremptorily refused to march, alleging, as the reason, that they were not at all desirous of fighting savages who did not respect the law of nations, and had no scruples about scalping their prisoners. The president of the republic, strong in his right, and the danger the country ran, tried to insist and force them to set out. Then a thing that might be easily foreseen occurred: not only did the troops obstinately remain in revolt, but set the seal on it by making a pronunciamiento in favour of the general chosen to command the expedition, and who, we may do him the justice of saying, had been the first to declare against the departure of the troops from the capital.

This pronunciamiento was the spark that fired the powder-train. In a few days, the whole of Mexico was a prey to the horrors of a civil war; so that the governors of the two states, being reduced to their own forces, and not knowing whether they would retain their posts under the new president, were more embarrassed than ever, did not dare take any initiative, and contented themselves with throwing up such intrenchments as they could, though they had quite enough to do in keeping their troops to their duty, and keeping them from deserting. Such was the state of things at the moment we have now reached. This information, upon which we have purposely laid a stress, in order to make the reader understand certain facts which, without this precaution, would seem to belong rather

to the regions of fancy than to that of history, as they are so strange and incredible, was reported by Stronghand to the council of the sachems, and listened to in a religious silence.

"Now," he added, in conclusion, "I believe that the moment has arrived to strike the grand blow for which we have so long been preparing. Our enemies hesitate. They are demoralized. Their soldiers tremble; and I am convinced they will not withstand the attack of our and the great Beaver's warriors. This is what I wished to say to the council. Still it was not advisable that such important news should reach the ears of our enemies. The sachems will judge whether I have acted well, or if my zeal carried me too far in dismissing from the council a pale-face who, I am convinced, is a traitor sold to the Mexicans. I have spoken."

A flattering murmur greeted the concluding remarks of the young man, who sat down, blushing.

"It appears to me," Whistler then said, "that the debate need not be a long one. As war is decided on, the council of the confederation has only to seek allies among the other Indian nations, in order to augment the number of our warriors, if that be possible. As regards the operations, and the period when the Mexican territory is to be invaded, that will devolve on the military committee, who pledge themselves to the profoundest secrecy about their discussions, until the hour for action arrives. I have spoken."

Thunderbolt rose.

"Chiefs and sachems of the confederation of the Papazos," he said, in his sympathetic and sonorous voice, "and you, warriors, our allies, the moment for dissolving your council has at length arrived. Henceforth the committee of the five chiefs will alone sit. Each of you will return to his tribe, arm his warriors, and order the scalp-dance to be performed round the war-post; but the eighth sun must see you here again at the head of your warriors, in order that all may be ready to act when the invasion is decided on. I have spoken. Have I said well, powerful men?"

The chiefs rose in silence, resumed their weapons, and immediately left the village, starting in different directions at a gallop. Thunderbolt and Stronghand were left alone.

"My son," the old man then said, "have you nothing to tell me?"

"Yes, father," the young man respectfully answered, "I have very serious news for you."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RANCHO.

BEFORE describing the conversation between Thunderbolt and Stronghand, we are obliged to go back, and tell the reader certain facts which had occurred at the Hacienda del Toro, a few days before the Major-domo set out for Hermosillo. Mexican girls, born and bred on the Indian border,

enjoy a liberty which the want of society renders indispensable. Always on horseback upon these immense estates, which extend for twenty or five-and-twenty leagues, their life is spent in riding over hill and dale, visiting the wretched huts of the vaqueros and peons, relieving their wants, and rendering themselves beloved by their simple graces and affecting goodness of heart.

Dona Marianna, who had been exiled for several years at a convent, so soon as she returned home, eagerly renewed her long rides through forests and prairies, to see again the persons in her father's employ, with whom she had sported as a child, and of whom she had such a pleasant recollection. At times followed by a servant, specially attached to her, but more usually alone, the maiden had therefore recommenced her rides, going to visit one and the other, enjoying her gallop, careless as a bird, pleased with everything—the flowers she culled as she passed, the reviving breeze she inhaled, and smiling gaily at the sun which bronzed her complexion; in a word, she revealed the voluptuous and egotistic apathy of a child in whom the woman is not yet revealed, and who is ignorant that she possesses a heart.

Most usually Dona Marianna guided her horse to a rancho situated about three leagues from the hacienda, in the midst of a majestic forest of evergreen oaks and larches. This rancho, which was built of adobes, and whitewashed, stood on the bank of a stream, in the centre of a field sufficiently cleared to grow the grain required for the support of the poor inhabitants of the hovel. In the rear of the rancho was an enclosure, serving as corral, and containing two cows and four or five horses, the sole fortune of the master of this rancho, which, however, internally was not so poverty-stricken as the exterior seemed to forebode. It was divided into three parts, two of which served as bed-rooms, and the third as sitting-room, saloon, kitchen, &c. In the latter, the fowls impudently came to pick up grain, and pieces of tortillas which had been allowed to fall.

On the right was a sort of low fireplace, evidently for culinary purposes; the middle of the room was occupied by a large oak table with twisted legs; at the end, two doors opened into the bed-rooms, and the walls were covered with those hideous coloured plates which Parisian trade inundates the New World with, and under which intelligent hawkers print the names of saints, to render the sale more easy. Among these engravings was one representing Napoleon crossing the St. Bernard, accompanied by a guide, holding his horse. It bore the rather too fanciful title, "The great St. Martin dividing his cloak with a beggar." A fact which imparts incomparable meaning to this humorous motto is, that the general, far from wishing to give his cloak to the guide, who does not want it, seems to be shivering with cold, and wrapping himself up with extreme care. Lastly, a few *butaccas* and *equipals* completed the furniture, which, for many reasons, might be considered elegant in a country where

the science of comfort is completely ignored, and the wants of material life are reduced to their simplest expression.

This rancho had been for many years inhabited by the same family, who were the last relics of the Indians dwelling here when the country was discovered by the Spaniards. These Indians, who were mansos, and long converted to Christianity, had been old and faithful servants of the Marquises de Moguer, who were always attached to them, and made it a point of honour to heighten their comforts, and give them their protection under all circumstances. Hence the devotion of these worthy people to the Moguer family was affecting, through its simple self-denial. They had forgotten their Indian name, and were only known by that of Sanchez.

At the moment when we introduce this family to the reader, it consisted of three persons: the father, a blind old man, but upright and hale, who, in spite of his infirmity, still traversed all the forest tracks without hesitation or risk of losing himself, merely accompanied by his dog Bouchaley; the mother, a woman of about forty years of age, tall, robust, and possessing marked features, which, when she was younger, must have been very handsome; and the son, a young man of about twenty, well built, and a daring hunter, who held the post of tigrero at the hacienda.

Louisa Sanchez had been nurse to Dona Marianna, and the young lady, deprived at an early age of her mistress, had retained for her not merely that friendship which children generally have for their nurse, and which at times renders the mother jealous, but that craving for affection, so natural in young hearts, and which Dona Marianna, restrained by her father's apparent sternness, could not indulge. The maiden's return to the hacienda caused great joy at the rancho; father, mother, and son at once mounted and proceeded to the Toro to embrace their child, as they simply called her. Halfway they met Dona Marianna, who, in her impatience to see them again, was galloping like a mad girl, followed by her brother, who was teasing her about this love for her nurse.

Since then, not a day had passed on which the young lady did not carry the sunshine of her presence to the rancho, and shared the breakfast of the family—a frugal meal, composed of light cakes, roasted on an iron plate, boiled beef seasoned with chile colorado, milk, and *quesadillas*, or cheese-cakes, hard and green and leathery, which the young lady, however, declared to be excellent, and heartily enjoyed. Bouchaley, like everybody else at the rancho, entertained a feeling of adoration for Dona Marianna. He was a long-haired black-and-white mastiff, about ten years old, and spiteful and noisy as all his congeners. In reality, the dog possessed but one good quality, its well-tryed fidelity to its master, whom it never took its eyes off, and constantly crouched at his feet. Since the young lady's return, the heart of the worthy quadruped had opened to a new affection; each morning it took its post on the road by which Dona Marianna came, and as soon as it saw her, saluted her by leaps and deafening barks.

Marianno Sanchez, the tigrero, had for his foster-sister an affection

heightened by the similarity of name—a similarity which in Spanish America gives a right to a sort of spiritual relationship. This touching custom, whose origin is entirely Indian, is intended to draw closer the relations between *tocayo* and *tocaya*, and they are almost brother and sister. Hence the tigrero, in order to be present each morning at his *tocaya's* breakfast, often rode eight or ten leagues in the morning, and found his reward in a smile from the young lady. As for Father Sanchez, since the return of his child, as he called her, he only felt one regret. It was that he could not see her and admire her beauty; but he consoled himself by embracing her.

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning; the sun illumined the hut; the birds were singing merrily in the forest. Father Sanchez had taken up the handmill, and was grinding the wheat, while his wife, after sifting the wheat, pounded it and formed it into light cakes, called tortillas, which, after being griddled, would form the solid portion of the breakfast. Bouchaley was at his post on the road, watching for the arrival of the young lady.

"How is it," the old man asked, "that Marianno is not here yet? I generally hear the sound of his horse earlier than this."

"Poor lad! who knows where he is at this moment?" the mother answered. "He has for some days been watching a band of jaguars that have bitten several horses at the hacienda. He is certainly ambushed in some thicket. I only trust he will not be devoured some day by the terrible animals."

"Nonsense, wife," the old man continued, with a shrug of his shoulders. "Maternal love renders you foolish. Marianno devoured by the tigers!"

"Well, I see nothing impossible in that."

"You might just as well say that Bouchaley is capable of chasing a peccari; one thing is as possible as the other. Besides, you forget that our son never goes out without his dog Bigote, a cross between a wolf and a Newfoundland dog, as big as a six months old colt, and who is capable of breaking the loins of a coyote at one snap."

"I do not say no, father; I do not say no," she continued, with a shake of her head; "that does not prevent his being a dangerous trade, which may, one day or another, cost him his life."

"Stuff! Marianno is too clever a hunter for that; besides, the trade is lucrative; each jaguar-skin brings him in fourteen piastres—a sum we cannot afford to despise, since my infirmity has prevented me from working. It would be better for my old carcass to return to the earth, as I am no longer good for anything."

"Do not speak so, father; especially before our daughter, for she would not forgive you: for what you are saying is unjust; you have worked enough in your time to rest now, and your son take your place."

"Well, tell me, wife," the old man said laughingly, "was I devoured

by the jaguar? And yet I was a tigrero for more than forty years, and the jaguars were not nearly so polite in my time as they now are."

"That is all very well; it is true that you have not been devoured, but your father and your grandfather were. What answer have you to that?"

"Hem!" the old man went on, in some embarrassment; "I will answer—I will answer—"

"Nothing, and that will be the best," she continued; "for you could not say anything satisfactory."

"Nonsense! what do you take me for, mother? if my father and grandfather were devoured, and that is true, it was—"

"Well, what? I am anxious to hear."

"Because they were treacherously attacked by the jaguars," he at length said, with a triumphant air; "the wretches knew whom they had to deal with, and so played cunning. Otherwise they would never have got the best of two such clever hunters as my father and grandfather."

The ranchera shrugged her shoulders with a smile, but she considered it unnecessary to answer, as she was well aware she would not succeed in making her husband change his opinion as to her son's dangerous trade. The old man, satisfied with having reduced his wife to silence, as he fancied, did not abuse his victory; with a crafty smile he rolled and lit a cigarette, while Na Luisa laid the table, arranged and dusted everything in the rancho, and listened anxiously to assure herself that the footfall of her son's horse was not mingled with the sounds that incessantly rose from the forest.

All at once Bouchaley was heard barking furiously. The old man drew himself up in his butacca, while Na Sanchez rushed to the doorway, in which Dona Marianna appeared, fresh and smiling.

"Good morning, father! good morning, mother!" she exclaimed in her silvery voice, and kissed the forehead of the old man, who tenderly pressed her to his heart. "Come, Bouchaley, come, be quiet!" she added; patting the dog, which still gambolled round her. "Mother, ask my tocayo to put Negro in the corral, for the good animal has earned its alfalfa."

"I will go, Querida," the old man said; "for to-day I take Marianno's place." And he left the rancho without awaiting an answer.

"Mother," the young lady continued, with a shade of anxiety, "where is my foster-brother? I do not see him."

"He has not arrived yet, nina."

"What! not arrived?"

"Oh, I trust he will soon be here," she said, while stifling a sigh.

The maiden looked at her for a moment sympathetically.

"What is the matter, mother?" she at length said, as she seized the poor woman's hand; "can any accident have happened?"

"The Lord guard us from it, Querida," Luisa said, clasping her hands.

"Still, you are anxious, mother. You are hiding something from me. Tell me at once what it is."

"Nothing, my child, forgive me. Nothing extraordinary has occurred, and I am hiding nothing from you, but—"

"But what?" Dona Marianna interrupted her.

"Well, since you insist, Querida, I confess to you that I am alarmed. You know that Marianno is tigrero to the hacienda?"

"Yes, what then?"

"I am always frightened lest he should meet with an accident, for that happens so easily."

"Come, come, mother, do not have such thoughts as these. Marianno is an intrepid hunter, and possesses far from common skill and tact."

"Ah, hija, you are of the same opinion as my old man. Alas! if I lost my son, what would become of you?"

"Oh, mother, why talk in that way? Marianno, I hope, runs no danger. The delay that alarms you means nothing; you will soon see him again."

"May you be saying the truth, dear child!"

"I am so convinced of it, mamita, that I will not sit down to table till he arrives."

"Well, you will not have to wait long, hijita," the old man said, as he re-entered the rancho.

"Is he coming?" the mother joyously exclaimed, as she furtively wiped away a tear.

"I knew it," the maiden remarked.

"There, do you hear his horse?" the old man said.

In fact, the furious gallop of a horse echoed in the forest, and approached with the rapidity of a hurricane. The two females darted to the door; at this moment a horseman appeared on the skirt of the clearing, riding at full speed, with his hair floating in the breeze, and his face animated by the speed at which he rode. This horseman, who was powerfully and yet gracefully built, and had a manly, energetic face, was Marianno, the tigrero. His dog, a black-and-white Newfoundland, with powerful chest and enormous head, was running by the side of the horse, and looking up intelligently every moment.

"Viva Dios! Querida tocaya!" the young man exclaimed, as he leaped from his horse. "I am glad to see you, for I was afraid that I should arrive too late. Bigote," he added, addressing his dog and throwing the bridle to it, which the animal seized with its mouth, "lead Moreno to the corral."

The dog immediately proceeded thither, followed by the horse, while Marianno and the two females returned to the rancho. The young man kissed his father's forehead, and took his hand, saying, "Good morning, papa!" and then returned to his mother, whom he embraced several times.

“Cruel child,” she said to him, “why did you delay so long?”

“Pay no attention to what your mother says, Muchacho,” the old man remarked; “she is foolish.”

“Fie! you must not say that!” the young lady exclaimed; “you would do better in scolding Marianno, for I too felt alarmed.”

“Do not be angry with me,” the young man replied; “I have been for some days on the track of a family of jaguars, which is prowling about the neighbourhood, and I could not possibly come sooner.”

“Are they about here?”

“No, they are prowlers brought here by the drought; and are the more dangerous because, as they do not belong to these parts, they rest where they please—sometimes at one place, sometimes at another, and it becomes very difficult to follow their trail.”

“I only hope they will not think of coming here,” the mother said anxiously.

“I do not believe they will, for wild beasts shun the vicinity of man. Still, Dona Marianna had better, for some days to come, restrict her rides, and not venture too far into the forest.”

“What can I have to fear?”

“Nothing, I hope; still it is better to act prudently. Wild beasts are animals whose habits it is very difficult to discover, especially when they are in unknown parts, as these are.”

“Nonsense!” the young lady said, with a laugh, “you are trying to frighten me, tocayo.”

“Do not believe that; I will accompany you with Bigote to the hacienda.”

The dog, which had returned to its master’s side after performing its duties, wagged its tail, and looked up in her face.

“I will not allow that, tocayo,” the young lady replied, as she passed her hand through the dog’s silky coat, and pulled its ears; “let Bigote have a rest. I came alone, and will return alone; and, mounted on Negro, I defy the tigers to catch me up, unless they are ambuscaded on my road.”

“Still, nina—” Marianno objected.

“Not a word more on the subject, tocayo, I beg; let us breakfast, for I am literally dying of hunger; and were the tigers here,” she added, with a laugh, “they might frighten me, but not deprive me of my appetite.”

PARADISE LOST.

I AT once frankly admit that it was not by rigorous observance of the proprieties that I contrived, in the brief space of one year,—something less, strictly speaking,—to graduate from the position, with an excellent salary, of principal assistant at one of the largest establishments for the sale of drugs and chemicals in London, with the certainty of early admission to the Pharmaceutical, to the rank of full private in the Garibaldian Volunteers, seven months of the descending interval having been passed in compounding pills in a famous manufactory of the wonder-working mixture, not one hundred miles from Temple Bar.

Yet I quite as certainly had not been guilty of any *very* sad slip in morals. I was a little fast, no doubt; did not keep so clear of tailors' books as I should have done; betted a sovereign or two, now and then, upon the Oaks or Derby; and greatly enjoyed a quiet game of billiards, when a chance offered of indulging in that fashionable pastime in a remote or obscure part of the metropolitan world, where there was no likelihood that the managing man in Mr. —, the eminent pharmaceutical chemist's establishment would be recognised. These minor peccadilloes would probably have had no very hurtful consequences, had it not unfortunately happened that when labouring under an oppressive consciousness—brought about by the almost simultaneous delivery of a number of letters, in size, folding, colour of paper, and caligraphy unmistakably at a glance the devil's own—that I had outrun the constable to the tune of something like two hundred pounds, I chanced, in carelessly running over the "Notices to Correspondents" column of a widely circulated penny periodical, to have my eye arrested by a communication, signed "Sophonisba." After considerable dubitation, I, in an evil hour, opened a correspondence, at the commencement through the editor, with "Sophonisba." "A lady considerably under thirty" (I myself was twenty-eight; the ages tallied nicely)—"A lady considerably under thirty; not, perhaps, handsome, in an artistic sense of the word, but very pleasing in appearance; endowed with the most cheerful good temper; confessedly an admirable household manager; and possessed, in actual cash, of two thousand pounds—not to speak of good expectations." This desirable lady was willing to yoke herself in the bonds of matrimony with a gentleman of correspondent amiability of temper, and suitable age—a professional gentleman, of sound Church of England principles, would be preferred—and one who himself had a moderate income of, say, £200 per annum.

If Sophonisba, it instantly occurred to me, had had my estimable self in her mind's eye when sketching the portraiture of him who, in her judgment, would be the right man in the right place, she could not have more exactly catalogued my qualifications for, under the circumstances, making her maritally happy. I was of the specified age, and of sweetest temper—except parenthetically; that is, when annoyed or irritated. I

was a professional gentleman in the true meaning of the phrase—whatever prating pedants might say; and my income—salary and income are convertible terms—had been lately raised to £210 per annum. I could not say that sound Church of England principles would have been set down to my credit by a rigorous appraiser of spiritual inclinings, but I was tolerably regular in my attendance at church, which was all, I judged, that would be required by the amiable Sophonisba until, “with hand in hand together,” we entered the shadow of the setting sun. Yes; there could be no doubt that I, in the main, realized Sophonisba’s fancy sketch. But who on earth or in heaven could have dreamed—who, by the wildest freak of suspicion, could for one moment have imagined—that Sophonisba herself was —. But I may not anticipate the dreadful discovery.

After a number of letters had been interchanged by Sophonisba and Tancred, Sophonisba agreed to meet Tancred towards dusk,—

“At about the lovely close of a warm summer’s day,”—

(I had been reading Macaulay’s poems,) at the Crown Coffee House, Holborn. Tancred would be there, awaiting, with trembling impatience, the advent of Sophonisba, in a private room, where—mutual felicitations, with real names, of course, having been exchanged—tea for two could be served to the happy pair.

Before inviting the reader to accompany me, on that memorable occasion, to the Crown Coffee House, it is necessary, in order to insure an intelligent appreciation of the situation, that I should place before him or her an outline of my own antecedents, as well as of the actual position in the social scale, with its conditions and belongings, to which I had clambered, been hoisted, had butted, or blundered my way. Those twenty-eight years of a by no means puffing-up life may be despatched in about as many seconds. I was born near Mitcham, Surrey. I was an only child; our family name, Smith; and, somewhat curiously, my father was under-bailiff to a gentleman—a very gay gentleman—also of the name of Smith: Percy Smith, Esq., of Elm Lodge. The motive of such condescension I cannot speak to,—my father being a taciturn, unquestionable man, and my mother having departed this life before I was able to ask the question, had it occurred to me to do so,—but the fact is beyond doubt that the gay young squire stood sponsor at my baptism, when I was named “Percy,” after himself. That gracious condescension was moreover supplemented by a promise that he would befriend his godson as he grew up in life, an undertaking which he better fulfilled than the more solemn one given at the same time,—that I should be led, by his guidance, to renounce the devil and all his works. When big enough, I was sent to the best dame school in Mitcham; and at my father’s death—which happened suddenly, from the kick of a vicious horse, when I was in my ninth year—to a Mr. Spinks’ seminary, where I remained till I was close upon sixteen. But for the squire’s benevolent solicitude for his godson, I

should have found myself in very evil case, my father, suddenly as he was called away, having taken timely care to leave me penniless, by a will executed soon after my birth. That instrument, in which my name was not even mentioned, devised all he possessed—a good round sum—to his brother, a small farmer of Wiltshire, whom he regularly visited every year at Christmas.

In the mean time, the gay squire had married, whilst I was still an infant, a yet gayer wife. She was, I in after years understood, a young person of humble parentage, whose only dowry was remarkable beauty. She bore a son—baptized Percy, like myself, not long after which strange reports got about. The upshot was, that the silly wife went off with a gentleman who had been a frequent visitor at Elm Lodge, and never returned. There was a duel, in which, I believe, neither combatant was much hurt. Not long afterwards, the squire shut up Elm Lodge, went abroad, and his wife having been divorced from him *à vinculo*, he married a French lady and settled permanently in Paris, visiting England at long intervals apart, and for a few days, sometimes for a few hours, only. It was reported that he had several children by his second wife. This was thought to account for his persistent estrangement from his son, whom, after the mother's elopement, he would never see or correspond with. He, however, provided—though, for one of his great means, in a scanty, grudging way—for the young gentleman, who was educated at Harrow, and subsequently sent to Cambridge University, where he graduated with credit. It was understood that he was allowed, after attaining his majority, £500 per annum. I saw him frequently; when, and under what circumstances, I shall presently notice. My impression of him, which maturer years confirmed, was that his was a nature of fine impulses, generous aspirations, but that his mind was soured, cankered—the genial current of his life poisoned, turned awry, dried up—by a bitter, burning sense of his father's injustice, his mother's frailty. He fell into habits of wild, reckless dissipation; raised money upon post-obit bonds, to be squandered as soon as obtained—which bonds were, however, of no real value, the family estates not being entailed.

It was a constant subject of jeering comment, not clearly comprehended by me, that although Percy Smith, Esq., never saw his son, when he came upon one of his flying visits to Surrey, he invariably called upon Dr. Spinks, inquired kindly after, and spoke kindly to me. That was true; but the kindness was lofty, condescending, reserved. He never failed to impress upon me, that though he took an interest in me as his godson, and would redeem the promise he had made to help me on in the world, I must not for that indulge in any absurd expectations. At his last visit to the seminary, when, as before stated, I was close upon my sixteenth birthday, he announced the precise way, and to what extent, he intended helping me on in the world. My education was finished, and he had agreed to place me with a highly respectable chemist and druggist of

London—a relative of Mr. May, the tenant of Holm Farm—for five years; that is to say, till I was twenty-one, up to which time I should be provided for at his cost. After that, I would have to shift for myself. “It will be well also,” added my magnificent godfather, “it will be well also you should clearly understand that any application to me for further pecuniary aid will neither be complied with nor noticed. Bear that distinctly in mind. It may help to render you industrious and self-reliant—qualities that will stand you in better stead than almost any amount of gift money.” He then bade me farewell, and I never saw him again.

I knew the “respectable chemist and druggist” by sight. He, with his wife, usually passed a week or so at Holm Farm every autumn. It was there also I frequently met my namesake, Percy Smith. The estate, as it was generally called, consisted of over five hundred remarkably fertile acres, and was highly farmed. As a cultivator of choice fruits and flowers, moreover, Mr. May was thought to have no superior in the county. A more delightful abode I have never seen, even in that southern Italy, where I, with some thousands of other fools, went in search of fame and found famine—or something more like it than I have before or since experienced. Mr. May, a widower, was a singularly genial, summer-hearted man; his only child, Emily, a bud of rarer promise than any which blushed and sparkled in his bright *parterres*. Emily May was seven years my junior, she being nine when I left Mitcham for London. Even at that age, it could be seen what consummate loveliness would be hers when a few more years should have passed over her head;—a fresh, joyous loveliness, dewy, sparkling as a rosy morning of spring, yet commingled with sunset hues, and the silvery light of stars. Mr. May had been always very friendly; and, when I left for London, gave me a cordial invitation to pass my annual holidays at Holm Farm. I did not once miss availing myself of that invitation during eight successive summers. Towards the close of the eighth visit, I, having long previously become distressingly spooney anent the divine Ellen, made a discovery which convinced me that the most prudent thing I could do was to renounce those dangerous visits, and stick sturdily to the study of drugs and chemicals. The discovery was made through my impetuous namesake, the son of the great Percy Smith, Esq. He, too, had been long thrall to Ellen May, and counting, to some extent, upon the father’s warm friendship, had proposed for her hand. He was met by a courteously expressed but decided refusal. Ellen, Mr. May stated, was betrothed to Arthur Redding, the eldest son of a wealthy London merchant, whom we both had met at Holm Farm. The first outburst of wrathful grief revealing the rejected lover’s disappointment, counselled me to draw my cloak closer over my own heart, and leave for London without delay. I heard little of the Mays for several years afterwards, and when I did, beauteous Ellen was still Miss May—a circumstance which, I had little doubt, was due to an announcement in that veritable doomsday book, the *London Gazette*, that Richard Redding, of Mincing

Lane, was adjudged bankrupt—summoned to surrender, &c. That notice afforded me the wickedest delight. It did, indeed. Very wrong to have so felt, no doubt; but a fact's a fact, whether a sinful or saintly one.

Well, I did stick sturdily to drugs and chemicals, and with such success, that, as before mentioned, I rose to £210 per annum. The governor was a good sort of man; his wife, a well-meaning woman. They had no children, and with them dwelt the wife's sister, Sarah Nixon, a fierce-tempered, foxy-haired virago; taking her all in all, one of the most repulsive women I have ever seen. She could not be less than forty, though affecting the dress, airs, and graces of a young marriageable woman. She was supreme ruler of the establishment, her sister and brother-in-law inclusive. There had been a talk of her marriage with a grocer nearly opposite—a widower with a long family. That project came to nothing, and then Miss Nixon must needs cast her bleary eyes upon me; and at one time I had won upon her favour to such an alarming extent, that I much feared I should soon have to elect between giving up my situation, or taking her to wife. Ugh! It was, let me add, quite as much owing to her influence as in reward of my business talents that my salary had been suddenly and unexpectedly doubled. Miss Nixon's flattering preference for my insensible self appeared, of late, to have passed away. There was, however, no being sure that it might not soon return again—a contingency, the apprehension of which sharpened my anxiety to secure the hand of sweet Sophonisba, and the £2,000 of which that hand held the key, without one hour's avoidable delay.

Firmly so resolved, though in a state of trepidation which an unusual quantum of wine had done little to calm, I hastened to keep my appointment at the Crown Coffee House. It wanted about a quarter of an hour to the appointed time—eight o'clock; and simultaneous with the chimes of the pendule on the mantel-piece, my ear caught the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs, and the rustling of silk. "In this room, ma'am," said the waitress, and the next moment I held clasped in my ardent embrace—Sarah Nixon!

The shock was terrible—paralysing! I think, but am not sure, that the horrid woman screamed with surprise at first; but I have a vivid recollection that, finding I continued in my bewildered consternation to hold her fast locked in my arms, she forthwith hugged me round the neck in hers, and ——. It was too much! The counter shock restored the use of my faculties. I threw her off with an exclamation of extreme disgust—snatched up my hat, and bolted. It was twelve o'clock when I reached home, and not so sober as I should have been. The porter was waiting up,—not to let me in, but to warn me off. I was discharged—would not be admitted even for that night. On the morrow I was to send—not go—for my things, and the trifling balance of salary due to me. The porter added, that I had better refer elsewhere for a character, as Mr. —— would answer no inquiry concerning me.

This was a cruel, overwhelming blow. I had drawn my salary so much in advance, that I should have but three or four pounds to take, including the quarter of a year's warning to which I was legally entitled; and I was in debt—overdue debt—more than two hundred pounds; and had no friend or relation in the world to whom I could apply for help. I thought of my godfather—but I did not know his address, nor where to procure it; and I, moreover, remembered his stern notice that no application to him for pecuniary aid would be complied with or noticed. I next endeavoured to obtain another situation, and fight off my creditors as well and long as I could. A desirable engagement I, after three or four weeks' wearying search, gave up all hope of obtaining. The refusal of Mr. ——— to speak to my character was fatal; and to escape starvation, I took refuge in the pill and ointment factory.

A temporary refuge only! My chief creditor found me out. I was served with a writ under the summary process Bill of Exchange Act, from the endorsement on which I knew that twelve days thence I might, and no doubt, if captured, should, be locked up in prison.

That fate I determined to avoid by any expedient, however desperate, even that of enlistment. Whilst thus gloomily meditating my sad position, the thought occurred to me of consulting my godfather's son! He had professed a more than ordinary friendship for me; and though himself involved, as I knew, in debt difficulties, might know some friend or acquaintance whose influence would serve me. I remembered that when in town he lodged at No. 17, Jermyn Street. I went there. The servant who answered the door said Mr. Percy Smith was not at home; but if I would walk in, the mistress of the house would, perhaps, be able to say where he might be found. The mistress of the house was exceedingly civil—said Mr. Smith had not been there for between three and four months! "Did she know," I asked, "where he might be met with?" She answered, with a meaning smile, that she might be able to inform a FRIEND where Mr. Percy Smith could be spoken with. Indeed, she had promised that gentleman to do so. I had taken two letters addressed to me by him, couched in very friendly terms. Mrs. Bryce knew the handwriting, and at once informed me that Mr. Percy Smith had been staying, but a few weeks previously, at the Castle Tavern, Richmond, where he passed by the name of Halliday.

Off to the Castle Tavern, Richmond! Mr. Halliday had left in a hurry more than a month ago; in such a hurry, indeed, that he had forgotten to pay the heavy bill he had been foolishly allowed to run up. He had left a few books of no value, and some papers, but they contained no hint of where he was likely to be found. The landlord wished they did, and willingly agreed that I should myself examine them. No trace of his whereabouts was indeed to be found; but amongst them was the card of Messrs. Rowley and Cairns, solicitors, Lincoln's Inn; at the bottom of which was written, "Percy Smith, Esq., Mon Séjour, near Versailles, Paris."

My godfather's address, of course! and as desperate—like drowning men will catch at straws, I resolved to write and ask him for a loan. If no notice were taken of the application, I should be no worse off. Another thought flashed upon my mind at the same moment:—would it not be as well to remain in Richmond until I knew whether my letter would be answered or not? No sheriff's officer would seek me there! Besides, the young man "Halliday" might suddenly return to his old quarters. I decided upon doing so, ordered some slight refreshments, and, after many unsatisfactory attempts, achieved the letter—a brief one, expressed in general terms, and promising, that if relieved of my difficulties by his bounty, I would never trouble him again with such a request. The amount required I did not state—an omission prompted by a hope that if my wealthy godfather did send me assistance, he would forward a larger amount than I dared name.

After posting the letter, I remembered having thoughtlessly dated it from "The Castle Hotel, Richmond;" where, with my slender means, it would have been impossible—or if not exactly impossible, absurd—for me to put up, even for a few days. That blunder was rectified by a small gratuity to the porter of the hotel, who, in consideration thereof, agreed to bring any letter that might arrive for Mr. Smith to my lodging, and also to inform me if Mr. Halliday should arrive. "It's curious enough," added the man, "that Mr. Halliday was expecting a letter, directed to Mr. Smith, for a long time, which never came! Relations, perhaps," he added, and passed on.

Ten days had limped lingeringly away, and I was beginning to despair of an answer, when my friend the porter brought me a letter, written in French-English, by a Paris lawyer, the contents of which fairly took my breath away, as soon as I mastered their purport. The lawyer informed me that Mr. Percy Smith, father (*père*), who was struck with mortal malady, had, urged by the benevolence of his wife, and although no blood of his ran in my veins, revoked his determination to not further provide for me. One thousand pounds had been forwarded to the bank of Coutts, London; which, upon my presenting the order enclosed, would be paid to me. Further, the excellent farm named Holm, county of Surrey, had been bequeathed to me by a will formally executed the day before my letter arrived; and it was prayed I sent no more letters, as they would annoy the sire, Percy Smith, who had given directions to his lady to burn any that came from England signed Percy Smith. Mr. May, the tenant of the farm named Holm, would receive written notice, by the same post, to pay over to my receipt the rents of said farm.

I was entranced—positively delirious for a while with excess of joy. The transition from the black depths of poverty to such eminence of riches, dazzled—bewildered me. Yes! eminence of riches! Why, the rent of Holm farm was twelve hundred per annum! I was sure of that; and now Holm farm,—an earthly paradise, the home of Ellen May—still

Ellen May,—was mine—mine! The rush of emotion was too mighty—I fainted; and might in falling have received serious hurt, but that the hotel porter caught and upheld me. He had waited unnoticed by me, in the hope of an extra gratuity.

The next day brought calmer thoughts—a more chastened joy. I thought of my benefactor's son. Surely *he* would not be less largely provided for than the Percy Smith “in whose veins”—and I was rejoiced to hear it—“in whose veins ran none of the testator's blood.” Impossible to believe so. I need have no compunctious misgivings upon that point. His father was reputedly worth fifteen thousand a year; the second wife had brought an ample dower; and surely she who had pleaded so successfully for me would not fail to do the same for the son. The excellent lady's advocacy in my behalf I imputed to the sacred tie, in the eyes of Catholics as I had understood, which links together godfather and godchild.

There was one inexpressibly pleasant thought lightening lambently in my brain, playing like softened sunshine about my heart. I had heard a report, the truth of which I had no reason to doubt, that Mr. May—that Ellen's father—had, in consequence of the bankruptcy of Richard Redding, who had persuaded him to embark his capital in a great bubble scheme, become much reduced in circumstances. The “eminent chemist and druggist” had, indeed, more than once hinted in my hearing that his relative, struggle as he might, would be ultimately compelled to give up Holm Farm. *Now* that catastrophe could not, *should* not, occur, even supposing—which I resolutely set myself not to suppose—Ellen May should a second time reject the suit of a Percy Smith.

* * * * *

Mr. May received me with great friendliness, though, till he saw the French lawyer's letter addressed to me, he had—why, it was difficult to say—got a notion in his head that the farm had been bequeathed to Mr. Percy Smith's son. There was certainly nothing in the notice he had received to pay the rent over to me, giving the least colour to such a supposition. That, upon comparing notes, he at once perceived; so did Ellen; but did not a slight—ever so slight a cloud, shadow the daughter's face when she was made aware of the real state of the case? The suspicion that there did fall that shadow over a countenance lovelier far than when I last sunned myself in its sweet radiance, murdered sleep for me that night.

I had a knack of tormenting myself with apprehensions never likely to be realized. Within a fortnight Ellen and I were betrothed. The sweet, I should perhaps write sad, candour with which she avowed that our union would not, on her part, be what is called “a love match,” deepened the profound tenderness with which she inspired me. She preferred no one to me, and doubted not that she would in time, and before a long time, reciprocate the affection I felt for her. As it was, her father's wishes—her father's needs—were a law to her, which she obeyed, not so

joyfully as I would she did, but without reluctance. With that declaration I was perforce content.

I engaged lodgings in the neighbourhood of Holm Farm, where each succeeding day seemed but to widen and extend the prospect of a blissful future, that had so unexpectedly opened upon me. Suddenly there came a cloud across my heaven, no bigger at first than a man's hand. A letter from Sarah Nixon came to Holm Farm. The divorced wife of Percy Smith, of Elm Lodge, reduced to beggary, to want, and dying by inches, whom she, Sarah Nixon, knew in her young days of pride, had called at the chemist's. She was anxious to see her son before she closed her eyes upon the world; and as it was probable the fellow who, some folks believed, would benefit largely under the unfortunate woman's sometime husband's will, could inform her where that son might be found—at all events, give her Percy Smith, Esq., of Elm Lodge's, address—she had determined, with Sarah Nixon's help, to journey by easy stages into Surrey, where, and in the neighbourhood of Holm Farm, she had ascertained "the fellow" was residing. Before sealing her letter, some one must have suggested to Mrs. Nixon that Mr. May could, of course, give Pierce Smith, Esq., of Elm Lodge's, address; and a request was added, in different ink, requesting him to forward the same immediately. He did so by return of post.

That venomous harridan's communication greatly disturbed me, though I hardly knew why it should. I read and re-read the letter from the Paris lawyer. No flaw discoverable there. Certainly, my godfather might change his mind, alter his will, and, if he chose, give the property of Holm Farm to an hospital. But would he? Pooh! He was a man of adamantine firmness, with whom even a verbal promise, as I well knew, was binding as a bond. There was certainly nothing to apprehend. Fear might lay him down and sleep.

A fortnight or thereabout passed. I, Ellen, and her father were lunching in one of the most delightful spots in their everywhere delightful gardens. The weather was superbly vernal; the flowers in brilliant bloom, in fullest fragrance; and, above all, there was a softness in Ellen's smile which showed, to say the least, that I had not retrograded in her regard. It was the happiest moment of my life.

Suddenly a nutmeg-grater voice, calling loudly for Mr. May, broke in upon that delicious dream. The voice was that of Sarah Nixon, who, her harsh features swollen with triumphant malice, her green eyes a-glitter with infernal glee, came striding along the trim alleys towards us.

"Good day, cousin; good day, Ellen," she screamed, rather than said. "Bless your lucky stars that I have unmasked in good time this impostor, this thief, this forger, this as yet unhangd felon!"

"How dare you, vile hag?" I exclaimed, starting to my feet; "how dare you address such epithets to me?"

"How dare I, bastard, address such epithets to you?" continued the

excited virago. "Why, I dare fling in your face, thrust down your throat, miserable villain, the items that make up impostor, thief, forger, felon! You, finding out that Mr. Percy Smith had written to his father, his true father—you base-born counter-jumper—soliciting large pecuniary assistance; that he had dated his letter from the Castle Hotel, Richmond, whence, despairing of an answer, he had hurriedly departed, being fearful of arrest; you—you, I say, wretched felon—having in some way wormed out these facts, intercepted at the hotel a letter addressed to Mr. Percy Smith, son of Mr. Smith of Elm Lodge, containing a draft on Coutts for one thousand pounds, which draft you could only obtain the money for by forgery—by forging that son's endorsement.

She stopped, out of breath. I was stunned—speechless.

A gentleman who had closely followed Sarah Nixon interposed. He was Mr. Cairns—firm of Rowley and Cairns. His manner was calm and stern.

"The charge, which might have been more temperately expressed, is, I am afraid, correct in every particular. I am, however, requested by the son of the now deceased Mr. Smith, of Elm Lodge, to ask you for, and, as far as lies in my power, give you the benefit of any explanation you may have to offer."

I did explain as soon as I could find my tongue. My words, it was plain, made no impression upon the lawyer. The passage in the French *avocat's* letter, "though no blood of his flowed in my veins," Mr. Cairns said could mislead no one; the deceased gentleman's craze in that respect was matter of notoriety in Surrey.

Ellen had vanished. I did not notice when old Mr. May interposed. But why prolong the story? I was finally permitted to leave; and as I, Fortune's fool, passed out of the house, I saw the son talking in that Lost Paradise with Ellen May. Their faces were turned from me—in a double sense; but I needed not that help to read their future. A month afterwards I was a Garibaldian volunteer. Now, thanks to my namesake's generosity and the kindly feeling of his wife, who are both thoroughly satisfied of my innocence in the matter of the letter and cheque—Mr. Cairns himself perfectly agrees with them—I start in a short time, well equipped for the adventure, for British Columbia, where it is quite possible I may one day have to boast of a "Paradise Regained."

BRIGANDAGE IN NAPLES.

SUCH of our readers as take an interest in Italian affairs will have noticed in the debates which have taken place in both Houses, a marked divergence between Lord Normanby and Earl Russell—Sir George Bowyer and Mr. Layard. Curiously enough, this divergence extends to facts, which might be easily established; and while the favourers of absolutism, ecclesiastical and temporal, roundly assert that Naples is overrun with brigands, aided and abetted by the nation who detest the Piedmontese, and make ardent vows for the return of *il Ré Bombino*, the friends of Italy declare, documents in hand, that the kingdom of the Two Sicilies is perfectly tranquil, and point with pride to the popular ovation recently given to Victor Emmanuel at Naples. Which party is in the right? Both, and neither! and to quote the philosopher's reply to Sir Roger de Coverley, in a similar vexed question, "there is a great deal to be said on both sides." Fortunately we are enabled to throw a satisfactory light upon the matter, through the timely publication of a small volume by Marc Monnier, bearing the title of "History of Brigandage in Southern Italy."*

The Neapolitans, according to our author, are divided into two classes, the educated and the people; and the former have rendered great services to Italy during the past twenty years. Long prior to the revolution, exiles from Naples were the most esteemed advocates and physicians in upper Italy; and, under a succession of bad kings, this class continued its task of self-education. Such men, as may be supposed, are no friends of the brigands, and we may, therefore, omit them from our sketch; but the lower classes, though they have made indubitable progress during the past year, were governed by one absorbing feeling—fear. Their religion was fear of the demon—their politics, fear of the king. The Government and the clergy kept up this feeling, which rendered them omnipotent. They did not combat wretchedness and ignorance, and did not check crime, by schools and workshops, but by threats—the threat of the hulks, and the threat of future punishment. This fear became so general, that the private was afraid of his corporal's stripes, and the hackney coachman trembled at his fare's good coat, and allowed himself to be beaten. The same man would have fought a duel to the death with one of his equals, on account of a penny. From this universal terror sprang pure brigandage, which has never ceased to exist in the cities or the country. Men of energy formed bands—oppressed the timid. Such is the real origin of the *camorra*. This plebeian freemasonry ramified through all the provinces, and the Government generally winked at it, as it was unable to abolish it. All those who dared to wield a knife felt a pride in joining it. They

* "Histoire du Brigandage dans l'Italie Méridionale," par Marc Monnier. Paris : Michel Lévy Frères.

passed through two stages of initiation, and were then enrolled. They had chiefs in all the twelve quarters of Naples, in all the cities of the kingdom, and in all the battalions of the army; they reigned wherever the people assembled; they took toll of the money you paid your driver; they watched the markets, and claimed their share of the sales; they stood sentry over the open-air gambling, and took their tribute from the winners. They even swayed the prisons—and the police allowed them to do so. At times they undertook the duties of the latter, and discovered and arrested dangerous men in the king's name. Not so long ago, they contrived to capture an assassin, who was in hiding, and one of themselves; and dragged him, covered with blood, to prison. At times the brigands were captured and sent to the hulks, but even then they terrified honest people and free men. Though their hands and feet were loaded with chains, they received visits from poor fellows who came regularly and humbly to pay them their monthly contributions.

Such being the case, no one can feel surprised at brigandage; and it has ever existed in this hapless country. Search history, and you will find it in every reign and under every dynasty, from the time of the Saracens and the Romans up to the present day. The roads between Rome and Naples have never been very safe, and we can imagine what the less frequented districts must be like. Everything favoured brigandage. First, the configuration of the country, covered with mountains; and then the Government, which left these mountains to themselves, without piercing tunnels or making roads. There are entire districts which a vehicle has never traversed, and there are roads upon which mules would not venture. All the assizes of Europe would not suffice to try the crimes committed on these heights, and impunity permitted the more daring brigands to form small bands, who established themselves in some dark forest, and attempted expeditions. Those most menaced were travellers; but farmers living in such parts did not sleep very comfortably, and if their armed labourers did not keep a good watch, they ran a risk of being carried off some fine night into the mountains. Then a ransom was set upon the prisoner, who wrote a letter to his family, which was delivered by the bandits. Here is an instance:—

“This took place daily. Very recently a man was carried off in the provinces whose relatives lived at Naples. They received a message from the bandits, who claimed a thousand ducats, and one-third of that amount was offered. The messengers returned with one of the prisoner's ears, and a threat to cut off the other, if a third demand had to be made. The relatives paid the full amount, and are now starving. Such adventurers would be impossible elsewhere, but here fear encourages them. People do not dare to denounce the messengers, but greet them kindly, and shake their hands. One man is sufficient to terrify a whole town, as I saw with my own eyes not an hour's walk from Naples. A workman had just killed his overseer, and was walking about the village calmly and with head erect. The Syndic had not the heart to arrest him.”

When these bands grew too strong, the Government made up its mind

to fight them, and then began a mountain war against invisible foes, until the king, tired of fighting, promised an armistice to those who surrendered; and the king kept his word sometimes—though not always, as we read in Ricasoli's circular:—

“The restored Bourbons took another method of destroying the brigandage which they had employed, and now found themselves impotent to repress. General Amati came to terms with Vandarelli's band, and procured them not only pardon and oblivion, but it was stipulated that the band should be converted into an armed legion, with high pay, and take the oath of allegiance. When all this was arranged, the brigands went to Fozzia to surrender, and, after being disarmed, were shot down by the general's orders.”

Ferdinand II. was actually obliged to treat on equal terms with Josaphat Talarico, who had braved him and defeated him for a long time in Calabria. It was arranged that he and his men should not only have their lives spared, but be free, and, better still, receive a pension. The sole stipulation was that they should reside in Ischia, the finest and richest of the islands; they are there now, and still receive their pension. Such was pure brigandage in ordinary times, and such it still is; but in political crises, brigandage was swollen by the released prisoners and the scum of the dangerous classes. Hence, the victorious party always employed these ruffians to support their cause, in proof of which we need merely recall Cardinal Ruffo's sanguinary expedition in 1799, and the celebrated chiefs, like Fra Diavolo, “of whom I can only say,” the historian, Carlo Botta, writes, “that I pity the cause of the Bourbons for having had them as defenders.” The reigns of Joseph Bonaparte and Murat offer some curious details.

“Antonelli occupied the whole territory of Chieti, and Joseph Bonaparte was forced to treat with him on equal terms, and sent two plenipotentiaries of high rank to him. He insisted on being made a colonel, and the uniform and epaulettes of that grade were sent to him. The two plenipotentiaries went to meet him a few miles from Chieti, and returned with him triumphantly to the town. On the accession of Murat, Colonel Antonelli recommenced his tricks, probably for the sake of being made a general. He was captured and brought to Chieti, but this time his entrance differed greatly from the first, for he was seated backwards on a donkey, and holding the animal's tale as a bridle. On his back was fastened the inscription, ‘This is Antonelli the assassin.’ Another chief, surnamed Bizzarro, had trained dogs to hunt down and devour men. After the arrival of Manhès, Bizzarro, abandoned by his band, was reduced to such a state of desperation, that he dashed out his infant's brains against a tree, lest it should betray him by its crying. Then the valiant wife, who had hitherto faithfully followed the monster, resolved to take justice into her own hands; she waited till he slept, and blew out his brains with his own gun. After this, she went to the authorities of Milete, and claimed the reward offered to the person who killed Bizzarro; the amount was faithfully paid her; she married again, and became an honest woman. We will not speak of Basso Tónico, the king of the Campagna, who burned a gendarmerie barracks, and thrust the wives and children of the absent soldiers into the flames; but we are bound to say a word about Parafanti. One day he captured a French official, of the name of Aytruc, and imposed the following conditions for his ransom:—All the families of brigands detained in prison must be released and

supplied with provisions and clothing. Now the Government had 60,000 bayonets at its disposal ; there were 25,000 troops collected at Piale, to repulse an expedition projected from Italy, and the king in person commanded them,—but the conditions offered by Parafanti were accepted and carried out.”

General Manhès was at length ordered by the king to put down the brigandage, and performed his task with the ferocious delight of a Haynau. Still, he did his work well. “I should not like to have been General Manhès,” Colletta wrote, in one of his posthumous works, “but I should have been sorry had there been no General Manhès in 1809 and 1810. He finally uprooted the venomous plant of brigandage.” One way in which he punished a town that sheltered bandits was most peculiar and effectual: he laid it under an interdict, removed the priests, and locked up the churches. The effect was wonderful, for where human laws can do nothing, the sole way of reducing men is by their religion. The inhabitants rose *en masse*, and none rested in exterminating the brigands till the last died of hunger. Then the interdict was removed. So salutary was the terror aroused by Manhès, that the mountaineers of the province substituted *Santo Manhès* for their favourite oath of *Santo Diavolo*. The general system employed by Manhès is admirably described by the historian Carlo Botta :—

“Manhès employed four methods : an exact list of the malefactors drawn up for each parish ; their complete separation from honest people ; the armament of the latter ; and inflexible justice. He ordered the peasants to retire, with their cattle, into large villages, which were guarded by regular troops ; he suspended agricultural operations ; he prohibited, under penalty of death, food being taken into the fields ; and he sent the armed landlords against the brigands, with orders to bring them in dead or alive. In the forests and in the fields, nothing could be seen but hunted men and man-hunters. Manhès was surrounded by his men, who were as inflexible as himself, but who displayed an atrocious and partial cruelty. Frightful acts were done. A mother, unaware of the orders, and carrying bread to her son, who worked in the fields, was hanged. A girl, on whom suspicious letters were found, was cruelly tormented ; and the blood of the Carbonari was not spared. Still, the malefactors perished of hunger, when they were not killed in action, or did not commit suicide. Those who surrendered, or were captured, were strangled on the gallows, or asphyxiated in infectious prisons ; but they were a barbarous and ferocious race, that merited punishment and not pity. The bandits were not merely condemned to death, but those who had succoured them, whether rich or poor, no matter their rank or name ; for if Manhès was inexorable, he was also incorruptible.”

Such is the history of pure brigandage, which may be regarded as a chronic evil of the Two Sicilies, and can never be entirely suppressed till the kingdom is brought under the control of wise laws. And now let us turn to the political brigands, who sprang into existence simultaneously with the arrival of Italy, and whom Lord Normanby calls patriots, and Mr. Layard villains. A distinction, however, must be drawn between the armed bands of 1860 and 1861. In the first-mentioned year, the mountaineers rose in array to defend their king, who still held out at Capua,

and reigned at Gaeta, and the mountaineers of the Abruzzi were loyally in the right. Gradually, however, the honest peasants, seeing the hopelessness of the cause, made their submission, and then the band was really composed of bandits alone, who fought to escape the gallows, and fought so desperately, that it was found necessary to send General Pinelli, one of the best officers in the Piedmontese army, against them. Then it was that he issued the terrible proclamation which scandalized Europe, and in which he threatened to shoot every bandit captured with arms in his possession. Pinelli was compelled to retire from the command; but before he did so, he had destroyed brigandage in that portion of the Abruzzi.

As every reader of the newspapers knows, so soon as Francis II. retired to Rome, armed expeditions into the Neapolitan territory became the rule. A fellow of the name of Giorgi managed to collect an army of about 15,000 men, composed of Papalini and disbanded Bourbon troops, Papal zouaves, a few peasants and monks. They marched upon the Abruzzi, but were conquered by the popular indifference before they were expelled by the victories of General Sonnaz. About the same period, M. de Christen, a legitimist guerilla, who fought for throne and altar, was attacked in the Roman States by General Sonnaz, and, when made prisoner, was allowed to go away on his promise not to serve again against Italy. But he did not keep his word; he attempted several more expeditions, then went to Naples, under a false name, and with an English passport, where he was arrested, and still lies in prison.

When the Piedmontese were firmly established, a reaction began in Naples. The educated classes did not like to see their country absorbed and adumbrated by a petty state like Piedmont, while the lower classes deified Garibaldi, the man of the people. The clergy were the first to set the ball rolling; for their feelings were outraged by the sudden suppression of the religious communities. From the pulpits Victor Emmanuel was denounced as Herod, and in lieu of Francis II., the priests uttered the Saviour's blessed name. The monasteries entered into communication with Rome, and stores of weapons and uniforms were collected in the religious houses at Naples. The author believes that Francis II. did not conspire at the outset; but his family did so for him. Committees were formed everywhere, which recognised and paid the bands of bandits; and brigandage thus became political.

“The reaction found these men already assembled and outlawed, and did not scruple to employ them. For their part, the plunderers asked nothing better than to receive fifty sous a day, and have their plundering legalized. They were no longer brigands, but partisans. Rosaries and amulets were given them, zinc rings were placed on their fingers, and, eventually, buttons were sent them, stamped with a crown, and a hand holding a dagger, with the motto *Fac et spera*. They were allowed to carry on their trade without any fear; and were merely recommended to attack, for choice, the property of liberals, to disarm the National Guards, plunder the patriots, place fleur-de-lys everywhere, instead of the cross of Savoy, and pillage hamlets to the cry of ‘Long live Francis II.!’”

We will not follow our author through the details which he gives of the movements of the first expedition, which was commanded by a man of the name of Crocco, an escaped galley-slave, who had been guilty of thirty of the worst crimes, and who elected himself commander-in-chief. These bandits entered the Basilicata early in April, 1861, committed the usual atrocities, and were finally extirpated by the National Guards. Not long after peace was restored, a fresh band of two hundred men entered the Terra di Lavoro, under the command of Chiavone, who acquired a considerable notoriety in his day. Scoundrel though he was, it does not appear that Chiavone was guilty of wanton barbarity, like Crocco; and only one execution is known to have been ordered by him. He had stolen some mules from a farmer, and offered to restore them for a certain sum of money, but the offer was declined. Then Chiavone ordered a court-martial on the mules: they were condemned to death, and executed on the spot. The bandits fired seventeen rounds at them, shouting upon each discharge, "Long live Francis II. ! Long live Chiavone!" It is Chiavone's mania to imitate Garibaldi, and he has preserved his picturesque costume,—a felt hat, velvet jacket and trowsers, loose cravat, red scarf and girdle, crammed with knives and pistols. He lacks, however, some of Garibaldi's qualities, such as bravery, disinterestedness, and orthography. Chiavone has never been dangerous; and the importance given him in the European newspapers greatly amused the Neapolitans.

When Count de San Martino was appointed Lieutenant of Naples, he tried a conciliatory policy, which was excellent in theory, but unfortunately encouraged the royalists, who became more active at Rome than ever; and it has been proved that M. de Merode tolerated and even encouraged the enlistments. On this point the confessions of prisoners agree.

"One Pietro Camaglio, who fell into the hands of the Italians, recounted the whole story of his engagement. Established at Rome for several years (he was a shoemaker, and father of a family), he received, on June 25th, a visit from an ex-gendarme of Naples, accompanied by several Roman policemen, who ordered him to join Chiavone's band, saying that such was the order of the police. He passed a very bad night, with other recruits, in the stables of the Farnese palace. He left Rome in charge of pontifical *sbirri*, and was taken as far as the frontiers, with his companions in misfortune, through the line of papal gendarmes. The latter allowed the band always to pass, upon the simple remark of the corporal who led it, '*E roba del Re di Napoli*' (merchandise of the King of Naples)."

Still, in spite of all the efforts of the Propaganda, the people could not be roused to side with the Bourbonists; and although the dissatisfaction caused by the mistakes committed at Turin was general, they did not move. On the whole, the National Guard behaved remarkably well; but Chiavone was driven across the frontier by Garibaldi's Hungarians. It was at this moment that General Cialdini arrived at Naples as the king's lieutenant. His mission was a difficult and delicate one; but he set to work with a soldier's energy. He began by suppressing the

opposition papers which dared to bark at him. Next, a council was surprised at Pausilippo, and highnesses were arrested at Portici. Twenty generals, without counting prelates, were caught in one haul. Papal gendarmes and French legitimists, who were preaching the Propaganda, were sent out of the city, and M. de Christen was locked up. Lastly, he dared a tremendous blow,—the first dignitary of the Neapolitan Church was sent aboard ship; and the people who, thirteen years previously, had wept profoundly on seeing the Jesuits depart, pitilessly hissed the carriage which was bearing their general to the port.

When Cialdini had fully gained the favour of the fickle Neapolitans, he turned his attention to the brigands, whom he eventually overcame, after they had committed every possible atrocity, which General Pinelli and Colonel Nigra punished with the utmost severity. Thus the brigands murdered forty-two Italian soldiers and their lieutenant, and the two villages in which the deed was done were reduced to ashes, while several men who aided the brigands were shot at Somma. The reaction was suppressed, and a normal state of tranquillity seemed to have been restored, when the most alarming conspiracy of all broke out. A fresh effort to arouse the mountaineers was made by a hot-headed gentleman of Namur, M. Alfred de Traziguiet, who was a tool of the clerical party. He was speedily captured by the Italians, and shot at the moment when he was declaring that the troops dared not shoot him. The next adventurer who sprang into notoriety was the Spaniard Borjès, whose journal of the campaign, found upon him, is preserved in the national archives at Turin, and is a most curious document. M. Marc Monnier quotes it *in extenso*, as corroborative of his assertion that the Bourbons have no partisans among the Neapolitan people. After wandering about for some time, Borjès, finding the game played out, tried to get back to the Roman territory, but was arrested five leagues from it, with the remnant of his band, by Major Franchini, and all were shot.

Borjès and his comrades confessed that, deceived by the reports of newspapers and committees, they had expected to find armies everywhere, and only met fugitive brigands. The execution of Borjès has been blamed, and Victor Hugo exclaimed, "The Italian Government is shooting the royalists;" but it could not well do otherwise. An example was necessary, and the result has justified it. Crocco's band is dispersed, and the other chieftains are in hiding at the Quirinal, or, perhaps, at the Vatican. A few insignificant bands of brigands still exist, but are scarce worth mentioning. Still, in spite of M. Marc Monnier's pæans, we are of opinion that the snake is not killed, but only scotched; and that brigandage will exist in Naples until the resources of the country are brought out by the formation of railroads and roads, and one of the most fertile provinces of the world is brought into closer contact with civilization.

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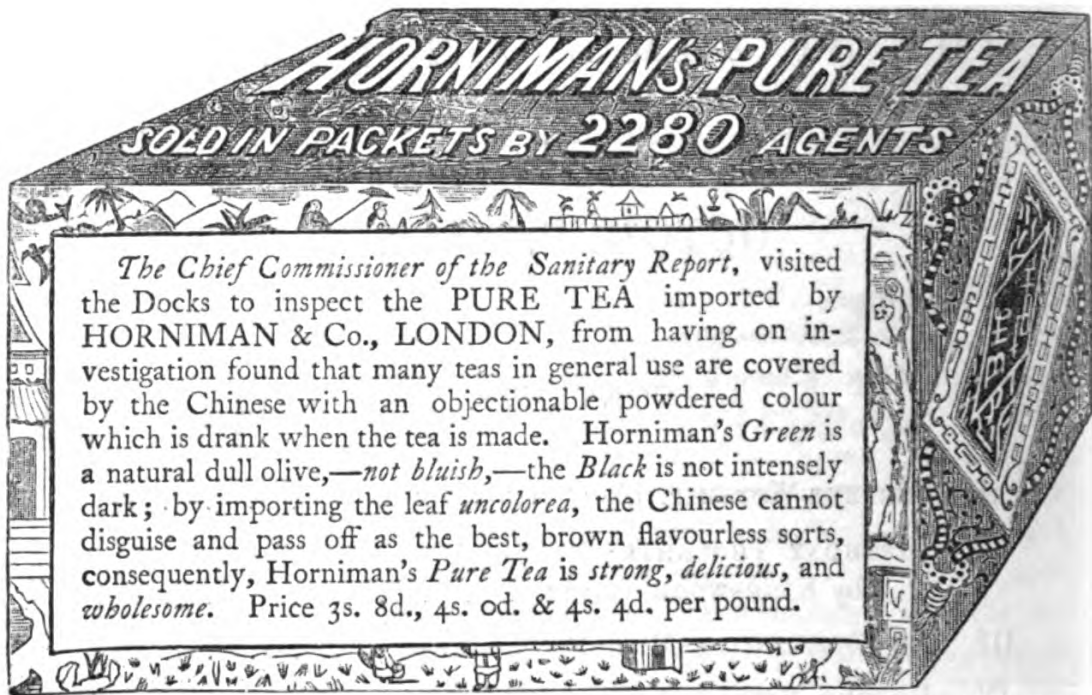
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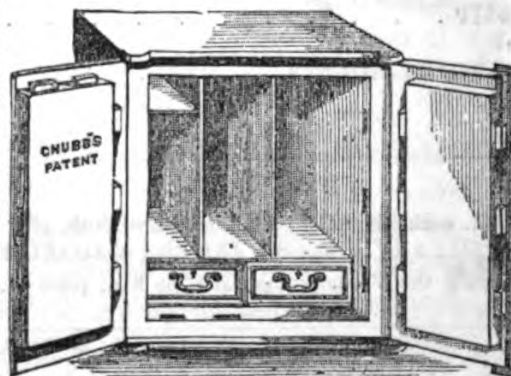
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SERPENT-WORSHIP, OR OPHIOLATRY.



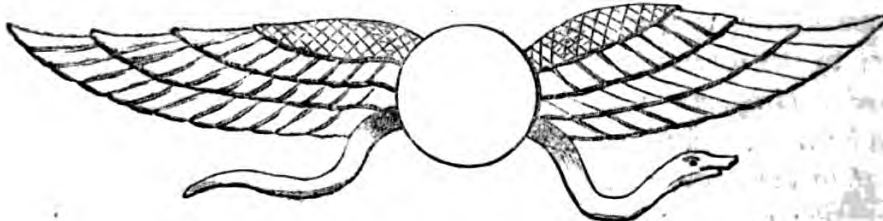
NOT a very attractive subject at first sight, we admit; but as recently there has been a very decided furor on behalf of the Lady Hercules Python, whose chickens, unfortunately, were counted before they were hatched, let us be permitted to fill a gap in snake-history with this paper. There is no stranger episode in the history of humanity than this most ancient and universally diffused form of idolatry. The word Python itself carries with it a host of ancient memories: it takes us back to the beautiful fable of Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, who alone, of all

the human race, were spared by Jupiter, when he destroyed the world by water; to the ocean-mud in which, after this Jovian deluge, the monster, *horrendum et informe*, was begotten; to the caves of Mount Parnassus, in which he lived, and where he was killed by Apollo, who gave the name of Pytho* to the place, and founded the celebrated Pythian games in commemoration of his victory, and is henceforth known as the Pythian Apollo. But older, far older than this Latin legend, is this snake-worship, and far from incomprehensible is the deep meaning of this form of devil-worship—still existing in India, in the West Coast of Africa, and

* So called from *πυθειν*, to rot, because the Python rotted there.

in St. Domingo, where it flourishes as vigorously as once it did in Egypt or in Babylon. Men in all ages have seen a principle of evil, a terrific tyranny, asserting its presence and exerting its baneful power, generation after generation. Standing in awe of that which to them, in their half-blindness, was an awful reality, in the very earnestness of their despair they transformed this evil principle into a god, whose favour they entreated, and whose wrath they deprecated—sometimes by human sacrifices, but always by obscene and horrid orgies. Floating down the tide of time and carried into all lands, as men increased and multiplied, were dim traditions, broken fragments of old truths, that there was once a time when this principle of evil assumed the form of a serpent, and thus became the fruitful parent of all catastrophes and calamities. Hence this evil principle was restored to his supposed bodily shape, and under all possible forms—some hideous and grotesque, others elaborately carved and gilded—the serpent became the god of the world, and as such was worshipped, until at length, in Egypt, in Babylon, in Hindostan, &c., all traces of a truer and better Deity were lost; the snake became the essential element of all religions, the only symbol of Divinity, and, in tiny forms of silver or of ivory, was worn upon the finger as at once a charm and an oracle. And there can be little doubt that our wedding ring is a real memorial of this ancient superstition—the ancient rings generally being made in the form of a serpent biting his tail, which, from the perfect figure of a circle thus formed, was the emblem of perpetuity and eternity,—ideas that are woven into the words, “With this ring I thee wed;” a perpetual and eternal alliance.

In Egypt, from a most remote antiquity, the serpent received divine honours; and in addition to being regarded as the symbol of wisdom, the ideas of creative energy and immortality were borrowed from the shedding of his skin. It was in Egypt that Hermes Tresmegistus, taking the idea from a hierogram, gave the world his sublime definition of Deity,—“God is a circle, whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere.” Very soon wings, to indicate swiftness and power, were added to the serpent, as seen in the following figure, which represents the most common symbol of Deity found upon Egyptian monuments.



The other sketch is from a row of figures depicted on one of the tombs at Thebes, discovered by Belzoni, and is thus described:—“Three human beings rest upon their knees, with their heads struck off. The attitude in which they implored for mercy is that in which they met their doom; and

the serpent-god opposite erects his crest on a level with their throats, ready to drink the stream of life as it gurgles from their veins."



How deeply tinctured with the idea of serpent-worship the Hebrews were, in consequence of their long sojourn in Egypt, we all know. It was these dark idolatries of the land of bondage that they wished to carry into Canaan, that rendered so impressive the Mosaic truth of God's unity, and the stern interdict to make any likeness of Deity. Our Authorized Version gives us no hint of ophiolatry among the Jews, but that it did exist is evident from the original. The Hebrew for a serpent is *Ob*,* and where we have "a familiar spirit" in our version, the original is *Ob*. Thus (Deut. xviii. 11) Moses commands them to put to death those who worshipped "Ob," snake-worshippers. Thus the witch of En-dor is described as "one that hath an Ob," a serpent by which she divined. The Vulgate has happily preserved this historic curiosity, and speaks of *mulier pythonicus*, or *mulier habens pythonem*, which little dissertation brings us back to our starting-point, and identifies *Ob* and *Python*.

The temple of *Bel*—which word is only a contraction of *Ob-el*, the serpent-god—had upon it many symbols of Deity, in all of which the serpent is the prominent figure, as in the following cut.



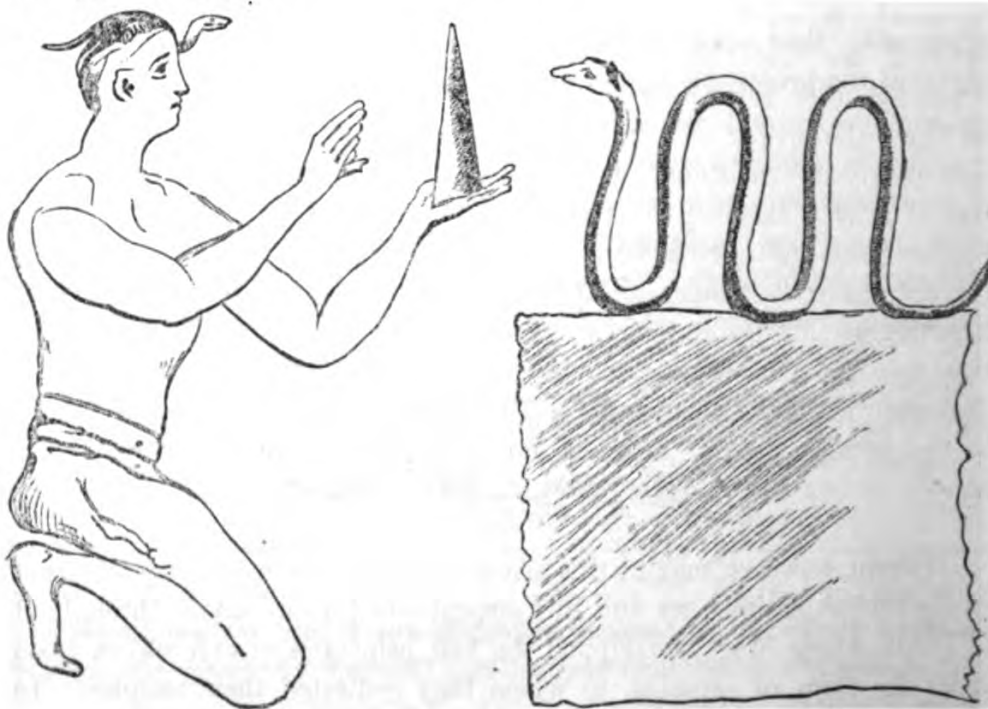
Without, however, making this historic inquiry tedious, we may add, that among ancient nations, we find this serpent-worship prevailing throughout all Persia, whose Magi worshipped the first principles of evil and of good under the form of serpents, to whom they dedicated their temples. In

* Hence the African *Ob-eah*, of which presently we shall speak.

the orgies of Bacchus, those who took part in the ceremony carried serpents in their hands, or twining round their bared arms, crying, *Eva, Eva*.* The serpent became the symbol of the gods Apollo and Esculapius, that took medicine under their special protection, the club of the latter always being entwined with one. Mercury, the herald of the gods and the protector of travellers, never comes into the abodes of men, whether to herald a public speaker, or to convey the shades of the dead across the dark river into the silent land, without his doubly serpented caduceus. The old Phrygians made the serpent their *genius loci*, and the readers of Virgil will recall the scene in the fifth *Æneid*, where *Æneas* offers sacrifices at the tomb of Anchises, when—we translate literally—“from the bottom of the shrine a slippery snake emerged in seven circling spires, and trailed along his sevenfold volumes;” and how *Æneas* “with the more zeal pursues the sacrifice begun in honour of his father, in doubt whether to think it the genius of the place, or the attendant of his father.” Strange idea this last. But the converse of it the Egyptians had. Firm in their belief of a future life, and

“Falling with their weight of cares
Upon the world’s great altar-stairs,
That slope through darkness up to God,”

they imagined that the liberated soul went in the barge of the setting sun, during the twelve hours of night, to wrestle with a mighty serpent, ere, at the dawn of day, it emerged into immortal life. From the temple at Thebes this figure is copied. It is called the Egyptian Basilisk, with its supplicating priest.



* The same as *Ob*; euphonized into *Eva*: the same as the Greek *ophis* (οφις).

Everywhere, backwards or forwards, through all past and in all present idolatries, the serpent, or dragon,* meets us as the one all-essential element of worship or fear, which is worship in darkness. The dragon, or winged serpent, was the standard borne by the Assyrians, the Parthians, the Scythians, the Saxons, the Chinese, and the Danes; which latter people held the story of a great snake that encircled the world, whom the god Thor strove to destroy with a hook baited with a bull's head. Menelaus and Agamemnon, among the Greeks, adopted the snake as the device for their shields; and upon the tomb of Epaminondas a serpent was offered, to show that he was a Spartan by descent. We see the same idea of serpent-worship in the Seva, Ganesa, and Vishno of India, and in the blood-besprinkled snakes, reminding us of Medusa's head, that the horrid Doorga brandishes in her thousand hands. In the dark caves of Salsetto and of Elephanta, where mysteries not to be named were once celebrated, all the colossal deities grasp huge stony snakes in their hands, or are enfolded by them. The old temples of the Druids, Abury and Stonehenge, were embodiments of the serpent form; and on the plains of Wiltshire still remain the traces of ophiolatry, and the Druids themselves always wore snakestone amulets. Plutarch tells us that the worship of the serpent was practised by the Edonian women in Thrace, who carried it to a degree of madness. Olympius, he says, copied them closely, "for she used to be followed with many attendants, who had each a thyrsus, with serpents entwined around it. They had also snakes in their hair, and in the chaplets which they wore, and their cries were a continual repetition of the words, *Evoe, Saboe, Flues Attes.*" † Going to the darkest land in the world, Western Africa, where exist races that are an enigma as yet unsolved, we find the same strange worship tenaciously persisted in, generation after generation. Purchas, in his "Pilgrims," tells us that in his day "the people of Congo worshipped serpents, which they fed with their daintiest provisions," just as the people of Bangalore do at the present time. Bosman, in his travels in 1697, tells us that "serpent-worship was the only idolatry of the negroes of Whydah; that they invoked the snake under all the emergencies of life; that they erected large houses for the special protection of the sacred snake, and that in their worship of them they danced and sung until they became frantic." Forbes, in his "Dahomey and the Dahomians," tells us that at Whydah, in the present day, "the chief lions of Whydah are the snake fetish house. It is a temple built round a huge cotton‡ tree, in which are at all

* *Dracones* is the Latin name for all great serpents. Dr. William Smith defines the Python as "the famous dragon who guarded the oracle of Delphi."

† Similar to this are the orgies of the Vaudoux dance, in St. Domingo, to which we shall refer presently.

‡ Not the cotton of commerce, but "the giant of the lowlands of Jamaica, the Ceiba, or cotton tree (*Eriodendron Anfractuosum*)."—Gosse.

times many snakes of the boa species. These are allowed to roam about at pleasure; but if found in a house or at a distance, a fetish man or woman is sought out, whose duty it is to induce the reptile to return, and reconduct it to its sacred abode, whilst all that meet it must bow down and kiss the dust. Morning and evening, many people are to be seen prostrated before the door, worshipping the snakes."

The Mandingoes, Eboes, and Coromantees carried this snake-worship to the West Indies, where it became the Obeah—the dread alike of the white man and the slave; and even to the present day the people of the West Indies, though considerably Christianized, have not entirely lost their superstition for the cotton tree or the snake. They hesitate to cut the cotton tree down, and we have heard them invoking it thus, when about to do so:—

“ Poor cotton tree,
 Poor cotton tree,
 Me sorry for you ;
 Poor cotton tree,
 Poor cotton tree,
 Me sorry you die.”

The snake the negroes will kill; but on no account will they step over it. An old Coromantee once said to us, “ No, no step over him; he have great power; he open our grandmother Eve’s eyes.”

Which of the sons of Adam, as if in open defiance of the Deity, first selected this malignant creature, that was “ more subtle than any beast of the field,” the very beast that Satan is said to have selected as the form of his disguise, and made it the object of divine honours and sacrifices, it is impossible to tell; but that serpent-worship is devil-worship there can be no doubt. History, vague but certain, however, gives it its right place in the category of delusions that have blinded the eyes of those given over to believe a lie. But it is a most extraordinary fact—one little investigated—not only that ophiolatry should ever have had a starting-point in the history of humanity, but, what is more remarkable, that it should almost universally have prevailed. Ruined as we believe mankind to have been through the inexplicable agency, or instrumentality rather, of this repulsive reptile, we could scarcely have imagined that of all objects it should have been selected as the most sacred emblem of Deity, and surrounded with the most impenetrable mysteries.

Equally singular is the Vaudoux worship of Hayti at the present time. It is the secret spring of political power and of superstitious agencies; it has prevailed there from time immemorial, though originally it came, in all probability, from Whydah, where the French had a settlement. Under every change of the ever-changing Haytian government, this form of serpent-worship has held its own with vigorous tenacity. Whether encouraged by Soulouque, or repressed by the present intelligent President Geffrard, it continues to assert its tremendous power over the superstitious people of

Hayti, who combine much of the fanaticism of the Africans with the susceptibility of the French, in their character. A French traveller in Hayti, in 1797,* gives many singularly curious particulars of this extraordinary form of ophiolatry, called Vaudoux, or Voodoo. Vaudoux is the name of the god. He is all-powerful for good or for evil. Recognition of the past, knowledge of the present, and foreknowledge of the future, all belong to this god, who is worshipped under the form of a snake. This serpent communicates his spiritual powers through a high priest and priestess (a negro and negress), who are chosen by the votes of the initiated. Sometimes these functionaries are called king and queen, at other times master and mistress; and in the moments of wild delirium produced by mental excitement, dancing, and tafia, "papa and mamma." The priest and priestess are invested with absolute power; they decide among the candidates those who are accepted for admission into their secret society, the members of which are bound together by a solemn oath never to reveal its secrets. This primary oath is always administered to the neophyte after touching his lips with warm goat's blood. When the bloody Soulouque was emperor, an ignorant savage who could neither read nor write, he took this oath with a choice bullock's blood, slain for the purpose during the ceremonies, and henceforward his career was one of relentless butchery and barbarism. To return. Let us imagine ourselves at a Vaudoux dance, and we shall see at once how terrible an engine of oppression such fetishism must be on an uneducated and superstitious people.

When the tropic night spreads its quiet curtain of darkness all around, and the dancing fire-flies flicker and die momentarily, like lamps suddenly let down from the skies, and as suddenly extinguished; when little is to be heard but the hoarse bark of the alligator, and the dismal croak of the bull-frog; when above, the clear blue sky, with its "southern cross" and myriad stars, bends over the scene, as if to symbolize the Eternal Tenderness that is ever longsuffering and kind; and the monotone of the ocean's wave, breaking on the distant shore, rolls up the hills in low but hulling murmurs;—then, when all is dreamy, unearthly, and weird-like, the mysteries of the serpent-god Vaudoux commence. The serpent is placed on the table in a box, and before it stand the priest and priestess, "clothed with luxurious simplicity." The old admitted members then enter; next the novitiates; and after them the neophytes, or candidates, all of whom are obliged to be dressed in colours in which red predominates. Red handkerchiefs, red scarves, red waist-ribbons, and, if need be, red blood itself, as they stand round this awe-inspiring Vaudoux box, before which, calm, passionless, yet demoniac-looking, stands the king, whose red diadem is encircled with a bright blue ribbon.

After an interval of silence, the first dance commences. It would be

* "History of St. Domingo," by M. L. E. Moreau. Philadelphia. 1797.

impossible to describe this. The Eleusinian mysteries had nothing to exceed its wild pythonic inspiration, or its revolting sexual degradation. During this dance the queen, or *priestess*, stands motionless on the serpent's box ; but presently, "as the pythoness, she is filled with Deity ;" her body is convulsed, and the oracle speaks through her mouth. In the name of the serpent she makes laws, from which there is no appeal ; and appoints to death those who afterwards do certainly die, either through slow poison, or the effects of terror on finding the charm placed on their thresholds. An oath is then administered, in which all engage to be silent on what has passed, and to concur in all that the priestess has determined. This oath is given to all as the priestess touches the lips of each with the warm blood of a kid just killed, all promising to suffer death rather than reveal the secrets of the Vaudoux.

Then commences the second dance. A large circle is drawn with a "firestick" (charcoal) on the ground by the *priest*, in the centre of which the candidate for admission is placed. The priest then gives him a small parcel of herbs, horsehair, alligators' teeth, horn, &c., on which the neophyte is commanded to dance within the circle, while the others dance without. Striking him on the head with a piece of wood, the priest in recitative commences an African song, which is soon taken up by all in full chorus :—

"Eh ! Eh ! Bomba ! hen ! hen !
Congo bafia té :—
Congo mourne dé lé
Congo do ki la !
Congo li ! congo li."

Then the neophyte dances. Agitated excessively—we can understand the psychology of any agitation under such circumstances—he strives hard to keep within the circle. Having previously been stupified with tafia, an intoxicating drink, this is difficult ; but if he steps without its limits, the king and the queen turn their backs upon the bad omen, and the whole ceremony, including the unlimited tafia, commences again. The king then touches him with a wand, or if very far gone, with a cowhide, Mumbo Jumbo fashion. He then takes another oath, and henceforth is enrolled as one of the secret society of the Vaudoux, prepared to do any deadly work of assassination, as Soulouque found to his intensely savage convenience. During these scenes some tear their clothes, and even their flesh ; others swoon, fall down, and are carried away senseless ; and the night closes with large supplies of tafia and abundance of Bacchanalian revels, enough to make even the "impassible gods of Africa gnash their teeth with horror."

This seems so much like a tale of the other day, that to many it may seem almost incredible ; and yet all this continues to the present day in Hayti. Ophiolatry is as vigorous there in this year of grace as it was in the palmy days of Egypt, Rome, or Persia. Only this week we were

reading the journal of a Protestant missionary in Hayti, in which occurs the following passage, most remarkable as illustrative of the life of a superstition amidst the deaths of successive dynasties, and the throbs of wretched revolutions :—“ On the occasion of a festival, Mr. W. happened to pass a booth, from which came the sounds of singing and dancing, accompanied by tom-toms, calabashes filled with hard dry seeds violently shaken, and sheets of rusty tin or iron beaten with a stick. As he approached, he found men, women, and children ranged in a circle, all prostrate on their knees, apparently engaged in profound adoration, and singing in chorus the following jargon :—

“ ‘Eh ! Eh ! Bomba, hen ! hen !
 Canga bafia té,
 Canga mourne dé lé,
 Canga di ki la !
 Canga li.’ ” *

Thus have we run through one chapter in the strange volume of humanity. We have no theory to offer for this strange form of devil-worship. That such it was, and such it is, no one can doubt. The serpent is and has been the unvarying symbol of an idolatry as ancient as Egypt, and as modern as our own times. Perhaps to some it may confirm a simple faith in the ancient record of a paradise lost through the instrumentality of a subtle tempter in shape and form most serpent-like; and may help us to believe in the same Record, which unfolds a Paradise regained, when the old serpent, the dragon, shall be utterly destroyed. We confess it does so to us; and here our pen rests.

B. ,

* The counter charm to this Vaudoux, called Obeah, in the British West Indies, runs thus, almost in the same metre :—

“ Obeah bad ! hearee : oh ! oh !
 Obeah no here ! oh ! oh !
 Obeah bad ! hearee : oh ! oh !
 Obeah ho here ! oh ! oh !
 Hallelujah : glory ! glory ! glory ! ”

BIRTHDAY THOUGHTS.

HALF a century old !
 In knowledge, sin, and sorrow,
 Too much tied with the need of to-day
 To think of that of to-morrow.
 Stung with the thought that rank and fame
 Might have ennobled my unknown name.

Half a century old !
 What changes I have seen !—
 The rich man fall, and the poor man rise
 To be what the rich hath been.
 Many in life have passed me by ;
 Some to prosper, and more to die.

Half a century old !
 What have I said or done
 To better man, or woman, or child,
 Of my fellows under the sun ?
 Have I not rather sown for tears,
 For pain, regrets, and wasted years ?

Half a century old !
 By the hearth is an empty chair ;
 Would that the woman I love the best
 Could for once be sitting there !
 I would strain her close to my beating heart,
 Never again in this world to part.

Half a century old !
 Yet I know that she is true,
 Though thinner and paler her cheek and brow,
 And dimmer her eye of blue.
 And I know that her prayers my pillow bless,
 When I seek its repose in my loneliness.

Half a century old !
 There is a little book
 With faded binding and silver clasp ;
 I promised her there to look
 For comfort, when hope seemed akin despair,—
 Perchance I may find her secret there !

KINGSWOOD CLARE.

AN EVENING AT MRS. FITZHERBERT'S.

TOWARDS the close of the last century, George Augustus, Prince of Wales, was regarded by that select portion of the community at large, known as the *beau monde*, as their elected leader and chief. Almost as soon as he contrived to escape from the scholastic tutelage and decent restrictions of the most virtuous court in Christendom, the world of fashion adopted him by acclamation as their ruler.

Conspicuous among those who paid him homage in this capacity, were ladies of the highest rank—ladies of the greatest beauty. They regarded him as the rising sun, and worshipped him with a fervour that would have done honour to the followers of Zoroaster. Wherever he appeared they thronged to do him honour; to whatever he did they promptly accorded their approbation. They unanimously pronounced the Tartarian structure that had been erected on the Sussex coast, the finest building in the world. They were in raptures with the cupola, enchanted with the minarets, and enthusiastic about the dragons. "It was really quite a fairy habitation compared with dull old St. James's," the solemn decorum of which always gave them the megrims, and they thanked their stars that *their* prince encouraged a mode of behaviour in his presence, as opposite as possible to that which was so rigidly maintained by the king and queen.

They flocked to Brighton with all their followers, and under their bright auspices the quiet fishing and smuggling town was rapidly transformed into a fashionable watering-place. The political party in opposition to the Government, having contrived to lead the prince into an apparent recognition of their principles, the wives and daughters of its leaders naturally enough were always among the most prominent of his fair supporters. They did their best to establish an opposition court, and spared no trouble to render it as lively and entertaining as they pronounced St. James's formal and stupid. They were by no means strait-laced—indeed, confessed a particular aversion to prudery; so these charming creatures kindly overlooked irregularities at "The Pavilion," which it is to be hoped they would not have sanctioned elsewhere. Their one great law was—not that *the king* could do no wrong—but *the prince*; their loyalty could not ascend higher than an acknowledgment of the Right Divine of heirs apparent.

It was under these circumstances that the Prince of Wales brought to Brighton a lady of remarkable personal attractions. She was of blonde complexion, of fine figure, of graceful carriage, and of cultivated mind—evidently a lady by birth, as well as by education. She lived in a house conveniently near the Pavilion—so near, indeed, that there was shortly observed to be a surprising facility of communication between the two residences. When it was supposed that His Royal Highness was in his Chinese mansion, it was discovered that he was in the more English and

more modest mansion in the next street. The most sharp-sighted equerry had not seen the prince leave the palace—the most attentive groom of the stole was unaware of His Royal Highness having quitted his chamber.

At first, considerable mystery was maintained respecting the new comer—the female leaders of *ton* assumed an air of reserve when spoken to on the subject by fashionable acquaintances of either sex; but it shortly became known that their carriages had been seen at the door of the modest mansion, and great excitement prevailed in all the best houses in Brighton in consequence. The prince was next seen publicly escorting the fair tenant of the modest mansion, and paying her extraordinary attention. “Who could she be?” was asked a thousand times a day by those who were not in the secret.

At last she was recognised as a widow of good family and small fortune, who had frequently been seen during the last two or three years in the most brilliant circle of London society, where she had been much admired, and more talked about. The prince's attachment to her had already been the theme of general gossip in the great metropolis; now, in the little watering-place, it became the one engrossing subject of conversation among all persons, professions, and trades. The established circulators of social facts and fictions—doctors, lawyers, hair-dressers, booksellers, clergymen's wives, and domestic servants—were sent for, questioned, listened to, and entreated to obtain further intelligence, while the small items of news thus secured were being published in a slightly altered form by the recipients.

Every day rumour made the matter more surprising and mysterious. It was said that the lady had sacrificed herself to prove her devotion to the prince—and a glow of feminine enthusiasm pervaded the entire female community. It was said that the prince had sacrificed himself to prove his devotion to the lady—and an impulse of chivalrous feeling thrilled every manly frame. It was said that the lady had withstood the importunities of her royal lover, and had only consented to be his when she discovered that he was dying of a self-inflicted wound, in sheer despair of her virtuous obduracy—and all the maiden ladies were in ecstasies with the propriety of her conduct.

It was said that the prince had resigned his claim to the crown of this realm, to enable him the more perfectly to enjoy love in a cottage—I mean love in a pavilion—with the object of his affections—and all the gay young bachelors were in raptures with so sublime an act of gallantry. It was said that the lady had insisted on a private marriage—it was said that this was a total mistake; that it was the prince who had insisted on the performance of such a ceremony, and had prevailed on a clergyman of the Church of England to make them man and wife, in defiance of the laws that had been passed to prevent members of the royal family entering into improper alliances.

It was said that the lady was a rigid Catholic, and would not be

satisfied till she had been married by a priest of her own faith, in her own house, and in presence of her nearest relatives ; it was said that nothing of the sort had taken place, that Catholic and Protestant clergymen were found equally averse to running a great risk, and that the prince had contented himself and the lady by reading the marriage ceremony in her drawing-room in the presence of two of her male friends, and had drawn up a form of marriage certificate, which they had witnessed, and that the lady had been content to accept this document as her marriage lines.

It is impossible to repeat half the *on dits* that were in circulation. The reader, however, has most likely had enough of these guesses and speculations ; it is only necessary to add, that the objects of them continued more and more to attract Brighton interest and Brighton admiration. They were talked of perpetually, they were stared at perpetually ; it became the aim of every one who had the slightest claim to enter good society, to be admitted into their presence. They were always named together, and as it was particularly an affair of gallantry, the lady first, as a matter of course. What seemed to trouble most of the more respectable gossips, was the fact that the lady, despite of her alleged union, still retained the name by which she had been previously known, while the prince, notwithstanding the reported surrender of his birthright, maintained all his powers and privileges as heir apparent. They were spoken of as "Mrs. Fitzherbert and the prince," at all times, in all places, under every possible circumstance. The whole local news might have been found under such a heading—the lions of the neighbourhood, the attractions of the town seemed to be thus named—nay, the lists of visitors, of residents, the population of the place, appeared to be so briefly catalogued, epitomized, and classed. There was evidently nothing on that portion of the Sussex coast worth mentioning but "Mrs. Fitzherbert and the prince."

During the first halcyon years of this interesting intimacy, all at the Pavilion, and at the modest house at a convenient distance, "went merry as a marriage bell," though no such bell had been sounded. The prince remained—

"The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers,"

Mrs. Fitzherbert, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

I can recall her to mind, radiant in her brilliant loveliness—her delicate features, her pure complexion, her exquisite blue eyes, her serene expression, combining to produce a face that impressed every spectator with a delightful sense of amiability and tenderness ; while her figure, set off to the best advantage by the costume of the time, was always distinguishable from those of the aristocratic beauties by whom she was generally surrounded, by its singular dignity and grace.

Though nobody ventured to call her princess, every one of her innumerable admirers of both sexes enthroned her as a queen. She was recognised as "Queen of Hearts" throughout the length and breadth of

fast-increasing Brighton—and a more loyal people it was impossible for sovereign to have. They honoured her, they almost worshipped her. Proud was the aspirant of fashion who succeeded in obtaining her notice in public; honoured the devotee of gentility who could boast of the least acquaintance with her in private. To be invited to meet her at the palatial Pavilion was acknowledged to be a covetable distinction; but to be welcomed to her modest house at a convenient distance, was regarded as a precious privilege.

She did her spiriting as gently as Ariel could have done, and apparently with a like vivacity and ease. She had, with a marvellous rapidity, that partook of the supernatural, thrown a girdle round about the world of the fashionable watering-place, that held every soul in it in thrall. She never had an enemy, and was constantly increasing her circle of friends. Whether she penetrated the motives that led the majority to attach themselves to her, is not known; neither is there any evidence that she exercised her influence over the prince to any considerable extent for their advantage or for her own.

The prince seemed as content with himself as with his companion. That he was not married to her, he induced the most influential of his political friends to declare emphatically in the most public manner possible—that friend having previously dissuaded him from entering into such an union. It has been averred that the prince subsequently denied having given his friend authority for making such a statement; this, however, rests on insufficient testimony.

After such a public repudiation, Mrs. Fitzherbert continued to live with the prince exactly as she had lived with him before it had been made, and it does not appear to have had more effect upon the Brighton community than it produced on herself. High authorities in the fashionable world—confidential friends of the lady—mysteriously intimated a knowledge that the denial was a sham; and as the heir apparent still continued to be accessible by paying attentions to her, the excitement respecting “Mrs. Fitzherbert and the prince” remained unabated.

“A heavy blow and great discouragement” to these believers in a secret marriage were felt, when it became generally rumoured that the Prince of Wales was about to form a matrimonial alliance with a German princess; and when that union took place, without having elicited the slightest protest from the lovely creature who had been for years tacitly acknowledged as his wife, their convictions were severely shaken. “Mrs. Fitzherbert and the prince” were now seldom referred to—indeed, they did not appear in public together. Subsequently the prince not only became a Benedict, but a father. Very discerning people shook their heads, but did not venture to question the established fact.

The Queen of Hearts took her dethronement as she accepted her divorce—with so serene an amiability, that her numerous admirers were again staggered in their belief. They could not comprehend that a disap-

pointment so severe to a woman, could be met with such refined philosophy; and when they again found the prince associating himself with her much in the old manner, though less frequently, no one attempted to resist the impulse that sent them again in crowds to pay their homage wherever the distinguished pair appeared in public. What they thought, I do not think it necessary to state. I can only add that the phrase, "Mrs. Fitzherbert and the prince," resumed its attraction over all the fashionable visitors of this now very fashionable locality.

It was about this time that I, fresh from a public school, visited Brighton, and like my elder contemporaries there, soon became ambitious of being known to the object of general regard and respect. I had scarcely been four-and-twenty hours in the place when I met, late in the day, a town acquaintance, the well-known Colonel Hanger, strolling along the parade, his silver buttons apparently larger and brighter than ever, and his green coat, his high boots, and his heavy riding-whip giving unmistakable evidence of his having recently been enjoying the diversion of hunting.

He recognised me in a moment with Hibernian cordiality, so loud and demonstrative as to attract the attention of an old maid in a Bath chair, and a stout clerically-dressed personage who was walking by the side of the vehicle in earnest conversation with its occupant.

"It's glad to see you, I am," he exclaimed, "as if you were the ace of trumps, and brought the rest of the honours along with you." He shook my hand heartily, and after a few friendly inquiries, took hold of my arm and led me in the direction of his lodgings, where he was then going, as he said, to dress for dinner, after a hard run with the hounds. He talked incessantly as he went, in his light-hearted, careless manner, chiefly respecting people then at Brighton; and as he referred to Mrs. Fitzherbert in a manner that denoted considerable intimacy, I ventured to ask if he would introduce me.

"The easiest thing in life, my dear boy," he replied, with increased vivacity. "She comes of an Irish family, and I have known her since she was but a bit of a girl, running like a fairy in and out of old Smith's house. Smyth, you know, is the genteel way of mentioning the name. Her first husband was a schoolfellow of mine; her second was a particular friend, with whom I have helped to empty many a good bowl of punch at his own house, and enjoyed many a roaring night at Mammy Butler's. As to her third, as some people insist on calling him, the journeys I have had backwards and forwards between them, would have knocked up half the running footmen in May Fair. So you see the dear creature naturally regards me as one of her oldest and best friends, and treats me accordingly, as you shall have an opportunity of seeing."

The colonel was as good as his word. I first went to my hotel to dress, and after we had dined together he took me to the modest house conveniently near the Pavilion, to which he at once obtained admittance. We

were presently ushered into a beautiful little saloon, furnished in the best taste of the time, and handsomely lighted. On my companion's name being announced, a lady advanced from a group standing round a small table at the further end of the room, and, with a winning sweetness that made her beauty doubly charming, welcomed him like a brother.

Presently she turned courteously to me, and the colonel immediately introduced me with that fervour of manner and elaborate politeness that distinguished the Irish gentleman of the old school. The brother of my Lord Coleraine never appeared to more advantage than when thus performing a part in which nature and education had equally fitted him to excel. I could scarcely recognise my reckless, devil-may-care acquaintance of the muddy boots, splashed buck-skins, and soiled riding-coat, in the refined and elegant-looking man, with his flowing hair neatly powdered, his claret-coloured coat of the most fashionable cut, his embroidered waist-coat, and a neckcloth, frill, and ruffles of dazzling whiteness, his nankeen small-clothes, silk stockings, and pumps with diamond buckles, showing to advantage the symmetry of his shape; while the *chapeau-bras* under his arm, bag-wig at his coat-collar, and sword at his side, made up the full evening costume. Of course, I was similarly attired, with some unimportant exceptions; but I could make no pretensions to the air of extreme fashion which long familiarity with the best society, rather than the skill of the court tailor, had given my companion.

I at once felt the legitimacy of our beautiful hostess's claim to the title of "Queen of Hearts" when she turned on me her exquisite blue eyes, her peach-like complexion, sunned by the most fascinating smile I had ever beheld, and acknowledged my bow with the dignified courtesy then in fashion. It is impossible to imagine any feminine action more charming and more regal. Her person might then be said to have arrived at womanly perfection, though she had reached an age when most beauties begin to show the truth of the poet's declaration,—

"All that's bright must fade,
The brightest still the fleetest."

Her manner gave a setting to her attractions that wonderfully enhanced their effect. It is impossible to imagine anything more brilliant. I was no longer surprised at the admiration she had excited, for I felt, as her smile and her glance fell upon me, a sense of her beauty, that thrilled every nerve of my frame. She addressed her conversation to me with so exquisite a sweetness of tone and look, that I became more and more fascinated; yet there was such a purity of feeling combined with her singular winningness of manner, that her attention excited only a devotion such as an honourable esquire or page might have avowed for some peerless dame whom he had the honour to serve in the glorious days of chivalry and romance.

The colonel kindly joined in the conversation, with the evident intention of helping to draw me out; and when he observed that I was gaining confi-

dence and making my way, he left me to join some friends whom he recognised at the end of the room. Seeing my attention attracted by a well-executed portrait of the prince that hung upon the wall before me, Mrs. Fitzherbert, in a thoroughly unaffected manner, pointed out its merits as a likeness. Imperceptibly she glided from the painting to the original, on whose excellences she was even more eloquent. She then referred to other members of the Royal Family, mentioning each with the most tender affection, yet with the profoundest respect. They all, according to her partial estimate, abounded with good qualities. King George, Queen Charlotte, the sweet princesses, the royal dukes, were models of domestic virtue. With the latter she was evidently well acquainted—especially the Duke of York, on whose character she dwelt longest, as though entitled to do so from a more intimate acquaintance.

Suddenly she directed her look towards the group at the table. "I must make you known to a few old friends," she observed, inviting me to follow her.

"Duchess," she cried, with vivacity, as she approached a matronly lady of beautiful features, who was showing an album, or book of drawings, to three young ladies, dressed like herself in the most finished toilette of the prevailing fashion—of which low bodies, short waists, and narrow skirts, with a towering head-dress, surmounted by a white plume of ostrich feathers, were the most remarkable features,—“I have brought you an acquisition to our circle—a friend of mine, who I know will be very proud of making your acquaintance.”

I was then formally introduced to the Duchess of Devonshire, by whom, thus favourably recommended, I was kindly as well as courteously received. The three young ladies raised their eyes—they were bright, aristocratic-looking *belles*, apparently in their first season, or nearly so—and having satisfied their curiosity, again gave their attention to the drawings. Nevertheless, each more than once glanced in my direction during the next ten minutes, but with as sedate an air of indifference as if contemplating a mile-stone or a finger-post.

"Come and give me your opinion of these verses, Mr. —," said the duchess, graciously. The youthful beauties drew back with the precision of grenadiers at the word of command, and I advanced with Mrs. Fitzherbert to the space their narrow skirts had vacated. On glancing at the title-page of a work on the table, I read—“*The Passage of Mount St. Gothard: a Poem, by the Duchess of Devonshire.*”*

This was satisfactory proof that the beautiful duchess, of whom I had often heard, was something more than a mere woman of fashion. I now found that Her Grace possessed a mind worthy of the attraction of her

* Only fifty copies were printed; an Italian version, by Polidori, accompanied the original text. Another edition, with a French translation by the Abbé de Lille, was printed about the same time, 1802.

person. She was a graceful musician and an accomplished artist, when both music and painting were far less accessible to amateurs than they have since become. I perused aloud several passages in the poem with an earnestness that seemed to please her as well as her friend, for both volunteered animated explanations, that rendered me perfectly informed on the subject of our conversation.

When we had got to the last page, the two elder ladies were in the highest spirits. The three younger ones had moved away, and were turning over some leaves of music, but not without occasionally directing their mild glances towards me. I looked round for the colonel. He was in an adjoining apartment, absorbed in a game at piquet.

"Ah! that is a good thought," said Mrs. Fitzherbert, looking in the direction of her younger guests. "Lady Frances, favour us with a song."

The tallest of the three girls quietly took up the music-book, and was about to carry it to the harpsichord, when I, with a murmured apology, glided in amongst them, requested permission to relieve her of the volume, and placed it on the instrument. No one seemed surprised at my interposition. Lady Frances regarded it with supreme indifference, and, sedately taking off her long gloves, seated herself on the music-stool, and began rapidly to turn over the leaves of the book.

"What shall I sing, duchess?" she inquired, listlessly, at the same time turning her head round.

I had fallen back to the little table, between the two matrons, who, in my opinion, exceeded either of the younger ladies in personal appearance; and I fancied that she looked piqued at the indifference to her attractions my movement expressed.

"Whatever you please, my love," replied the duchess; "I am sure Mr. — will be charmed with your performance, whatever it may be."

Lady Frances did not consider the suggestion worth her notice. She went on turning over the leaves; then suddenly stopped, bent down a leaf at the top corner, and played a short prelude. I now quietly walked to the harpsichord, and observed that she had selected "Julia to the Wood Robin." She sang it with faultless accuracy, but with little expression. I turned over the leaf when she had reached the bottom of the page, and as quietly fell back to my original post. The fair automaton continued with the same frigid correctness, and I was not sorry when she concluded, though I joined heartily in the applause her singing excited from all within hearing.

Lady Georgiana and her sister, Lady Henrietta, were now requested to contribute their accomplishments to the entertainment, and immediately they rose from an ottoman, and one standing before a harp, and the other seating herself at the harpsichord, presently devoted themselves to getting the two instruments in accord; then, rapidly arranging their music, they dashed into a duet, by Dussek, with amazing spirit. I did not leave my place, as I could not have assisted both performers; nor could I readily

have made up my mind which I ought to attend to: but I soon saw that my services could be dispensed with. The fair musicians dashed over their leaves, as they dashed through their brilliant variations, apparently regardless of everything except the notes they had to play. The applause was loud at the termination of the duet, and I added my quota to it with marked zeal.

I was both surprised and embarrassed when, almost immediately afterwards, Mrs. Fitzherbert requested me to follow the example of her "dear young friends." I endeavoured to excuse myself; but the Duchess of Devonshire laughingly insisted on my obligation to return favour for favour. I saw that there was no resisting this appeal to my gallantry, and ventured on a compromise,—if the duchess would be so very good-natured as to accompany me.

The good nature of the charming duchess was proverbial. She arose instantly, and, joining in her friends' laugh, permitted me to lead her to the instrument.

She seemed pleased when I selected her own composition—a favourite of mine of long standing. She was still more gratified when I sung it with all the expression I could throw into the familiar air. Need I say it was that melancholy piece of sentiment that enjoyed universal popularity at the period to which I am referring,—"*I have a Silent Sorrow here*"? The words, as every one knows, were written by Sheridan.

When I had concluded, I found grouped behind me not only my fair hostess and her three young friends, but many of her guests from the distant ottomans and the card-rooms, who joined in energetic demonstrations, that expressed their gratification at either the composition or its performance—Colonel Hanger distinguishing himself among the most vehement. I received compliments from all sides. Even Lady Frances, though still somewhat apathetically, ventured to say, in my hearing, that the dear duchess had never played the song so well; to which Lady Georgiana spiritedly replied—also in my hearing—there was nothing surprising in that.

Presently the card-players went back to their tables, the loungers to their ottomans, and the little group of which I made one remained in their old positions—the younger ladies in quiet talk with each other over their music; and the duchess, Mrs. Fitzherbert, and myself, much more earnestly conversing on at least equally interesting topics. I forget what led to it, but we got to discourse about dancing, which suggested to the lively duchess the desirableness of setting the young people to join in the graceful exercise. Finding that I was quite willing to follow her suggestion, she asked Lady Frances to stand up with me for a minuet. Either from caprice or disinclination, the lady listlessly excused herself. Her Grace then turned to her daughters, both of whom thought proper to follow their friend's example.

"There is only one thing to be done, my dear Mrs. Fitzherbert," said

the duchess. "If Mr. —— will be so good as to accept an old woman as a partner, I am his most obedient."

And she curtsied to me, with a grace that must have charmed an anchorite.

The proposition took me completely by surprise; but I need hardly add that I was eager to avail myself of it. Lady Frances went back to the drawings. Lady Georgiana and Lady Henrietta returned to their instruments. I led Her Grace into the middle of the apartment, made the preliminary bow, received the preliminary courtesy, and, as the music of the *Minuet de la Cour* commenced, summoning to my aid all my recollections of M. Desnoyer's lessons, I began with my incomparable partner that stately and most graceful measure.

A more trying ordeal for a youth of seventeen, before a circle so distinguished as that in which I had the good fortune to find myself, can scarcely be conceived. This long fashionable dance demanding the most careful attention to the prescribed movements, with perfect ease and self-possession; every limb had to be moved with studied grace; even the *chapeau-bras* figuring, in the elaborate evolutions, as an accessory of no little importance. My youthful figure, no doubt, assisted me to do justice to the instructions of the Court dancingmaster; and with my long hair carefully powdered and tied behind with a ribbon, my handsome suit of velvet, and silver-hilted sword, I presume I did not appear an undesirable partner.

It is impossible to do justice to the mingled grace and dignity which the duchess infused into her portion of the performance. Whether, gratified by the compliment I had just paid her musical talents, Her Grace had condescended to confer on me a compliment she intended to be equally gratifying, I cannot say. All I know is, that I was wonderfully exhilarated by the honour I received, and most carefully strove to second her exertions by an equal attention to the dance. From time to time I heard expressions of commendation; but my attention was absorbed by my partner, who seemed to become more fascinating in her movements as the minuet advanced.

Though the duchess had passed her *premiere jeunesse*, an "old woman," as she had called herself, she certainly was not; and I question whether, in the zenith of her fashion and loveliness, this charming creature had ever appeared more charming than she looked and moved on this memorable occasion. There was an indescribable archness in her upward glance every time she bent low to me—spreading out with both hands her rich lustrous robe, as if enjoying my blushing admiration.

The gavotte followed. The more lively measure was gone through with the same easy self-possession that had distinguished my partner's performance of the slow and stately one, during which I again heard warm approval expressed, but was too much occupied with my part of the dance to ascertain whence it came.

As soon as the gavotte terminated, I was not left long in ignorance of this new source of admiration. Standing beside Mrs. Fitzherbert, I beheld the well-known figure of the Prince of Wales, applauding energetically; while all the company, drawn, perhaps, into the apartment by his arrival, added their meed of approbation with equal zeal.

When I recognised His Royal Highness I was about to retire into the background, but this I was not permitted to do, for the duchess, evidently most heartily enjoying her success, suddenly laid hold of my arm, and, then and there, insisted on introducing me. The prince readily entered into the joke, and permitted me to kiss his hand, making a pleasant comment on the manner in which I had just acquitted myself, and saying that he envied me such a partner.

Mrs. Fitzherbert joined her musical laugh to that of her friend; and in a state of indescribable confusion, mixed with a sense of the most exquisite pleasure, I at last succeeded in bowing my way out of the smiling circle, and soon afterwards left the house, never to forget the hours I had passed within its walls.

Inexorable fate willed that this delightful association with "the Beautiful Duchess" should on this, to me, eventful evening, begin and end; for, to the inexpressible loss of society, and to the profound regret of every one Her Grace honoured with her friendship, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, died shortly afterwards. I think this was in the year 1806. With the Ladies Cavendish—the elder of whom became Countess of Carlisle, and the younger Countess Granville—as well as with many other members of the brilliant circle that then surrounded my fashionable hostess, I was more fortunate, as I trust my readers will be able to acknowledge, when I have laid before them a few more of my recollections of my contemporaries.

UP THE RIVER.

BEHIND the purple mountains lies a lake,
 Steadfast thro' storm and sunshine in its place ;
 Asleep 'neath changing skies, its waters make
 A mirror for the tempest's thunder-face ;
 Thence—singing songs of glee,
 Fluttering to my cottage by the sea,
 By bosky glen and grove,
 Past the lone shepherd, moveless as the rock
 Whence stretched at length he views his scatter'd flock—
 Cometh the little river that I love.

To-day I'll bid farewell to books,
 And by the river loved so well,
 Thro' ferny haunts and flowery nooks,
 Thro' stony glen and woody dell,
 The rainy river-path I'll take,
 Till by the silent-sleeping lake
 I hear the shepherd's bell
 Tinkle thro' mountain mist,
 Dark but with gleams of gold and amethyst.
 The summer bleats from every rocky height,
 The harebell banks are dim with dewy light,
 The heavens are clear as infants' eyes above ;
 This is no day—you, little river, know it !—
 For sage or poet
 To localize his love.
 The whole world wide is full of some sweet yearning ;
 Fresh from the caverns old,
 Where sweats the gleaming gold,
 The kisses of the sunshine are returning
 In flowers alive with scents, and colours gay.
 The very bookworms and the grubs of learning
 Forsake their chrysalis of parchments grey,
 And change, as common little insects may,
 To butterflies to-day.

In rippling cadence, calm and slow,
Sing, little river, as I go,
Songs of the mountains whence you flow.

The grassy banks are wet with dew that flashes
Silverly on the Naiad-river's lashes—
The Naiad-river, bright with sunken suns,
Who rhymeth as she runs.
Yonder the silver-bellied grayling splashes
Within the spreading circle of blue shade
That his own leaps have made :
And here I stoop, and pluck with tender care
A lily from the Naiad's sedgy hair.
And curling softly over pebble,
Weaving soft waves with yellow sands,
Singing her song in tinkling treble,
The mountain lady thro' the farmer's lands
Slides to the sea, with harvest-giving hands.
Here freckled cowslips bloom unsought,
 Like yellow jewels on her light green train ;
 And yonder, dark with dreaming of the rain,
Grows the wood-violet like a lowly thought.
Lightly the mountain lady dances down,
Dressed maidenly in many a woodland gem ;—
Lo, even where the footprint of the clown
Has bruised her raiment-hem,
Crimson-tipp'd daisies make a diadem.

The little river is the fittest singer
To sound the praises of a day so fair.
The dews, sucked up thro' pores of sunshine, linger
As silver cloudlets in mid-air ;
And over all the sunshine throws
Its golden glamour of repose.
The silence listens, in a dream,
To hear the ploughman urge his reeling team,
The trout, that flashes with a sudden gleam,
And musical motions heaved by hills that bound
The slumberous vales around.
 I loiter onward slowly, and the whole
Sweet joy is in my fancies drowned.
The sunshine meets the music. Sight and sound
 Are wedded by that hidden priest—the Soul.

Sing, little river, this sweet morn,
Songs of the hills where you were born !

For, suddenly, mine eyes perceive
The purple hills that touch the sky,
And are familiar with the stars of eve;
Against the pale blue west they lie,
Netted in mists of azure air,
With thread-like cataracts here and there.
O hark ! O hark !
The shepherd shouts, and answering sheep-dogs bark ;
And voices, startling Echo from her sleep,
Are blown from steep to steep.

At yonder falls, the trembling mountain lady
Clings to the bramble high above me lying,
With foamy veil behind her swift feet flying,
And a lorn terror in her lifted voice,
Ere springing to the rush-friezed basin shady,
That boils below with noise.
Then, whirling dizzily for a moment's space,
She lets the sun make blushes on her face,
And lightly laughs at her own terror past,
And floateth onward fast.

Thus wandering onward, ankle-deep in grass,
Scaring the cumbrous pheasant as I pass,
I come upon two shepherd boys, who wade
For coolness in the limpid waves,
And with their shade
Startle the gudgeon from his shallow caves.

Let me lie down upon the bank, and drink !
The minnows at the brim, with bellies white
Upturned in specks of silvery light,
Flash from me in a shower, and sink.
Below, the blue skies wink
Thro' heated golden air—a clear abyss
Of azure, with a solitary bird
Steadfastly winging thro' the depths unstirred.
The brain turns dizzy with its bliss ;
And I would plunge into the chasms cool,
And float to yonder cloud of fleecy wool

That floats below me, as I kiss
 The mountain lady's lips with thirsty mouth.
 What would parch'd Dives give amid his drouth
 For kisses such as this?

Sing, little river, while I rest,
 Songs of your hidden mountain nest,
 And of the blue sky in your breast!

The landscape darkens slowly
 With mountain shadows; when I wander on,
 The tremulous gladness of the heart seems gone,
 And a cool awe spreads round me, sweet and holy,—
 A tender, sober-suited melancholy.
 The path rough feet have made me winds away
 O'er fenny meadows to the white highway,
 Where the big waggon clatters with its load,
 And pushing onward, to the ankles wet
 In swards as soft as silken sarcenet,
 I gain the dusty road.

The air is hotter here. The bee booms by
 With honey-laden thigh,
 Doubling the heat with sounds akin to heat;
 And like a floating flower the butterfly
 Swims upward, downward, till its feet
 Cling to the hedgerows white and sweet.
 A black duck rises clumsily with a cry,
 And the dim lake is nigh.
 The road curves upward to a dusty rise,
 Where fall the sunbeams flake on flake;
 And turning at the curve, mine eyes
 Fall sudden on the silent lake,
 Asleep 'neath hyacinthine skies.

Sing, little river, in your mirth,
 Sing to thyself for joy the earth
 Is smiling on your humble worth;
 And sing for joy that earth has given
 A place of birth so near to heaven!
 Sing, little river, while I climb
 These little hills of rock and thyme,
 And hear far-off your tinkling chime!

The cataracts burst in foamy sheen ;
 The hills slope swiftly to the water's brim,
 And far below I see their shadows dim ;
 The lake, so closely hemmed between
 Their skirts of heather and of grass,
 Grows black and cold beneath me as I pass.

The sunlight fades on mossy rocks,
 And on the mountain-sides the flocks
 Are spilt like streams ;—the highway dips
 Down, narrowing to a path where lambs
 Lay to the udders of their dams
 Their soft and pulpy lips.
 The hills grow closer ; to the right
 The path sweeps round a shadowy bay,
 Upon whose slated bottom white
 And crested waves faint-warbling play.
 All else is still. But list, O list !
 Hidden by boulders and by mist,
 A shepherd whistles in his fist ;
 From height to height the far sheep bleat
 In answering iteration sweet.
 Sound, seeking silence, bends above her,
 Within some haunted mountain grot ;
 Kisses her, like a trembling lover—
 So that she stirs in sleep, but wakens not.

Along this rock I'll lie,
 With face turned upward to the sky.
 A dreamy numbness glows within my brain—
 It is not joy and is not pain—
 'Tis like the solemn, sweet imaginings
 That cast a shade on music's golden wings.
 With face turned upward to the sun,
 I lie as indolent as one
 Who, in a vision sweet, perceives
 Angels thro' mists of lotus leaves ;
 And now and then small shadows move
 Across me, cast by clouds so small
 Mine eyes perceive them not at all
 In the unsullied blue above.
 I hear the streams that burst and fall,
 The straggling shepherd's frequent call,

The kine low bleating as they pass,
 The dark lake stirring with the breeze,
 The melancholy hum of bees,
 The very murmur of the grass.

Those clouds look dangerous on the southern sky,
 Charged with the sulphurous spume of thunders. I
 Am half a weather prophet, and I fear
 The summer storm is near.
 A darkness falls upon me as I lie :
 Let me push onward fast,
 And seek a shelter till the storm be past.

The south breeds darkness. Cumbrous clouds increase,
 And a great listening awe, that is not peace,
 Falls on the darken'd air ;
 The hills are breathless with black heat, and shroud
 Their rocky foreheads bare
 In helms of brazen cloud.
 The little wind, dropped sudden on the lake,
 Ruffling the surface for a moment, dies.
 The birds crouch quivering in bush and brake,
 And fast to yonder wood a heron flies.
 The sun grows whitely visible, and then,
 Like a great eye that shuts in wrath,
 Burns backward thro' the vapours, that again
 Seal up its blacken'd path.

Now, housed within a mountain hut, I see
 The outer tempest in its growing ire.
 The deep hush thickens over rock and tree,
 Till short bright flashes quiver visibly,
 And on the edges of the hills the dire
 Darkness doth breathe forth fire.
 The distant heaven moans ;
 Low sounds precede the thunder from the hills,
 Till, rolling along skyey chasms, it fills
 The distance with its groans.
 A flash ! and thunder, waving sulphurous wings,
 Crouches before the tempest's lightning spear,
 Like a black beast that crouches in its fear,
 Then, roaring loudly, springs !

And lightning, like a snake with meteor-scales,
Writhes, quivering down the mountains to the dales.

A sultry pause. But now the rain
Falls headlong down and fills the plain ;
Light seethes around the shower, and glances
Brightly upon its tiny lances,
Till the pale sun comes forth again,
And, shrinking back, the quivering beam
Whitens and sickens, flash by flash,
And dies away in one wide gleam.
On the wet rocks the raindrops splash ;
The lawny mists the hills have worn
Are into scarfs of cobweb torn.
Cool are the summer rains, and brief ;
 The watery sun illumes the leaves,
 And audibly the green earth heaves
A fragrant sigh of sweet relief ;
 The clouds, exhaling in blue heaven's dome,
Leave still a mimic tempest in the lake.

Come, let me venture forth again, and take
 The rain-trod highway home.

R. W. B.

A TANGLED SKEIN.

A ROMANCE.

BY ALBANY FONBLANQUE, JUN.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DEALS WITH PUZZLES, OR AT LEAST ONE SORT OF THEM—WOMEN.

YES! What Stephen took for a door-mat was Doggie, and tremendous was the resentment of that unprepossessing animal. If it were possible for a dog to bark himself into convulsions, Doggie would have done it. As it was, he barked till he could bark no longer, and then his indignation subsided into an angry and reproachful whine, from which he would burst now and again into a fresh paroxysm of barking, as though it had suddenly occurred to his mind that he had not sufficiently asserted his wrongs.

Now, when Doggie was free from durance vile—as, in his character of guest at Kernden Rectory he was, just now—he and his mistress were generally to be found together—the only redeeming point in Doggie's disposition being his affection for Grace. But how came Grace to Kernden? Simply thus. Very shortly after Stephen's departure from Tremlett Towers, a great change came over this young lady's demeanour and conduct. I wish I could say that it was marked with those results which my reading teaches me should be observed in the deportment of damsels with well-regulated minds, when labouring under similar trials. Would the reader like her better if I were to say that she "brooded o'er her silent grief as in its nest the dove;" that "she let concealment, like a worm in the bud, prey on her damask cheek;" that she "pined in solitude," and so on? If he would, please let him skip on to the next paragraph. Let him fancy that she behaved in all respects as he would wish the girl of his heart to behave, and not seek to know the truth, which, as a faithful historian, I am bound to tell. And this is, that she became silent and—must it be said?—sulky; that she was cross with her favourite Jane, and boxed Bobby's ears; that she grew discontented with herself, and extremely disagreeable to the whole Coleman family. Let me say just a few words in her defence, and I will go on. She loved Stephen Frankland with all the strength of her pure, strong heart. Her woman's tact taught her that her affection was returned; but she knew also of the cruel rock which lay between her and the haven of her happiness, and she had seen—or thought she saw—her life's hope shipwrecked upon it. Not a word of all Mr. Coleman had said about the pride of the Franklands, and the misery of their unequal marriages, had been lost upon her. With gentle eyes—love-softened—she watched Steevie from her window as he

passed through the garden on the day of his last visit to Ruxton Court. She saw him pause with her guardian at the iron gate, and, in her mind, *heard* all that passed. Oh, how her heart leaped with joy when she saw our Steevie snap his fingers in the air, and turn away gaily towards his home! How it sank when the news came that he had left it—gone not to return! He had taken counsel with night, and prudence had come with the morning. But she had no reproaches for him. All her anger was directed against herself. “Idiot that I am,” she would break out in the midst of her long fits of musing, “to think that I could ever become the wife of an honourable man! *I*, the poor disowned—perhaps the child of shame! But, oh, father! oh, mother! if you had only let me know you; if you had only *tried* to love me; if you had only trusted me, instead of leaving me all alone and unloved, all alone in the world—God help me!—all alone!” And then tears would come to her relief, and she would sob herself to sleep.

“My love,” said Mr. Coleman to his wife one day, “our Grace is fretting herself to death after that fellow Ste—— after Frankland. She ought to have some change to divert her mind.”

“So she ought,” agreed his better half; “I’ll get Beatrice to invite her to Ellwood.”

“Stuff! your sister Beatrice is a— Well, she has not your pleasant qualities, my dear. Ellwood is not a lively place, and Grace would mope there more than she does now.”

“Let her go to her own relations, then!” said Mrs. Coleman, in a decisive tone, with a little vexation in it.

“My love!”

“Don’t speak to me in that reproachful way, Coleman, as though I had said something wicked, when I am talking common sense. The girl *has* relations, I suppose?”

“My dear—*business!*”

“If you go on in this way, sir, I declare I shall begin to think that—”

“No you won’t, Laura!” was the lawyer’s reply, as he stole his arm round the ample waist of his buxom wife; “no you won’t, old woman. We haven’t lived together forty years for that. Have we now?”

“Well, I don’t mean to say that you know more about her than you ought,” replied Mrs. Coleman, mollified by the not unfrequent act of affection from the husband she really loved and respected; “but you will own that it is hard to have a girl under one’s own roof, interfering with the prospects of one’s own flesh and blood, without knowing who she is, or where she came from. Not one wife in a thousand would put up with what I have, Coleman; and you know it.”

“Because you are a wife out of a thousand, my love,” replied the old lawyer, with a quaint smile. “But, to be frank with you, I do not talk about Grace and her affairs, because, in the first place, it’s *business*; and

in the second, because I know no more about them at this moment than you do."

"But you can guess."

"I never guess. When old Spencer Fane asked me to become the girl's trustee—it's all nonsense calling me her guardian, for she is of age—he said that there were reasons why her parentage should not be discovered; and that he had taken care it never should be. Now I know enough of old Spencer to be sure that the clue to a secret hidden by him is not to be *guessed* out of its hiding-place."

"Could he have been her father?" mused Mrs. Coleman—not to be done out of her conjectures.

Her spouse shook his head gravely. "But we are wandering away from our subject," he said; "Grace must have some change. It's quite clear that she loves Stephen, and that he has jilted her. Don't you see how she clings to everything associated with him? Why, she has even taken up with Lady Tremlett."

"That's true," replied Mrs. Coleman. "Do you know that Rhoda has been here twice this week, evidently to see her? and Grace has promised to spend to-morrow at the Towers."

"Well, it will do her no good to go there. Now listen to me. Isn't she engaged to spend Christmas with the Trehernes?"

"She is, and it's a great bore. She is so very useful at Christmas time."

"It will not do to put it in that way; but if you were to hint that it would be a pity for her to miss our little gaieties—particularly as the Trehernes, being in mourning, cannot have any parties—it might, perhaps, be arranged that she should go there at once. She's fonder of those girls than she is of ours—naturally enough, for she's known them longer, and they would cheer her up if anybody can."

"But suppose Steevie were to go there?"

"What! and revive all his associations with Brandron's murder? Nonsense, my love, it's out of the question."

Only see what a prophet Mr. Coleman was!

His ideas were communicated—diplomatically enough—to Grace, and jumped at. And "how splendid of you to come, you delicious thing!" wrote Gerty Treherne, in reply to the letter in which her friend asked if it would be quite convenient for her to change the time fixed for her promised visit.

The only person whom this arrangement displeased was Lady Tremlett, who—as we know from the hint thrown out by Mr. Coleman—had suddenly taken a violent fancy for Grace.

"What!" she cried, when she heard the news, "you going too—you going to leave me? Oh, Grace! how can you be so unkind? What shall I do? what shall I do?"

"Do?" replied our candid Grace, "why, pretty much the same as you did a week ago, I suppose."

"But you cannot think—you don't know how I have learned to cling to you in that little time. I *must* have somebody who is good to cling to now, Gracey dear. Oh, if Steevie had only stayed—if you would not go!"

"I can understand your wishing to have Captain Frankland here," said Grace, in a low tone.

"Do you think he would come back?" asked my Lady, eagerly; "we will all beg his pardon if he will. Oh, ask him to come back, Gracey—do ask him!"

"Nonsense, Lady Tremlett! How can you suppose that I could do such a thing?"

"But if we were all to beg his pardon," reiterated Lady Tremlett, in a tone of entreaty—"if Francis were to promise to behave better! But I forgot—you don't know why Steevie went away."

"I suppose he had his reasons," said Grace, beginning to feel uncomfortable.

"Oh yes, that he had! and we all behaved so badly—he so well. Do you think he will ever come back?"

"How can I possibly say?" replied Grace, who was burning to know what reason Lady Tremlett assigned for her stepson's abrupt departure. "How can I possibly say," replied the astute damsel, "unless I know why he went?"

And then the poor weak woman told her all—all about the arrest of Sir George, and the conduct of Francis and Stephen thereon, with many digressions touching the behaviour of the former towards his half-brother; and Grace went home a happier girl than she had been for many a long day, but still not happy. Good reason was there for Steevie to leave his home so suddenly; but had he not left her too, having heard that she was what she was, and without a word—a line to say Good bye?

Knowing my Lady's silly, volatile nature, Grace thought little of the sorrow—almost despair—which she evinced at their parting. The time came when she saw what it meant.

So she went to Kernden, and there learnt, for the first time, that Stephen Frankland had taken up his quarters with Cuthbert Lindsay, in the Temple, but knew nothing of the latter's approaching visit; for the best of reasons—because he was not expected till the day before he actually arrived, and poor Doggie was mistaken for a mat. Cuddy, you must know, had a long-standing invitation from his uncle to run down when he pleased, with his friends, for such pheasant-shooting as the neighbourhood afforded; but having heard that there was a probability of the girls spending some time at the seaside with their aunt, the little man postponed his trip; not wishing (for reasons of his own) to expend his bidding upon a time when they—at least, one of them—should be away from home. As soon, then, as he heard that their departure was indefinitely postponed, he wrote to say that he was coming "immediately, if not

sooner," and asked for leave to bring a friend, whom he described, in the slang of the day, as "a young man from the country," in lieu of Lorimer, who had gone abroad. "And won't they be pleased, just"—he chuckled to himself—"when they find it's old Steevie?"

If this reticence had not been preserved, the county of Kent would not have contained Miss Lee when the carriage drove up with the three Templars to the rectory door. As it happened, however, she was standing in the little honeysuckle-shaded porch, with Doggie at her feet, her hands clasped before her, and her beautiful head thrown back wearily—gazing up into the clear autumn sky, and thinking—thinking—thinking.

Doggie did not hear the sound of approaching wheels, for, upon the principle of "love me, love my dog," he had been plied with all sorts of unaccustomed viands at luncheon, and was sleeping the sleep of innocence and dyspepsia. Grace's thoughts were busy afar off, and the phaeton approached within a dozen yards of her before she was roused from her reverie. Then one glance was enough, and she fled—fled through the hall, up the stairs, and into Gertrude's room, where she found her friend preparing to dress for dinner, and rushed upon her, and seized her by the arm.

"Oh, you wicked girl! oh, you false, wicked, wicked creature!" she gasped, with flashing eyes, and lips all in a quiver; "you knew it, you knew it, and did not tell me! Oh, Gerty!"

Gerty was really frightened—and well she might be—by the suddenness of the attack.

"Good heavens! what has happened? Are you mad, Grace? What on earth do you mean? I declare you have hurt me dreadfully!" she continued, as she shook off the grasp of her excited assailant, and looked at her pretty white arm in the glass. "You wild animal! I shall not be fit to be seen to-morrow." And, indeed, there were five red marks, which bade fairly to become black ere long.

"You knew he was coming!" cried Grace, with a stamp of her foot and undiminished anger. "It's a plot between you, and it's shameful—shameful!" And here, exhausted by the excitement, she broke down, and began to cry.

"Dear Gracey," said Gertrude, mollified by the sight of her tears, "do explain yourself. I give you my word that I am not conscious of having done anything to make you speak and look thus. Gracey! little mother! can you think that your child—your own Gerty—would hurt you?"

"Little mother" was the school name of the Treherne girls for their friend and protector; and now Gertrude took Grace in her arms, as she had been taken many a time by her in her own childish troubles, and petted and soothed her, begging the while for an explanation of what had so distressed her.

"He's here!" she sobbed, "he's here now—just arrived with your

cousin Lindsay, and they'll say that I came to meet him. I am sure they will. They've said all sorts of horrid things about us already, and you know I never expected him. You know I did not, Gerty! How dare you sit there and smile, you wicked girl, like that? You know I did not!"

"Did not what, dear?"

"Why, know that he would come! How could I?"

"Perhaps you will enlighten me as to who this mysterious '*he*' is, and then, may be, I can answer you."

"Were you, or were you not, aware that Captain Frankland was expected with Mr. Lindsay? Tell me candidly, Gertrude."

"Candidly, no!—but has he really come?" she asked. "What a goose Cuddy is to play such tricks! He only told papa that he was going to bring a friend. But what a pleasant surprise!"

"Pleasant for *you*, I dare say," replied Grace, drily; "as for me, I shall leave this house as soon as it is convenient for you to send me to the station."

"Humph," mused Gertrude; "I think I see. Grace, dearie, there used to be no secrets between us. You don't love me less than you used in the old days, do you?"

"No, my darling, not one bit!"

"But you love some one else a good deal more, slyboots! You love this handsome, grave Steevie!"

"Pshaw!" was Grace's contemptuous reply. "Love *him*!"

"Not a little—little bit?"

"Don't be silly, Gertrude."

"I am so glad you don't like him, dear," said Gerty, hiding her winsome face on Grace's bosom, and creeping close to her, "because, you see, you're so pretty and clever, that other girls would have no chance against you. He's just the man to fancy a clever girl like you, and—and you're my own dearest friend; but you don't love him the least bit, Gracey, dear? I don't mind telling you that I—I—"

A change, curious to behold, came over Grace Lee as these faltering words fell on her ear. The contemptuous smile left her lip, and it quivered with a totally different emotion.

"You!" she gasped, turning deadly pale, and repulsing the lithe and elegant figure that reposed in her arms, as though it had been a snake that had stung her, "you! oh, Gerty!" And there was a depth of reproach and misery thrown into those two little words that I cannot attempt to render. But Gerty only burst out into a peal of merry, musical laughter, and shook her finger at Grace, saying,—

"Oh, you hypocrite! If you do not love him, why shouldn't I?"

"The man's a fool!" replied Grace, vexed at having fallen into the trap.

"What for, dearie?"

"Because he's so mild and humble—that's why. He goes about just

as though he were nobody at all, and lets them all trample upon him down at home, just as their bad, cowardly hearts please, when—when—”

“When what?—eh?”

“Why, when the top of his little finger is worth them all, body and soul together. Because he’s the noblest-hearted man, the kindest, most honourable gentleman that ever won a poor girl’s heart. There! it’s out.”

It was Grace’s turn now to hide her face.

“Woe betide poor me,” said Gerty, with a smile, “if *I* had called him a fool. He would be one if he did not love you, though. He does love you, Gracey?”

“A little—a very little, I think. That’s the worst of it.”

“His loving you only a little?” asked Gerty, archly.

“No, dear,” said Grace, a shadow of pain passing over her flushed face as she spoke; “his loving me at all.”

“You very strange child, why?”

“It will grieve him when— I mean, if he should ever— Gerty, I can never be his wife.”

“Oh, Gracey! Why not?”

“No matter, love. You and yours have been very good to me—most considerate and kind; and in forgetting what—what I am, and giving me your friendship, think that others are equally generous; or, perhaps, do not think about it at all. Others are not equally generous, Gerty.”

“But, dearie, if we, who are only friends—though very staunch and dear ones, you know—love and honour you, as we do, without considering that—without thinking of anything but your sweet, winsome self—surely the man who loves you would do the same.”

“At first he might,” replied Grace, sadly; “but, in the course of time, ill-natured people might pity him; he might repent of having made a nameless girl his wife; he might even tell me so.”

“Not if he is the man you take him to be.”

“I do not think he would say so in words. I don’t depend on their words to know what is going on in people’s minds. He has never *told* me that he loves me, and yet I am sure he does—a little. Were we to marry, he would never tell me that he had grown weary of me—that he was ashamed of his poor foundling of a wife—but I should know it; and, oh, Gerty, it would break my heart!”

Gerty could only reply with a caress.

“But it is no use talking thus,” continued Grace, dashing aside her tears. “He knows what—what I am *not*, and perhaps he is wise, and has determined to forget me.” And then she told of their last meeting, and Steevie’s abrupt departure from his home, with what she had heard from Lady Tremlett of its cause. She also narrated, to the intense indignation of honest Gerty, the versions told by the scandal-mongers of the neighbourhood, both of this and the affair in the old hall. “And so, dearie,” she said in conclusion, “you see that it would never do for me to remain here now that he has come.”

"It would never do for you to go, you goose," replied Gerty, "for then they would say that he had really attempted something wrong. No; if any one has to leave, it must be him."

"Yes, and of course people would declare I had made a dead set at him, and he had run away to escape! A likely story, indeed!"

"Well, then, as there are objections both ways, let's ask Maud what she thinks best. You don't mind trusting little Maud, do you, dearie?"

So Maud was called into the council, and told all. It was a pretty sight to see poor Grace seated between those affectionate girls; the arm of one round her neck, and the arm of the other round her waist, and with a hand of each clasped in both of hers. Not the fiery Grace of half an hour ago, or the quiet, resolute little woman whom we have been accustomed to see at Ruxton Court, but a sad and trembling Grace, full of fears and doubts; one who required much love and sympathy at that moment, and who got it.

"Well, dearest," said Maud, "you know I don't pretend to be as wise as Gerty, but it seems to me that you ought both to remain—for the present, at any rate; and I think that Gracey ought not to be selfish."

"Selfish, Maud!"

"Don't be cross, dear. You've told me to say exactly what I think; didn't you now?"

"Yes! yes! Go on!"

"If Captain Frankland really loves you, and tells you so, and you really love him, you ought to take *his* feelings into consideration. What right have you to make him miserable for a *certainty*, because you fancy there is a *chance* of his making you unhappy some day years hence?"

"He will soon forget me," replied Grace, abstractedly.

"I do not think so badly of him," said Maud. "He has evidently got something preying on his mind. He's unhappy, dear. I never saw a man so altered. I should have hardly known him again."

"Have you seen him, then?" asked Grace, quickly.

"Yes, just now, in the garden with Cuddy; and, oh! such a great big friend of his, that Mr. Jackson he talks about."

"And how is he? how does he look, dearie?"

"Oh, very good-humoured, but rather awkward, I must say."

"What Ste—— Captain Frankland, I mean, awkward?" exclaimed Grace.

"No! no! not Captain Frankland. I was speaking of Mr. Jackson."

"You goose!" said Gertrude. "Do you suppose that Grace wants to hear about your Johnsons and Thompsons?"

"His name is Jackson."

"What's in a name? Your tall, awkward friend, Maud, by any other name, would be quite as uninteresting to Gracey; wouldn't he, dear? What about the man of men?"

"Well, he's looking very haggard and stern, poor fellow. I'm sure he has something on his mind."

“Or is in love,” interrupted Gerty.

“Maud is right,” said Grace. “He has something on his mind—something dreadful. He told me so.”

“Oh gracious! What is it?” demanded the two girls in a breath.

“That he did not say. I only know the fact. He did not give me any particulars.”

“And you did not ask him?”

“Ask him, Gerty!”

“Excuse me. I spoke without reflecting. What on earth can it be?”

“I think I can guess,” said Maud, after a short pause.

“You clever little thing, what is it?” asked her elder sister.

“May I say, Grace dear?”

“Of course you may.”

“Well, then, I think it’s something to do with the murder of his friend, poor Mr. Brandron.” But Grace, remembering what had passed in the old hall, shook her head; and then Maud quoted, in support of her view, Stephen’s refusal to deliver up Brandron’s papers at the inquest, and all that the landlady of the Rising Sun had told her father about there being a secret between the dead man and Steevie.

“But what strikes me as most odd,” said Maud, “is something that we heard only the other day. It seems that on the day of the funeral, Captain Frankland went over to ‘The Wells,’ and made all sorts of inquiries about where Mangerton Grange was. Now, did you not say in one of your letters, when you first went to live with the Colemans, that that was the old name for Tremlett Towers?”

Grace started, flushed, and trembled, at the thought which this statement created.

“Yes,” she said at last, “I did say so.”

“Then you may depend upon it,” said Maud, in the triumphant tone of one whose prophecy is giving signs of fulfilment, “that there is some connection between this poor Mr. Brandron and the Frankland family, though, perhaps, your Steevie does not know it.”

Grace thought of the scene in the old hall, and the strange words which Steevie had spoken in the conservatory at Ruxton Court, and was bewildered.

“It is this that is making him miserable,” continued Maud, “and, oh, Grace, if we—I mean if you could help him to clear up his doubts, and drive this black cloud away!”

“Shall I go up to him, drop a curtsey, and say, ‘Please, sir, give me your confidence’?” said Grace, with a grim attempt at levity.

“No, dearie,” replied Maud; “but you’re so clever, you might win it, if you liked, without appearing to wish for it. It must be so sad to have a grief, and not a friend to share it with.”

“How do you know he has not got a friend to share it with?” asked Gerty. “Don’t be sentimental, puss.”

"Perhaps he has told Cuddy."

"Cuddy's a goose! No one would dream of confiding anything to him."

"You're always running poor Cuddy down, Gerty," said her sister, "and it's very unkind. Isn't it, Grace?"

"I don't know," she replied, wearily, "perhaps it is; but you must remember that I have never seen your cousin, and therefore cannot judge whether or not he is an injured innocent."

"Well, you will see him very soon," said Gertrude, rising, "for there goes the half-hour bell, and we've none of us begun to dress yet."

"I don't think, dear, that I *can* come down. Please make some excuse for me," pleaded poor Grace.

"Oh, dearie, that would never do. You must come down to-day, and we will hold a council of war to-night, when we go to bed, and see what is to be done for the future."

So the friends separated; and half an hour afterwards, Grace sauntered into the drawing-room with an air of the utmost unconcern and indifference, attired in a plain black silk dress, and shook hands with Stephen as though meeting him thus were the most natural thing in the world.

Dear ladies, was I wrong in taking the general public into the sanctum of those young girls, and playing the eavesdropper as I have done? Do you suppose, gentlemen, that you have all the talk to yourselves, in your club windows and smoking-rooms? You have been treated to a conversation which, on the whole, is flattering to your sex, but don't suppose that the dear creatures to whom you devote your hours of idleness invariably sing the same song. When you roll away in your hansoms from opera or ball—when you stroll off to the club after the promenade—when you sit up at night over your soda-water and brandy, in the pleasant country house wherein you are favoured guests, and talk over Mary This, and Clara That, and what you suppose to be passing in the mind of pretty little Rosina, together with the mighty effect which your lordship's gracious presence and condescension is producing upon the sex in general,—in such hours, I say, do not your lofty ears burn sometimes, and are you not conscious that you are being talked over roundly in your turn? Can you flatter yourselves that silent laughter lives only in sleeves of broadcloth, and that nothing but captive sighs are heard in the small hours around toilette-tables, upon which bracelets glitter? Ha! ha! my tall friends, laugh and be gay. "When ignorance"—you know the rest. We are lords of the creation, are we not? we in white chokers! Sultans every man of us, with the world for a harem! Who shall dare to laugh at our Crimean beards? As for me, it is tolerably well known that I keep a familiar, who assumes in public the form of a large bluebottle fly, and whom I am bound to provide with fifteen thousand python's eggs a day for his dinner, under pain of being torn to pieces, but who unroofs houses for me like another Asmodeus; and I as faithfully assure you that

I have never heard anything that would make you wince in the sacred places just indicated. So let us be gay—mighty ones that we are—quaff the flowing bowl, and think of the trophies that we shall win to-morrow.

The result of the council of war was a determination that no notice should be taken of Stephen's arrival; and, to judge by Grace Lee's manner towards him on all occasions, no one would have guessed that his visit gave her the least uneasiness.

As a general rule, it is not pleasant to be bayed at by an ugly cur, but the howls of Doggie were exquisite music in the ears of Stephen Frankland. He had foreseen what interpretations the Coleman family, and, indeed, Grace herself, might place upon his sudden exit from Derbyshire, and it fretted his sensitive mind sorely to think that he should be so misjudged by those he respected—by her he loved. Half a dozen times he essayed to write to Mr. Coleman, to his wife, to his old playmate, Laura, and account for his apparently heartless conduct, but was stopped by the utter impossibility of explaining it, and a sense of the futility of saying anything that was not based upon an explanation. "Now," he thought, "I can find an opportunity to show her that some better cause than this idiotic pride people talk about, or idle superstition, prevents me from trying to win her affection." (The goose could not see that he had won it already.) "Would to Heaven that I could tell her all!" What occasion was there to tell her anything—what need of an explanation, if she did not care for him? None whatever, of course. Steevie was in love; and when people get into that lamentable state, logic and common sense are the last things which occur to their distempered minds.

Accordingly, he, too, set about playing a part, became gay and indifferent; and to anybody who was behind the scenes, there was more real acting going on daily in that quiet Kentish parsonage than is to be seen behind the footlights of several popular metropolitan theatres that could be mentioned. The two principal performers determined that they would do nothing that could betray their actual characters, and, in consequence, made themselves as wretched as their worst enemies could wish them to be; not only themselves, but certain of their very good friends: for no doubt the astute reader has perceived that there was something more than a mere cousinly liking between Cuddy and the lively Gertrude; and, consequently, may imagine that it did not add to the comfort of the former, or of poor Grace, to see the handsome captain always walking by Gerty's side in their rambles, and constantly in possession of her ear at other times. However, Grace took good care to disguise her feelings during this game of cross purposes, and you may imagine how pleasantly the time passed. If people will go play-acting in private life, they must take the consequences, and three days of this work sufficed to cool considerably the friendship between Gerty and Grace, Cuddy and Stephen, and sowed the seeds of a very pretty quarrel between the two latter. However——.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOWEVER——.

HOWEVER! The idea of heading a chapter *however!*

Dear reader, if I only had the wit to write all that *could* be written under such a text, I would print the work in five-and-twenty volumes, bound in morocco, with gilt edges, and my portrait—after a photograph by Smear—opposite the title-page. I'd make my publisher's fortune; think of that, longsuffering man! For myself, I'd smash every ink-bottle in the house, and have currant and raspberry tart, with Devonshire cream, for dinner every day of my life. However—. There it is again!

What is "However"? It is the great high bank, with double posts and rails on the top, and ever such a ditch on each side, which "pounds" us in full cry after our favourite fox, be his name Pleasure, Ambition, Gain, what you will. It is the bane which fills the healthy draught with death, the antidote which renders the poisoned goblet harmless. It is the bridge leading to and fro, connecting this world with that place which is said to have such a peculiar pavement. Look at it! See the swarms of wayfarers going *down*, elbowing, laughing, struggling on, and saying within themselves, "It's very dangerous, it's very wrong; HOWEVER, we think we'll go." How they press forward! how impatient they are of delay! Amidst so dense a crowd, you can hardly recognize the few who are trying to stem the tide in the contrary direction, and who say, "It's very pleasant, it's very easy; HOWEVER, we'd better turn back." Hustle them, knock them down, trample them under foot! What right have they to get in honest people's way, and tread on their corns? Turn back, indeed! We all intend to turn back some day; don't we? Of course we do, and this good intention is never destined to macadamize the region just indicated; never, never! The resolutions made for the future by such fellows as Jack, and Tom, and Harry, are not worth a snap of the fingers; but yours and mine, my dear sir, are very different; so come along.

This is one of those digressions which, I am told, are knocking off fifty-seven pounds eleven and sixpence a page from the commercial value of this story. I don't care! A pretty story it would be if I were to stick to any facts. Shall I say, "Once upon a time there was a secret, and two people who were in love; and the secret bothered them, and somebody found it out, and then it was all right again; you know"—would that sort of thing suit? If so, there it is; and I'll write half a dozen like it every week, and sell them for three hundred guineas apiece.

I concluded the last chapter with that "will-o'-the-wisp" of a word, which has led me thus astray, for a special purpose. What a poor foolish bird is that which sticks his thick head in the sand, and fancies no one can see his plumes! What vastly superior beings were the ladies and gentlemen at Kernden Rectory! They were all so sure that they were each working towards his or her end undiscovered, and that this end was

a good one. Grace Lee was quite sure that she could play her cards so as never to give Stephen the glimmering of an idea respecting the secret which fluttered in her poor little breast. Stephen was quite sure that he could let her see that there was some hidden obstacle between him and her heart, without touching it in the attempt. The Treherne girls were quite sure that they would smooth the path of true love for their friends sooner or later, and that Cuddy never could be jealous. Cuddy was quite sure that he was beginning to hate old Steevie. Good, simple Mr. Treherne was quite sure that nothing extraordinary was going on in his house; and all were perfectly agreed that Gigas was far too stupid to have anything out of the common way on *his* big hands. How—— I had very nearly done it again!

Whilst all these heads were in the sand, Stephen had not neglected the business which had been the cause of his visit to Westborough. He took an early opportunity of telling his host of the discoveries he had made respecting Jim Riley, and the poor afflicted girl who had passed as his sister. The good rector was no less delighted than surprised at the news, and readily acceded to Steevie's request that he would give him his aid towards discovering Nancy's parentage. "And I'm sure it's very noble in you, Captain Frankland," he said, "to take so much trouble about one who has no sort of claim on you."

"No sort of claim upon me!" mused Stephen. "If it should turn out as I suspect!" But he kept his own counsel, and the credit given to his disinterestedness.

Between them they discovered that Mrs. Riley had come into the neighbourhood with the child some fifteen years ago. That, from certain hints she had let drop, it was generally understood that she had come from Norfolk; that she had been in service, and had saved money; that she had married, and lately lost her husband; that a lease of the cottage in which she died had been bought for her by some attorney in London, whose name the steward of the manor could not remember; and that at first the child wore very good clothes—silks and laces—and had a gold chain round its neck.

Stephen also found out that Mr. Lagger had been staying at the Rising Sun, and that since the departure of the detective, Jim Riley had been beforehand with him (Stephen) in the inquiries that he was making amongst the old people of the village. No more information could he obtain far or near.

Oh! if he could only discover the lawyer who had negotiated the lease!

One day, whilst thinking of something—perhaps it would be more true to say some *one*—else, an idea ran full tilt into his head, as ideas sometimes will run, when you are not labouring after them. The same person who had tried to keep Brandron out of the way had, it might be concluded, a hand in sending Mrs. Riley and the child from where they were known.

That Mr. Williams, who had corresponded with the murdered man just before his departure for India, "Might it not be he," mused Stephen, "who had established Mrs. Riley in that quiet Kentish lane? What a blockhead I am not to have thought of this before!" He determined to leave the next day, return to London, see the attorney, and try what else he could get out of him.

It was on the road back to the Rectory from Westborough, where he had been prosecuting his inquiries, that this idea struck him, and, on entering the garden, he found Gertrude and her sister seated on a rustic bench, which surrounded the bole of a huge oak tree, and working away at their—I don't know what to call it—a wondrous and bewildering tangle of coloured worsted, pretty fingers, and sticks; that's what it was! Working away, I repeat, and chatting confidentially. A little startled, a half-guilty smile broke over Gerty's face as Steevie made his presence known, for the sisters were so intent in their converse that they had not noticed his approach.

They began to talk about many unimportant things, and at last a walk in the plantation was proposed. "Only wait a minute or two," said Maud, "Grace will come directly;" but just then her father appeared at his study window, and called her; so little Maud tripped over the green-sward to do his will, whatever it was, bidding her sister not to start till she came back; and so Steevie and Gertrude were left alone under the great oak. Not the least disconcerted were they, either of them: for Gerty was an agreeable, lively girl, and had always plenty to say for herself; and Steevie's thoughts were too much given to another to feel anything awkward in being *tête-à-tête* with Gerty in that quiet, shady spot.

"I do think," said Gertrude, as she watched the crimsoning sunset, "that when our English autumnal days are bright, they are the pleasantest in the whole year."

"They are indeed," Steevie replied; "but, like other pleasant things, they must come to an end—at least, for me. I shall have to thank you all to-morrow for having given me some of the pleasantest hours I have spent since I returned from India;" and Steevie sighed.

"And why particularly to-morrow, Captain Frankland?" asked Gerty, with a smile.

"I regret to say that I must leave you then."

"To-morrow—already!" she said, opening wide her soft eyes, and looking a little scared. "Why—why—you have had no shooting at all yet." She paused, then uttered the last words rapidly, as though the subject had not been in her mind when she began to speak.

"I have had something else to do; besides, your cousin—"

"Oh, don't talk of Cuddy and shooting together. He cannot hit a barn door. Stupid fellow! But he has got leave for you to shoot over the Brixford covers next week, and you really must stay."

"I cannot."

"Oh dear, dear!" said Gerty; "what a pity! and you've lost all your time bothering yourself about that stupid Nancy, when—" Here something seemed to occur to this pretty intriguer, and she continued, in quite a changed tone, "But I'm sure it's very generous and good of you to take so much trouble about the poor girl."

Stephen smiled, but made no reply.

"Because, you see, she is so very helpless and alone," Gerty continued.

"She has her bro—I mean Riley, to take care of her."

"Yes, but I don't quite believe in him, you know; and if he were to change, and desert her?"

"Then she would indeed be helpless."

"I don't exactly know what to think about her plight," mused Gerty, her fingers busy with some grass which she had plucked as she spoke. "Sometimes it seems as though her loss of intellect were a blessing."

"How so?"

"Because, poor thing, she does not know what people think of her."

"What do they think of her?" asked Stevie, eagerly.

"I don't know—I—I—cannot exactly explain," stammered Gerty. "It isn't so much what people *say* in such a case as what they do, or rather, what they would do. Suppose, now, that Nancy were sensible, and like any other young woman of her class; would any honest working man ask her to become his wife?"

"Why not?"

"Well, I don't know; perhaps in that sort of life they don't care about—about such things. If she had been brought up as a gentlewoman, now, it would have been different, of course."

"I cannot see why," said Stevie, getting hot, and fidgeting.

"Because, Captain Frankland, you have not mixed with people whom nobody knows anything about, and, consequently, have never had an opportunity of testing what would be your sentiments towards them," replied Gertrude, in as careless a tone as she could assume.

"Miss Treherne," said Stephen, with flashing eyes, "if I thought that I could entertain towards a lady who was alone and unprotected in the world one sentiment which I would not presume to express about a princess,—if I knew one,—I would not let my black heart beat again in the presence of an honest woman."

A sob of delight sprang up into Gerty's throat as Stephen spoke thus, but she kept it down, and only smiled demurely.

"It takes one back into the days of chivalry," she said, "to hear such gallant words."

"They are something more than *words*, Miss Treherne."

"Oh, I do not doubt that you mean what you say," she answered, "and I flatter myself that there are thousands of gentlemen who think just as you think; they would not be gentlemen else. Civility costs so very little. But if some sacrifice were required, how would it be? For

example, suppose that you had a brother—a *real* brother, mind—and he were to fall in love with a girl without friends or family; would your Frankland pride consent to their marriage?"

"Much good has come of our Frankland pride," said Stephen, bitterly.

"That is no answer to my question."

"I answer it thus:—Our happiness is our own, to make or mar. His marriage is usually the most important step that a man can take. In taking it, he has no right to disregard advice, because it affects the welfare of another; but there is a point beyond which no one should interpose, and, for weal or for woe, he should have his way."

"And the lady?"

"I say the same of her. Who have more to gain or peril by a union than those whom it makes one for life? Let them have every opportunity of discovering the best and the worst in each other's disposition, and then any one who attempts to join or separate them against their will, incurs a responsibility which no one has a right to assume. I think strongly upon this subject," said Steevie, after a pause. "Perhaps I am wrong. You have asked me a question, and I have answered it as best I can."

"Thank you; but tell me one thing more," said Gerty, turning aside her face, and plucking at the bark of the great oak. "Am I right in gleaning from what you have said, that you pay little regard to such considerations as birth, and blood, and pedigree?"

"Oh dear, no! On the contrary, no one esteems them more highly. Why, they influence the entire creation—from the lowest plant, the minutest animal, up to man. It is impossible to disregard them. Would you plant a briar in your rosery, Miss Treherne, and expect it to rival your choice standards? Would you think me a clever sportsman if I were to enter your shaggy cart-horse colt for the Derby, or take Doggie out partridge-shooting as a pointer? Do you blame a milk-maid for not having the grace of body and mind which marks your thoroughbred gentlewoman? No! Then, if the power which has created us has provided that birth and breeding, or the want of them, shall produce certain effects, can we be wrong if we estimate them at their proper value?"

"Poor Charley always said you were proud," said Gertrude, in a musing tone, from which she could not exclude a shade of vexation.

"If admiration of what is generous and strong, noble and pure, be an indication of pride," returned Stephen, "then I confess poor Charley to have been right, and that I am proud."

"Ah, but now you have shifted your ground. We were discussing the value of good birth, long pedigrees, and all that. How many persons are there, who, having a family tree as high as this oak, are, nevertheless, weak in body and mind, selfish, and the very reverse of noble or anything that is good!"

"I am afraid there are too many."

“And, on the other hand, look at that poor Mrs. Wantley, whom you were telling papa about this morning. Take into consideration her means of being so, and can you deny that she is generous and noble?”

“Certainly not.”

“But still you consider birth and pedigree as everything,” said Gerty, the vexation that she felt deepening in her tone and manner. “I do not understand you, Captain Frankland.”

“Because you—quite unwittingly, I believe—misinterpret me. I do attach much value to birth and pedigree, but only as a means for producing a certain end. Nature has decreed that such and such qualities shall be perpetuated in the descendants of those who, at some time or other, have possessed them; and the knowledge of this law leads us to cultivate those qualities, if they are good, and even to simulate them when we feel that they are imperfectly developed within us. I value what is called ‘good blood,’ then, not for itself, but for what it is *likely* to produce.”

“I don’t pretend to be able to argue with you,” said Gertrude, looking a little puzzled, “but it seems to me that your doctrine would do a cruel injustice to the low-born, because you must naturally look upon them as *likely* to be mean and depraved.”

“If merely applied to them in a physical sense, it would,” replied Steevie; “but if thoroughly carried out, as it ought to be, it would not. We should remember, Miss Treherne, that our virtues and our vices have ancestors, and are transmitted, with the colour of our eyes and the contour of our features, from one generation to another, and that diseases of the mind descend no less fatally than the ills which are hereditary in certain races.”

“Oh, but that is not universally true. Did you hear what Cuddy was saying the other day about the sons of great lawyers and generals, whose fathers’ abilities have won them peerages?”

“I did. And I grant that just as skilful medical treatment can turn a weak constitution into a strong one, so careful mental culture can convert small natures into great ones, only the physical qualities are more easily transmitted than the mental ones.”

“In the instances which my cousin mentioned, they are not transmitted at all,” she replied, not to be moved from the point she had in her mind.

“Let us be patient,” said Steevie, “and wait a generation or two before we assume that. Did you ever keep pigeons, Miss Treherne?”

“Why, where are your eyes? My beautiful fantails! Have you never noticed them on the roof?”

“I am ashamed to say that I have yet to make their acquaintance. But tell me, have you never been annoyed by finding a coloured feather in the white plumage of some of the young birds?”

“I believe that you are a conjuror, Captain Frankland,” Gerty replied, with an astonished look. “We never had any but pure white birds, and

were so proud of them, until last spring, when several of the nestlings came out quite piebald! Why was that?"

"Because they have inherited a black feather from some remote ancestor; exactly as, amongst us, the scion of some family noted for its bravery sometimes shows a white one," replied Stephen, smiling. "Depend upon it that there is much truth in the old proverb, 'What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh,' and that it has a moral as well as a physical significance."

"Then," said Gerty, catching him up quickly, her pretty face lighted up with a bright, eager smile, "when you find a person in possession of all the good qualities—mental and personal—which high birth and an educated ancestry is supposed to bestow, you would conclude that they had been actually inherited?"

"Or that, by extraordinary culture, they had been acquired, which practically comes to the same thing. For what I said before, I repeat—I value high birth and pure descent merely as a *means* for an end, or rather, a source from which certain qualities may reasonably be expected to flow. Granted that some thoroughbred horses are slugs, and some thoroughbred men, snobs; that is the exception to the general rule. Tell me that I may have my choice out of a lot of hunters that I have never seen, and I will choose the one which has the reputation of the best pedigree. Mount me haphazard, and let me *find* that my nag can carry me through a long day at the head of the hunt, and I will not trouble you to say who his father and mother were. I ought to apologize for talking thus to a young lady," said Stephen, checking himself and turning red, "but you know I am a dragoon, and dragoons are wont to indulge in horsey talk."

"I think your illustration very good," Gerty replied. "It makes me understand exactly what you mean. Pray go on."

"Well, I follow the same rules in society. Give one the choice of what class one should make—I should make friends in, and I should say, give me the thoroughbreds; but if one encounters a person beautiful alike in person and in mind, one would be a dolt to avoid her—him, I mean, because—because I—I mean, what on earth does it matter what her father or mother are like, or who they are? You are not obliged to marry them."

Oh, Steevie! Steevie! where are your thoughts wandering? Who was talking about marrying, or giving in marriage? Puss! puss! poor pussy! What a fine cat is this which you have let out of the bag! There she is—head down, back arched, tail in the air—rubbing herself complacently against Gerty's skirts, and purring demurely. But Steevie does not see her—does not know—as my good critics do—that there is not one rag of his argument which will hold on to another; and so he goes on, his head well buried in the sand as heretofore.

"There is nothing like an example," he continued, warming into his subject. "Look at your friend Gra—Miss Lee. If she were a duchess in her own right, she could not move with a more graceful dignity—a

dignity which inspires respect without repelling. She could not be more beautiful, more thoroughly gentle and good, if the concentrated blood of a hundred belted earls and noble châtelains were in her veins. What can it matter, then, that her origin remains unknown? Is it good? then every requisite which this word demands is fulfilled. Is it bad? then all the more credit to her for having overcome every evil influence, and being what she is."

"The darling! But oh, Steevie!—may I call you Steevie just for a little time?" continued Gerty, checking herself, and clasping her little white hands together with an imploring air that was not to be resisted—"I should be able to say what I have—what I want—to say to you so much, oh, so much better, if you would not think it odd, and let me call you Steevie. Long before we saw you we all liked you so much by that name, for it was the name by which dear Charley knew and loved you. Maud and I have always talked of you as Steevie," said the frank girl, "as Charley's Steevie, you know, and associated with the name so much that is brave and true and gentle, that just now, when I was going to take a very great liberty, and say something which I could not say to Captain Frankland, the familiar word sprang unbidden to my lips. May I go on? May I speak to dear Charley's friend as I would have spoken to dear Charley himself, if God had spared him to us?"

The grave look which had deepened almost into sternness as Gertrude began, changed and grew sad when she mentioned her dead brother's name, and then slowly melted into that sweet, almost womanly smile of his that we know of. He looked her searchingly in the face, but its kind, anxious expression never wavered. There was no romantic nonsense in Gerty.

"Call me what you please," he said; "say on, and I will listen as poor Charley's friend."

"First of all," Gerty commenced, "tell me; you have no sister?"

"No, thank God!"

Gertrude expected quite a different reply, and was a little taken aback.

"I never had a sister," Stephen continued; "I am quite alone in the world now. I have no home, no brother, no mother! I am the last of my name, and again I say, Thank God!"

"That expression betokens a strange state of mind, Ste—— Captain Frankland, and—pardon me for saying so—rather a morbid one."

"Miss Treherne," replied Stephen, turning his face aside, and speaking in a troubled but deliberate voice, "you will hear and observe many things about me—perhaps you have already heard and observed some—which may make you consider my conduct strange, my mind morbid. I should like to be thought of kindly and well in this house—to leave a good name amongst your family, and—and your friends. It is a bitter sorrow to me not to be liked and respected by those I like and respect. You will give me credit for this, Miss Treherne?"

"Readily—entirely!"

"Then think what it must cost me to say, 'I am going deliberately to do things which will lose me your esteem, and I cannot offer a single excuse for them—I cannot even bid you suspend your judgment, and let time justify me.'"

"I know what you mean," said Gertrude, quickly; "you have discovered who murdered Mr. Brandron—you are going to give him up to justice, and you fancy we will all think you revengeful and bloodthirsty. Is it not so?"

"You are wrong—quite wrong," Stephen replied. "If the—if that person were to be discovered, and—and punished, it will not be through my instrumentality."

"I am glad of that—very glad! Not but that I should like to know that such a wretch should have his deserts; only one does not like one's friends to be mixed up in such things. Besides, fancy the after life of a murderer! It must be a far greater punishment for him to let him live in never-ending remorse, in hourly fear of detection, than to strangle him on the gallows. And then, villain though he must be, I dare say there are some innocent ones who care for him, and on whom cruel people would visit his sins."

"Is it not written, that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children?" said Stephen, in a changed, husky voice.

"Ay, by God—not by man, Captain Frankland; and not even by God under the covenant of the New Testament, if I read it aright."

"You asked to call me Steevie," he said, with glittering eyes. "Dear, generous girl, you little know what comfort there is in those words."

"You require comforting?"

"God help me! no one more," he moaned, covering his face with his hands.

"Then seek it in HIS word and promises."

"I have, I have! But, oh! if I had a—if I were not so utterly alone!"

"Steevie," she said, laying her hand timidly, but with sisterly tenderness, upon his bowed head, "dear Steevie, Charley's Steevie! listen to what I was about to say (but with far less reason and force than I can say it now), when by mere accident I touched upon a subject which—I know not why, neither do I ask—has struck such a sad chord in your heart. You are the prey of some deep and secret sorrow, Steevie; we can all see that, and we have all grieved in beholding it. Do not fancy for an instant that I ask, or wish to become your *confidante*," she added, quickly, as he raised his head, and was about to make a reply, "but share your troubles with some one you *must*, Steevie; or they will wear your sensitive nature into the grave. Who knows," she continued, more gaily, "that you are not fretting yourself about nothing at all? An explanation—a reflection, in other eyes, of what appears to you so black and gloomy—in eyes that love you, Steevie—may present a picture vastly different from that over

which you brood so painfully. A sorrow shared is a sorrow more than half assuaged. Share your sorrows then, Steevie, but only with her who has the right to bear them with you. If poor Charley were alive you would be guided by him—be guided now by poor Charley's sister, who cannot bear to see his friend so wretched, and who sympathizes with him from the very bottom of her heart."

"What would you have me do?"

"Share your griefs—whatever they may be—with the girl you love."

"I do not—I mean, I must not love any one!"

"Now, Steevie," replied Gertrude, "this is folly. Do you suppose that we are all deaf and dumb and blind down in Kent here? Unless we knew you to be the good man and honourable soldier that you are, we should—*not* being bereft of our senses—think very badly of you; but we are aware that love makes cowards, and—geese of the bravest of you men; and for all your Victoria cross, and your scars; your bronzed cheek, and the battle-flash which sometimes lights up your eye, we know you to be a very coward in the presence of a certain silken skirt. Do you suppose that little Maud and I have not noticed you start, and turn pale, and tremble, when it has rustled past you? Take heart of grace, Steevie, and—and don't tell fibs. Look up, sir, this moment, and give a plain answer to a plain question."

Stephen did look up, but disclosed a face so changed, so haggard and ghastly, that the sight of it frightened the playful words that hung on Gerty's lips, and she merely said,—

"You love Grace Lee."

"With all my heart, with all my soul," Steevie exclaimed, with warmth. "I love her now, and I shall love her till my last hour, but I can never tell her so. Good God! what is that?" he cried, starting from his seat, as a low cry—half sob, half wail—was heard from the other side of the great oak.

He darted round, and there saw Grace Lee herself—or rather what might have been taken for her wraith, so pale and lifeless did it seem—standing with one hand pressed upon her heart, and the other stretched out towards the great tree, vaguely seeking for support. She would have fallen if Stephen had not caught her in his arms; but at his touch a shudder ran through her frame, and with a mighty effort she regained sufficient strength to repulse him.

"Maud told me you were here," she gasped—"that you were waiting for me; and I heard you mention my name, Gerty, and—and—I came; and, oh, Gerty, you know you sent for me!"

But Gerty had disappeared, and therefore there came no response to this appeal.

"Let go my hand, Captain Frankland," poor Grace cried, flushing crimson as she saw that they were left alone. "It is cruel—unmanly of you! How dare you detain me thus, when I wish to leave?"

Grace had a manner of saying "How dare you?" on great occasions, which was not to be withstood. Stephen released her hand, and she sank upon the rustic seat, burst into tears, and sobbed, "Leave me, oh, *do* leave me!"

"I will," said Stephen, sadly; "but not till I have said what, in common justice—in common mercy, you should hear. You have heard too much not to hear still more."

"I heard my name. I thought—Maud said Gertrude wanted me—and—and—"

"Then you heard what followed?"

"Yes—yes! but you did not intend it for my ears. Do, do consider it unsaid, and now go—leave me here, and send Gerty back."

"Presently. For the first and, may be, the last time, I must say to you what I have already said of you—what has been in my heart of you many and many a day; I love you, Grace, as I never loved before—as I shall never love again; but too fondly, too well, to ask you to give one kind thought for one who may bear a dishonoured name."

"A dishonoured name!"

"Hear me out, and judge how deep is that love when it forces me to confide to you a secret which I thought I should have carried with me to my grave, unless—but no matter! And, oh, Grace, if—no, I will not, dare not hope. Listen! A few days before I first saw you, when I was last here, a murder was committed in the wood behind Westborough Church. The man to whose gentleness and care I owed my life was the victim. I have too good reason to believe that he fell by the hand of my own father."

Grace Lee sprang to her feet. "Gracious heavens!" she exclaimed, "I see it all!" and then, when he expected to see horror and aversion stamped upon her face, it was suffused by an expression of unutterable love and pity, and in a tone of ineffable tenderness, she murmured softly, "My poor Steevie! oh, my poor, poor Steevie!"

It was enough. The next moment she was clasped to his heart, and ——. Come away, reader. No one but the little birds saw what followed, and they won't tell.

"Why, what can be keeping dinner?" inquired Mr. Treherne, looking at his watch. "I declare it is a quarter to seven!"

"Hush, papa!" replied Maud, leading the rector into the bow-window of the drawing-room; "they've only just come in."

"Who have only just come in?"

"Grace and Captain Frankland; they—they've been out for a walk."

"What, in the dark?"

"They did not know it was dark—they lost their way in the wood."

"Really?" rejoined the good clergyman; "how very disagreeable!" Little Maud smiled.

"But I'm very glad," continued her father, in a confidential whisper,

“that they seem to have overcome that coolness, not to say antipathy, which they seemed to have towards each other.”

“Antipathy, papa! What *do* you mean?”

“You are too young and giddy, my pet,” he said, patting his pretty daughter fondly on her fair, cool shoulder, “to notice such things; but it was quite clear from their manner, and the way they have avoided each other, that they had taken a mutual dislike. It is very foolish and uncharitable, Maud, to take dislikes; and I hope when they become better acquainted—for they are both very estimable young persons—that they will overcome such nonsense.”

“Why, you dear darling of an old blind bat!” cried little Maud, at the end of a peal of musical laughter; “they”—and she threw her arms round her father’s neck, and whispered in his ear.

“Well, I never was so much astonished in my life!” he exclaimed; and his looks did not belie the assertion.

Some twenty minutes or so before this conversation took place, Grace rushed into Gerty’s room, flung herself upon that young lady, and cried, “Oh, Gerty, what am I to do? I am so happy!”

“Be as happy as you please, dear,” replied she, demurely; “but pray don’t tumble my *berthe*. I declare I shall be obliged to change it, and I put it on fresh not five minutes ago!”

“If you are so provoking, Gerty, I will not tell you what has happened.”

“Very well, dear; go and dress for dinner. You’re very late!” and the provoking one proceeded leisurely to select another lace *berthe*.

“Gerty, dear!”

“Well!”

“He loves me, he loves me, he loves me,” cried the happy girl, with a little jump of delight at each repetition of the phrase; “and I’ve told him—”

“Told him what?”

Strong-minded Grace Lee began to cry; whereupon the provoking one (who, in truth, was burning to hear the news) was provoking no longer, and heard with great delight how it was that the pair, whom she had left under the old oak, had lost their way in the wood, and what sort of conversation had made them forget all about dinner-time, and that it was getting dark.

“And he’s going to write to Mr. Coleman to-night,” said Grace; “and we’re going to India very soon, and you and little Maud are to be bridesmaids, and your papa is to marry us—very quietly, you know; and I believe that it was all through you, you darling; and I told such a big fib—and, oh, I *am* so happy!”

She was certainly not coherent, though.

“But what fib did you tell, dear?” asked Gerty.

“Why, I told him that I only came up when I heard you say my

name ; and really, I came just as you said *his*. I heard you call him Steevie, Gerty ; and, oh, I was in such a rage ! I was so wickedly jealous of you, it was all I could do to prevent myself from springing upon you, and tearing your eyes out !”

“ Mercy on us ! what an escape I’ve had ! And did you hear all we aid afterwards ?”

“ No, dear, not all ; but Steevie told me.”

“ That was very silly of him,” said Gertrude, looking vexed.

“ No, dear, it was not. At the risk of my taking offence at knowing how his proposal had come about, he told me all that had passed between you and him ; and if there is one quality that I prize more than another in that man,” she continued, proudly, “ it is his unswerving honesty and truth.”

“ You are a pair for that, I think,” said Gerty, kissing her.

“ No, no, we’re not,” Grace replied, demurely ; “ I did not tell him half how I love him. I was very reserved and cold to him, poor fellow.”

“ Well, we must not stop talking here. They’re waiting dinner ; so run along to your room, change your dress, dearie, and I’ll come and help you. It will not take five minutes to slip on that black silk.”

“ Yes, but I should like—if you thought there would be time—I should so like to wear my white muslin with the pink spots. Don’t you think, dear”—and she sidled up towards Gerty, and began to fidget with the buckle of her waist, her eyes cast down the while—“ don’t you think, dear, that I should look nicer in my muslin ?”

Gerty laughed. “ Why, where is our strong-minded Grace, who used to profess such contempt for finery, and all the vanities ?”

“ Gone, Gerty, clean gone, I think,” she replied, in a pitiful tone. “ He is strong-minded enough for both ; and since his strong arm has been round me, and his big, brave heart open to my own, I have felt so weak and happy, that I am afraid I shall never be strong-minded any more—only don’t tell him !”

Do not say “ afraid,” bonnie Grace Lee. Never regret the loss of that which made you less perfect woman, though you are committing deadly sin in the lovely eyes of the Honourable and Reverend Mrs. Corbyle and her set. If “ dearest Francis” had heard your confession, you would, no doubt, have fallen greatly in the esteem of that exemplary young man. There are some even, I suppose, who, reading this part of your history, will think you soft, and sentimental, and Missyish. Let them ! Nature was altogether wrong, wasn’t she ? when she ordained that woman’s strength should be in her weakness. Go forth, ye strong-minded ones—*sans crinoline*—in blue spectacles, and stockings to match ! regenerate the world, and turn the milk of human kindness sour with your vinegar aspects. Teach the so-called lords of the creation their proper places. Be lawyers, doctors, statesmen, tax-collectors—anything you like ; but spinsters for ever ! Only when this flood of wisdom that you would bring about

does cover the world, and demolish the sort of women some of us love and honour, and who wield a power over us—that I have my doubts about your ever attaining—then let an ark be made, in which a few Grace Lees may be preserved, in case it should turn out after all that they make the best Christians, wives, mothers, and friends.

And if there be a vacancy on board for a cabin boy, let application be made to the publisher of this work for the address of a young man—steady, honest, and obliging, with a good character from his last place—who will be glad to accept the situation.

So Grace Lee came down to dinner in her white muslin with the pink spots; and the fish was boiled to rags, and the haunch of mutton overdone.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH POOR GRACE LEE'S NEW-BORN HOPES ARE SHIPWRECKED.

“CUDDY,” said Mr. Treherne, as he rose, and was about to quit the dinner-table soon after the girls had left the room, “you will find more claret in the cellaret. Captain Frankland, when you have quite done dessert, I should like to speak to you for a few moments, in my study.”

“Holloa!” said Jackson, when the door closed upon his host, “what’s the matter?”

“Never you mind, Gigas,” observed Cuddy, who was in the secret; “you go on eating those plums, and you shall have the cholera morbus, and be buried like a gentleman, to the great relief of your family.”

Steevie lost no time in following Mr. Treherne, and found him deep in the mysteries of Bradshaw.

“My daughter Maud has told me, Captain Frankland,” he said, “that you have made a proposal of marriage to our dear friend, Miss Lee, and that you have been so fortunate as to be accepted.”

“You may, indeed, say fortunate, sir. I would have told you of this myself, sir, and so would Grace, I know, if we had had an opportunity.”

“I am sure you would—I am sure you would. I give you joy with all my heart; but there are other persons of more importance than I, my dear young friend, deep as is my interest in you both, to be informed and consulted with.”

“I know what you mean. I am going to write to Mr. Coleman by this night’s post, and so is Grace.”

“Grace may write, my dear boy, but you must go and *see* him. You must go and see your parents, and consult them. There are so many things to be weighed and discussed on a subject like this, that if you were to write letters for a month you would not conclude anything properly. No! There is nothing like talking matters over face to face. Now I see

here," he went on, pointing to his Bradshaw, "that the early train, which leaves Poundbridge at seven"—poor Steevie winced. He had been thinking how nice it would be to show Grace, by the pleasant light of early morning, how it was that they had lost their way in the gloaming—"arrives in London," continued Mr. Treherne, "just in time for you to catch the mid-day express. By this you can get home to dinner. You might have a long talk with Sir George in the evening, and a couple of hours next morning might suffice to arrange all that need at present be arranged with dear Grace's guardian."

"She is of age—her own mistress in every respect. Mr. Coleman is only her trustee."

"Be it so. You know best. Still he must be consulted. Go then, my dear friend; and the quicker you are back, the better I shall be pleased; only you must excuse my saying that I cannot consent to your remaining in my house (under present circumstances) for one hour more than is absolutely necessary, until and unless everything is properly arranged, with the consent of your family and her—her trustee."

The rector's tone was very kind, but so firm, that Steevie gave in at once—indeed, how could he do otherwise? "It is rather hard, you'll admit," he said, with a brighter smile than had lighted his eye for many a day, "to leave her so very soon; but you are quite right, Mr. Treherne, and I thank you much for your good counsel. I will see Mr. Coleman, and—and I will undertake to bring you my father's consent to my marriage."

"That's capital—capital! I should have thought very poorly of you if you had not felt it a great bore to go; and more poorly still if you had not made up your mind to do what is right in the end. And now I will not keep you any longer from the drawing-room. God bless you, my dear young friend! If Grace had been my own child, I could not give her to you with more confidence or less regret. Ah, poor Charley!"

In the hall Stephen encountered Jackson, who seized him by the hand, and nearly dislocated three of his fingers in his herculean grasp. "Cuddy's told me," he whispered, "and—and I ain't a clever fellow, you know, or eloquent and that, but I do wish you joy, Steevie; I do with all my heart. It seems like a good omen."

"Of what?"

Gigas blushed like a girl of sixteen, and began to stammer something about its bringing good back to the chambers; in the midst of which incoherent utterances, Steevie thanked him for his good wishes, and passed on.

The folks at Kernden Rectory were too kind and well bred to say or do anything which could embarrass the happy lovers, and so the evening passed much as many of its predecessors had done; except that the pleasant circle of friends broke up and separated for the night rather earlier than usual, as though by common consent.

Grace retired to her room alone, wrote a short business-like letter to her trustee, and to Mrs. Coleman a long and affectionate epistle, in which she opened her heart to the jolly matron from whom she had received so many acts of kindness; and this done, took out her Bible and began to read, breaking off every now and then, as her mind *would* stray from the page, to wonder whether her happiness were real, or merely a dream, from which she should wake before the morning dawned.

It was long past midnight when a slim figure, draped in white, and which might have been taken for a ghost but for its rosy cheeks, glided into the room where the Treherne girls slept, and sat itself at the foot of the bed.

“Gerty, Gerty,” it said, in a low voice, “are you awake, dear Gerty?”

This last appeal, in a louder tone, and accompanied by a shake, settled the question, and Gertrude and her sister sprang up together with cries of alarm.

“Oh, Grace! what has happened?” gasped Gerty.

“Don’t say it’s thieves!” said Maud, really frightened, and stopping her ears lest she should hear the dreaded word.

“No, no, dears; there is nothing the matter—really nothing. I only came to ask a question. I’m sorry I woke you. I thought that perhaps you were not *quite* asleep. I want to know, Gerty dear, if it would be very wrong—if I might—if there would be any harm, dearie, in my going down and giving him his breakfast. The carriage is ordered for him at six o’clock, and it will be so uncomfortable for him if there is no one up to make his tea.”

“Bother him and his tea,” cried Gerty, in assumed indignation. “You bad, wicked girl to come waking us out of our beauty-sleep about your wretched *him* and his breakfast! Go away! Avaunt, this moment!”

“Oh, but she would so like to see him off, Gerty,” pleaded little Maud, “and it is so early for him to go. If it would not be right for her to go down alone, I’ll get up now—is it time, Gracey?—and help her. Let me get up and dress.”

“Well, I never supposed that two girls could make such fools of themselves as to get up in the middle of the night to bother about a man’s breakfast. What, are there no servants in the house? They will give him his breakfast just as comfortably as you can.”

“You did not think so when Cuddy left the last time, Gerty,” replied Maud. “You made me get up to do propriety whilst you gave *him* his breakfast, and——no, I will not be smothered—hold her off, Gracey. Oh, you ought to protect me when— Goodness, gracious! What’s that?”

It was the sound of breaking glass, and Gerty, startled, desisted from the attempt to smother the tell-tale.

“Oh dear! it’s thieves. I knew there were thieves,” whimpered Maud, clinging to her sister.

“Nonsense, child. Thieves do not make such a noise as that. It’s

that great clumsy Mr. Jackson has poked something through his window."

"Mr. Jackson isn't clumsy," replied Maud. "Besides, his room is not on that side of the house."

"Hark! Some one is walking in the passage. It's Steevie's step, I know it," said Grace. "Hush, dear, don't cry" (this to the trembling Maud). "We are quite safe, even if it be thieves, now."

But still the three girls listened with painful anxiety for the sounds which followed. They heard Steevie descend the stairs, open the hall door, and go out. They heard him rustling through the evergreens which grew under his window. They heard the latch of the iron gate "click, click," as though he had gone out into the road. In about ten minutes, which seemed to them an hour, he returned, remounted the stairs softly, closed his door after him, and then all was silent as before.

"What *can* have happened?" said Grace, under her breath.

"Pho! nothing at all," replied Gertrude, sinking back upon her pillow. "As I said before, only of the wrong person, he's knocked something—perhaps his horrid pipe—through the window, and has gone down to fetch it. That's all."

"Perhaps so; but, oh! I do so wish the morning would come," sighed Grace.

"So do I, dear," Gerty rejoined, "as it seems that I am to have no more sleep. Well—ll! did it look vexed? Come, then, and be kissed and patted by its big child." And Gerty drew Grace to her side, and—was as good as her word. "And I'll tell you what we'll do," she said, after a while; "we'll all get up and give him his breakfast, and then no one can say anything."

Grace pressed her hand in silence, and soon afterwards left the room.

"How changed she is!—all in a moment, too, as it were," observed Maud, when the sisters were once more alone.

"She's happy, dear," was the reply. "Go to sleep."

Stephen Frankland smoked a couple of his muscular cheroots, with Cuddy and Gigas in the deserted kitchen, to the chirping of the crickets; and when at last he retired to his room, threw himself into an easy chair, and thought of all the wise resolves which those simple words, "My poor, poor Steevie," had blown away into thin air, never again to settle, cloud-like, upon the clear horizon of his life. What a true adviser, what a prophet, was Gerty! He had shared his griefs and fears, and how much lighter, how much happier he was! Grace loved him through all, and in spite of all—*would* love him, as she had said with her own bright lips, more dearly, if possible, than before, if the sorrow and the shame he dreaded were to fall upon his house. Oh, he was a happy man that night! He made plans for the morrow. He would go straight, he thought, to Ruxton Court, settle all with Mr. Coleman, and get him to

arrange the affair at "The Towers." He could not bear to see his father again, and it gave him a little trouble to think that the wedding must take place at the Colemans' house, when he reflected what Sir George would be called upon to say and do upon the occasion. However, he consoled himself by the thought that the ordeal would only last for an hour or two, and would end by his carrying away Grace—his first love—to happier scenes, as his wife.

From these reflections he was roused by a crash of glass, and something hard and heavy fell on the table, and rolled from the table to the floor.

We know what followed. He went out, searched the shrubbery, and the garden, looked up and down the lane, but found no one, heard no sound, and so returned to his room.

"Some drunken tramp," he thought, "passing by, and seeing a light in the window, has thrown a stone at it."

But where was the stone?

Stephen searched where he had heard it fall, and found it. To his surprise, he saw that a folded paper was attached to it firmly by a piece of faded black ribbon. It was some time before he could undo the knots, and then he read what was written on the paper.

"This precious Steevie will miss his train if he does not make haste," said Gertrude Treherne to her sister, whilst busy making the tea for the breakfast of the departing guest. "Where's Grace?"

"Not down yet."

"Well, she's a nice girl, to wake people up in the middle of the night to get them to come down early with her, and not to make her appearance after all."

"Perhaps they are out in the garden together."

"No, Grace would not do that, I am sure. It seems so odd that *he's* not down. Oh, Williams," she said to the servant, as he entered with some dish, "have you called Captain Frankland?"

"Yes, Miss—more than an hour ago."

"And I knocked at Grace's door myself," said Maud, "and she answered me."

"What can she be doing?"

"If you please, Miss," interpolated Williams, "Elizabeth went up to Miss Lee's room about half an hour since with a letter."

"What! has the post come in already?"

"No, Miss. It was not a post letter."

"What was it, then? Who sent it?"

"I don't know, Miss. Perhaps Elizabeth—"

Gertrude did not wait to hear the rest, but sprang two stairs at a time up to Grace's room.

"Grace! Grace!" she cried, knocking at the door.

No answer!

“Oh, Grace, do say something! Grace!”

Still silence!

“Oh dear! what shall we do! what shall we do!” she cried, wringing her hands, whilst Maud, who had followed, stood by, wondering and asking what could have happened.

“Is anything wrong, Miss Treherne?” demanded Jackson, who at that moment appeared on the scene.

“Yes!—no!—that is—oh, Grace, do answer!”

“Good heavens! is Miss Lee ill? Where’s Frankland?”

“Gone, sir!” said the maid Elizabeth, from the foot of the stairs. “He left before five o’clock, and gave me a letter for Miss Lee, which I took up to her just now.”

“In her room?”

“Yes, sir.”

Jackson rattled the door, and banged it with his knuckles loud enough to wake the dead. It was locked inside.

“Miss Lee!—answer, pray! Your friends are dreadfully anxious. Miss Lee!!!”

No sound in reply.

“Shall I break open the door?”

“Oh yes! please do—now at once!” cried Gerty.

Gigas just seemed to lean his shoulder against the door, and in it flew.

They found Grace completely dressed, sitting on the floor, and staring at them as they entered, but with no sight in her gaze. Staring, pale as ashes, through them, past them, into vacancy—staring as a corpse might stare into futurity.

Gertrude and Maud flung themselves upon the ground beside her, twined their arms round her, called her by every endearing name. They could not rouse her. They brought every sort of restorative, and forced them upon her—in vain! Nothing that they could do averted that stony, lack-lustre stare into vacancy. She let them raise her to her feet. She let Jackson lift her—and he did it tenderly—and carry her to her bed. She let the girls take off the pretty dress—never worn before—which she had put on that morning because it was a colour that Steevie liked. She let the doctor come and feel her pulse, and shake his head over her. She even murmured “Thank you” now and again, as little services were rendered her; but still, through all, that horrid vague stare into vacancy!

At last, Mr. Treherne noticed that she held something clenched in one of her hands. They opened it as gently as they could—she not resisting—and found there the letter she had received, crushed up. A wild, blotted, incoherent scrawl, in what might be the ghost of Stephen Frankland’s handwriting, in which he bade her to think of him no more; to fancy all that he had said to her of love and marriage as folly, nonsense, untruth—anything but what she had taken it to be. Praying her to forget

him, to pray for him, to hate him, if it must be, but to forget him then and for ever!

And where was the writer? Hurrying away towards Rawthorne Castle, the first place he had thought of when the horror revealed by the letter attached to the stone had burst upon him, and driven him in despair from the house, as though it had been the very brink of doom. For the words it contained—written in a cramped female hand, but cruelly clear and plain—were these:—

“A merciful providence enables me to save you from a fearful fate. Beware! The woman with whom you were walking in the wood this day is she whom John Brandron came from India to make a liar and a profligate acknowledge as his child. She is your own father’s child, Stephen Frankland, so help me God.—MARY ALSTON.”

The first person that Stephen encountered on the platform of the little railway-station that was nearest to Rawthorne Castle, was no less a personage than Sampson Lagger.

“You here!” Stephen exclaimed. “Why have you not communicated with me, as you promised?”

“Because I have been too busy, sir, with my own business, to be able to attend to yours,” replied the detective, firmly returning Frankland’s angry gaze. “Before I am a day older, I shall lay my hand on the murderer of John Everett Brandron!”

Stephen staggered back aghast.

“He—he is not here,” he gasped, not knowing what he said.

“I know he isn’t,” replied the detective; “leastwise, not *yet*, but he will be before nightfall. Lord bless you, sir, I have him as safe this moment as though he were under lock and key in Maidstone jail. I’m sorry for you, sir, I am indeed, but dooty’s dooty, and must be done.”

ICELAND AND ITS GEYSERS.

ICELAND is indubitably one of the most interesting spots on the face of the globe. Though as large as Ireland, it is in the interior a frightful desert; and it is only populated on its south-western side, by about 68,000 souls. Surrounded by stormy seas, which are generally covered with ice, this island—with its tall, bare mountains, crowned with eternal snows and ice; its numerous precipices; its enormous lava fields, and the ever-present traces of frightful earthquakes and desolating revolutions; without a tree, and, with the exception of the seaboard valleys, without vegetation—produces a startling effect on the traveller. Nowhere is the reaction of the interior of our planet against the exterior displayed in so striking and fearful a way; and no climate is so remarkably influenced as the Icelandic by opposite agencies, such as tropical and polar currents of sea and air. It is explicable that a naturalist should prefer visiting this island to many others. It is true that the botanist and the zoologist do not find so much that is peculiar to them as do the geognost and the mineralogist; but Iceland, like Madagascar and other islands, has various genera of animals and plants, which have not, up to the present, been discovered in any other region. It was a desire to form an acquaintance with the rare animals, and above all to observe the life of boreal birds when at liberty, which induced two German *savants* recently to make a voyage to Iceland, and the results of the voyage are now lying before us.*

The professors left Bonn at the end of May, travelled *viâ* Rotterdam and Edinburgh, came in sight of Iceland on June 13, and the following day landed in the port of Reykjavik. Their stay on the island lasted till August 12; and they now offer their countrymen an account of what they saw and endured during their constant trips about the country. As Iceland is at the present day the great attraction of daring Alpine climbers, and the *Times* has even gone so far as to insert a correspondence about the volcanoes which have lately broken out there, our readers will, perhaps, owe us thanks if we offer them an epitome of a portion of this interesting volume. We say advisedly, a portion; for although the whole of the work, and especially the second half, may be recommended to the *savant* and the naturalist, we purpose confining our attention to the valuable description of the world-renowned geysers, those great boiling springs, which are situated to the north of the fire-belching Hecla, in a flat, pastoral valley, which is cut up by countless springs. Everybody is aware that the mountains of Iceland attain a considerable elevation (the Oraefa Jökul is 6,240 feet above the level of the sea). They are covered with widely extended glaciers or jökuls, and pour down frightful avalanches, or sniöflods, upon the plains. Among the numerous volcanoes, Hecla,

* Reise nach Island, im Sommer, 1860, von Wilhelm Preyer and Dr. Ferdinand Zirkel. Leipzig. Brockhaus. 1862.

on the south coast, which is said to have been at work since 1104, is the best known. Other important volcanoes are the Krabla, Leirniukur, Blarna flag, and Hetzool on the northern, and the Kötligian and Oraefa Jökul on the southern, coast, which all broke out simultaneously about the year 1724. The numerous hot springs, chiefly found on the south-west coast, are connected with them; and are divided into Laugar, or baths, which flow quietly; and Hyu, or Geysers, which burst forth in the shape of fountains. Their water rises in temperature from lukewarm to boiling; and one portion is sweet—another sulphurous. The geysers to which we purpose chiefly to pay attention, belong to what are called intermittent springs; but, contrary to the usual nature of such springs, they do not obey any settled rule, either as to the amount or duration of their discharge of water, or the period of the outburst. The Great Geyser is primeval; but the Strokkur, or New Geyser, situated close to it, was only produced in 1784, by an earthquake.

The geyser district lies at the foot of a steep but not very lofty hill, in a plain about ten miles in width, doubtless the bed of an old fiord, which runs down to the sea, and resembles an outspread green carpet of marshy pasturage. It is watered by the Tugn flyot and several smaller streams, which fall into the Hvita, at the end of the valley. In the north-east the plain is bordered by the Blafell, a lofty extinct volcano, whose summit is partially veiled by clouds, and whose steep sides, denuded of all vegetation, display caverns and ravines filled with masses of snow. Round the plain are also other masses of jagged mountains, which, in the interior of the island, are piled up in gigantic forms; while Hecla, covered with its mantle of snow, proudly looks down upon the whole scene. The elevation of the springs above Reykjavik is, according to Bunsen's calculations, about 360 feet. The principal springs are situated here close together, the two extremes being hardly 600 feet distant from each other; and our travellers hurried from one spring to another; and though they were all quiet, the professors walked up to their brink with the same feeling which is produced by looking down into a slumbering but ever-dangerous volcano.

The Great Geyser has piled up a truncated cone of ash-grey colour, formed of pebbles, tuff, and stalactites. The height of this cone is 30 feet, and its diameter rather under 200 feet. It is formed precisely like a volcano; for on the top of the cone is an almost circular basin, at the bottom of which is the funnel-shaped well of the spring, which runs down perpendicularly to a depth of 75 feet, and is at the spring in the basin about 12 feet in diameter, but grows much narrower as it descends. The interior of the basin, covered with incrustations of pebbles, is of a whitish colour; and the bottom, as well as the well itself, whose sides are in constant contact with the water, are so smooth, that they look as if they were polished. The basin was filled with crystalline, bluish-green water, which had a temperature of 98° C., but was perfectly calm, and so wondrously transparent, that our travellers were unable to inspect the construction of the

apparatus, as well as the delicate feathery formations that cover the inner slope of the basin. At the south-east side of the cone are three small channels, by which the water runs off, and slowly drips down the external incline.

Among the numerous springs in the vicinity, the one called Strokkur (butter-cask) arouses special interest. It is scarce 100 yards from the Great Geyser, with which its name is generally connected; but is very different in its appearance. It has no conical basin, and its orifice is merely surrounded by an edging scarce four inches high, and composed of a firm brown dross. The spring begins to descend immediately from the surface. At the mouth it is $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter; but at a depth of 25 feet is so contracted, that it is only ten inches in breadth. The water usually remains 12 to 13 feet below the surface, and is constantly in a state of commotion, without rising or falling. After taking a cursory glance at all the hot springs, our travellers resolved to convince themselves whether it is really possible, as has been affirmed by some writers, and contradicted by others, to stop up the Strokkur, by throwing stones and earth into the lower part of the pit, and force it to an eruption. The whole party, seven in number, were soon busied in collecting lumps of stone, cutting patches of turf, bringing up earth, and throwing it all into the cavity; but after half an hour's work, no change had taken place in the height or behaviour of the pillar of water, although they had thrown a considerable cargo into the monster's yawning jaws. They therefore gave up all hope of seeing the rather comical sight, and proceeded to the Farm of Haugar, a short distance off, in order to rest after their exertions. The farmer, in whose poor cabin strangers from all parts of the world have put up, is rather polished, and his manner is most respectful. He told the travellers that an Englishman had spent two days at the Geyser, and left it after the last eruption. As for the Strokkur, it seemed to be quite exhausted since the beginning of June, and they had but little hope of seeing it start. They conversed for a while with the farmer, but could not long stand the low, smoky room, and hence hurried again into the open air.

While the travellers were strolling toward the Geyser, a hollow sound suddenly smote their ears; and in the direction where the Strokkur lay, a mighty pillar of steam rose to the clouds with indescribable force. It was followed by an immense jet of water, which was forced up from the well with a frightful panting sound, and rose in the air to an extraordinary height. This mass of water had scarce begun to sink ere fresh jets sprang forth, and continued the performance with redoubled strength, and even more deafening din. At times a pause set in for a few moments, and then smaller jets of boiling water burst forth in all directions with a hissing sound, and broke through the surrounding steam. The height to which the jets ascended was irregular, but several of them attained from 80 to 100 feet. The water was dyed of a chocolate hue, by the earth and grass patches which had been boiled in it; and the stones with which

the travellers had stopped up the tube were hurled upwards to such a height, that they almost disappeared from sight. Some of them even rose so perpendicularly, that they fell back again into the spring, and were treated by the mighty fountain like huge pith balls. At last, the height of the jets gradually decreased; and though one or two shot up unexpectedly into the air, the entire performance was ended in six minutes. When there was no longer any risk of being boiled by accident, the travellers went up to the Strokkur, round the mouth of which the ground was still covered with hot, dirty water, and gazed curiously down into the funnel. Any man who suffers from dizziness must not venture too near the brink; and the Laugar farmer told our German friends that kine, horses, and sheep sometimes fell in, and were exploded again in a thoroughly boiled state. In the Northland the Oexhavner has derived its name from this circumstance.

The water in the interior was at a lower level than it had been prior to the eruption, and was still boiling furiously; at times its surface heaved, and it seemed to be making an attempt to rise once more, but only bubbles burst forth. The travellers had watched the remarkable spectacle with breathless excitement and admiration, and whenever a jet of water rose to a height not before attained, they involuntarily clapped their hands, and eagerly shouted bravo at the most successful representation, in comparison with which any human waterworks are only a miniature copy; but Olaff, the guide, shook his head, and uttered, with a meaning smile, his stereotyped "Ekki Godt!" and he was perfectly right, for the sight the travellers saw this day was nothing as compared with what awaited them on the morrow.

About one hundred and fifty paces from the Great Geyser are several extensive ponds, whose beauties it is almost impossible to describe. Their shape is irregular; each is from fifteen to twenty feet wide, and thirty feet in depth, and filled to the brink with perfectly calm and almost boiling water, as clear as crystal, and so transparent that the bed can be plainly distinguished. The several basins are divided from each other by narrow parting-walls, which, like the sides, are composed of silica deposits; the white points and pinnacles which everywhere cover the walls of these arched grottoes with the most fantastic forms of fern-leaf delicacy, appear with wondrous splendour through the azure-tinted waters. Aladdin's fairy palace could not be more beautiful, and even the Blue Grotto at Capri does not produce such a fairy-like effect. When you walk up to the brink and look down into the depths, you soon perceive, however, that you are walking on a very dangerous soil, for the cavities extend for a long way under ground, and the crust of breaking silica which overarches the boiling water is scarce a foot in thickness, so that a hot bath might easily punish the curiosity of examining the beauties of these grottoes too closely.

The water of all the hot springs deposits the silica, large quantities of which it dissolves from the masses of rock, through a heavy pressure and

high temperature, in the form of tuff and stalactites. The solvent of silica is, as is well known, carbonic acid and natron, and the silica is deposited on growing cold, though chiefly by the evaporation of the water. For a considerable distance round the spring the earth's surface is composed of a thick crust of this deposit, and the basins and tubes of the spring are also formed of it. The running streams which flow from the basins deposit on their bed and on their banks layers of silica, which generally consist of fine thin strata laid upon each other; and the Baena stream is specially remarkable for the beauty and number of the petrifications. All bodies which come in contact with the waters of these springs, are covered within a short time by a thicker or thinner crust. In the vicinity of the geyser, petrified remains of plants are found in very large quantities; the most tender fibres of birch and willow leaves, and the finest serrated ribs on the surface of the shave-grass, are most faithfully copied; countless impressions of grass and branches of small crawling shrubs, and even flowers, are found in rare beauty enclosed in the tuff; entire lumps are converted into stalactites, and twigs of the thickness of a finger are changed into a dark brown lignite. While the travellers were engaged in collecting these delicate formations, they were surprised and delighted by a sight which has fallen to the lot of but few previous visitors to Iceland—a gigantic and voluntary eruption of the Strokkur. Behind them a subterranean thunder suddenly began rolling, and a pillar of dense white steam shot up from the Strokkur into the air with the speed of an arrow; this steam contained in its centre a cylindrical jet of water, at least ten feet in diameter, which at the top parted like a gigantic pine tree into various arms, whose ends, dissolving into dazzling white mist, flew away in all directions. The jet had scarce sunk again to half its length, with the same speed as it ascended with, ere it rose with astounding rapidity and a deafening roar, so that it could scarce be followed with the eyes. Countless other jets shot forth from the steam like rockets, with a hissing sound, and also dissolved into a fine dust rain, whose pearls slowly fell to the ground, while immeasurable steam-clouds brooded over the whole scene. Ere long it seemed as if the giant's strength were exhausted, and the fatigued pillar were about to break down, but it rose again to a height not before reached, with even greater speed and louder thunder. So great was the power of the stream that, although there was a strong breeze blowing, the jet was not at all driven out of the perpendicular. This wondrous spectacle lasted for fifteen minutes, until the fury was spent and the pillar of water fell back not to rise again: the greatest height which it attained was 140 feet.

Many attempts have been made to describe the eruption of these hot springs, but no pen and no language is eloquent enough to furnish even a remote idea of the wondrous magnificence of the spectacle.

The night was spent by our travellers in the same way as the previous one had been, that is, on the watch, so that they might not miss any eruption of the Great Geyser, though they dared hardly expect that it would surpass,

either in height, majesty, or imposing beauty, the outburst of the Strokkur which they had admired in the morning. At midnight Mr. Hay, one of the party, woke them with the news that the detonations and trembling of the Geyser cone were terrible; then came what is called a temporary eruption, though it was rather important, and the hour did its part to heighten the interesting nature of the scene. The sky was covered with dark clouds, close by rose in the twilight the ash-grey cone of the Geyser, while all around, the gloomy landscape and the more distant mountain ranges were veiled by the black shadows of night. The uncomfortable subterranean thundering was at last terminated by the mounting of the water in the basin, which rose like a large hemisphere to a height of ten feet, and then falling back, poured over the edges of the basin. The clouds of steam rose whirling to the sky, and all at once the Great Strokkur and the Little Geyser began spouting together, while the old foamy Geyser made frightful efforts to get rid of its steam. It produced almost a painful feeling to find oneself at the midnight hour among all these excited water-spirits.

In these "sensation" days, when everybody is pining for fresh excitement, and the majority go to see M. Blondin, not so much to admire his skill, as for the chance of being in at the death, Iceland is just the country for travellers. There is, certainly, something very primitive about the manners of the inhabitants; but those who are fond of grand sights, and are not particular as to fleas, sleeping five-and-twenty in a bed—that is to say, on the ground—and eating off plates which are cleaned by the simple process of giving them to a dog to lick, cannot do better than set sail for the tight little island next year. But they must not defer beyond that time, if they wish to recoup themselves by publishing their experiences; the stream has already set in strongly for the icy North, and we expect to find several books published on the subject during the coming literary season. Still, Iceland is very far from being used up, and a good deal of amusing information may be picked up there by an observer who does not go with the settled purpose of writing a book. Next, perhaps, to spending a summer in Birmingham, there is no greater novelty to be found at the present day than a six weeks' scamper about Iceland. We offer this advice in the most disinterested way; for we have reached that stage of life when we like to take our ease in an inn, and there does not happen to be a single establishment of that nature throughout Iceland; hence we need hardly say that we have not the remotest intention of going there: but every one to his taste. As every mountain in Switzerland, with but very few exceptions, has been scaled, as even the famous Jungfrau has lost her virginity, the members of the Alpine Club will have to seek fresh fields and pastures new ere long; and we have not the slightest doubt but that, if we live long enough, we shall see an Icelandic Club, and read by the snug fireside fascinating accounts of hair-breadth escapes and dangers surmounted in the land of the jökuls and the fiords.

PHILOSOPHY OF "SENSATION."

SOCIETY, as though it were a but conglomerate of Sir Charles Coldstreams, is every year acknowledging itself more and more "used up." Its craving for excitement is constantly becoming conspicuous by its eager patronage of every appeal to it. No sated epicurè, no tired voluptuary ever acknowledged so complete a stagnation in the current of his life, as this civilized, this moral, this Christian community confesses in its feverish rushing after what are accepted as sensational gratifications.

The stir we find in them bears some resemblance to the effect of a heavy stone dropped into a colony of frogs; the majority of the sluggish batrachians immediately develop all their faculties, with the least possible thought of the injury the "sensation" has inflicted.

Let us pause a moment to examine the word. As now used, it means a concentrated interest in any amusement brought particularly under our attention; and it is not only artificially produced, but apparently, as a greater recommendation, is commonly of illicit manufacture, from sources generally considered unwholesome. In some instances it may have a more innocent origin, and be presented to the public in what might be called a legitimate form, but on proper examination the article cannot escape condemnation as partly or entirely deleterious.

Some years ago a Bread Company was established, that distilled a spirit in the process of baking; but the consumers found the staff of life, so presented to them, much too feeble a support, and soon neglected the new process for what, in unsophisticated Doric, they called, "bread with the gin in it." Those who take upon themselves to supply the demand for sensation, appear to have reversed this process in the separation of similar elements in diet intended for the mind—they furnish the alcohol without the farina.

Such caterers for the public taste may now be found providing almost every species of entertainment; but their greatest success has been effected in the form of a dramatic representation. Sensation dramas, it must not be forgotten, have long been a resource of the stage, both here and abroad. In Paris, extraordinary achievements have been effected in this direction, especially at the theatre so long a favourite at the Porte St. Martin. In London, the archives of the Coburg are full of such performances. What old melodramatic play-goer can have forgotten the sensation created by the appearance of "the identical horse and gig" that figured in the murder of the unfortunate gambler? or that which was produced by the faithful representation of the sanguinary deed that rendered so terrible the slaughter of the poor girl in the Red Barn? Cannot his memory fall back upon "Jonathan Bradford," or any other of the numerous trans-Thamesic plays that so thrilled the pit and galleries of the Surrey from a quarter to half a century ago?

But the larger or more fashionable houses have not been devoid of the same attraction. "George Barnwell" is a very old sensation drama. "Blue Beard" and "Frankenstein" are of later date; and we could name a score of identically the same type. Recently, an experienced playwright found a forgotten story in the work of an Irish novelist, that possessed in a singular degree the elements of dramatic popularity; and by a skilful adaptation of it to stage purposes, was enabled to create scenic illusions of a painful nature, that could not fail of engrossing the attention of every one who beheld them. But the artistic accessories of the piece were not more carefully studied than the development and costume of the characters. The result was the "Colleen Bawn"—unquestionably the most picturesque representation of Irish life, from an Irishman's point of view, ever seen in a theatre. Nevertheless, with all its recommendations of clever acting and clever painting, it is thoroughly artificial, and made up of materials that dramatists of original talent would not condescend to adopt.

It is a "love and murder" story, closely after the Coburg model, in which the hero is a profligate gentleman, whose heart has been won by a peasant girl. He has married her secretly, and his proud mother, in her anxiety that the heir of the house should save himself from impending ruin, when she discovers his secret, sanctions a suggestion made to her by a fellow in her son's service, that the low-born damsel should be got rid of by violent means. It is on the apparent murder of the affectionate wife by her husband's faithful follower, and her timely rescue by a humble but far more honourable suitor, that the real interest of the play depends; and the "sensation" is derived from the artificial aids introduced to complete the illusion of this attempt at cold-blooded assassination.

The exaggerated fidelity of this Irish dependent is put forward by way of apology for his crime, while his more criminal accomplices are expected to be shielded from our detestation by their desire to maintain the respectability of an ancient family. The heroine does not develop much pretension to character, and her special friend, Father Tom, is anything but what he ought to be. In short, the genuine sources of dramatic interest are totally neglected, to convey a life-like picture of a woman being drowned in a lake by design, and saved by accident as she is making her last struggle for existence. To see this spectacle the theatre is nightly crowded, and the amount of sensation produced is far in advance of what any real case of suspended animation in the Serpentine or elsewhere has ever excited.

If popularity is to be any test of its merit, the "Colleen Bawn" has been excelled by "Mazeppa" in number of performances, still more in the duration of public favour. As a dramatic production, however, we should no more think of comparing the two than of preferring the whining misery of the once illustrious Cartlidge, as the Cossack hero, to the racy impersonation of Mr. Boucicault. All we desire to maintain is our opinion of the unwholesomeness of the effect produced by such plays—the craving

for similar excitement, in place of the purer pleasure which the masterpieces of dramatic genius were written to create. It must be a depraved taste which neglects the immortal creations of Shakspeare and Sheridan, to enjoy a sensation drama of the kind we have described.

If we are obliged to record grave objections to such performances, how much stronger must we denounce others that have no claim to dramatic manipulation! In the "Colleen Bawn" there is a certain amount of intelligence employed to render an ultra-romantic story as much like real life as possible; but the public amusements to which we now refer, that rival it in popularity, have no such recommendation. Their merit consists only in an unusual degree of physical strength and agility, demonstrated in the performance of feats which, in an enlightened age, ought to be regarded as ranking no higher than posturing and tumbling. In an era which has distinguished itself by the invention of the electric telegraph—that has produced the most wonderful achievements of mechanical science, and that has made very remarkable advances in almost every department of human knowledge, the fact, that thousands and tens of thousands of both sexes can be attracted to see one man cook an omelet and drive a wheelbarrow on a tight-rope; and another jump from one platform to another, making a certain number of somersaults by the way, is likely to make the sagacious observer imagine that public taste has stood still since similar crowds were brought together to witness the exhibitions of Madame Sacqui.

If there were nothing beyond the dexterity of the performer to witness, no more need be said of either; but M. Blondin and M. Leotard find their real source of attraction in the semblance of imminent danger that accompanies their most admired performances. The hero of the *trapèze* takes his daring flights at the hazard of dislocating his vertebræ; while the hero of the rope carries on his lofty tricks under circumstances that render a frightful death an immediate contingency. The apprehension that the spectacle of dexterity will be turned into one of horror, creates the "sensation" which enables these distinguished acrobats to realize an income far exceeding the largest secured by the ablest of our engineers, or the wisest of our philosophers. And so general has become the unwholesome thirst for excitement, that an exhibition, completed at enormous expense, with the object of reforming and intellectualizing the people, has sunk itself to the level of the tea-garden of half a century ago, by pandering to the puerile and degrading taste such entertainments develop.

That danger does exist in these wonderful leapings and tight-rope performances is clear, from the serious accidents that have occurred to the imitators of the two celebrated Frenchmen who introduced them to a discerning British public. Indeed, we believe that they are more hazardous than the once fascinating spectacle of a man's head thrust into a lion's jaws. As the menagerie marvels have had their day, we live in hope that the day of the tea-garden marvels will not be of much longer duration.

In the mean time we cannot refrain from stating, that they are increasing the love of alcoholic gratification, to which several of our theatres have been, with more or less success, appealing; and daily increasing a morbid appetite among the present generation of sight-seers for what is as deficient in moral nutriment as in intellectual pleasure.

Another phase of sensation, probably the most mischievous of all, is "the sensation novel." Like the others, it possesses no claim to originality; for similar fictions, continued in much the same artificial manner, with the like exaggerations of vicious human nature, have issued from the press ever since works of imagination have been circulated in print. The modern sensation novel, however, partakes more of a French than of an English type. It is put forward usually as a series of narrative melodramas, in which natural truth is in proportion to improbable romance, as Falstaff's halfpennyworth of bread is to his prodigious quantity of sack—with this marked difference, the beverage apparently is not the produce of a vineyard, but of a distillery.

What might be termed a topsy-turvy arrangement commonly prevails in the action of the *dramatis personæ*—the dregs come to the surface. If a tramp is not represented as a Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*, you may expect to find a convicted felon a victim of sensibility, quite as touching as the hero of the "Sorrows of Werter." Self-reliant young ladies, not fairly emancipated from short frocks, perform such prodigies of independence as no amount of experience of the world would sanction. With one bound they escape the trammels of the nursery, to enjoy to the utmost the social enfranchisement of strong-minded women.

It is unnecessary to particularize the numerous imitations of Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo which have been brought before the English public within the last few years. They have all the same complexion—the sanguine; they have all the same spirit—that of passion. The main object seems to be to excuse criminality, or to render vice interesting; and the means of maintaining the reader's attention to the sequence of incidents is to draw highly-coloured pictures of social immorality, each of which is made to produce a vivid impression on the excited mind, by a dramatic *tour de force*, as nearly as possible as striking in its way as the drowning scene in the "Colleen Bawn." Compared with the ordinary pace of the author's imagination, it suggests "the trot for the avenue," held in reserve by the Irish postillion.

In excuse for such writers it has been advanced, that incidents equally violent occur in our daily experience; and the tragedy that lately occurred in the neighbourhood of the Adelphi, and half a dozen similar revolting dramas of real life, are confidently quoted. Nature, to be sure, produces earthquakes and volcanoes—but both are phenomena. In the state of society sensation novelists represent, they insist upon giving us earthquakes as matters of course, and volcanoes as every-day occurrences.

Perhaps a cleverer work of this kind than "The Woman in White"

has never been produced. In no modern fiction with which we are acquainted has the semblance of reality been better kept up throughout the story; and the artistic arrangement of its machinery very much assists in the illusion it creates. But when the excitement produced on the imagination by these well-simulated scenes has evaporated, and a cool judgment proceeds to analyze the materials of this fascinating fiction, their thoroughly artificial character becomes apparent. The stage effects are as conspicuous as paint and canvas can make them—moreover, they are not new.

As every generation appears to have had its sensation novels, probably the latest productions in this style of art will, in due course, be shelved with those of Calprenede and De Scudery, Horace Walpole, Maturin, Matt. Lewis, Mrs. Radcliffe, and numerous other writers of the same melodramatic tendency; but while the vicious tendency of the reading is being diffused over the land, those who possess a sounder judgment and a healthier taste should, for the benefit of the community at large, discourage their circulation as far as their influence extends. There is always abundance of narrative fictions of an innocuous kind, written with more or less ability; so that there needs be no excuse for patronizing the sensation-mongers: and there are many works that have established for themselves an enduring reputation, by a faithful portraiture of nature, and a careful appreciation of truth.

We except from this category one or two popular authors, the real source of whose popularity seems as difficult to trace as that of the Nile. To do them justice, we should as soon expect sensation from their compositions as from an apple dumpling. The most celebrated of them appears to draw his characters exclusively from one set of lay figures, and his scenes from a series of models equally artificial. Humour may be elicited from this process, doubtless, just as it is elicited from a still more familiar set of Marionettes; but with flesh and blood humanity, such portraits bear as little relationship as the personages exhibited in the waxen Walhalla in Baker Street.

We are sorry to be obliged to add that even great artists sometimes condescend to adopt the tricks of sensation writers, for the sake of popularity, and present the public with hybrid combinations of the mean and the noble, the modest and the impure, the hero and the scoundrel, and the angel and the tigress. They may succeed in making highly dramatic pictures by grouping such characters on their canvas, but we must be permitted to remind them that the truly illustrious masters of their art were content with representing virtue as virtuous, and vice as vicious. We must also venture to ask them if the public writer, be he novelist or dramatist, has not a mission to elevate as well as to amuse, and if such mission can be best accomplished by confounding the general notions of right and wrong, and catering for a feverish desire for excitement?

The novel has really become a domestic institution. In truth, so general is its influence, that its presence is felt in almost every link in the

great social chain; sometimes, by the way, acting rather as a fetter upon sociality than as a means of communication, as many a traveller must have felt, whose hard fate it has been to sit between two evidently very charming young ladies on a bench placed on a fashionable "Parade" overlooking the sea, whose attention has been engrossed by the interest of the stories they were perusing. In vain he turns his gaze from one intelligent face to the other, in the hope of finding an opportunity for saying something that should enable him to accomplish that great difficulty—the first step to a desirable acquaintance. Both pair of bright eyes continue obstinately fixed upon each absorbing page, and he is finally obliged to give up the attempt, with anything but charitable feelings towards the Bulwer or George Eliot who has produced his disappointment.

To ladies, the novel is so frequent a resource, that they make at least four-fifths of the novel-readers in this country. This being the case, we think that too much care cannot be taken that the entertainment provided for them should be unobjectionable in sentiment, as well as in impression. The only person on whom they can place any reliance for securing them a wholesome course of reading, is generally the librarian; and in provincial districts, very little dependence can be placed upon him. In London the case is totally different.

The founder of the existing library system, Mr. Mudie, to whose enterprise both town and country readers owe the facility and economy with which they are able to secure new publications, is known to exercise a judgment on every book published. He will not admit a work into his list if immoral or trashy, while large supplies are taken of every production possessed of legitimate claims to public favour. That his system is a good one, is proved by the closeness with which it has been imitated by other London librarians; and that there is no real cause of complaint in the operation of his judgment, is evinced by the fact that none of the great publishing firms have found it in the slightest degree injurious to them. Much clamour has been raised against him for one or two instances in which he has declined to assist in the circulation of works of a questionable character,—questionable either as regards the ability, the object, or the composition of the works objected to. All that we have to say on the subject is, that we wish his discrimination would take a wider field for its operation, and include all ostensibly sensational novels. If by this measure he could abate what is fast becoming a public nuisance, Mr. Mudie would add largely to the obligation under which he has laid the present generation of readers. We trust, however, that the morbid taste which encourages "sensation" will become accessible to the ordinary remedies, and the supply cease with the demand. We are weary of this unwholesome excitement in any form; but in literature it has become intolerable.

We wish it to be understood that we do not object to mental excitement, when it is the natural result of strong intellectual diet. It comes

from a wholesome source, and subsides without leaving any ill effects. The sublime creations of genius on an impressionable mind, cannot be appreciated without a sensible elevation of feeling; but this is as different from the feverish sensation sought after by some modern authors, and by their admirers, as is the gladdening exhilaration produced by a glass or two of Moët's purest vintage, compared with the horrible *delirium tremens* created by a debauch in which the most noxious poisons have entered as elements of the intoxication. It is the difference between reading the "Paradise Lost" or the "Divina Commedia," and "Monte Christo" or "East Lynne."

Any one who can remember the first perusal of "Robinson Crusoe," of "Paul and Virginia," or of the "Exiles of Siberia," may be able to realize the influence produced by a genuine interest naturally developed. Let him contrast this with the spasmodic manner in which the principal incidents of recent sensation novels are made to tell upon his sympathies, and the wholesome and unwholesome effect will be made clearly apparent to his senses. It is difficult to make writer or reader understand that fidelity to nature, even if the picture be unassuming, is universally recognizable, and never loses its interest. Hence the wide-spread popularity of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," and Mrs. Inchbald's "Simple Story;" while exaggerations of every kind, however artfully the interest is intensified, after the first rush at the circulating library is at an end, produce a reaction, or sense of shame, which gradually sinks the object of temporary public favour till it becomes completely neglected, if not thoroughly despised. Bulwer will always be remembered by his "Caxtons,"—a story written with the playfulness of Sterne, and the tenderness of Goldsmith; but his sensational efforts, such as "Lucretia," and "The Strange Story," will take rank only with the imitative efforts in the same school of novel-writing of his sensational contemporaries.

THE WAYSIDE HOUSE.

BY LADY LUSHINGTON.

“Gloom is upon thy lonely hearth,
O silent house !”

THE traveller who passes along the H—— road can hardly fail to remark a house of most melancholy appearance on his right, about four miles from London. It is a building of some size, with the principal front at right angles with the road, looking into what was once a garden bounded by a shrubbery; while a lower range of building, which contained offices and servants' apartments, stretches along the wayside. There is a paved court at the back, and beyond it a large walled space, studded here and there amid its wilderness of weeds, with a few old moss-grown fruit-trees. On all sides beyond the boundary, lies green meadow-land of no particular beauty, but pleasant to the eye, with its divisions of green hedgerow, and sprinkling of old elms and sycamores, under which the cattle rest in quiet groups. Here and there may be seen a small pool or a sluggish stream, nearly choked with weeds; otherwise the view is monotonous enough.

But spring brings daisies and buttercups among the grass, and green leaves to the trees, even to those that grow within the deserted garden; and the lark, high-poised in the blue air, sends a flood of gladness to float in sweet sound over the fields; yet nothing cheers that dreary old house, sinking deeper year by year into decay and desolation. The glass is gone from every window, and there are boards nailed across the openings. Where the stucco has not fallen away, it is stained with mould, or hidden with a growth of yellow lichen. Nature has tried to do her gracious part, and made a few grasses spring even on the highest window-sills, and a little ivy creep about the walls, but she has only enhanced the general sadness.

Many, many years ago, in that bay-window now almost hidden by the tangled boughs, a father and daughter lingered over the breakfast-table. It was late in the summer, and the shadow of thick leaves made a shelter from the sun, while the air was heavy with perfume from the well-kept flower-beds. There was an air of comfort and even of wealth about everything; from the chased silver and exquisite china on the table, to the rich dress of the young lady. The dark silken folds fell like the robes of a queen round her tall figure, and accorded well with the stately beauty of her face and head. The dark hair smoothly braided, the deeply set eyes with their heavy fringes, the short upper lip and well-developed chin, the finely moulded throat set off by the lace collar and knot of rose-colour, the rich glow that pervaded cheek and lip, all combined to make Honoria Calvert a beautiful woman. Her father certainly thought her so, as he watched her pouring out his tea with a grace and dignity that might have beseeemed an empress. Perhaps he did not take the less pride in her beauty, because many found in her a strong resemblance to himself;

and, indeed, a stranger's eye could see at a glance that they were father and daughter.

"Did I tell you I met an old friend yesterday, Honoria?" asked Mr. Calvert.

"No, sir; who was it?"

"I hardly know whether you can recollect him, it is so long ago; but he was a pupil of old Brown's when we lived at Hundon, and he sometimes dined with us on Sundays. You were but five or six years old, and he was a great lad of sixteen. His name is Benham."

"Oh yes, I remember him," answered Honoria, with a smile; "Archer Benham used to swing me, and let me ride on his shoulder. He was a merry, good-natured boy."

"Well, he seems a pleasant young man enough," said Mr. Calvert, "and I told him we should be happy to see him here. If he should call this afternoon, ask him to stay and dine. I will bring Ellis back with me to make a fourth."

Honoria bowed assent—she was usually chary of her words—but she looked pleased, for she had an agreeable recollection of her old playfellow, and she liked society and amusement. She accompanied her father to the yard, saw him mount, patted his brown horse's shining coat, and nodded farewell as she returned to the house to give her orders for the day. This done, she wandered round the garden, gathered some flowers, and busied herself in arranging them in vases about the drawing-room—a very unusual occupation for her, but she was restless and unsettled. Her father seldom invited any but his old friends and contemporaries; and though she sometimes went with an aunt to large and brilliant parties, and invariably on such occasions received the homage her magnificent beauty seemed to claim as a right, still she was little used to intimate intercourse with any persons at all near her in age.

At last she began to feel vexed with herself; and saying half aloud, "What nonsense to lose all my time in this way!" she took a volume of Goëthe and her German dictionary, and worked diligently for two or three hours. After luncheon, she found herself listening for the sound of a horse; and, with an expression of impatience at her own folly, she sat down to the pianoforte. She had no great musical taste; but she had a correct ear, a strong will, and an intelligent mind. The hidden meaning, the depth of sentiment of the great masters of harmony, might be as a sealed book to her; but she loved to grapple with difficulties and to conquer them, to unravel intricate and mazy passages, and put into them plenty of energy, if not of sweetness. So she opened one of Beethoven's sonatas, and laboured vigorously at its complicated chords and chromatic runs—appreciating and enjoying the difficulty, though she missed the beauty.

"Well done!" exclaimed a manly voice, when at length she paused for a little rest; and turning round, she saw a gentleman, whom she easily guessed to be Mr. Benham.

"Pray forgive me," he said, "I am afraid I startled you. I was duly announced, but your grand music drowned my humble name."

She held out her hand and gave him welcome. "I think I should have known you," she said, looking steadily into his face; "you are very little altered, only older and taller."

He shook back his light brown hair and twirled his moustache with an air of good-humoured self-complacency, and then said,—

"I hardly think I should have known *you*."

"I was so much younger," Honoria replied, turning away with a slight blush at the compliment his looks implied. He soon glided into a subject less personal, and when Mr. Calvert returned, bringing his old friend Mr. Ellis, he found the young pair strolling side by side in the shrubbery, as amicably as they might have done in those old days of which they had been speaking, when Honoria was six years old.

The evening passed away cheerfully. Mr. Ellis, who held a confidential situation in the banking-house in which Mr. Calvert was a partner, was sensible and well-bred; and while he talked politics with his employer, the young people discussed themes more interesting. There was music, too, to beguile the time. Mr. Benham had a rich tenor voice, and though Honoria could not sing, she could accompany him brilliantly. She could talk of poetry also, more eloquently, perhaps, than if she had felt it more deeply. Certain it is that, as Archer Benham rode slowly home, his thoughts were busy with Honoria's image.

"She is a glorious creature to look at," he said half aloud, "and the father's a gentlemanly fellow enough. Now everybody is out of town, it won't be a bad thing to ride this way occasionally. I shouldn't like to offend her, but how splendid she would look in a rage!"

Such were *his* reflections; but with Honoria, life was a more serious matter. She had enjoyed that evening's conversation; she had uttered more of what was really in her heart than she was accustomed to do; her imagination had been warmed and excited by her companion's descriptions of foreign travel, and her ear charmed by the rich tones of his voice.

"That's a pleasing young man," remarked her father; "you seemed to like him, Honoria, and I hope he will come again. He sings well, doesn't he? I'm no judge."

Honoria ignored the question, gave her father his nightly kiss, and retired to her chamber. She shut her door on the outer world, extinguished her taper, and went to the open window, leaning out to gaze over the quiet meadow-land sleeping in the moonlight. There was a half-smile on her lips as she murmured,—

"Have I met my fate to-day? I could almost think so. All was yesterday so stagnant, so dull, and now—— Why is it all so changed?"

Days, weeks, and months passed on, and Archer Benham's frequent visits had become matters of course. Very commonly Honoria rode towards London in the afternoon, to meet her father, and she had learnt

now to be surprised when he was alone. She was a noble figure on horseback, and Archer had one day playfully given her the title of "Empress," by which he now commonly addressed her. Mr. Calvert observed all that passed, and made no objection. The young man was a clerk in the Foreign Office, with a small salary; but he was nephew and heir to Sir Archer Benham of Benham Hall, in Norfolk, and therefore a very eligible match, even for the stately Honoria. As yet he never spoke of love; but his attentions could be construed into only one meaning, and Mr. Calvert complacently awaited the event, ready to give his consent and blessing when the proper moment should arrive.

Meantime, how was it with Honoria herself? She was living in a dream of happiness, which she would not pause to analyse. Enough to know, when she rose in the morning, that she should see him ere nightfall; or, if he came not, enough to think of all he said in their last ride, or in the twilight stroll in the shrubbery, or—as autumn waned—at the fireside, or by the piano. Enough to think out long trains of reasoning suggested by some slight remark of his, and to look out over the broad meadows, and know, he would soon return. For on that summer day when Archer Benham first came to the old house, Honoria had "met her fate," and now she smiled to feel that it was so.

Did he love her? She never asked herself the question, but it sometimes occurred to Archer himself, and received a doubtful sort of reply. He liked her society,—her conversation always so animated with him; her beauty so brightened and almost glorified by her present happiness. He might, he thought, be drifting on towards matrimony; if so, well and good. It did not much matter; but, at all events, she was handsome enough for an empress, and clever enough, too, and no doubt her father would give her a good portion; so, if she should take a fancy to him, why, all parties would be very well pleased.

So time passed on, and Christmas was coming near. One evening, Mr. Calvert had brought Archer in his carriage from London, to make one of an unusually large dinner-party. Honoria came down with her father just before the other guests arrived, and Archer started from his seat to receive her. She never dressed like others of her age, but in a picturesque style of her own, and on this occasion she wore ruby-coloured velvet, with a coronet of chased gold beads on her head.

"You are glorious to-night, Empress," exclaimed Archer; "allow me to tender my homage. I cannot greet you as an ordinary mortal;" and he knelt on one knee, and kissed her hand. Her father smiled, and, turning her towards the light, said, "Well, you are very handsome to-night, my dear, though I say it."

"Thank you, papa; it is something to get a compliment from *you*," said Honoria; and then, to change the subject, she asked if he had read the letter she had put in his room.

“Susie’s letter, do you mean? Yes. Little darling, how glad I shall be to see her at home again!”

“And who may Susie be?” asked Archer.

“Susie is my sister,” replied Honoria.

“Your sister! Do you mean to say you have a sister? You never told me so,” he exclaimed.

“I wonder you never spoke of Susie in all your talks,” observed Mr. Calvert. “She is my only other child, and she leaves school at Christmas, to my great joy, for she is a sweet, loving little creature, and the image of her poor mother.”

A silence fell on the three. The father’s thoughts were full of his little girl; Archer was wondering how it was that Honoria had never spoken of her sister—her young, only sister. It did not seem amiable or kind. Honoria felt the cloud of doubt that came over him. She might have told him it was because he had never seen Susie; because her own mind had been full of him and his interests, that she had never mentioned her little sister; but perhaps it is always a part of the punishment of idolatry such as hers, to be misunderstood by its object.

The guests arrived; the momentary cloud dispersed; and Archer could not but admire the perfect grace with which Honoria presided at the feast. He noticed, however, that though perfectly polite to all, she seemed intimate with none of the ladies present; and he remarked this to her, when some of them were playing and singing.

“Does it surprise you?” she said, slightly shrugging her shoulders. “I am quite used to it. We beauties have no friends. No woman ever loved me, except my mother, who is dead and gone, and little Susie—if I may call that scrap of humanity a woman.”

Again Archer was a little startled. He did not like a sarcastic woman. He began to be glad he had never spoken of love to this hard beauty, who had no friends.

She saw the shadow again; and, with her most winning smile, said,—

“I am tired of all this insipid music. Come and sing your best, and I will play for you.”

He did sing—in those full, rich tones that found an echo in her heart. The music was one of Mozart’s most touching melodies, and Honoria’s proud eyes were filled with tears when she looked up to thank him. It was the sweetest flattery, and might have led him to commit himself by some tender speech, but that Mr. Calvert drew near.

“That is really beautiful, Benham,” he said. “We must have some duets when Susie comes.”

“What, does Susie sing?” asked Archer.

“She always had a sweet little voice,” replied the father; “and now she has been taking lessons, and they say she sings uncommonly well.”

The idea of singing duets with a little girl fresh from school was not very attractive to a musician of Archer’s pretensions; but he promised to

try, if Honoria would still play the accompaniments. He was going to his uncle's for Christmas; but on his return he would call, and bring some music with him to try Susie's voice.

In the second week in January he came. The lamp was lighted, the crimson curtains drawn, and the fire burning cheerily, as he entered the drawing-room. Mr. Calvert was up stairs, preparing for dinner. Honoria, in a dress of some rich shawl pattern, leant back in an easy chair; and on a cushion at her feet nestled a little figure, almost a child in size, with fair face and light hair, her little hand laid lovingly on Honoria's lap, her blue eyes looking dreamily into Honoria's face. Both started at Archer's approach.

"Welcome!" said Honoria, giving him her hand. "I am very glad you are returned. This," she continued, turning to the little figure now shyly standing beside her—"this is my sister Susie; and this, Susie, is our friend Mr. Benham."

Archer took the little childish hand, only half extended to him, and clasped it kindly, as he looked down with interest on the gentle, blushing girl. Honoria watched him, and a fierce pang shot through her heart. He had many a time looked at herself with admiration, with amusement, even with kindness; but that look of interest was an expression she had never seen in his face before. What did it mean?

Mr. Calvert soon joined them, and Archer dined with the family. Susie was petted by her father, and her shyness soon abated; so that she gave him playful answers, and joined sometimes in the general conversation. Honoria was unusually grave; and Archer saw Susie glance uneasily at her occasionally.

"What ails the Empress?" he said, at last; "your majesty is silent to-day. Are you wearied with the festivities of the season?"

"No," Honoria said, with a faint smile; "we have been very quiet."

"I thought very young ladies had parties at this time of the year," he continued, with a sly glance at Susie.

"Indeed, Mr. Benham," Susie said, laughing, "I am not a very young lady now. It is very hard, because one has an empress for a sister, that one is to pass for a child when one is a young woman of eighteen."

"I beg ten thousand pardons," said Archer. "I had no idea I was offending the dignity of eighteen years. I shall be more discreet for the future."

After dinner the piano was opened, and Susie was coaxed to sing. Truly had her father spoken when he said her voice was sweet. There was a pathos in its tones that went straight to the hearer's heart—a tender sadness that brought tears to the eyes. When she sang alone, and the full, pleading tones rose thrilling and clear, Archer listened with hushed breath. Not a note escaped him. Honoria saw it, as she accompanied her sister, and her heart sank with dreary apprehension. Then came duet

after duet, the two lovely voices blending in exquisite harmony. Mr. Calvert was beside himself with delight.

"Is it not beautiful, Honoria?" he said; "only I thought you played those last chords a little too loud. Of course, you know best; but it seems to me they ought to die away with the voices."

"I am tired," Honoria said, abruptly, pushing back her chair; "my head aches, and I can play no more. So, if you want any more music, you must play your own accompaniments, Susie."

Archer thought her rude and ill-humoured. Alas! from what bitter anguish of heart does a woman's seeming ill-humour sometimes spring! Susie was kinder.

"How good of you, dear, to play for us so long! How selfish we have been! Of course, we won't sing any more. Sit here, and let me bathe your head."

Her pretty carefulness was charming, and Archer watched it with a smile, forgetting to express regret for the pains he was trying to soothe. It was past bearing. Harshly forbidding Susie to follow, Honoria said she would go to her room. She only needed darkness and quiet. It was a very trifling headache, and no one need be disturbed about it. Archer held the door open as she swept out, and expressed a hope she would soon be better.

"I fear you are worse than you will acknowledge," he whispered, as she passed him, and he caught sight of her troubled face. She stopped, called all her pride to her aid, and smiled.

"It is nothing, I assure you. Good night." And she shook hands.

Her fingers were cold as ice, and he could not forget the expression of her countenance a moment before; but his reflections were soon disturbed by Mr. Calvert, who begged for one more song, and silenced all Susie's objections by the assurance that Honoria could not hear it in her room.

Meantime, Honoria had locked her door, thrown aside the heavy curtains, and opened the window at which she had stood dreaming so happily a few short months ago. It was a wild, stormy night. The meadows were covered here and there with patches of snow; the wind wailed drearily, and dark clouds were driving over the moon, which shone out at intervals with keen brightness above the saddened landscape. The bitter air was welcome to Honoria's heated brow. She could have shrieked an answer to the wild wind; her eyes were full of despair, as the moonlight fell upon them. She wrung her hands in anguish.

"It is coming," she muttered; "I know it is coming. Fool, fool that I have been, not to foresee this—not to know that he never loved me! Oh God! I have staked all my happiness, all my peace, and he cares not for me. He will love her. I see it; I know it; and I must wear a smiling face, day after day, day after day. Oh! if I might die! if I might die!"

Passionate moans and inarticulate cries gave way at last to a burst of

tears, and then she heard the muffled sound of music from below. It was plain he did not care; and Susie, too, was heartless, inconsiderate, unfeeling, to sing when her sister was ill and suffering. But her passion was exhausted now, and had given place to an intense self-pity. She closed the window with a shudder, drew the curtains, and prepared for bed. Susie's gentle voice pleaded in vain for admittance; and only a cold "good night" answered Mr. Calvert's kindly inquiries.

This was the spirit in which Honoria met her heavy trial—the heaviest, perhaps, that could be laid on a nature like hers. She had seen the truth. Archer found a charm in Susie's gentleness that all Honoria's beauty could not equal. His heart was touched as it had never been touched before. All that was best in him was called forth by this young, tender creature, who could but love him in return for his devotion, and for the thousand good qualities she very naturally saw in him. Oh! what days and weeks of torture for Honoria! Stifling down, with the power of her strong will, the anguish of her jealousy, she wore a smiling face in spite of her aching heart. She received Archer as a friend, and talked to him as of old, when her sister was not by. Susie was so occupied with the strange new joy of being beloved, that she had seldom time to wonder at Honoria's wayward manner,—sometimes so full of affection towards herself, sometimes so cold and stern as almost to frighten her gentler spirit. Still the crisis had not come. Archer had not spoken of love, and he never saw Susie alone. There was to be yet one more drop of bitterness in Honoria's cup. Archer had forgotten, as it is easy for men to do, those old times when he had dreamed of the possibility of making Honoria his wife. Now, she was only Susie's sister, and, as such, of course, his friend. He could find no opportunities of speaking to Susie. If he offered her a note, how her large blue eyes would open still wider with wonder! He would speak to Honoria. She loved her sister, and would know all about her feelings, and speak for him. So he watched for an occasion, and soon found it.

"You know so well what admiration is, fair Empress," he began; but Honoria shrank away, as if she had been stung. "Forgive me," he continued; "perhaps that address is impertinently familiar. I only meant that, used as you are to homage, you must know what my feelings are towards your sister. She is so young and gentle, I am half afraid to speak to her; but if you will stand my friend, I shall be eternally grateful to you."

He paused; but she kept her eyes fixed on the ground, and said, in a low voice,—

"What would you have me do?"

"Will you advise me?" he asked. "I am so afraid of speaking too soon. Will you talk to her of me, and prepare her for my declaration?"

"On one condition," Honoria answered.

"What is it?"

"That you promise not to speak till I give you warning. You will ruin your own cause if you speak too soon."

Archer hesitated; then said, smiling, "Well, I promise; only you must not try me too long."

She wondered at herself for the composure with which she now could go through scenes like this one. No one knew what passed in the solitude of her own chamber, when the tall, proud form lay stretched on the ground, as if crushed by some heavy blow; no human eye saw the haggard face, peering out in the moonlight, the clenched hands raised in a mad supplication for death. Morning found her in her usual place at the breakfast-table, calm and attentive to her duties, ready to listen to her father's plans, and to take her part in conversation. There was no outward change, or, at least, Mr. Calvert perceived none; and if he was a little puzzled at seeing Mr. Benham devote himself to Susie quite as much as to Honoria, yet he made no remark, and concluded, probably, that it was a natural consequence of the little girl's pretty voice.

But a dark shadow hung over the old house. Mr. Calvert was seized with a fit at his office, and almost instantly expired, only the day after Archer had made his appeal to Honoria for her assistance. The sisters were overwhelmed with sorrow, and Susie drooped at once, like some tender plant beaten down by the storm. When Mr. Ellis arrived to announce the sad news, he found the sisters sitting together, busied with some womanly work. His face betrayed that he was the bearer of evil tidings. He tried to tell them cautiously, but when Susie understood the truth, she dropped from her seat, like one heart-stricken.

"Poor child!" Mr. Ellis said, kindly, as he raised her in his arms, as gently as if she had been his own daughter. "Let me carry her to her room, Miss Calvert; she will be better there."

Pale and wan, but tearless still, Honoria led the way, and Susie was carried to her room. The sun was shining gaily in, but Honoria, almost impatiently, drew the heavy curtains to shut out the daylight; and, begging Mr. Ellis to send Susie's old nurse, who was still a favoured member of the household, she began to undress the poor child. The swoon lasted long; and for many a day afterwards, Susie lay, feeble as an infant, with wide-open eyes, scarcely speaking, even to old nurse, who sat beside the bed, working at the black garments, and wishing for cries or tears, or anything rather than that strange stillness.

Meanwhile, Honoria came and went through the darkened chambers, gloomy, hopeless, and most miserable. She saw no one but Mr. Ellis, who had been named in Mr. Calvert's will as one of Susie's guardians, while Honoria herself was the other. The property, which was considerable, was divided equally between the two sisters; and, in the event of one of them dying, all was to belong to the survivor.

"Arrange all as you think best," Honoria said to Mr. Ellis; "only I shall remain in this house with Susie. I do not care for anything else."

Mr. Ellis offered his wife's assistance.

"No," Honoria replied; "you are very kind, but we can do very well. I am glad to have something to do;" and she sighed drearily. About one thing she was obstinate,—she would not see Archer Benham. He called, he sent messages through Mr. Ellis, he wrote imploring letters, but all in vain; she always sent the same answer,—“He must wait.”

So the weary weeks passed on, and Susie could yet only bear to be lifted from the bed to the sofa; but she sometimes spoke of her father with quiet tears that the nurse rejoiced to see. Strength might return to the delicate frame, enfeebled by so severe a shock, now that the mind was clear and calm. And all this time there was a heart beating only for her. Archer longed to defend her with his strong, loving arms, against all the cares, all the sorrows, all the unkindness of the world. If she had only known!

One day, Honoria was beside her sister's couch, silently watching the thin fingers braiding some pretty work. It was so still outside, that they could hear the approach of a horseman, and presently a voice almost under the window asked for Miss Calvert. Honoria saw the colour rise in Susie's cheek, the eyes fill with moisture, the trembling hands drop the work. She saw how the tender little heart yearned with eager longing at the sound of that voice, but she had no pity then. She rose, pressing her hand on her heart, and left the room. With that burning, passionate jealousy in her soul, she dared not stay beside her sister. She went to her room, the scene so often of her fearful mental struggles, and sat down, gasping for breath, and shuddering at her own thoughts. A knock roused her, and the servant put a letter into her hand.

“Mr. Benham says, Will you be good enough to see him, only for five minutes, Miss Calvert?”

“I cannot see him,” she answered, hoarsely. “Tell him I will write.”

She sat listening till she heard him ride slowly away; then she rose and went to the window, whence she watched the solitary horseman as long as he was in sight. Almost with a groan, she then broke the seal of the letter she had held all this time. An enclosure fell out, addressed to Susie; she laid it aside, and read the sheet addressed to herself. In it Archer implored her forgiveness, but he could wait no longer. Surely, if Susie loved him, it would be a comfort to her to receive the assurance of his deep and unalterable affection. Would she not give him some hope? He could not stay so near, and not try to see her. If Susie would not give him an answer now, would she name a time when he might come? Might he return in a month—two months—three months? Meantime he would go abroad. He would not harass her for the world; he would be a wanderer till she bade him come; only let him have a hope, he asked no more.

There was a cold, cruel gleam in Honoria's eye as she read. The jealous passion she had nursed had grown beyond her unassisted human

strength now, and she yielded to its whispers. Lighting a candle, she held Susie's letter in the flame till it blazed, then threw it on the hearth, and stood watching it till the last particle was consumed; then she sat at her desk and wrote, without glancing at the open sheet that lay beside her,—

“Susie cannot, will not listen to you now. You will lose her for ever if you persist in writing. Her heart is full of her father, and she thinks it sacrilege to talk of any other love now. Your plan of going abroad is excellent. Leave her to me, and go. In three months you may return.” For a moment she paused. Implied falsehood had been but too easy; a direct untruth was harder. Again her evil spirit prompted, and she listened. A very few words were added. “Susie bids me say so.”

She dared not read what she had written. Hastily sealing and directing it, and only pausing to crush Archer's letter into a secret drawer of her desk, she took her note to the hall, and put it into the letter-bag herself. She could not stop to think, but went straight to Susie's room. The poor child looked up with eager, wistful eyes, and her lips were white with agitation. Honoria moved out of reach of her glance, and said, as easily as she could,—

“I have had a note from our friend Mr. Benham. He inquires kindly for us, and is just going abroad.”

Her ear caught a low, shivering sigh, but there was no answer; and when she ventured to turn from the window, the little fingers were busy with their delicate work again. Honoria smiled bitterly.

“She does not care much, after all,” she thought.

A few days later, Mr. Ellis mentioned, accidentally, that Mr. Benham was gone abroad for three months. Honoria replied that she had heard so from himself, and then the subject was dropped, and Archer's name was mentioned no more.

Summer was coming with its roses, but no roses returned to Susie's cheek. The doctor, whom Honoria anxiously consulted, said the nerves had sustained so severe a shock in her father's sudden death, that she could only rally by very slow degrees. The old nurse trembled for her darling, and called Honoria's attention to the fact that Susie grew weaker. The old woman carried her about like a child, and Susie liked to be taken to the couch in the bay-windowed room, to lie listening to the whispering leaves, and dreaming over the past.

Honoria herself was fearfully changed. Her cheek was hollow, her eye burned with a restless fire. Sleep seldom visited her. Through the long nights she wandered up and down her room, pausing at the window to watch the grey dawn stealing up the sky, or to gaze over the meadow-land, where the grass was once more rich and high, as in the time last year when Archer Benham first came to the old house. Thoughts which almost maddened her rushed over her brain in those miserable nights.

“Was Susie really dying, as nurse feared? Was it only grief for her

father's death? Would the knowledge, the blessed certainty that she was beloved, send fresh life through those veins, fresh vigour into that fading form? Should she hear the truth soon,—to-morrow? No: Honoria would wait till she knew where he was, and could summon him. She knew not now anything of his whereabouts; she must wait. Only three months, and he would come, and then . . . and then . . .”

Two-thirds of the time had rolled away. It was a lovely day in June, and the blackbird was piping in the pink-thorn whose bloomy boughs shadowed the bay-window. Susie was on her couch facing the garden, and Honoria sat with her back to the light, looking at her sister, and trying to fancy she was better. Susie shook her head in reply to some remark of Honoria's. “I have taken my last walk, dear,” she said; “you must learn to do without little Susie.”

Honoria hid her face in her hands, when suddenly she was startled by a low cry, and looking up, she saw Susie raising herself on the couch, with outstretched hands and glowing cheek, her eyes intently gazing out of the window. Honoria turned. *He* was there; pale, travel-worn, altered—but it was Archer Benham.

In a few moments he was in the room, kneeling by the couch, Susie's little head lying on his bosom in an ecstasy of joy. Tender as a mother's were his low, caressing words: “My little one, my dove, my darling, why did you send me away?”

He could only think of the bliss of seeing her again at first. Honoria sat spell-bound, till at last he turned to her, and said fiercely “Why was I not warned of this? Why did you not tell me? I heard from a stranger that she was ill.”

“How could I know where you were?” faltered Honoria.

“You knew my uncle's address,” he said; then, turning to Susie, “Why did you not answer my letter, my little one? Why not tell me I should be welcome? One word would have brought me, as I told you. Why did you not write?” Susie looked up astonished.

“Letter!” she said, “I had no letter.”

Honoria hid her face, and the truth flashed on Archer that he had been deceived. He started to his feet, and confronted her.

“You did not give her my letter?” he asked, seizing her wrist. “Where is it?”

“I destroyed it.”

The words sounded unnaturally hollow. He stood a moment, as if paralysed; then a low moan from Susie roused him, and he flew to his place by the couch, where the poor child lay cold and still, faint with terror.

“God forgive you!” he muttered, as he turned from Honoria. “You have murdered your sister.”

It was too true. Joy came too late to save the young life, blighted by sorrow and falsehood. The next day, with words of Christian forgiveness

and Christian hope on her lips, Susie's spirit passed into the world where sorrow is unknown. Honoria had confessed all, and Susie had earnestly pleaded with Archer; but Honoria felt that his seeming pardon was but spoken to pacify her sister, and that in reality he shrank from her with disgust. One promise Susie had exacted from her old nurse; it was that she should always remain with Honoria. Even Susie's influence would have failed here had the old woman known the truth, but none ever knew it except the three persons concerned.

The funeral moved away from the house, and once more Honoria gazed from the window, wild and hopeless, as the body of her only sister was carried to the grave. From that day she never again saw the face of Archer Benham, nor did any friendly foot ever cross her threshold. With Mr. Ellis she would only communicate by letter on matters of business. She dismissed every servant except the gardener, his wife, and the old nurse. She never left the house by day, only in the twilight she would steal into the garden or shrubbery, and wander for hours like a restless ghost; and many a time the passing traveller might be startled by the sight of a white despairing face, looking drearily out of one of the upper windows. Who shall say whether peace ever came to that proud and sinful heart? Death took her after many years. The nurse, entering her room one morning, found the bed had not been occupied, but on the floor under the window lay Honoria, her grey hair unbound, her hands clasped as if in supplication. She was dead.

Her will left all her large fortune to different charitable institutions, after providing for her servants. The house she bequeathed, without remark, to Archer Benham, now a baronet and in possession of Benham Park, but still a sad and solitary man. By his order the furniture was sold, with the exception of some few things he reserved for himself. In the secret drawer of Honoria's desk, he found a crushed letter, which he tore and flung to the winds; the other papers he handed to Mr. Ellis. After the sale, he ordered that the house should be shut up, and left to decay. The very windows had been removed, and replaced by boards, and neglect soon did its work. The once cheerful home is now but a desolate ruin, which the traveller can scarcely pass without a sigh, even when the history of its former inmates is unknown to him.

OUR SOLDIERS AT SEA.

THE sun was just rising from behind a low ridge of hills to the eastward of Kurrachee, as I turned out of my cot, made a tropical toilette, and went on deck to take a last quiet look, for the time being, at Indian soil. Still life reigned supreme. Around, close to shore, lay the boats forming the yet unfinished Indus flotilla, and beyond these stretched the low sandy plain through which the many-mouthed river finds its way to the sea. The town dotted this plain to the northward of the harbour, and the high church tower, marking its centre, was the only prominent object against the horizon. A more pictureless prospect I have seldom seen. An hour passed, my cheroot was finished, and life came into the landscape. The bells struck five, the watch turned out, and all was activity aloft and aloft. The commissariat bullock-waggons were soon seen wending their laborious way along the road between the town and the harbour, and before the sun had begun to exercise his power, the troops, with all their accessories, were on the Government quay ready to embark. Now all was noise and bustle; our living freight comes up on one side, havresacks, portmanteaus, bundles, and baggage on the other. Breakfast is despatched in an uncomfortable and summary manner; Government officials make their final inspection; dubashes, buggy-wallahs, and Parsee agents (whose name is legion) make their final settlements and depart (grumbling, of course), and at eleven a.m. up comes the anchor.

“Well, doctor, we’re in for four months of it,” said Captain S——, our commanding officer, as the tug threw off her hawser, wished us fair winds, and steamed back to the harbour. “Never mind, there are just enough to make up a rubber.”

Up went topgallant-sails and royals, and away we scudded, with a fine six-knot breeze on the quarter. Kurrachee soon looked little in the distance, and the mouths of the Indus knew us no more. Manora Point, standing boldly out to the last, wished us good-bye, and few were the regrets when land was invisible, and our imprisonment in wooden walls fairly begun. Though but a novice in tropical countries, I could tolerably well appreciate and enter into the feelings of joy felt and expressed by all around me at the prospect of once more sniffing a really temperate breeze in a temperate latitude. Men were with us who had not seen home for more than twenty years; who had lived in India through storm and sunshine, and who had ended gloriously their career there by helping to quell that mutiny which wellnigh scattered to the winds our Sovereign’s rule in Asia. Women were with us, some few of whom had borne with their husbands the burden and heat of the day in every sense of the expression; all of whom had passed through that ordéal of discomfort and minor hardships utterly unknown to the women of England, who have never quitted their native soil. Children were with us, most of whom had

first seen the light under an Indian sky, and whose ideas of life were consequently connected very closely with heat and Hindostanee; they seemed happy enough now as always, for a soldier's child in a marching regiment knows and cares little about domestic comforts, and few of these young hopefuls looked, comparatively speaking, at all the worse for their tropical experiences. "Homeward bound" was, however, just now the watchword of all, and I mentally contrasted the gleesome countenances of my present fellow-travellers with the dejected and saddened aspect of a large party of women and children landed under my charge some three weeks before.

Our soldiers find a footing in all quarters of the globe, and those at home read of their doings and movements here, there, and everywhere. It sufficeth our John Bull that the British lion holds his own wherever he places his paw; and he considers not how large a proportion of a soldier's life is spent on the high seas, where his very existence, for all practical purposes, is wellnigh ignored.

With fair winds and prosperous weather, about a hundred days must elapse before we reach Gravesend, and our little world of 270 souls must live on and look after itself.

Order soon prevails, for all now with us were seasoned soldiers, had seen lots of service, and were hoping that this would be their last voyage. The main deck of a troop-ship presents nothing very striking in its arrangements, being more or less clean and smart according to the activity of the ship's officers, and the supervision of their commander; to him is entrusted all matters relating to the sanitary department, and he is, by the terms of the charter-party, specially instructed to communicate with the commanding officer of the troops on this point. Officers commanding in transports are also recommended to use all possible means to further these arrangements, so that, under general circumstances, the ship's deck should be thoroughly clean at all times, except, perhaps, in very rough weather. Large wooden frames, called storm-hatches, with moveable tops, are placed over all the hatchways, their intended object being to facilitate the passage of air along the troop deck below in stormy weather. I cannot but think them a most clumsy encumbrance on the deck of a ship; they are constantly in the way of the sailors, render the descent through the hatchway infinitely difficult, and I can speak from experience as to their utter uselessness for purposes of ventilation, in that they impede the action of windsails in fine weather, and must be closed completely whenever there is any probability of shipping seas. It is just five o'clock; we have finished dinner in the cuddy, and have smoked our cheroots on the poop, gladly welcoming the sun's decline. Thinking that by this time our living freight must have shaken into their places, we dived down the after hatch on a tour of inspection. The arrangements of a troop deck are somewhat varied according to circumstances—as the number of women and children, the size of the vessel, &c.; but a general scheme pervades all. The deck is

open fore and aft throughout its entire length ; it is then divided into three chief compartments,—one for the married portion of the community and their families, a second for the general body of troops, and a third for the sick ; this last division is, of course, larger in ships bringing home invalids : a small space is also boarded up and barred to serve as a prison, but, thanks to good discipline, is seldom used. We found ourselves, on descending, in the married men's quarters, which, in this instance, occupied one-third of the ship's length. Bunks—*i. e.*, long sleeping-boxes—are provided, a row of these being built on each side, with double rows in the middle. These bunks are sometimes double, sometimes triple, as to height, and the wife, with her little ones, must choose between the difficult ascent of the upper, and the confined air of the lower, dormitories. The latter are decidedly preferred, and we found an old sergeant engaged in the unenviable task of uniting conflicting interests, and assigning a resting-place to each with as much equity as possible. A curtain, rolled up during the day, and dropped at night, separates this division from the rest of the deck. Looking “for'ard,” we see at a glance the general arrangements. A row of tables is placed on each side, with benches to match, each table accommodating six individuals, and forming, in regulation parlance, a mess. Each mess is provided with its own cooking and eating utensils, and is responsible for the good order of the same during the voyage ; as the men know that there is no market at which to replenish their stock of hardware, they are tolerably careful, and few breakages occur. Every soldier, if not in hospital, or otherwise disabled, sleeps in a hammock. The hammocks are slung in rows fore and aft, close to each other ; for, as they all swing simultaneously, no more room is required for each than the hammock actually occupies. Neighbours can thus talk to each other in bed comfortably enough ; and, depend upon it, many are the yarns spun during the long hours spent on the swing “between decks.” This division occupies naturally the largest portion of the deck. Our hospital is small, and situated close to the bows ; it is railed off, and contains six bunks, with room to hang as many cots. (A cot is an oblong swing-bed, a great improvement upon the conventional hammock, and, to my mind, by far the most comfortable kind of couch at sea, when the ludicrous difficulties of getting in and out are fairly surmounted.) A table and benches, like those outside, do double duty for the hospital sergeant and orderlies, and as the only furniture of my consulting-room,—a cheerless place, truly, for a sick soldier, and a contrast indeed to those comfortable wards on the “Dreadnought” hospital-ship, where the sick sailor finds a snug home.

The internal life of a troop-ship's inhabitants is, as with all things military, one of rule. I rise at five, and, an hour after, go down to attend to, and prescribe for, the sick. All are up and doing something. That very uncomfortable, but very necessary, process, yecept “washing decks,” has just commenced. Hammocks are unstrung, rolled up, and carried on deck, to be piled amidships during the day. Children are undergoing

matutinal ablutions, and a good deal of unsteady walking is observable, as we are now considerably on the slant, and few have, as yet, donned their sea legs. The morning's visit soon showed me how many broken constitutions and wrecks of once hearty men we were carrying home. They might reach England, 'tis true, but how few of them will have that health without which life is but an existence, and old age but a burden! All were incapacitated from further service by disease incidental to tropical climates, except a few who had received wounds during the late mutiny. Four were insane, the result of sunstroke: they were, of course, strictly watched, for the care of such patients on board ship involves great responsibilities. It is at present, and has, I believe, been always, the plan to send insane patients home in parties of three or four, distributing them, as equally as possible, among the whole number of soldiers returning for discharge to England. The wisdom of such a plan may, I think, justly be questioned: it is highly injudicious to send this class of patients in a ship in which children are conveyed, and there is no doubt that more complete arrangements should be made for them than at present exist. Medicines are given and taken, those too weak for duty put upon the sick list; eight bells strike, the breakfast call sounds, and down come the messmen, with unsteady gait, with the rations of biscuit and tea. I make my way with some difficulty to the stern, anxious to observe how our soldiers' wives and children fare at sea. Some say that first impressions are invariably correct, and in this instance I should certainly hold with the remark. My *début* here impressed me with the idea, which experience confirmed, that, for the most part, the wife of the British soldier is not clever at making the best of indifferent quarters. 'Tis true, sea-sickness was very rife with them just then; but as this wore off, and fine weather continued, the women's quarters were invariably found in a state of dire discomfort and dirt. A general want of energy (nurtured, perhaps, by a tropical sun) is observable among them, and a chief part of my duty consisted in a hebdomadal clearing out and thorough cleansing of these temporary domestic quarters between decks. It is so difficult to persuade a soldier's wife that ventilation is necessary to health, that clothes-lines are not appropriately placed along a row of bunks; in short, that, as to things sanitary, prevention is better than cure. I left them this morning *in statu quo* (seeing the utter impossibility of reducing such a party to a state of orderly cleanliness at present), stumbled up the main ladder, and, gaining the poop, looked out on a glorious morning—sun, sky, and water great in their expanse and power. No cloud, no ship, not even a bird in sight. We were moving through the water at a tolerably brisk rate, with all sails set; so, sniffing savoury odours arising from the cuddy, I went below, thinking, with satisfaction, that we had already lessened our journey by 120 miles. Our party in the cabin department was but small; in fact, just enough for a rubber. The fair sex was not represented, and but one of our quartett could look forward to the pleasure of joining his better half at the journey's

end. Captain S——, the happy man in question, was going home in charge of the troops, and was (ay, is, I trust), in every sense of the word, a capital fellow. Without interest or influence with the powers that be, he had served with his regiment at most foreign stations, and had already grown grey in his country's service, though hardly as yet passed the prime of life. Glad enough at the prospect of seeing England for the sake of those it contained, he was, *par excellence*, the merry member of our little clique, and whiled away many an otherwise monotonous evening by pleasant tales of experience and reminiscence. We finished a tolerably substantial meal, and, *sèlon la regle*, commenced at ten o'clock to inspect the men. All able to attend are drawn up in file, as well as space permits, along the main deck, with bare arms, chest, and feet; a general inspection serves thus to detect at once any want of cleanliness, and unwashed limbs are easily discovered. This done, we proceed below. All is perfectly clean now, and everything taut; even my bugbear, the women's quarter, is reduced to some sort of order by the miraculous efforts of the sergeant-major and his assistants. Invalids only are allowed below from nine to twelve, in order to give the deck as thorough a ventilation as possible; scuttles are opened to-day, for the weather is tolerably fine; the windsails fore and aft are all in due order, but 'tis certain that our troop deck does not rid itself well of foul air. As we glance round, the cause thereof is evident enough; there are no stern-ports. Fresh air in abundance may find its way down the fore hatch, but no means of egress exist for the impure air seeking to escape at the stern. We go for'ard, and find our little hospital intolerably hot; it is, as I before described, situated at the bows, under the fore-castle, and, consequently, in front of the fore hatch. No fresh air can be sent directly into it, except by means of two small scuttles, which are always closed whenever the wind is at all fresh. These two glaring evils were, of course, irremediable then, and the hospital, instead of being used as a quiet retreat for the most severe cases of sickness, became, of necessity, a *dernier ressort*.

It should certainly be a *sine qua non* in chartering a vessel for this service, that the 'tween decks shall have open stern-ports, and that the hospital shall be situated at the stern, and not at the bows, of the ship. The latter arrangement is, I am aware, sometimes carried out, but no special rule exists respecting it; and few who have not made a voyage with a large living freight can tell the great discomfort that want of arrangements such as these causes.

Official duties are now over for the day; sentries are placed at the fore and main hatches, on the fore-castle, and over the water-butts,—for these last require strict supervision. Each man and woman is allowed one gallon, each child half a gallon, of water *per diem*. A certain proportion of this is served out to every mess, morning and evening, for tea; the remainder is emptied into casks, to which all have access, going to drink *in propria persona*. No water is allowed to be carried away during the day, except

by the doctor's order. This very necessary regulation prevents wastage, which, even with all possible care, goes on often to an alarming extent. "Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink," though poetical in theory, is by no means pleasant in practice. Awnings are spread, and from eleven to twelve, little is done by any except the cooks, who may be seen at intervals issuing from their smoking kitchens near the fore-castle, glad to catch a little fresh air. These somewhat laborious posts are filled by men chosen from the ranks, to whom an extra rate of pay is given. Their kitchens are, of course, constructed upon a very limited scale, and but little provision is made for supplying the sick with variety of diet, oft-times necessary. Great improvements might be made in this respect, for, although it is generally understood that all cooking for the hospital shall be performed in the ship's galley, no order exists to that effect, and in an ill-regulated vessel the difficulties arising from this indefinite arrangement are endless and vexatious in the extreme. Twelve o'clock strikes, sights are taken, our position determined, our day's run noted, our future course given, and dinner, that great business of the day on board ship, commences.

On leaving port, troops are always supplied with fresh provisions for two days. In this instance the meat was found to be less fresh than was desirable, and was at once thrown overboard, so that the regular scale of victualling was adopted—beef, flour, and suet being the staple commodities for to-day. The weather was so hot, that many by choice ate their dinners upon deck; and I saw at a glance how much better the married messes fared than their bachelor neighbours. The messman for the week brought up the dinner, each party being responsible for the making of their own pudding. Many varieties of the latter existed, from the uninviting-looking mass concocted hastily and clumsily by some member of an unmarried clique, to the wholesome pudding (flavoured with a few currants from the private stock) set down by a clever soldier's wife before her husband and four or five hungry bairns. Sea-sickness affects children but very slightly indeed, and their appetites on board ship are wonderful to witness. The scale of diet, as to quantity, leaves nothing to desire; but, as the owners of the ship usually supply all provisions, the quality of the meat and other articles of food varies considerably. It is true, an inspection of all comestibles takes place before the commencement of the voyage; but complaints, some just, others frivolous, are so often preferred by the soldiers, that officers in charge of a troop-ship have no light duties to perform in preserving a requisite amount of content among those under their command during a long voyage;—this by the way. Dinner, like all good things, comes to an end at last; and after the decks are duly swept, all betake themselves to that laziness which a tropical afternoon so thoroughly favours, and the *far niente* principle holds its own completely. The majority go to sleep; some smoke, a few talk, and all, for the nonce, seem contented. All the hospital inmates able to bear removal are now brought upon deck; and two or three, to whom quietude was particularly

necessary, were carried up to the poop. As I went about, superintending their removal, it was sad to see and know how small was the prospect to them of ending their journey. Pale and ill as they now were, there was still that gleam of cheerfulness which rest and the hope of home always give. The sea breeze, with calm weather, had already effected a change for the better; but I knew that the Cape, with its gales, adverse currents, and cold weather, had yet to be passed before these old soldiers could fairly reckon upon reaching England.

Half-past three, or, in nautical parlance, seven bells, is, I believe, the universal dinner-hour on troop-ships for the cuddy passengers; soup, flesh, and fowl in every variety—the domestic birds being, however, terribly tough towards the journey's end. Very little, if any, fish is eaten on a long passage, for though they are seen daily, the opportunities for angling are few, and shark is by no means a delicate dish. We don't fare badly, however, and soon adjourned to smoke that eternal pipe, so general a favourite with Europeans abroad, and, I must needs say, so excusable a luxury. Five o'clock, and tea now claims universal attention. The youngsters are noisy enough over it, and, *en masse*, seemed as much at home here, with appetites as hearty and spirits as good, as on land. All now are alive, old and young, for the sun has gone down, and after a twilight of scarce ten minutes' duration, we are sailing along on a fine moonlit sea. This is by far the happiest time of the day, for, putting aside all romantic ideas of a lunny nature, and ignoring the poets altogether, the luxury of a tropical evening is well worth the discomforts attending a sea journey. The awnings are furled at six, and down go the hammocks to be slung for the night. This latter business occupies about half an hour, for space is limited, and each man cannot claim his property from the heap without some trouble. At last, however, the *finale* of the day's work is over; out comes the fiddle, out comes the flute—the quarter deck is cleared in a trice, and the Emerald Isle soon claims pre-eminence in the light fantastic toe department. Irishmen are capital soldiers (though sea captains tell me that they make very bad sailors)—few regiments of the line are without a considerable number of them—and on this occasion, the clans Murphy, O'Rourke, and O'Brien, with others of Hibernian descent, were very ably represented. Hornpipe and reel follow each other in quick succession. We were very fortunate in having on board a famous piper, whose pibroch had sounded in the ranks of the 79th for the last twenty-five years, and who blew his last military note as we anchored at Gravesend. Eight bells sounded long before the dancers were tired; all now turned in for the night; the pumps did their evening duty to the air of "Camp-town Races," and before another hour had passed, the denizens of the troop deck, for the most part, betrayed their existence only by a protracted series of snores. At ten, I made a final round to look at the sick, and to see that the scheme of ventilation was carried out as completely as possible; our little clique in the cabin usually broke up early, and after taking a turn

or two on the poop with the officer of the watch, we were generally glad to court the sleeping god, not often unsuccessfully.

Such is the general routine of troop-ship life. Sunday brought some variety with it, for on these days the men are paraded in white smocks (provided specially for the voyage), and Divine service is read by the commanding officer. A small library is now always sent with every detachment of troops embarking for a long passage, and, as the collection of books is a miscellaneous one, it is extensively patronised. Scott's novels are always in great request; and volumes of magazines, containing short stories or articles, are chief favourites. In all ships returning from India, birds are an endless source of amusement; and we had on this occasion sixty or seventy parrots, paroquets, and love-birds belonging to the soldiers. We neared the Cape in due course, changed our sails, and soon encountered one of those gales from the north-west, so well known and so anxiously looked for in that locality. The poor invalids bore the rough weather badly; a troop deck with closed hatches is by no means an enviable place of residence, and we had barely rounded the corner and caught the south-east trades, before two of my patients found their last resting-place in the wide Atlantic. There are few events in a wandering existence more sadly impressive than a funeral at sea. Life is brought into such close proximity with death; the seat once occupied, now vacant, looks conspicuous in its emptiness, and reminds us constantly that death's unsparing hand has been amongst us. The men are all paraded on the main deck; those of their own corps perform the last sad offices for their comrade; as the declining sun reaches the horizon, the sails are reversed, the ensign waves over the dead, and, with uncovered heads, we commit their bodies to the deep, hoping and believing that there the weary are at rest.

All troop-ships proceeding from India to England put in at the Cape, Mauritius, or St. Helena, to provide a fresh supply of water, and extra medical stores, if required. Our captain chose the last-named place, and we anchored under the cliffs of that isolated rock, one of the most naturally curious dwelling-places in the world. Twenty-four hours sufficed to do all necessary business, and we were soon under weigh again. Ascension is past, the Line is crossed, and the evening songs sound fresher and merrier as we reach temperate latitudes, and know that home is not very far off. The Lizard is sighted at last; and only those who have lived continuously on salt water for three or four months, can tell how delightful is the sight of green fields and the immediate prospect of walking again on *terra firma*. After a foggy day in the Channel we reached Gravesend, were duly inspected by the authorities there, and afterwards forwarded to Chatham. I took leave of my charge with many regrets; travellers by sea have so many sympathies in common, that a tie of friendship unites all in a greater or less degree.

After this brief description of a soldier's voyage, some details respecting the governance of troop-ships may be interesting. The transport service, as at present constituted, is managed by three distinct departments. The

conveyance of troops to and from the home districts and colonies, is conducted by the War Office and the Admiralty; the marine branch of the East India Office is responsible for the transit of its own European army; and the Emigration Office, constituting the third department, organizes the conveyance of emigrants and coolies to the colonies, and, in some instances, of the wives and families of soldiers serving in India. The first of these departments possessed, some time ago, eight Government troop-ships in active service; two are lost, and the remaining six have been chiefly employed in conveying troops to and from the Mediterranean and other home stations; several were also of great service, acting with the fleet during the Chinese war. The *Himalaya* is a noble example of this class of ships, all of which are specially well ventilated, and fitted up in a far better manner than the hired transport just described. After an experience of thirteen years, during which time the relative merits and cost of Government and hired troop-ships have been thoroughly canvassed, a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry has arrived at the following conclusions:—that for long voyages sailing transports are preferable to steamships; that the cost of Government troop-ships far exceeds that incurred by the hire of vessels from the mercantile marine; and that, therefore, it is expedient that all transport service should be conducted by means of hired vessels—two or three Government troop-ships being retained for home service. There are, however, manifest disadvantages arising from the existence of three transport departments. All have distinct charter-parties, variously worded, and with different regulations; as an instance of this, we may cite that rule of the Emigration Commissioners, which enjoins all owners of vessels chartered by them, to provide in each a distilling apparatus for fresh water; no such rule exists in the other departments. Their interests, also, are conflicting; for two departments are frequently advertising for tonnage at the same time, thereby tending to increase freights, and damage the public service. It is therefore recommended that these offices be united under one management, to be called “The Transport Office.” If these recommendations be adopted and carried out, the comfort and well-being of our soldiers at sea will mainly depend upon the regulations which will guide the hiring of vessels for the conveyance of troops. In England, vessels can always be found to meet the requirements of any transit; but it is certain that, in India and the colonies, ships are often taken up for the use of troops wholly inadequate, as to ventilation and other requirements, for the proper performance of their duty. It is of the utmost importance that soldiers returning home on sick leave, or to receive their discharge from the service, should be even better provided for than those going out. Those labourers are surely well worthy of their hire; they have fought for us, and it is but just that we should make their journey home as pleasant as we can. To many of them a troop-ship is a last earthly place of abode—they find a watery grave, and the world on land forgets them. In reviewing the deeds and doings of British regiments scattered over the globe, let us remember now and then the existence of our soldiers at sea.

THE DISINHERITED;

A TALE OF MEXICAN LIFE AND ADVENTURE.

CHAPTER XX.

LOST!

THEY sat down to table; but the meal, in spite of Dona Marianna's efforts to enliven it, suffered from the anxiety which two of the party felt, and tried in vain to conceal. The tigrero was vexed with his foster-sister for not letting him accompany her, for he had not liked to express his fears, lest the young lady on her return to the hacienda might meet the ferocious animals he had been pursuing for some days past, without being able to shoot them.

The jaguar, which is very little known in Europe, is one of the scourges of Mexico, and would figure advantageously in zoological gardens. There is only one in the Parisian Jardin des Plantes, and that is a very small specimen. Let us describe this animal, which is more feared by the Indians and white men of North America, than is the lion by the Arabs. The jaguar (*Felis onca*, or *onza*) is, next to the tiger and lion, the largest of the animals of its genus; it is the great wild cat of Cuvier, and is called indiscriminately "the American tiger," and the "panther of the furriers." It is a quadruped of the feline race; its total length is about nine feet, and its height about twenty-seven inches. Its skin is handsome, and in great request; while of a bright tawny hue on the back, it is marked on the head, neck, and along the flanks with black spots: the lower part of the body is white, with irregular black spots.

But few animals escape the pursuit of the jaguar; it obstinately hunts horses, bulls, and buffaloes; it does not hesitate to leap into rivers to catch certain fish it is fond of, fights the alligator, devours otters and picas, and wages a cruel warfare with the monkeys, owing to its agility, which enables it to mount to the top of trees, even when they are devoid of branches, and upwards of eighty feet high. Although, like all the *Carnivora* of the New World, it shuns the proximity of man, it does not hesitate to attack him when urged by hunger or tracked by hunters; in such cases it fights with the utmost bravery, and does not dream of flight.

Such were the animals the tigrero had been pursuing for the last few days, and had not been able to catch up. According to the sign he had found, the jaguars were four in number—the male, female, and two cubs. We can now understand what the young man's terror must be on thinking of the terrible dangers to which his foster-sister ran a risk of being exposed on her return to the hacienda; but he knew Dona Marianna too well to hope he could make her recall her decision. Hence, he did not try to bring the conversation back to the subject, but resolved to follow her at a distance, in order to come to her aid if circumstances required it.

As always happens under such circumstances, Dona Marianna, seeing that no one referred again to the jaguars, was the first to talk about them, asking her foster-brother the details of their appearance in the country, and the mischief they had done, in what way he meant to surprise them, and a multitude of other questions; to which the young man replied most politely, but limiting himself to brief answers, and without launching into details, which are generally so agreeable to a hunter. The tigrero displayed such laconism in the information he gave the young lady, that the latter, vexed in spite of herself at seeing him so cold upon a subject to which he had seemed to attach such importance a few moments before, began jeering him, and ended by saying, with a mocking look, that she was convinced he had only said what he did to frighten her, and that the jaguars had only existed in his imagination. Marianno gaily endured the raillery, confessed that he had, perhaps, displayed more anxiety than the affair deserved, and taking down a jarabe that hung on the wall, he began strumming a fandango with the back of his hand, in order to turn the conversation.

Several hours passed in laughing, talking, and singing. When the moment for departure at length arrived, Marianno went to the corral to fetch the young lady's horse, saddled it with the utmost care, and led it to the door of the rancho, after saddling his own horse, so that he might start so soon as Dona Marianna was out of sight of the rancho.

"You remained a long time in the corral, toçayo," she said, with a laugh; "pray, have you discovered any suspicious sign?"

"No, nina; but as I am also going to leave the rancho, after saddling your horse I saddled mine."

"Of course, you are going to hunt your strange jaguars again?"

"Oh, of course," he answered.

"Well," she said, with feigned terror, "if you do meet them, pray do not miss them."

"I will do all in my power to avoid that, because I desire to make you a present of their skins, in order to prove to you that they really existed."

"I thank you for your gallantry, toçayo," she replied, with a laugh; "but you know the proverb: 'a hunter must not sell the skin of a—jaguar, before—'"

"Well, well, we shall soon know who is right and who wrong," he interrupted her.

The maiden, still laughing, embraced the rançhero and his wife, lightly bounded into the saddle, and bending down gracefully, offered her hand to Marianno.

"We part friends, toçayo," she said to him; "are you coming my way?"

"I ought to do so."

"Then why not accompany me?"

"Because you would suppose, nina, that I wished to escort you."

“Ha! ha! ha!” the young lady said, merrily, “I had forgotten your proposal of this morning; well, I hope you will be successful in your hunt; and so good bye till to-morrow. Come, Negro.”

After uttering these words, she gave a parting wave of the hand to her nurse, and started at a gallop. The young man, after watching her for a while to be certain of the road she followed, then re-entered the rancho, took his gun, and loaded it with all the care which hunters display in this operation when they believe that life depends on the accuracy of their aim.

“Are you really about to start at once?” his mother asked him, anxiously.

“At once, mother.”

“Where are you going?”

“To follow my foster-sister to the hacienda, without her seeing me.”

“That is a good idea; do you fear any danger for her?”

“Not the slightest. But it is a long distance from here to the hacienda; the Indians are moving, it is said; we are no great distance from the border, and, as no one can foresee the future, I do not wish my sister to be exposed to any chance encounter.”

“Excellently reasoned, muchacho. The nina is wrong in thus crossing the forest alone.”

“Poor child!” the rancho said, “an accident happens so easily; lose no time, muchacho, but be off: on reflection, I think you ought to have insisted on accompanying her.”

“You know, father, she would not have consented.”

“That is true; it is better that it should be as it is, for she will be protected without knowing it. The first time I see Don Ruiz, I will recommend him not to let his sister go out thus alone, for times are not good.”

But the young man was no longer listening to his father; so soon as his gun was loaded he left the rancho, followed by his dog. Two minutes later he was in the saddle, and riding at full speed in the direction taken by Dona Marianna.

So soon as the young lady found herself at a sufficient distance from the rancho, she had checked her horse's pace, which was now proceeding at an amble. It was about five in the afternoon; the evening breeze was rising, and gently waving the tufted crests of the trees; the sun, now almost level with the ground, only appeared on the horizon in the shape of a reddish globe; the atmosphere, refreshed by the breeze, was perfumed by the gentle emanations from the flowers and herbs; the birds, aroused from the heavy lethargy produced by the heat, were singing beneath all the branches, and filling the air with their joyous songs.

Dona Marianna, whose mind was impressionable, and open to all sensations, gently yielded to the impressions of this scene, which was so full of ineffable harmony, and gradually forgetting where she was and sur-

rounding objects, had fallen into a voluptuous reverie. What was she meditating? She certainly could not have said; she was yielding unconsciously to the influence of this lovely evening, and travelling into that glorious country of fancy, of which life is but too often the nightmare. Dona Marianna was too young, too simple, and too pure yet to possess any memory either sad or sweet; her life had hitherto been an uninterrupted succession of sunshiny days; but she was a woman, and listened for the beatings of her heart, which she was surprised at not hearing. With that curiosity which is innate in her sex, the maiden tried with a timid hand to raise a corner of the veil that covered the future, and to divine mysteries which are incomprehensible, so long as love has not revealed them by sufferings, joy, or grief.

Dona Marianna had rather a long ride through the forest before reaching the plain; but she had so often ridden the road at all hours of the day, she was so thoroughly persuaded that no danger menaced her, that she let the bridle hang on her horse's neck, while she plunged deeper and deeper into the delicious reverie which had seized on her. In the meanwhile the shades grew deeper; the birds had concealed themselves in the foliage, and ceased their songs; the sun had disappeared, and the hot red beams it had left on the horizon were beginning to die out; the wind blew with greater force through the branches, which uttered long murmurs; the sky was assuming deeper tints, and night was rapidly approaching. Already the shrill cries of the coyotes rose in the quebradas and in the unexplored depths of the forest; hoarse yells disturbed the silence, and announced the awakening of the savage denizens of the forest.

All at once a long, startling, strident howl, bearing some resemblance to the miauling of a cat, burst through the air, and fell on the maiden's ear with an ill-omened echo. Suddenly startled from her reverie, Dona Marianna looked up, and took an anxious glance around her. A slight shudder of fear passed over her body, for her horse, so long left to its own devices, had left the beaten track, and the maiden found herself in a part of the forest unknown to her—she had lost her way. A person lost in an American forest is dead!

These forests are generally entirely composed of trees of the same family, which render it impossible to guide oneself, unless gifted with that miraculous intuition which the Indians and hunters possess, and which enables them to march with certainty in the most inextricable labyrinths. Wherever the eye may turn, it only perceives immense arcades of verdure, infinitely prolonged, wearying the eye by their desperate monotony, and only crossed at intervals by the tracks of wild beasts, which are mixed strangely together, and eventually lead to unknown watering-places—nameless streams, that run silently and gloomily beneath the covert, and whose windings cannot possibly be followed.

The spot where the maiden was, was one of the most deserted in the forest; the trees, of prodigious height and size, grew closely together, and

were connected by a network of lianas, which, growing in every direction, formed an impassable wall; from the end of the branches hung, in long festoons to the ground, that greyish moss known as Spanish beard, while the tall straight grass that everywhere covered the ground, showed that human foot had not trodden the soil here for a lengthened period. The maiden felt an invincible terror seize upon her. Night had almost completely set in; then the stories her foster-brother had told her in the morning about the jaguars returned to her mind in a flood, and were rendered more terrible by the darkness that surrounded her, and the mournful howling that burst forth on all sides. She shuddered, and turned pale as death at the thought of the fearful danger to which she had so imprudently exposed herself.

Then, collecting all her strength for a last appeal, she uttered a cry; but her voice died out without raising an echo. She was alone—lost in the desert by night. What could she do? what would become of her?

The maiden tried to find the route by which she had come, but the road followed haphazard through the herbage no longer existed—the grass trodden by her horse's hoof had sprung up again behind it. Moreover, the night was so dark that Dona Marianna could not see four paces ahead of her; and she soon found that her efforts to find the road would only result in leading her further astray. Under such circumstances, a man would have been in a comparatively far less dangerous position. He could have lit a fire to combat the night chill, and keep the wild beasts at bay; in the event of an attack, his weapons would have allowed him to defend himself: but Dona Marianna had not the means to light a fire; she had no weapons, and had she possessed them, she would not have known how to use them. She was forced to remain motionless at the spot where she was for the whole night, at the hazard of dying of cold or terror.

This position was frightful. How she now regretted her imprudent confidence, which was the cause of what was now occurring! But it was too late; neither complaints nor recrimination aught availed. She must yield to her fate. With energetic natures, however little accustomed they may be to peril, when that peril proves inevitable, and they recognise that nothing can protect them from it, a reaction takes place; their thoughts become clearer, their courage grows with their will, and they accept, with a proud and resolute resignation, all the consequences of the danger they are compelled to confront, however terrible they may be. This was what happened to the maiden when she perceived that she was really lost. A profound despair seized upon her—for a moment the weakness natural to her sex gained the upper hand, and she fell sobbing on the ground; but gradually the reaction set in, and, pious as all Spanish women are, she clasped her hands and addressed a fervent and touching prayer to GOD, who was her last hope.

It has been justly said that prayer not only consoles, but strengthens and restores hope. Prayer, with those who sincerely believe, is the expres-

sion of the real feelings of the soul ; only those who have looked death in the face, either on the battle-field or during a storm at sea, will understand the sublimity of prayer—the last appeal of the weak victim to the omnipotent Intelligence which can alone save him. Dona Marianna prayed, and then rose calmer, and, above all, stronger. She had placed herself in the hands of Deity, and, in her simple faith, was convinced that He would not abandon her.

Her horse, whose bridle she had not let loose, was standing motionless by her side. The maiden gently patted the noble animal, the only friend left to her ; then, by a sudden inspiration, she began unfastening the girths, tearing her little hands without knowing it, and lacerating her fingers with the iron tongues of the buckles.

“Poor Negro,” she said, in a soft voice, as she removed the trappings, “you must not be the victim of my imprudence ; resume your liberty, for the noble instinct with which your Creator has endowed you, will, perhaps, enable you to find your road. Go, my poor Negro ; you are now free.”

The animal gave a whining of delight, made a prodigious leap, and disappeared in the darkness. Dona Marianna was alone—really alone, now.

CHAP. XXI.

STRONGHAND.

IT is impossible to imagine what terrors night brings with it under its thick mantle of mist, when the earth is no longer warmed by the sparkling sunbeams, and darkness reigns as supreme lord. At that time everything changes its aspect, and assumes in the flickering rays of the moon a fantastic appearance ; the mountains seem loftier, the rivers wider and deeper ; the trees resemble spectres—gloomy denizens of the tomb, watching for you to pass, and ready to clutch you in their fleshless arms. The imagination becomes heated, ideas grow confused, you tremble at the fall of a leaf, at the moaning of the night breeze, at the breakage of a branch ; and, suffering from a horrible nightmare, you fancy at every moment that your last hour is at hand.

In the American forests, night has mysteries still more terrible. Beneath these immense domes of verdure, which the sun is powerless to pierce, even at mid-day, and which remain constantly buried in an undecided clear-obscure, the darkness may, so to speak, be felt ; nothing could produce a flash in this chaos, excepting, perhaps, the luminous eyeballs of the wild beasts, that dart electric sparks from the thickets. Here Night is truly the mistress ; the darkness is peopled by the sinister denizens of the forest, whom the obscurity drives from their unknown hiding-places, and who begin their mournful prowling in search of prey. From each clump, from each ravine, issue confused sounds that have no name in human

language; some clear and sharp, others hoarse and low, and others, again, resembling miauling, or sardonic laughter, are blended in a horrible concert. Then come the heavy footfalls on the ground, and the sullen flapping of birds' wings, as well as that incessant indistinct murmur, which is nought else but the continual buzz of the infinitely little, mingled with the hollow moan always heard in the desert, and which is only the breath of Nature travelling with her incomprehensible secrets. A night passed in the forest, without fire or weapons, is a terrible thing for a man; but the situation becomes far more frightful for a woman—a girl—a frail and delicate creature, accustomed to all the comforts of life, and unable to find within herself those thousand resources which a strong man, habituated to struggle, manages to procure, even in the most desperate situations.

Without dwelling further on the subject, the reader can imagine without difficulty the painful situation in which Dona Marianna found herself. So long as she could hear the sound of her horse's hoofs, as it fled at full speed, she stood with her body bent forward and outstretched ears, attaching herself to life, and, perchance, to hope, through the sound which was so familiar to her; but when it had died out in the distance, when a leaden silence once again weighed on her, the maiden shuddered, and, folding her hands on her chest, sank in a half-fainting condition at the foot of a tree—no longer thinking or hoping, but awaiting death. For what succour could she expect in this tomb of verdure, which, though so spacious, was not the less secure?

How long did she remain plunged in this state of prostration, which was only an anticipated death—one hour or five minutes? She could not have said. For wretched people, whom everything, even hope, abandons, time seems to stand still—minutes become ages, and an hour seems as if it would never end. All at once a feeble, almost indistinguishable sound smote her ear, and she instinctively listened. This sound grew louder with every second, and ere long she could not be mistaken; it was a rapid mad gallop through the forest. This sound Dona Marianna recognised with terror; for it was produced by the return of her horse. For the noble animal to come back with such velocity, it must be pursued, and that closely, by ferocious animals; such was Dona Marianna's idea, and, unfortunately, she only too soon recognised its correctness. The horse gave a snort of terror, which was immediately answered by two loud, sharp growls. Then, as if dreaming, Dona Marianna heard prodigious leaps; she saw ill-omened shadows pass before her with the rapidity of a lightning flash, and then a fearful struggle, in which groans of agony were mingled with yells of delight.

However terrible the maiden's position might be, she felt tears slowly course down her cheeks—her horse, her last comrade, had succumbed—the liberty she had granted it had only precipitated its destruction. Strange to say, though, at this supreme moment Dona Marianna did not think for an instant that the death of her horse probably only preceded her own by

a brief space, and that it was a sinister warning to her to prepare for being devoured.

When terror has attained a certain degree, a strange effect is produced upon the individual: animal life still exists in the sense that the arteries pulsate, the heart palpitates; but intellectual life is completely suspended; the brain, struck by a temporary paralysis, no longer receives the thought; the eyes look without seeing; the voice itself cannot force its way through the contracted throat; in a word, terror produces a partial catalepsy, by destroying for a period, longer or shorter, all the noblest faculties of man. Dona Marianna had reached such a point that, even had she possessed the means of flight, she would have been incapable of employing them, so thoroughly was every feeling extinct in her—even the instinct of self-preservation, which usually remains when all the others are destroyed.

Fortunately for the girl, the jaguars—for there were several of them—were to leeward; moreover, they had tasted blood, and this was a double reason which temporarily saved her, by depriving their scent of nearly all its delicacy. No other sound was audible, save that produced by the crushing of the horse's bones, which the wild beasts were devouring, mingled with growls of anger, when one of the banqueters tried to encroach on its neighbour's share of the booty. There could be no doubt about the fact; the animals enjoying this horrible repast were the jaguars, so long hunted by the tigrero, and which her evil star had brought across the maiden's track.

By degrees, Dona Marianna became—not familiarized with the danger hanging over her head, for that would have been impossible; but as, according to the law of nature, anything that reaches its culminating point must begin to descend, her first terror, though it did not abandon her, produced a strange phenomenon. She felt involuntarily attracted toward these horrible animals, whose black outlines she could distinguish moving in the darkness; suffering from a species of vertigo, with her body bent forward, and her eyes immoderately dilated, without even accounting for the strange feeling that urged her to act thus, she kept her eyes eagerly fixed upon them, following with a febrile interest their slightest movements, and experiencing at the sight a feeling of inexplicable pleasure, which produced a mingled shudder of joy and pain. Let who will try to explain this singular anomaly of human nature; but the fact is certain, and among our readers many will, doubtless, bear witness to its truth.

All at once the jaguars, which had hitherto been greedily engaged with the corpse of the horse, without thinking of anything beyond making a hearty meal, raised their heads and began sniffing savagely. Dona Marianna saw their eyes, sparkling like live coals, fixed upon her; she understood that she was lost; instinctively she closed her eyes to escape the fascination of those metallic eyeballs, which seemed in the darkness to emit electric sparks, and prepared to die. Still the jaguars did not stir; they were crouching on the remains of the horse, and, while continuing to

gaze at the maiden, gracefully passed their paws over their ears with a purr of pleasure—in a word, they were coquettishly performing their toilet, appearing not only most pleased with the meal they had just ended, but with that which was awaiting them.

Still, in spite of the calmness affected by the two animals—for the cubs were sleeping, rolled up like kittens—it was evident that for some unknown motive they were restless; they lashed the ground with their weighty tails, or laid back their ears with a roar of anger, and turning their heads in all directions, sniffed the air. They scented a danger; but of what nature was it? As for Dona Marianna, they appeared so sure of seizing her whenever they thought proper, and saw how harmless she was, that they contented themselves with crouching before her, and did not deign to advance a step. All at once the male, without stirring, uttered a sharp quick yell. The female rose, bounded forward, seized one of her cubs in her mouth, and with one backward leap disappeared in a thicket; almost immediately she reappeared, and removed the second in the same way; then she returned calmly and boldly to place herself by the side of the male, whose anxiety had now attained formidable proportions.

At the same instant a flash traversed the air—a shot echoed far and wide—and the male jaguar writhed on the ground with a roar of agony. Almost immediately, a man dashed from the tree at the foot of which Dona Marianna was crouching, stood in front of her, and received the shock of the female, which, at the shot, had instinctively bounded forward. The man tottered, but for all that kept his feet; there was a frightful struggle for a few minutes, and then the jaguar fell back with a last and fearful yell.

“Come,” the hunter said, as he wiped on the grass the long machete with which he had stabbed the beast, “my arrangements were well made, but I fancy that I arrived only just in time. Now for the cubs; for I must not show mercy to any member of this horrible family.”

Then this man, who seemed to possess the faculty of seeing in the darkness, walked without hesitation toward the spot where the female had hidden her cubs. He resolutely entered the thicket, and came out again almost immediately, holding a cub in either hand. He smashed their heads against the trunk of a tree, and threw the bodies on those of their father and mother.

“That is a very tidy butchery,” he said; “but what on earth is Don Hernando’s tigrero about, that I am obliged to do his work?”

While saying this, the hunter had collected all the dry wood within reach, struck a light, and within a few minutes a bright flame rose skywards. This duly accomplished, the stranger hurried to the assistance of Dona Marianna, who had fainted.

“Poor girl!” he muttered, with an accent of gentle pity, as he lifted her in his arms, and carried her to the fire; “how is it that the fright has not killed her?”

He gently laid her on some furs he had arranged for her bed, and gazed at her for a moment with a look of delight impossible to describe. But then he felt considerably embarrassed. Accustomed to the hardships of a desert life, and a skilful hunter as he had proved himself, this man was naturally a very poor sick-nurse. He knew how, at a pinch, to dress a wound, or extract a bullet, but he was quite ignorant how to bring a fainting woman round.

"Still I cannot leave her in this state, poor girl!" he muttered, gazing on her sorrowfully; "but what am I to do?—how can I relieve her?"

At length he knelt down by the young lady's side, gently raised her lovely head, which he laid on his knee, and opening with his dagger-point her closed lips, poured in a few drops of Catalonian refino contained in a gourd. The effect of this remedy was instantaneous. A nervous tremor passed over the maiden's body; she heaved a sigh, and opened her lips. At the first moment she looked around her wildly, but ideas seemed gradually to return to her brain; her contracted features grew brighter, and fixing her eyes on the hunter, who was still bending over her, she muttered, with an expression of gratitude which made the young man's heart beat, "Stronghand!"

"Have you recognised me, *senorita*?" he exclaimed, with joyous surprise.

"Are you not my Providence?" she answered. "Do you not always arrive when I have to be saved from some fearful danger?"

"Oh, *senorita*!" he murmured, in great embarrassment.

"Thanks! thanks, my saviour!" she continued, seizing his hand, and pressing it to her heart; "thanks for having come to my help, Stronghand, for this time again. I should have been lost without you."

"I really believe," he said, with a smile, "that I arrived just in time."

"But how is it that you came so opportunely?" she asked, curiously, as she sat up and wrapped herself in the furs; for the feminine instinct had regained its power over her.

At this question, simple though it was, the hunter turned red.

"Oh," he said, "it is very simple. I have been hunting in these parts for some days past. I had tracked this family of jaguars, which I obstinately determined to kill, I know not why; but now I understand that it was a presentiment. After pursuing them all day, I had lost them out of sight, and was seeking their trail, when your horse enabled me to recover it."

"What!—my horse?" she exclaimed, in amazement.

"Do you not remember that it was I who gave you this poor Negro on our first meeting?"

"That is true," she murmured, as she let her eyes fall beneath the hunter's ardent glance.

"I saw you for a moment this morning, when you were going to Sanchez' rancho."

"Ah!" she remarked.

"Sanchez is a friend of mine," he continued, as if to explain his remark.

"Go on."

"On seeing the horse, which I at once recognised, I feared that some accident had happened to you, and set out after it. But the jaguars had scented it at the same time, and in spite of my thorough acquaintance with this forest, it was impossible for me to run as fast as they did. Luckily, they were hungry, and amused themselves by devouring poor Negro, otherwise I should not have arrived in time."

"But how was it that you came by this strange road?"

"In the first place, I was bound to save your life, as I knew that if I killed one jaguar, the other would leap upon you, in order to avenge it."

"But you ran the risk of being torn in pieces by the horrible animals," she said, with a shudder of retrospective terror, as she thought of the frightful dangers from which she had been so miraculously preserved.

"That is possible," he said, with an unmistakable expression of joy; "but I should have died to save you, and I desired nothing else."

The maiden made no reply. Pensive and blushing, she bowed her head on her chest. The hunter thought that he had offended her, and also remained silent and constrained. This silence lasted several minutes: at length Dona Marianna raised her head, and offered her hand to the young man.

"Thank you again!" she said, with a gentle smile. "Your heart is good. You did not hesitate to sacrifice your life for me, whom you scarce know, and I shall feel eternally grateful to you."

"I am too amply repaid for my services by these words, *senorita*," he replied, with marked hesitation; "still I have a favour to ask you, and I should be pleased if you would deign to grant it."

"Oh, speak, speak! tell me what I can do!"

"I know not how to explain it; my request will appear to you so strange, so singular—perhaps so indiscreet."

"Speak; for I feel convinced that the favour you pretend to ask of me is merely another service you wish to render me."

Stronghand bent a searching glance on the maiden, and then seemed to make up his mind.

"Well, *senorita*," he said, "it is this:—should you ever, for any reason neither you nor I can foresee, need advice or the help of a friend, either for yourself or any member of your family, do nothing till you have seen me, and explained to me unreservedly the motives that impelled you to come to me."

Dona Marianna reflected, while the hunter gazed at her attentively.

"Be it so," she at length said; "I promise to act as you wish. But how am I to find you?"

"Your foster-brother is my friend, *senorita*; you will request him to

lead you to me, and he will do so ; or, if you prefer it, you can warn me through him to proceed to any place you may point out."

"Agreed."

"I can count on your promise?"

"Have I not passed my word?"

All at once a loud noise, resembling the passage of a wild beast, was heard in the forest glade ; the maiden started, and instinctively clung to the hunter.

"Fear nothing, *senorita*," the latter said ; "do you not recognise a friend?"

At the same moment the *tigrero's* dog leaped up to fondle her, followed almost instantaneously by *Marianno*.

"Heaven be blessed !" he said, joyfully, "she is saved !" and pressing the hunter's hand cordially, he added, "Thanks ; it is a service I owe you, brother."

CHAP. XXII.

THE RETURN.

How was it that the *tigrero*, whom we saw leave the rancho almost as soon as *Dona Marianna*, and follow in her track, arrived so late ? We will explain this in a few sentences. The young man, feeling certain that his foster-sister thoroughly knew the road she had to follow, which was, moreover, properly traced, had not dreamed of the chance of her missing her way, and not troubling himself to follow the horse's footmarks, he pushed straight on, fancying *Dona Marianna* ahead of him, crossed the forest, and then entered the plain, without perceiving the person he fancied he was following.

Still, on reaching the cultivated land he looked carefully ahead of him, for he was surprised at the advance the young lady had gained on him in so short a time. But, though he examined the horizon all around, he saw nothing of her. *Marianno* was beginning to grow anxious ; still, as there was a *chapparal* some distance ahead, whose tufted trees might conceal her whom he sought, he became reassured and pushed onward, increasing the already rapid pace of his steed. It took him some time to pass through the *chapparal* ; when he reached its skirt, and again entered the plain, the sun had set about half an hour previously, and darkness was invading the earth ; the darkness was, indeed, so thick that, in spite of all his exertions, he could distinguish nothing a few paces ahead of him.

The *tigrero* halted, dismounted, placed his ear on the ground, and listened. A moment later he heard, or fancied he heard, a distant sound resembling a horse's gallop ; his alarm was at once dissipated ; convinced that the young lady was in front of him, he mounted again and pushed on. As he was only two leagues from the *Hacienda del Toro*, he soon reached the

foot of the rock. Here he stopped, and asked himself whether he had better go up, or regard his mission as fulfilled, and turn back. While unable to form any decision, he saw a black outline gliding along the path, and soon distinguished a horseman coming toward him.

"*Buena noche, Caballero,*" he said, when the latter crossed him.

"*Dios la de a usted buena,*" the other politely replied, and he passed on, but suddenly turned round again. The tigrero rode to meet him.

"Ah!" the horseman said, when they met, "I felt sure that I was not mistaken. How is No Marianno?"

"Very well, and at your service," the tigrero answered, recognising the Major-domo; "and you, No Paredes?"

"The same, thank you; are you going up to the toro, or returning to the rancho?"

"Why that question?"

"Because in the former case I would bid you good night, while in the latter we would ride together."

"Are you going to the rancho?"

"Yes; the Senor Marquis has sent me."

"Tell me, No Paredes, would there be any indiscretion on my part in asking you what you are going to do at the rancho at so late an hour?"

"Not the slightest, compadre. I am simply going to fetch Dona Marianna, who has remained to-day later than usual with her nurse. Her father is anxious about her long absence, and asked me to go and meet her if she were on her road home, or, if not, push on to the rancho."

This revelation was a thunder-clap for the young man, who fancied that he had misunderstood.

"What!" he exclaimed, anxiously, "is not Dona Marianna at the hacienda?"

"It seems not," the Major-domo answered, "since I am going to fetch her."

"Why, that is impossible!" the other continued, in extreme agitation.

"Why so?" said Paredes, beginning to grow anxious in his turn. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that Dona Marianna left the rancho full three hours ago; that I followed her without her knowledge to watch over her safety, and that she must have been at the hacienda for more than half an hour."

"Are you quite sure of what you assert?"

"Carai! I have asserted it."

"In that case, Heaven have pity on the poor girl! for I apprehend a frightful misfortune."

"But she may have entered the hacienda without your seeing her."

"Nonsense, compadre; that is impossible. But come, we'll convince ourselves."

Without losing time in longer argument, the two men dashed up the rock at a gallop, and in a few minutes reached the first gate of the hacienda.

No one had seen Dona Marianna. The alarm was instantly given; Don Hernando wished to ride off at the head of his people, and beat up the country in search of his daughter; and it was with great difficulty that he was induced to abandon the project. Don Ruiz and the Major-domo, followed by some twenty peons, provided with ocote-wood torches, started in two different directions.

Marianno had an idea of his own. When he was quite certain that his foster-sister had not returned, he presumed the truth—that she was lost in the forest. He did not consider for a moment that she had been carried off by Indian marauders, for he had not noticed any trace of a party of horsemen, and Bigote, whose nose was infallible, had evinced no anxiety during the ride. Hence Dona Marianna must be lost in the forest. The tigrero let Don Ruiz, the Major-domo, and the peons pass him, and then bent his steps toward the rancho, closely followed by his dog, in spite of the exhortations of his young master and No Paredes, who wanted him to accompany them. When he was in the forest he stopped for a moment, as if to look round him; then, after most carefully examining the spot where he was, he dismounted, fastened his horse's bridle to the pommel, tied the stirrups together to keep them from clanking, and gave his horse a friendly smack on the crupper.

“Go along, Moreno,” he said to it; “return to the rancho. I shall not want you again to-night.”

The horse turned its fine intelligent head to its master, gave a neigh of pleasure, and started at a gallop in the direction of the rancho. The tigrero carefully examined his gun, the priming of which he renewed, and began inspecting the ground by the light of a torch. Bigote, gravely seated on its hind legs, followed its master's every movement, and was evidently much perplexed. After a very lengthened search, the tigrero probably found what he was looking for, for he rose with an air of satisfaction, and whistled his dog, which at once ran up.

“Bigote,” he said, “smell these marks; they were made by the horse of your mistress, Marianna; do you recognise them?”

The noble animal did as its master ordered, then fixed its sparkling eyes upon him with an almost human expression, and wagged its tail with delight.

“Good, Bigote! good, my famous dog!” the tigrero continued, as he patted it; “and now let us follow the trail; forward, Bigote, pick it up clean.”

The dog hesitated for a moment, then it set out with its nose to the ground, closely followed by its master, who had extinguished his torch, which would henceforth be useless. But all we have narrated occupied considerable time; and the tigrero would have arrived too late to save the maiden, had not Heaven sent the hunter across her path. The dog did not once check its speed through the numberless windings of the course Negro had followed; and master and dog together reached the spot where the horrible drama we recently described occurred.

"When I heard Stronghand's shot," the tigrero added, as he concluded his narrative, "I experienced a sound of deadly agony, for I understood that a frightful struggle was going on at the moment, and that the beast might conquer the man. Well, tocada, will you now believe in the jaguars?"

"Oh, silence, Marianno!" the young lady said, with a shudder; "I almost went mad with terror when I saw the eyes of the horrible animals fixed upon me. Oh! had it not been for this brave and honest hunter, I should have been lost."

"Brave and honest, indeed!" the tigrero said, with frank affection; "you are right, senorita, for Stronghand might just as fairly be called Goodheart, for he is ever so ready to assist strangers, and relieve the unfortunate."

Dona Marianna listened with lively pleasure to this praise of the man who had saved her life; but Stronghand felt terribly embarrassed, and suffered in his heart at a deed which he thought so simple, and which he was so delighted to have done, being rated so highly.

"Come, come, Marianno," he said, in order to cut short the young man's compliments, "we cannot remain here any longer; remember, that while we are quietly resting by the fireside and talking nonsense, this young lady's father and brother are suffering from deadly anxiety, and scouring the plain without any hope of finding her. We must arrange how to get away from here as soon as possible, and return to the hacienda."

"Carai, master, you are right, as usual; but what is to be done? Both you and I are on foot, and we cannot dream for a moment that the senorita could walk such a distance."

"Oh, I am strong," she said, with a smile; "under your escort, my friends, I fear nothing, and can walk."

"No, senorita," the hunter said, with an accent of gentle authority, "your strength would betray your courage; on so dark a night, and in a forest like this, a man accustomed to desert life could hardly expect to walk without falling at every step. Put yourself in our hands, for we know better than you do what is best to be done under the circumstances."

"Very good," she answered; "act as you think proper. I have suffered enough already to-day, by refusing to listen to the advice of my tocayo, to prevent me being obstinate now."

"That is the way to talk," the tigrero said, gaily. "What are we going to do, Stronghand?"

"While you skin the jaguars—for I suppose you do not wish to leave them as they are—"

"What!" the tigrero interrupted him, "those skins belong to you, and I have no claim to them, as you killed the beasts."

"Pooh!" the hunter said, with a laugh, "I am not a tigrero, except by accident; the skins are yours, and fairly so; so you had better take them."

"Since that is the case I will not decline; but as for my part, I promised to give my foster-sister the skins to make a rug; I will beg her to accept them."

"Very good," she answered, giving the hunter a look which filled him with joy; "they will remind me of the fearful danger I incurred, and the way in which I escaped it."

"That is settled, then," the hunter said; "and I will cut down with my machete some branches to form a litter."

"Carai, that is an idea which would not have occurred to me," Marianno remarked, with a laugh; "but it is very simple. To work."

Hunters and trappers are skilful and most expeditious men; in a few minutes Marianno had skinned the jaguars, and Stronghand formed the litter; the skins, after being carefully folded, were securely fastened on the back of Bigote, who did not at all like the burden imposed on him; but after a while he made up his mind to put up with it. Stronghand covered the litter with leaves and grass, over which he laid the saddle-cloth of the horse the jaguars had devoured; then he requested the young lady to seat herself on this soft divan, which was so suddenly improvised, and the two men, taking it on their strong shoulders, started in the direction of the hacienda, joined by Bigote, who trotted in front with glad barks.

Although the hunters had, from excess of precaution, formed torches of ocote-wood to help them, the darkness was so complete—the trees were so close together—that it was with extreme difficulty that they succeeded in advancing in this inextricable labyrinth. Forced to take continual *detours*—obliged at times to walk in water up to their waists—deafened by the discordant cries of the birds, which the flash of the torches aroused,—they saw all around them the wild beasts flying, with hoarse roars and eyes glaring through the darkness. It was then that Dona Marianna fully comprehended what frightful peril she had escaped, and how certain her death would have been, had not the hunter come to her assistance with such noble self-devotion; and at the remembrance of all that had occurred, and which was now but a dream, a convulsive tremor passed over her limbs, and she felt as if she were about to faint. Stronghand, who seemed to guess what was going on in the maiden's mind, frequently spoke to her, in order to change the current of her ideas, by compelling her to answer him. They had been marching for a long distance, and the forest seemed as savage as when they started.

"Do you believe," Dona Marianna asked, "that we are on the right road?"

"Even admitting, senora, what might be possible," the hunter answered, "that Marianno and myself were capable of falling into an error, we have with us an infallible guide in Bigote, who, you may be quite certain, will not lead us astray."

"Within ten minutes, senorita," the tigrero said, "we shall enter the road that runs from the rancho to the hacienda."

All at once the two men stopped. At the same moment Dona Marianna heard shouts that seemed to answer each other in various directions.

"Forward! forward!" said Stronghand; "let us not leave your relatives and friends in anxiety longer than we can help."

"Thanks," she answered.

They continued their march; and, as the tigrero had announced, in scarce ten minutes they reached the road to the hacienda.

"What shall we do now?" Marianno asked.

"I think," Stronghand answered, "that we ought to announce our presence by a cry for help, and then proceed in the direction of those who answer us. What is your opinion, senora?"

"Yes," she said, "I think we ought to do so; for otherwise we run a risk of reaching the hacienda without meeting any of the persons sent to seek me, and who might continue their search till morning, which would be ingratitude on my part."

"You are right, nina; for all these worthy people are attached to you, and besides, your brother and Don Paredes are also seeking you."

"That is a further reason why we should hasten to announce our return," the young lady answered.

The two hunters, after consulting for a moment, uttered together that long shrill yell, which, in the desert as in the mountains, serves as the rallying cry, and may be heard for an enormous distance. Almost immediately the whole forest seemed to be aroused; similar cries broke out in all directions, and the hunters noticed red dots running with extreme rapidity between the trees, and all converging on the spot where they stood, as if they radiated from a common centre. Certain of having been heard, the hunters once again uttered their shout for help. The reply was not delayed; the galloping of horses soon became distinct, and then riders, holding torches, appeared from all parts of the forest coming at full speed, waving their hands, and resembling the fantastic huntsmen of the old German legends. In a few minutes all the persons were assembled round the litter on which the young lady reclined; and Don Ruiz and the Major-domo were not long ere they arrived. We will not describe the joy of brother and sister on seeing each other again.

"Brother," Dona Marianna said to Don Ruiz, "if you find me still alive, you owe it to the man who before saved us both from the pirates of the prairies; had it not been for him, I should have been lost."

"You may safely say that, and no mistake," Marianno said in confirmation.

"Where is he?" Don Ruiz asked—"where is he? that I may express all my gratitude to him."

But he was sought for in vain. During the first moment of confusion, Stronghand had summoned a peon to take his place—had glided unnoticed into the forest and disappeared—no one being able to say in what direction he had gone.

“Why this flight?” Dona Marianna murmured, with a stifled sigh; “does this strange man fear lest our gratitude should prove too warm?”

And she thoughtfully bowed her head on her bosom.

CHAP. XXIII.

CHANCE WORK.

ALTHOUGH he allowed nothing to be visible, Don Ruiz was vexed at heart with the affectation the hunter seemed to display in avoiding him, and escaping from his thanks. This savageness in a man to whom he owed such serious obligations, appeared to him to conceal either a disguised enmity, or dark schemes whose accomplishment he feared, though he could not assign any plausible motive for them, especially after the manner in which the hunter had not hesitated on two occasions to imperil his life in assisting himself and his sister. These thoughts, which incessantly thronged to the mind of Don Ruiz, plunged him into deep trouble for some moments; still, when the peons he had sent off to seek the hunter all returned one after the other, declaring that they could not possibly find his trail, the young man shook his head several times, frowned, and then gave orders for the start.

Dona Marianna's return to the hacienda was a real triumphal procession. The peons, delighted at having found their mistress again safe and sound, gaily bore her on their shoulders, laughing, singing, and dancing along the road, not knowing how otherwise to express their joy, and yet desirous to make her comprehend the pleasure they felt. In spite of the fatigue that crushed her, and the state of exhaustion into which she had fallen through the terrific emotions she had undergone, Dona Marianna, sensible of these manifestations of gratitude, made energetic efforts in order to appear to share their joy, and prove to them how greatly she was affected by it. But, although she gave them her sweetest smiles and gentlest words, she could not have endured much longer the constraint, and she was really exhausted when the little party at length reached the hacienda.

The Marquis, who was suffering from the most frightful agitation, had gone to the last gate to meet them, and would possibly have gone further still, had not Don Ruiz taken the precaution, so soon as his sister was found, to send off a peon to tranquillize his mind and announce the successful result. At the first moment the Marquis completely forgot his aristocratic pride, only to think of the happiness of pressing to his heart the child he feared he had lost for ever. Don Rufino Contreras, carried away by the example, shared in the general joy, and pretended to pump up a tear of sympathy while fixing on the young lady his huge grey eyes, to which he tried in vain to give a tender expression.

The maiden threw herself with an outburst of tears into her father's

arms, and, at length yielding to her feelings, fainted—an accident which, by arousing the anxiety of the spectators, cut short all the demonstrations. Dona Marianna was conveyed to her apartments, and the peons were dismissed after the Major-domo had, by the orders of the Marquis, distributed among them *pesetas* and *tragos* of *refino*, which set the crown of the delight of these worthy fellows.

In spite of the offer of No Paredes, who invited him to spend the night at the hacienda, the tigrero would not consent; and after freeing Bigote from the jaguars' skins, which seemed to cause the dog considerable pleasure, they both started gaily for the rancho. It was about two o'clock A.M., and a splendid night, and the tigrero, with his gun under his arm and his dog at his heels, was walking at a steady pace while whistling a merry *jarana*, when, just as he was entering the shadow of the forest, Stronghand suddenly emerged from a thicket two paces ahead of him.

"Hilloh!" the tigrero said, on recognising him; "where the deuce did you get to just now, that it was impossible to find you? what bee was buzzing in your bonnet?"

The hunter shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you fancy," he replied, "that it is so very pleasant to be stared at by those semi-idiotic peons, for performing so simple a deed as mine was?"

"Well, opinions are free, *compadre*, and I will not argue with you on that score; still, *I* should not have run off in that way."

"*Quien sabe?* You are more modest than you like to show, brother; and I feel certain that, under similar circumstances, you would have acted as I did."

"That is possible, though I do not believe it; still, I thank you," he added, with a laugh, "for having discovered in me a quality which I was not aware that I possessed. But where on earth are you going at such an hour?"

"I was looking for you."

"In that case all is for the best, since you have found me; what do you want of me?"

"To ask hospitality of you for a few days."

"Our house is not large, but sufficiently so to contain a guest, especially when you are he; you can remain with us so long as you please."

"I thank you, gossip, but I shall not abuse your complaisance; I am obliged to remain for a few days in these parts, and, as the nights are fresh, I will confess that I prefer passing them under a roof, instead of the star-spangled arch of heaven."

"As you please, Stronghand; the door of my humble rancho is ever open to let you in or out. I do not want to know the reason for your stay here; but the longer you remain with us, the greater honour and pleasure will you afford us."

"Thanks, comrade."

All was settled in a few words. The two men continued their walk, and soon reached the rancho. The tigrero led the hunter to his bed-room, where they lay down side by side, and soon fell asleep. A few days elapsed, during which the hunter saw Dona Marianna several times, while careful not to let her notice him, although it was evident to Stronghand that the young lady would have liked nothing better than meeting him; perhaps she really desired it, without daring to confess it to herself.

One day, about a week after the scene with the jaguars, the hunter was lying half asleep in a copse whose leafy branches completely hid him from sight, and quietly enjoying his siesta during the great mid-day heat, when he fancied he heard the sound of footsteps not far from the spot where he was. He instinctively opened his eyes, raised himself on his elbow, and looked carefully around him; he checked a cry of surprise on recognising the man who had stopped close to the thicket and dismounted, like a man who has reached the spot he desired. This man was Kidd, the bandit, with whom the reader has already formed acquaintance.

"What does that scoundrel want here?" the hunter asked himself. "He is doubtless plotting some infamy, and I bless the chance that brings him within ear-shot; for this demon is one of the men who cannot be watched too closely."

In the mean while Kidd had removed his horse's bit, in order to let it graze freely; he himself sat down on a rock, lit a husk cigarette, and began smoking with all the *nonchalance* of a man whose conscience is perfectly at its ease. Stronghand racked his brains in vain to try and discover the motive for the presence of the bandits in these parts, so remote from the ordinary scene of his villany, when chance, which had already favoured him, gave him the clue to the enigma, which he had almost despaired of obtaining. A sound made him turn his head, and he saw a stout horseman, with rubicund face and handsomely dressed, coming up at an amble. When he reached the adventurer the latter rose, bowed respectfully, and assisted him to dismount.

"Ouf!" the stout man said, with a sigh of relief, "what a confounded ride!"

"Well," the bandit replied, with a grin, "you must blame yourself, Don Rufino, for you arranged it. May the fiend twist my neck if I would damage myself, no matter for what purpose, and ride across the plain at this hour of the day."

"Everybody is the best judge of his own business, Master Kidd," Don Rufino remarked, drily, as he wiped his steaming face with a fine cambric handkerchief.

"That is possible; but if I had the honour to be Don Rufino Contreras, enormously rich, and senator to boot, hang me if I would put myself out of my way to run after an adventurer like Master Kidd, whatever pleasure I might take at other times in the conversation of that worthy caballero."

The senator began laughing.

“Ha! ha! scoundrel; you have scented something.”

“Hang it!” the bandit replied, impudently, “I do not deceive myself, and am well aware that whatever attractions my conversation may offer, you would not have come this distance expressly to hear it.”

“That is possible, scamp. However, listen to me.”

“I can see from your familiarity that the job will be an expensive one; well, I do not dislike that way of entering upon the subject, for it forebodes a good business.”

The senator shrugged his shoulders with ill-disguised contempt.

“Enough of this,” he said; “let us come to facts.”

“I ask nothing better.”

“Are you fond of money?”

“I certainly have a weakness for gold.”

“Good. Would you hesitate about killing a man to earn it?”

“What do you mean?”

“I ask you, scoundrel, whether in a case of necessity you would kill a man for money?”

“I perfectly understood you.”

“Then why make me repeat it?”

“Because your doubt is offensive to my feelings.”

“How so?”

“Hang it, I fancy I speak clearly. Killing a man is nothing when you are well paid for it.”

“I will pay well.”

“Beforehand?”

“Yes, if you like.”

“How much?”

“I warn you that the man I refer to is but a poor fellow.”

“Yes, a poor fellow who is troublesome to you. Well, go on.”

“One thousand piastres. Is that enough?”

“It is not too much.”

“Confound it, you are expensive.”

“That is possible; but I do my work conscientiously. Well, tell me who the man is that is in your way.”

“Jose Paredes.”

“The Major-domo at the Toro?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know that he is not an easy man to kill? You must owe him a sore grudge, I suppose?”

“I do not know him.”

The bandit looked in amazement at the speaker.

“You do not know him, and yet offer one thousand piastres for his death? Nonsense!”

“It is so.”

“But you must have a reason. Carai, a man is not killed as one twists a fowl’s neck. I know that, bandit though I am.”

“You said it just now. He is in my way.”

“That is different,” the adventurer replied, convinced by this peremptory reason.

“Listen to me attentively, and engrave my words on your mind.”

“Go on, *senor*. I will not lose a word.”

“In two or three days the Major-domo will leave for Hermosillo, carrying bills to a considerable amount.”

“Good,” the bandit said, rubbing his hands gleefully; “I will kill him as he passes, and take possession of the bills.”

“No; you will let him go on in peace, and you will kill him on his return, when he has cashed the bills.”

“That is true. Where the deuce was my head? That will be much better.”

Don Rufino looked at him ironically.

“You will deliver to me the sum this man is the bearer of,” he said.

The bandit gave a start of alarm.

“I suppose the sum is large?”

“Fifty thousand piastres.”

“Viva Dios! Surrender such a fortune? I would sooner be burned alive.”

“You must, though.”

“Never, *senor*.”

“Nonsense,” the senator remarked, contemptuously. “You know you are in my hands. All the worse for you if you hesitate, for you will then lose two thousand piastres.”

“You said one thousand.”

“I made a mistake.”

“And when will you give them to me?”

“At once.”

“Have you the amount about you?”

“Yes.”

Suddenly the bandit’s eye gleamed with a sinister flash; he drew himself up, and leaped, knife in hand, upon the senator. But the adventurer had a powerful adversary. Don Rufino had long known the man he was treating with, and, while conversing, had not once taken his eye off, and attentively watched all his movements. Hence, though Kidd’s action was so rapid, Don Rufino was before him; he seized his arm with his left hand, while, with the right, he placed a pistol to his chest.

“Hilloh, my master,” he said, coldly, and with the most perfect tranquillity, “are you mad, or has a wasp stung you?”

Abashed by his failure, the bandit gave him a savage look.

“Let me loose!”

“Not before you have thrown your knife away, scoundrel.”

Kidd opened his hand, the knife fell on the ground, and Don Rufino put his foot upon it.

"You are not half clever enough," he said, sarcastically; "you deserve to have your brains blown out, in order to teach you to take your measures better another time."

"I do not always miss my mark," he replied, with a menacing accent.

There was a moment of silence between the two men. Stronghand still watched them, not losing one of their words or gestures, which interested him to the highest degree. At length Don Rufino spoke.

"Have you reflected?" he asked the bandit.

"Of what?" the latter remarked, roughly; "this proposal?"

"Yes."

"Well, I accept."

"But you understand," the senator continued, laying a stress upon every word, "you must deal frankly this time. No trickery, eh?"

"No, no," Kidd answered, with a shake of the head; "you may be sure of that."

"I reckon on your honesty. Moreover, profit by what has occurred to-day. I am not always so good-tempered; and if a misunderstanding, like that just now, again arose between us, the consequences might be very serious to you."

These few words were uttered with an intonation of voice, and accompanied by a look, that produced a profound impression on the bandit.

"All right," he said, shrugging his shoulders savagely; "there is no need to threaten, as all is settled."

"Very good."

"Where shall I come to you after the business?"

"Do not trouble yourself about that. I shall manage to find you."

"Ah!" he said, with a side glance; "then that is your affair?"

"Yes."

"Very good. Give me the money."

"Here it is. But remember, if you deceive me—"

"Nonsense," the bandit interrupted him. "Did I not tell you that it was all settled?"

The senator drew from his pocket a long purse, through whose meshes gold coins could be seen. He weighed it for an instant in his hand, and then threw it twenty paces from him.

"Go and fetch it," he said.

The bandit dashed at the gold, which, as it fell, produced a ringing sound. Don Rufino took advantage of this movement to get into his saddle.

"Good bye," he said to the bandit. "Remember!" and he started at a gallop. Kidd made no reply, for he was too busy counting the ounces contained in the purse.

"All right," he at last said, with a smile upon his features, as he hid

the purse in his bosom. "No matter," he added, as he looked savagely after the senator, "I allow that I am in your power, demon; but if I ever had you in my hands as you had me to-day, and I manage to discover one of your secrets, I should not be so mad as to show you any mercy."

After this soliloquy the bandit went up to his horse, tightened the girths, and set out in his turn, but in a direction opposite to that which the senator had taken. So soon as he was alone, the hunter rose.

"Oh, oh!" he muttered, "that is a dark plot. That man cannot want to kill Paredes merely to rob him; it is plain that the blow is meant for the Marquis. I will be on my guard."

We have already seen that the hunter religiously kept his promise.

THE DAISY CHAIN.

I MADE for her a daisy chain,
 (She was not six years old,)
 Of starry white and pink-tipp'd buds,
 And king-cups bright as gold.

We threw it from the walnut bough
 Up to the laurel tree;
 The child beneath danced to and fro,
 And shouted in her glee.

But soon there came a rustling breeze
 And shook the slender chain;
 It floated airily awhile,
 Then snapp'd, and fell in twain.

I thought to see the colour rise,
 Or look of childish pain;
 "O never mind!" she laughing said,
 "We'll join the ends again."

O childlike wisdom! fit for those
 Who floral chains dis sever;
 The daisies *may* be link'd afresh—
 Lost human friendships, never!

CAROLINE M. KING.

CLUB GOSSIP.*

THE recollections of any one who has been acquainted with the remarkable characters of his time, and moved in what is called the best society of a strongly marked social epoch, have always been welcomed as a pleasant, in some instances a valuable, contribution to our knowledge of human nature. When observers of the doings of the world around them continue from day to day so unreserved a chronicle of the sayings and doings of themselves, and of their contemporaries, as Samuel Pepys recorded in short-hand, it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the interest which a succeeding age would be sure to take in their revelations. Even when Horace Walpole studiously endeavoured, throughout a long life, to report the gossip and scandal that floated "thick as motes in the sunbeam" in the fashionable atmosphere in which he flourished, we are not inclined to be ungrateful to the reporter, though we often wish he had either been more trustworthy, or less communicative.

Besides these well-known oracles on men and manners, modern literature possesses a vast number of contributors to the same fund of information, each of whom professes to have had some special privilege to place the reader behind the scenes of a theatre in which the comedy of life has long been played out, the actors retired from their green-room to one of very much smaller dimensions, and the audience gone home. Diaries, correspondence, anecdotes, have been published in great variety, and in such abundance, that if we cannot get at the secret history of everybody, and of everybody's wife, it must be very much our own fault.

If there remained any one particular epoch where the gas conveyed in these useful pipes had not been sufficiently turned on, it was half a century ago. The state of society in England then, is beyond the recollection of the rising generation, and is fast fading from the memories of their seniors. With the avowed object of supplying the desired light, suddenly up starts a veritable "man about town" of this unilluminated period, and professes to have the power of turning its lamp-and-link light into the clearest and brightest of carburetted hydrogen that a volume of "Reminiscences" could produce.

In his title-page, he defines the darkness he is about to light up, as "the close of the last war with France"—that is, the autumn of 1815; nevertheless, he ventures to render effulgent the more distant years 1808 and 1805. In the very limited information the author affords the public respecting himself, we learn that he left school at the close of December, 1812, joined his regiment—the Grenadier Guards—as an ensign in the following February, and the British army in Spain, in October. He was

* "Reminiscences of Captain Gronow, formerly of the Grenadier Guards, and M.P. for Stafford. Being Anecdotes of the Camp, the Court, and the Clubs, at the Close of the last War with France. Related by Himself. With Illustrations."

present at the investment of Bayonne, in the winter of the same year, and prefaces an anecdote, illustrating his own courage, with the following curious announcement:—"I may here recount an instance of the folly and foolhardiness of youth, and the recklessness to which *a long course of exposure to danger* produces." This is rather grand on the part of a subaltern who had only been a few months in active service, and only on a very few occasions under fire.

"When Bayonne was invested, I was one night on duty on the outer picket. The ground inside the breastwork, which had been thrown up for our protection by Burgoyne, was in a most disagreeable state for any one who wished to repose after the fatigues of the day, being knee-deep in mud of a remarkably plastic nature. I was dead tired, and determined to get a little rest in some more agreeable spot, so, calling my sergeant, I told him to give me his knapsack for a pillow; I would make a comfortable night of it on the top of the breastwork, as it was an invitingly dry place. 'For heaven's sake take care, sir,' said he; 'you'll have fifty bullets in you—you will be killed to a certainty.' 'Pooh! nonsense!' said I; and climbing up, I wrapped myself in my cloak, laid my head on the knapsack, and soon fell into a sound sleep."

If this is not bounce, it is extremely like it. The officer on duty, however, who thus went to sleep on his post, was not thought worth a shot from the enemy. He enjoyed a comfortable night. The perusal of the passage suggests a question,—How is it that the name of this young fire-eater of eighteen or nineteen, who affects the experience in danger of a veteran, has, to the best of our belief, been entirely omitted, not only in all despatches and official memoranda, but in all private correspondence and printed recollections of the campaign? We have read hundreds of authorities, in MS. and in type, on this great war, but have never found the gallant Gronow among the heroes it produced. It is surprising that he should have been so completely overlooked, seeing that he represents himself as the constant associate of some of the most distinguished of his military contemporaries. Burns' familiar couplet,—

"O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see ourselves as others see us,"—

would scarcely apply to this self-constituted hero, for it is evident that the lookers-on at the game shut their eyes when he took his innings.

The author relates some other incidents in Wellington's invasion of France, and adds several personal sketches of his brother officers. His narrative, we suspect, will not supersede the labours of the historian of the Peninsular war, and we are afraid that some of his notices of his mess-room friends and parade acquaintances will be considered of doubtful authenticity. For instance, he puts forward, without offering the slightest authority for it, the following startling anecdote respecting a general officer, who held a high command in the cavalry, and subsequently maintained a still more elevated position in diplomacy and politics:—

THE LATE MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY.

“If the present generation of Englishmen would take the trouble of looking at the newspapers which, fifty years ago, informed the British public of passing events, both at home and abroad, they would doubtless marvel at the very limited and imperfect amount of intelligence which the best journals were enabled to place before their readers. The progress of the Peninsular campaign was very imperfectly chronicled; it will, therefore, be easily imagined what interest was attached to certain letters that appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, which criticized with much severity, and frequently with considerable injustice, the military movements of Lord Wellington’s Spanish campaign.

“The attention of the commander-in-chief being drawn to these periodical and personal comments on his conduct of the war, his lordship at once perceived, from the information which they contained, that they must have been written by an officer holding a high command under him. Determined to ascertain the author—who, in addressing a public journal, was violating the Articles of War, and, it might be, assisting the enemy—means were employed in London to identify the writer. The result was, that Lord Wellington discovered the author of the letters to be no other than Sir Charles Stewart, the late Lord Londonderry. As soon as Lord Wellington had made himself master of this fact, he summoned Sir Charles Stewart to head-quarters at Torres Vedras, and on his appearance, he, without the least preface, addressed him thus:—

“‘Charles Stewart, I have ascertained, with deep regret, that you are the author of the letters which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, abusing me, and finding fault with my military plans.’

“Lord Wellington here paused for a moment, and then continued:—

“‘Now, Stewart, you know your brother Castlereagh is my best friend, to whom I owe everything; nevertheless, if you continue to write letters to the *Chronicle*, or any other newspaper, by God I will send you home.’

“Sir Charles Stewart was so affected at this rebuke, that he shed tears, and expressed himself deeply penitent for the breach of confidence and want of respect for the Articles of War. They immediately shook hands, and parted friends. It happened, however, that Sir Charles Stewart did not remain long in the cavalry, of which he was adjutant-general. Within a few weeks he was named one of the commissioners deputed to proceed to the allied armies, where the sovereigns were then completing their plans to crush Napoleon.”

In the first place, this alleged conversation must have been strictly private; and neither party was likely to mention it to a third. There is no trace of it in the “Wellington Despatches,” nor in the “Castlereagh Correspondence,” printed or in MS. No contemporary letter alludes to it. The reporter of it was not with the army at the time at which he dates it. Torres Vedras is not in Spain; and Sir Charles Stewart was sent to the north of Europe as British commissioner with the allied armies about the commencement of the year 1813. Wellington marched out of Torres Vedras into Spain in the spring of the year 1811. But the crowning absurdity of the statement consists in making the brother of one of the secretaries of state the secret correspondent of a newspaper hostile to the Government. The explanation is, that the story was once in circulation as club gossip, but, like many other *canards*, had no foundation whatever. As the author of these Reminiscences in his preface

claims credit for the reserve he has shown in his volume in matters of a scandalous complexion that came within his knowledge, we think he ought not to have repeated so foolish an accusation against Lord Londonderry; but as we proceed we find him raking up forgotten scandals with increasing zeal. The Duke of York is obliged to do penance for a notorious *liaison*, which, however, occurred long before Captain Gronow could have taken cognizance of it. So far from its belonging to the time he attempts to illustrate—"the close of the last war with France"—it had lived out its allotted period as a nine days' wonder before that war had commenced.

We quote the following "reminiscences" of its heroine:—

MARY ANNE CLARKE.

"Her narrative of her first introduction to the Duke of York has often been repeated; but as all her stories were considered apocryphal, it is difficult to arrive at a real history of her career. Certain, however, is it that, about the age of sixteen, she was residing at Blackheath, a sweet, pretty, lively girl, when, in her daily walk across the heath, she was passed, on two or three occasions, by a handsome, well-dressed cavalier, who, finding that she recognized his salute, dismounted. Pleased with her manner and wit, he begged to be allowed to introduce a friend. Accordingly, on her consenting, a person to whom the cavalier appeared to pay every sort of deference was presented to her, and the acquaintance ripened into something more than friendship. Not the slightest idea had the young lady of the position in society of her lover, until she accompanied him, on his invitation, to the theatre, where she occupied a private box, when she was surprised at the ceremony with which she was treated, and at observing that every eye and every *lorgnette* in the house were directed towards her in the course of the evening;—she accepted this as a tribute to her beauty. Finding that she could go again to the theatre when she pleased, and occupy the same box, she availed herself of this opportunity with a female friend, and was not a little astonished at being addressed as Her Royal Highness. She then discovered that the individual into whose affections she had insinuated herself was the son of the king, the Duke of York, who had not long before united himself to a lady for whom she had been mistaken.

"Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke was soon reconciled to the thought of being the wife of a prince by the left hand, particularly as she found herself assiduously courted by persons of the highest rank, and more especially by military men. A large house in a fashionable street was taken for her, and an establishment on a magnificent scale gave her an opportunity of surrounding herself with persons of a sphere far beyond anything she could in her younger days have dreamt of, her father having been in an honourable trade, and her husband being only a captain in a marching regiment. The duke, delighted to see his fair friend so well received, constantly honoured her dinner-table with his presence, and willingly gratified any wish that she expressed; and he must have known (and for this he was afterwards highly censured) that her style of living was upon a scale of great expense, and that he himself contributed little towards it. The consequence was, that the hospitable lady eventually became embarrassed, and knew not which way to turn to meet her outlay. It was suggested to her that she might obtain from the duke commissions in the army, which she could easily dispose of at a good price. Individuals quickly came forward, ready to purchase anything that came within her grasp, which she extended not only to the army, but, as it afterwards

appeared, to the church ; for there were reverend personages who availed themselves of her assistance, and thus obtained patronage by which they advanced their worldly interests very rapidly."

The greater portion of this passage is not only club gossip, but gossip with more than its ordinary share of invention. The duke was married in 1791, and the duchess's features must have been too well known at the theatres to render such a case of mistaken identity as Captain Gronow vouches, for possible. Mrs. Clarke's house was not in a fashionable street, but was a little east of Sloane Square, in the King's Road, Chelsea. It still exists; one portion being a public house, the other occupied as a furniture warehouse.

The author of the "Reminiscences" then proceeds further to convey his idea of reserve by quoting this woman's estimate of different members of the royal family, which are as scandalous as low impudence and vulgar spite could make them. Moreover, he asserts that the Marquis of Londonderry entertained a high opinion of her talent. He does not, however, inform us which Marquis of Londonderry was on such good terms with her as is insinuated. It could not be the present possessor of the title,—his lordship was a boy of three years old when the duke's trial made Mrs. Clarke so famous; nor the late lord, who was with his regiment in Ireland at the time; nor the second marquis, who was then Viscount Castlereagh: most certainly it was not the first marquis, for no such title was in existence,—the marquisate was not created till 1816.

If in this loose manner "reminiscences" may be compiled, there is no reason on earth that should prevent Captain Gronow from giving the world his recollections of the Queen of Sheba. But we have not yet done with the fictitious character of his anecdotes. Another, that bears the same date of 1808 (about the time the writer was breeched), is in a still greater degree open to censure, for it embodies a coarse caricature of a most benevolent though eccentric gentleman, who was for many years familiar to West End loungers as "Romeo" Coates, from his performance of the lover of the fair Juliet at one of the London theatres. Although Captain Gronow denies Mr. Coates's possession of a large fortune, we can assure him that the estates he inherited in Demerara were so productive, that his long course of extravagance would not have embarrassed him, had not that terrible depreciation of West India property commenced which ruined most of the planters. His assertion that the amateur played for money is equally untrue. His liberality was really prodigal. Captain Gronow's description of his personal characteristics is as imaginary as it is offensive. The fact is, the fools of quality were up in arms against the fool of no quality, who appeared, as it seemed to them, to interfere with their monopoly of folly. They not only stigmatized him as a plebeian, but circulated stories, as prejudicial as their wit could devise, of his vulgar absurdity. Mr. Robert Coates was by education and manners far better entitled to claim the social rank of a gentleman than the

majority of the gambling profligates at White's who affected to despise him. Nor was he the idiot, any more than he was the old man of fifty, with a sallow face, seamed with wrinkles, when he first appeared at Bath, Captain Gronow delineates. He was quite a young man, possessed of an extremely good figure and fashionable appearance, and his portrait, engraved at the time for one of the magazines as "THE AMATEUR OF FASHION," which was very like him, gives him a pleasing expression of countenance. His complexion was certainly very dark, but his features were regular, and bore no trace whatever of the "cunning" his libeller has attributed to them. He was exceedingly vain, and was under the impression that he possessed great talent as an actor; but this common but harmless weakness was always made by him conducive to benevolent purposes. Whenever he acted, he not only paid the expenses of the establishment he favoured, but gave the proceeds of his performance to a charity.

We knew him during the entire course of his career, but never once saw him in the costume in which the late M.P. for Stafford—who, we strongly suspect, has never been in his company—has thought proper to decorate his person. As for the farcical description of his acting with the rent in his dress, out of which issued "a quantity of white linen sufficient to make a Bourbon flag," it is simply "club gossip" more than usually absurd and malicious.

We gladly turn to a subject with which Captain Gronow appears to be a little better informed, and but a little:—

SOCIETY IN LONDON IN 1814.

"In the year 1814, my battalion of the Guards was once more in its old quarters, in Portman Street Barracks, enjoying the fame of our Spanish campaign. Good society at the period to which I refer was, to use a familiar expression, wonderfully 'select.' At the present time one can hardly conceive the importance which was attached to getting admission to Almack's, the seventh heaven of the fashionable world. Of the three hundred officers of the Foot Guards, not more than half a dozen were honoured with vouchers of admission to this exclusive temple of the *beau monde*; the gates of which were guarded by lady patronesses, whose smiles or frowns consigned men and women to happiness or despair. These lady patronesses were the Ladies Castlereagh, Jersey, Cowper, and Sefton; Mrs. Drummond Burrell, now Lady Willoughby; the Princess Esterhazy; and the Countess Lieven.

"The most popular among these *grandes dames* was unquestionably Lady Cowper, now Lady Palmerston. Lady Jersey's bearing, on the contrary, was that of a theatrical tragedy queen; and whilst attempting the sublime, she frequently made herself simply ridiculous, being inconceivably rude, and in her manner often ill-bred. Lady Sefton was kind and amiable; Madame de Lieven haughty and exclusive; Princess Esterhazy was a *bon enfant*; Lady Castlereagh and Mrs. Burrell *de très grandes dames*.

"Many diplomatic arts, much *finesse*, and a host of intrigues, were set in motion to get an invitation to Almack's. Very often, persons whose rank and fortunes entitled them to the *entrée* anywhere, were excluded by the cliquism of

the lady patronesses ; for the female government of Almack's was a pure despotism, and subject to all the caprices of despotic rule. It is needless to add, that, like every other despotism, it was not innocent of abuses. The fair ladies who ruled supreme over this little dancing and gossiping world, issued a solemn proclamation that no gentleman should appear at the assemblies without being dressed in knee-breeches, white cravat, and *chapeau bras*. On one occasion, the Duke of Wellington was about to ascend the staircase of the ballroom, dressed in black trousers, when the vigilant Mr. Willis, the guardian of the establishment, stepped forward, and said, 'Your Grace cannot be admitted in trousers ;' whereupon the duke, who had a great respect for orders and regulations, quietly walked away.

"In 1814, the dances at Almack's were Scotch reels and the old English country-dance ; and the orchestra, being from Edinburgh, was conducted by the celebrated Neil Gow. It was not until 1815 that Lady Jersey introduced from Paris the favourite quadrille, which has so long remained popular. I recollect the persons who formed the very first quadrille that was ever danced at Almack's. They were Lady Jersey, Lady Harriett Butler, Lady Susan Ryder, and Miss Montgomery ; the men being, the Count St. Aldegonde, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Montague, and Charles Standish. The 'mazy waltz' was also brought to us about this time ; but there were comparatively few who, at first, ventured to whirl round the *salons* of Almack's. In course of time Lord Palmerston might, however, have been seen describing an infinite number of circles with Madame de Lieven. Baron de Neuman was frequently seen perpetually turning with the Princess Esterhazy ; and, in course of time, the waltzing mania, having turned the heads of society generally, descended to their feet, and the waltz was practised in the morning, in certain noble mansions in London, with unparalleled assiduity."

Captain Gronow does not assert that he, then only an ensign, was one of the favoured half-dozen officers of the Guards who were admitted to this exclusive coterie ; but that is the inference to be drawn from his statement. He must have observed the lady patronesses pursuing their vocation, or he could not have described them with so much confidence. And yet we are under the impression that his description owes more to club gossip than to personal observation. Perhaps Lady Jersey snubbed him ; hence his unfavourable opinion of that distinguished member of the supreme court of fashion. His personal notices of the others are as slight as they are untrustworthy. He ought to have given us finished portraits, and he puts us off with hasty *silhouettes*. Could nothing more be said of the charming Viscountess Castlereagh ? Romney has left us an infinitely more expressive likeness. Is it possible that Lady Palmerston could have been a lady patroness in 1814 ? and could nothing more suggestive be written of those celebrated female diplomatists he has included in his list ?

With regard to the reported exclusion of the Duke of Wellington for appearing in trousers, no such incident occurred at the period indicated, and we have heard the story very differently told. It is quite true that before the introduction of the immortal "First Set," country-dances varied by Scotch reels, were danced, not only at Almack's, but at all assembly-rooms throughout the kingdom. In private houses were

occasionally introduced the minuet, the hornpipe, and the cotillon. A young lady's music-book at this period, with the fashionable sonatas and ballads, was sure to contain a large assortment of country-dances. The quadrille and the waltz had almost entirely superseded them before the first quarter of the century had been completed.

It is singular that Captain Gronow does not attempt to describe the arrangements that existed in Willis's Rooms on the grand ball nights. Indeed, these "reminiscences" are often but a Barmecides' feast; mere shadowy titles and names being put forward in place of characters, those titles often wrongly described, and those names as frequently incorrectly spelt. We add one or two sketches:—

COLONEL MACKINNON.

"Colonel Mackinnon, commonly called 'Dan,' was an exceedingly well-made man, and remarkable for his physical powers in running, jumping, climbing, and such bodily exercises as demanded agility and muscular strength. He used to amuse his friends by creeping over the furniture of a room like a monkey. It was very common for his companions to make bets with him; for example, that he would not be able to climb up to the ceiling of a room, or scramble over a certain housetop. Grimaldi, the famous clown, used to say, 'Colonel Mackinnon has only to put on the motley costume, and he would totally eclipse me.'

"Mackinnon was famous for practical jokes, which were, however, always played in a gentlemanly way. Before landing at St. Andera's, with some other officers who had been on leave in England, he agreed to personate the Duke of York, and make the Spaniards believe that his Royal Highness was amongst them. On nearing the shore, a royal standard was hoisted at the masthead, and Mackinnon disembarked, wearing the star of his shako on his left breast, and accompanied by his friends, who agreed to play the part of aides-de-camp to royalty. The Spanish authorities were soon informed of the arrival of the royal commander-in-chief of the British army, so they received Mackinnon with the usual pomp and circumstance attending such occasions. The mayor of the place, in honour of the illustrious arrival, gave a grand banquet, which terminated with the appearance of a huge bowl of punch. Whereupon, Dan, thinking that the joke had gone far enough, suddenly *dived his head into the porcelain vase, and threw his heels into the air.* The surprise and indignation of the solemn Spaniards was such that they made a most intemperate report of the hoax that had been played on them to Lord Wellington. Dan, however, was ultimately forgiven, after a severe reprimand.

"Another of his freaks very nearly brought him to a court-martial. Lord Wellington was curious about visiting a convent near Lisbon, and the lady abbess made no difficulty. Mackinnon hearing this, contrived to get clandestinely within the sacred walls, and it was generally supposed that it was neither his first nor his second visit. At all events, when Lord Wellington arrived, Dan Mackinnon was to be seen among the nuns, dressed out in their sacred costume, with his head and whiskers shaved, and, as he possessed good features, he was declared to be one of the best looking amongst those chaste dames. It was supposed that this adventure, which was known to Lord Byron, suggested a similar episode in Don Juan, the scene being laid in the East. I might say more about Dan's adventures in the convent, but have no wish to be scandalous."

The writer is like the would-be gentleman in Molière's comedy, who

wrote prose without knowing it, with the difference that he writes scandal without knowing it. His stories, however, have here too much of a mess-room character to be credible.

● SIR LUMLEY SKEFFINGTON.

“Another dandy of the day was Sir Lumley Skeffington, who used to paint his face so that he looked like a French toy. He dressed *à la Robespierre*, and practised other follies, although the consummate old fop was a man of literary attainments, and a great admirer and patron of the drama. Skeffington was remarkable for his politeness and courtly manners; in fact, he was invited everywhere, and was very popular with the ladies. You always knew of his approach by an *avant courier* of sweet smells, and when he advanced a little nearer you might suppose yourself in the atmosphere of a perfumer's shop. He is thus immortalized by Byron, in the ‘English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,’ alluding to the play written by Skeffington, ‘The Sleeping Beauty :’—

‘ In grim array, though Lewis’ spectres rise,
Still Skeffington and Goose divide the prize :
And sure great Skeffington must claim our praise,
For skirtless coats and skeletons of plays
Renowned alike ; whose genius ne’er confines
Her flight to garnish Greenwood’s gay designs.
Nor sleeps with “sleeping beauties,” but anon,
In five facetious acts comes thundering on ;
While poor John Bull, bewildered with the scene,
Stares, wondering what the devil it can mean ;
But as some hands applaud—a venal few—
Rather than sleep, John Bull applauds it too.’”

The last we saw of Sir Lumley was a figure bent nearly double, enveloped in a long, loose coat, and other garments much too loose for his shrunk shanks. His head, then on a level with his breast, was covered with a youthful brown wig, and his very-wrinkled face was rouged. He was quitting Christie's large room, where some pictures were on private view; but no painting in the collection had half so much attraction as this striking representation of “the last scene of all” in the life of an exquisite. A few weeks later his name was in the obituary.

Captain Gronow promises another volume of his “club gossip.” We hope that he will either put it forth under that title, or confine his “reminiscences” to notices of scenes and persons that have come under his personal observation. Should he prefer it to appear as gossip, we trust it will not be quite so much of the club clubby, as are certain scandalous passages in the present work, on which we have been obliged to animadvert. Should he aspire to infuse into it a merit of a higher kind, we shall expect to see a distinct and not unpicturesque phase of society photographed with care as well as with fidelity.

SWISS BOARDING-HOUSES.

ALTHOUGH boarding-houses, or human menageries, as they have been irreverently termed, are common enough throughout Europe, they are a real institution in Switzerland, and add very much to the convenience of travellers, while sparing their purses. Switzerland is a favourite summer residence of Continentals, and especially Germans, for they revel in the thought of residing, if only temporarily, in a republic; and, moreover, the scenery exerts a decided influence. Hence it is that we find not only the tormented classes of monarchical states, but also the highest dignitaries—ministers, princes, and even kings—taking up their abode in Switzerland, though not in the boarding-houses, which are intended only for low persons and not for those who have the *sangre azul* in their veins, and enjoying a course of bathing in the stream of universal equality which is found in this glorious country. The sensible Swiss are perfectly conscious of the importance of their mission; nature has given them snow-clad mountains, blue lakes, blooming meadows, and running streams, and they have not neglected to put out their talent at good interest. We will proceed at once to the capital of the European boarding system, where it will be most easy for us to indicate its prominent features; and seating ourselves on the fairy carpet of the magician of the Arabian Nights, we will fly straight to Interlachen, the Paris of boarding-houses.

Between the lakes of Thun and Brienz, and on the left bank of the Aar, nature has in the course of many centuries laid bare a piece of land, so pleasant that its like cannot be found between the Baltic and the Mediterranean. From the luxurious pasture-land, overshadowed by gigantic walnut trees, stand forth dark mountain spurs, green Alps, barren rock-crests, and lastly, the white peaks of the Jungfrau; in the background of Lake Brienz rise the Suster hörner; all sorts of picturesque and jagged peaks border the horizon on the west, and the northern side is defended from all raw and injurious winds by a tall, precipitous rocky wall. All the sweetness and pleasantness which heaven and earth can afford us are found collected at this spot—warmth and fragrance, clearness and glorious light and shade, coolness and a pure atmosphere. The valley offers mankind a silent invitation to settle there, to forget all their past sufferings, and to reflect upon their own original better self, while contemplating the beauties of nature. This combination of the pleasantest circumstances is the reason why persons who feel a craving for boarding-houses have constantly been attached to Interlachen.

When the cucumber is ripe in the gardens of northern cities, and the fragrant wood-strawberry is ready for picking on the slopes of the Alps; when Parliament is up, and legislators are enjoying their holiday; when all the diplomatists, ministers, and generals are flying about, and the industrious farmer is beginning to carry home, in the sweat of his brow, the fruits of the field,—then people flock to Interlachen, and try to regain their

strength in the incomparable valley. Members of the most varied classes and ranks wisely throw aside their distinctions, ribbons are removed from button-holes, uniforms doffed, riding-boots and spurs pulled off, and, in a word, every pilgrim to the Swiss boarding-houses strives to give himself the appearance of civic equality, and conceal his profession behind a harmless or a pleasing mask. Mr. Justice Minos covers his grey head with a green or brown Tyrolese hat, round which a broad ribbon is wound; aged bankers come out in the most irresponsible tourist garb, and coats of many pockets; and even reverend professors strive to purchase a chamois braid, and attach it to their Calabrese hat; lieutenant-colonels of Christian states don red Garibaldi shirts—and, in a word, everybody strives to assume a poetic tinge suited to the Alps, and conceal his every-day existence behind it.

The wise Swiss suffers from no unhealthy curiosity in this respect; his officials let visitors pass the frontier without any offensive rectification of passports or examination of luggage; the houseowner does not inquire after name and rank, but is tolerant enough to allow his guest to enrol himself in the strangers' list under whatever name he pleases,—only in one point is the tourist expected to legitimate himself, and that is as regards his exchequer. His purse must be provided with the necessary store of napoleons, franks, and batzen, and if such be the case he can go where he likes. The entire plain between the two lakes to which we have referred, is covered with "Phalansteries," the first sight of which would occasion the great socialist, Fourier, to feel amazement. Whether these institutions are called villas, hotels, boarding-houses, or chalets, they are all inhabited by natives of European states, who obey the Swiss regulations, which are drawn up in accordance with natural philosophy, and have hung up on a peg their personal habits and likings. The only differences to be found in the boarding-houses relate to their origin, the languages of their inmates, and the prices charged; and so soon as you are quartered in one of these institutions you must follow the established rules, or leave the house and select another establishment that suits you better. In the interior of the phalansteries, or boarding-houses, no distinctions are made; and so soon as the portmanteaus are taken off the omnibus, and the necessary preliminary negotiations are completed between the owner of the house and his boarder, the latter takes leave of the world in which he has hitherto sojourned. That abolition of earthly inequality, such as spontaneously arises in the mines of Siberia, in prisons, and in the grave, is accomplished in the boarding-houses quite unconsciously, and in the most amiable manner possible. The guest is certainly permitted to retain his name, but in the account-books of the boarding-house-keeper he is only a number. He is distinguished from his compeers at the most by a better bottle of wine, by a *mi-tasse* after dinner, somewhat more linen, and two candles, and a boarder can hardly commit greater excesses in the matter of ambition and luxury. To such an extent he also resembles the compulsory inmate of a

prison, who is allowed to purchase a herring out of the proceeds of his overtime. He has no position in society, and merely stands on the list of his host, and the day of his arrival alone decides his seat at table. Were he the Prime Minister of the King of Dahomey, Lord High Admiral of the Hanoverian fleet, or even a member of the French Senate, if he has only arrived on Thursday morning, he receives a seat below the third tenor of a second-rate opera, who entered the house on a Wednesday evening. The boarder who has resided the longest in the house is chairman at the dinner-table, and every day's stay carries the guest higher up. By such a system a lad of eighteen may become president by seniority. Outside the house perfect equality also prevails: the estimable quadrupeds of the vicinity, owing to their usefulness, are not placed below the immigrants, and are equally allowed to enjoy the promenade. There is not a trace of those unpleasant regulations at French and German watering-places, which exclude the countryman and his nearest relations, his dog and his pipe. The splendid walnut-tree walk at Interlachen belongs to all—to the Italian Vetturino, who seeks a return-fare across the Alps, and to the merry Swiss boy, who desires a purchaser for a stag-beetle or a great Ligurian caterpillar, the sight of which throws passing ladies into convulsions—to the thin consumptive patient, and the stout consul from Smyrna—to the Parisian lorette, and the poor fisherman from Lake Thun—to the small German prince, and the non-amnestied political fugitive, who meets here each morning the pensioned cousin of his stern ruler, and makes melancholy reflections about the forbearance of Providence.

Exclusive festivities, in which ambition and swagger may be displayed, are not got up, nor are certain modern amusements allowed which are expected by good society in certain Continental watering-places. The rulers of Berne, in their paternal wisdom, have resisted the proposed establishment of an "Alpine Bank," which some pushing scholars of the great Fazy, of Geneva, proposed. The venerable fathers of Switzerland thought it better for the moral and bodily health of their guests, to allow the enjoyment of foals' milk, rather than of *roulette* and *rouge et noir*, and drove gamblers out of the peaceful valley. It is assuredly better that the savings of the tourists of Europe should pass into the hands of landlords, guides, coachmen, ostlers, porters, and neatherds, than into those of croupiers of Blanc's and Benazet's school. Mentally exciting employments are also not specially favoured, and if the boarder has not brought a stock of books with him, the Interlachen library can only satisfy the most modest demands. Interlachen is not allowed to become a gambling-hell or a watering-place; according to the intention of the Swiss, it is to remain, as before, the first of all the Continental summer residences. Let us hope that the even consistency of the boarding-house system may be permanent, in spite of the growing increase of illustrious and wealthy visitors.

The frontiers of Switzerland are far extended, and from all the four quarters of the world fugitives from the monarchical states flock during the

summer months to the boarding-houses of the republic. Even the Italian princes who are now liberated from the bore of governing—for instance the Duchess of Parma—have not despised the offered benefit. We do not know exactly whether she resided in a boarding-house, but she certainly lived for a whole winter in the Hotel Baur, on the Lake of Zurich. A professor of the Zurich Polytechnic School told us the following anecdote on our last visit to that town:—Baur, the landlord, who had run very short of cash, owing to expensive building undertakings and the purchase of a fresh piece of land in the lake, was relieved from his unpleasant position by the long stay of the ducal family, and was filled with the happiest hopes for the future. “If it goes on in this way—if more dukes and princes arrive,” the worthy man said, in the joy of his heart, “by heavens! Venice will be free in a couple of months.” We must remark that Venice was the name of the small piece of ground the landlord had purchased on the lake.

The summer inhabitants of the Canton of Appenzell arrive from South Germany, and principally Suabia, *viâ* the Lake of Constance. Here, where expensive boarding-houses have not yet been established, is the proper abode of simple people, who sup on bread-and-butter and cheese, and a glass of beer, for the sum of threepence, when at home. In the Canton of Appenzell people are boarded and lodged for twenty francs a week; but if the boarder wants curds and whey, he has to pay a trifle daily as a patient. In this happy land assemble the friends of healthy, pure milk, strawberries, and trout. The beer is excellent, we may remark, parenthetically; and the goats' milk and splendid mountain air have already compelled murderous consumption to check its progress. From the Lake of Constance the swarm of boarders spreads over eastern and western Switzerland, while the more hurried tourists prefer the night express trains. The trip across the lake, for one florin first class, is a far more agreeable introduction to the month's cheap boarding. On all the lakes, and in all the valleys, the tourist finds the same hospitable refuges; and even the landlords, where their hotels do not lie in the main roads of traffic, take in boarders. Private persons also like, as sensible men, to augment their incomes in the same way during the short summer months. The best rooms in the house are given up to the guests, and the family put up with the worst rooms, and almost any sleeping-place. The small houses on the lakes of Zurich and the Four Cantons swarm with boarders, who withdraw to the retired valleys, according as their nature is social or contemplative. There is no notion here of the comfort of the great establishments in Interlachen; the weak indulgence to the appetite of the guests, by cooking two dinners a day, and leaving them the choice between a one o'clock and a four o'clock dinner is not shown; and the way of living is thoroughly simple, and in accordance with the cheaper prices. In the morning, coffee is served with any quantity of milk, sugar, fresh butter, and brown rolls; and if an inordinate quantity of flies have met with their death in the honey-pot, through want of caution, the blame must not

be laid on the servants and the Humane Society, for honey is everywhere sticky, and flies are always greedy. The boarder can drink his coffee any time he pleases between seven and nine; but after that, is left to his own resources. If there be a lake or a stream in the vicinity, he can go fishing: if there is no water, he probably rolls on the grass during the morning, and bathes himself in the sunshine and the refreshing mountain breeze. If he has brought his children with him, he picks strawberries and bilberries with them, plucks flowers, or catches butterflies. If he is not deficient in learning, and educated, he botanizes, or looks for minerals, reads, or takes an æsthetic walk, during which he composes poetry. At one o'clock the grand feeding generally takes place; and in a boarding-house, at three francs a day the minimum, it consists of an inartistic soup, a dish of vegetables, and a joint, and a wonderful pudding on Sundays. When fish are abundant they are never absent at any dinner; and the dessert consists of filberts and a sort of small cakes, which, owing to their original dryness, can be kept for several centuries, and are infallibly the produce of a receipt left by the pastrycooks of the old Helvetians. If the boarder desires wine or beer, he pays for it out of his pocket; but, with the exception of a few houses, no offence is taken if he satisfies himself with the water-jug standing on the table. From one o'clock till seven or eight in the evening, the boarder is left to his own devices. He retires to his bedroom to sleep; he plays piquet or whist with his colleagues under the verandah; he smokes a cigar in the sight of the mountains; reads the newly-arrived local papers; or climbs up the adjacent hills. The ringing of a bell assembles all the residents in the house round the tea-table in the evening; and if there are patients among them, they receive a warm soup, which quiets the nerves. Cold pastry, cheese, and fruit—generally strawberries and raspberries—appease the hunger of the rest. After supper the Alpine glow is looked at; or else the boarders go to the posthouse, to wait for the last coach, and have a peep at the new arrivals. Agricultural studies are made upon the kine returning home; or they take a trip on the water, in the event of the boarding-house being in the vicinity of a lake. There are some patient people, who spend their holidays in sitting on the railings on the banks, watching the steamers arrive, and looking after them as long as they possibly can, when they have started again. The only parallel to this we know, is the subaltern in the country town, whose sole occupation is to expectorate over one side of a bridge, and rush to see his saliva come through the arch.

If boarders are blockaded by rain, their condition generally becomes frightful, and it is one of the worst things that can happen. Man may be driven into as serious devilries by *ennui*, as by the incitement of his vices; and the boarder who comes from the great centres of civilization is naturally most easily tempted. The maintenance of peace is not merely a serious and difficult matter in the relation of States to each other, but in most boarding-houses the company are equally hovering on the brink of a

declaration of war. The larger the boarding-house, the more composite in its various components, and the closer in its architectural arrangements, the more strict becomes the preparation for hostilities. Hence, any man who wishes to insure his summer's peace will do well to avoid all comprehensive phalansteries, managed on a business footing, and board with plain tradesmen or farmers. We were witness, once, how a dispute about a window being open or shut led to a quarrel at dinner, which collected the greater portion of the population of Interlachen before the windows of our dining-room, and led to a duel between a peppery Bengal colonel and a Berlin lawyer, all because the rain made us cry individually, like Sterne's starling, "I can't get out." Boarding-houses that are rained on can only become dragons' nests, the murder-caves of social revolution, and the slaughterhouses of innocence. The stock of anecdotes is speedily exhausted, the gentleman with the card tricks is used up in no time, but the sky will not grow clearer. Then the old Egyptian traveller is wound up, or the Polish Count is called upon to describe his estates in polyglottic language. At night the amateur is listened to, as he performs on the slackened strings of the guitar: but it rains on inexorably. A few long-arranged courtships are in full swing; but the furies of jealousy are aroused; an old maid, who wishes to be married, snarls revenge; father and mother are insulted; and an aunt, with two nieces in the *rococo* style, considers decorum offended. If it go on raining the next day, we may await with trembling the entire break-up of the boarding-house. Most fortunate of all are those societies which, like every respectable beehive, stand under the charge of a queen. In the majority of instances she is a young lady of distinguished appearance, but dubious antecedents; who, after the failure of all her hopes in her own country, seeks a rich husband abroad; and with this object, renders all the men who come within range serviceable, and thoroughly reckons them up. Other boarding-houses are held in subjection by equally young gentlemen, who are tenor singers after a fashion, play the pianoforte, or get up picnics in the mountains.

A very peculiar fact is the change of character of the various boarding-houses, according to the part of the country in which they happen to be. We are only able, however, to refer to the two extremes, but we would recommend observing tourists carefully to study the fact. The tone in boarding-houses situated above the level of the sea is serious, and the temperament of the inmates is inclined to melancholy. Although we might fancy that the monotony of the region, covered with pines and Alpine vegetation, would make them come together and be more sociable than at other places, they prefer to isolate themselves. In the Upper Engadine, on the despairingly straight road between Samaden and Pontresina, at the foot of the Mortarasch and Rosegg glacier, and on the banks of the Inn, at Cresta and Celerina, we come across some splendid specimens of these death's-head moths. They were originally jolly fellows from large towns, who, when down in the plain, were not indisposed to the enjoyment of life, but

here sat on lumps of rock, gazed silently into the distance, held half-rotten pine-cones philosophically in their hands for an hour and contemplated them, threw a line into the Inn for double that time without catching a trout, and gobbled down their dinner hurriedly, without addressing a word to their neighbours. The boarders in such regions, however, are fondly attached to them, and return every year in order to enjoy the deep soul-comfort and sacred silence of the mountains.

In the warmer regions of the French Switzerland—for instance, on the Lake of Geneva—a more pleasant feeling of sociability generally prevails among the boarders. Very frequently they live, at least after dinner, gregariously; they go about on the water in broods like ducks so soon as the sun is beginning to decline, and in the bushes on the banks of the Rhone their laughter rivals the noise of the reed-sparrows in the marshes. The boarder in western Switzerland is particular about his food, and on that account often resides for some time, and at considerable outlay, under the rule of the excellent landlord of the Hôtel Monnaie at Vevay; he is fond of strong wines, and in cold weather wanders about the paths in the vineyards. In the evening he is enthusiastic for music, fireworks, and moonlight walks with girls, or, at the worst, with middle-aged ladies, or those who have been left over from the last season; and when the whim is on him, he climbs up lofty mountains, spends the night over the bivouac fire, and waits for sunrise.

But it is impossible to describe all the pleasures of boarding-house life in Switzerland, and the only advice we can offer our readers is to go and make trial for themselves. For five francs a day they can live comfortably and respectably, and forget all the cares and troubles of this naughty world. The cost of reaching Switzerland is but a mere trifle at the present day, with the network of railways spreading over France, and probably six weeks can be spent at a cheaper rate in cantons away from the high road, than a week at Brighton. We are not of those who, as a rule, advocate visiting foreign parts and neglecting home scenery; but the case of Switzerland is exceptional, and we would call attention to a little book, entitled "How to See Switzerland for Ten Pounds;" which, though not without its faults, contains a very fair account of the way of enjoying a trip without sacrificing comfort. At the same time, we cannot help thinking that this Swiss boarding-house system might be admirably introduced at our lakes, for it is the uncertainty of hotel bills which prevents travelling in England; and if some reduction were made in the railway fares, which are at present as heavy as a trip to Cologne or Berlin, we do not doubt but that the reproach so frequently, and, we fear, so justly raised against Englishmen, that they know every country but their own, would be speedily removed.

L. W.

THE ST. JAMES'S MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER, 1862.

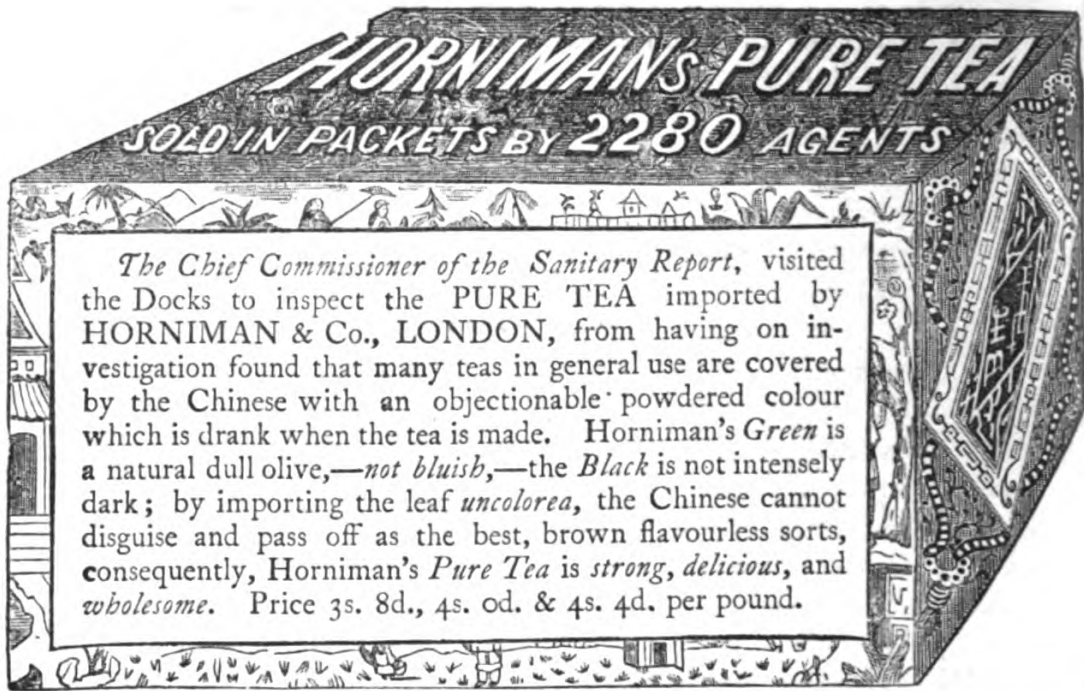
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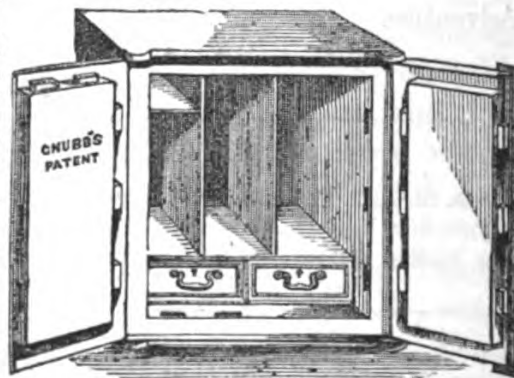
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I R E L A N D A N D S P A I N

FORMERLY CONNECTED BY LAND.



OURTEOUS reader, be not alarmed at beholding this superscription. If you assert that no historic evidence is extant, showing that an actual union of the two countries formerly existed, I cannot by any appeal to literary records gainsay that assertion; nor indeed can I hope to prove conclusively the truth of this broad statement,—at least, I may confess the entire impossibility of bringing living witnesses forward in the case before you; but I think I shall exhibit such an amount of circumstantial evidence as shall tend, if not to satisfy you of the correctness of *my* belief, at all events to leave you

in a very sceptical condition as regards the validity of your own.


I am here but to plead a cause—that of Science, my client. The defendant in this matter is Ordinary Supposition; and the plaintiff's case may thus be briefly stated:—

That portion of "Her Majesty's dominions of Great Britain and Ireland, called Ireland"—now entirely surrounded by water—was at an early period of the earth's history (posterior to the creation of man) the upper portion of a great continent, which reached from Spain through what is now known as the Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Ocean. That this country was inhabited by the descendants of the Phœnicians, who, *in this way*, first set foot in Ireland (having come by *land*); and that, owing to the submersion

beneath the ocean of the intervening country, all connection between the two nations became dissolved.

It is of advantage that in the first place we show from whom the Irish Celtic race has descended, for upon this circumstance of pedigree rests much of the superstructure of our case. Antiquarian researches have brought to light many facts of the deepest interest in an inquiry of the kind we are pursuing; and the most important of these discoveries is that which relates to a species of alphabet in use among the earliest inhabitants of Ireland, anterior (possibly) to the Christian era.

This alphabet, which consists of seventeen or eighteen letters (thus showing the absence of any affinity with the Latin or Greek), is formed by a number of more or less vertical lines crossing a horizontal one, or lying above or beneath the latter in this manner,—



those strokes similar in number, position, and direction, always indicating the same letter or sound, and by a series of combinations being converted into an alphabet which is termed the Ogham “Beithlusnion.” These characters (the resemblance of which to the Hebrew, Punic, and kindred symbols is evident) are to be found inscribed on various sepulchral and monumental stones throughout Ireland, and some the reader may inspect in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy, and in the Celtic manuscripts in the British Museum. But the feature to which I would direct the reader’s attention particularly is this:—the Ogham inscriptions, unlike all languages save the Hebrew, Punic, *et hoc genus omne*, can be read from the right hand towards the left; and now I think, with the reader’s permission, this witness may go down.

In one of the plays of Plautus, called “Pœnulus,” in the fifth act, a peculiar scene is introduced, known as the Punic scene; and such is the resemblance of the Punic paragraphs to the Irish of the present day, that when they have been translated into Celtic it is almost impossible to distinguish between the two versions. Here again is a well-marked proof of the Phœnician origin of the Irish Celts, an origin which is furthermore borne out by the difference existing between the Celtæ of ancient Britain and the former. It has also been very plausibly contended that the round towers of Ireland are identical with those of the Phœnicians, both the latter and the early Irish having been most unquestionably worshippers of the sun and planets; but be that as it may, the very name by which the island was known to the ancients is adequate proof of the Phœnician ancestry of the primitive inhabitants. Some writers maintain that it owes its name of Hibernia to the inclement character of its climate, and derive the word from *hibernus*; this assuredly is wrong, for, of all Great Britain, the mean winter temperature of Ireland is greatest. With much more likelihood the name is but a corruption of the Punic word *Ierne*, or *Iberne*, meaning the furthest habitation, for at that time all the globe to the west of Ireland was thought to have been water; and a striking corroboration

of this view is the fact that the Irish of the present day cling with affection to the term *Erinn* (from the Celtic *eir*—western), of the analogy of which with *Ierne* there can be little question.

Thus far having shown that it is, at any rate, exceedingly probable that the Irish Celts have come down to us from the Phœnicians, let me introduce the second portion of the inquiry.

I stated that the latter race found their way into the country of St. Patrick by land, and not by water. This is a wide statement, and the historic accounts of the great navigating power of this people are of some weight as a contra-argument; but I hold that, viewing the subject without prejudice in one direction or the other, we shall have fair grounds for supposing that the first colonization of Ireland was not brought about *entirely* by an aquatic communication between the two places (*i. e.*, between Ireland and Spain).

Turn to the map of Europe, and glance at the relative positions of Ireland and the Straits of Gibraltar—cast your eye over the great expanse of water separating the two localities (upwards of a thousand miles of ocean)—consider that the sea stretches away to the distant shores of the New World—reflect upon the fact that the navigation of the Bay of Biscay is about the most difficult of all European seas—and then impartially and dispassionately endeavour to conceive that the Phœnicians, without a compass, without charts, and unable to pursue a coasting track, could with their fragile crafts reach the shores of Ireland, and I confess I shall estimate your credulity at a high mark. For myself, I cannot put any *faith* in the legendary record, the improbability of which is *apparently* so manifest. I dare say the reader will urge upon my consideration the extent of Phœnician exploration in the Mediterranean; but then I would ask him to remember that the latter may be regarded as an inland sea or lake.

To proceed. Traditions must have existed proving the contiguity, if not the continuity, of the two countries; else, how should we find two writers, Bede and Tacitus,* referring to the geographical position of Ireland as though it were, in their time, vastly larger than in the present day? Thus, the former observes (Hist. I., chap. 1), “Ireland is the greatest island next to Britain, and is situate to the west of it; but as it is shorter than Britain to the north, so, running out *far* beyond it to the south, it reaches [*usque contra*] even over against the northern parts of Spain.” The description of Tacitus evinces even a closer approximation of the two shores. In his Life of Agricola, cap. 24, he writes:—“Eam partem Britanniae quæ Hiberniam aspicit copiis instruxit in spem magis quam ob formidinem, *siquidem Hibernia medio inter Britanniam atque Hispaniam sita*” (“That part of Britain which looks toward Ireland he supplied with troops; . . . for Ireland is situate in the midst [*in medio*, midway?] between Britain and Spain”). It is unjust to cast aside this

* Bede wrote about A. D. 730; Tacitus, about A. D. 95.

description as valueless, for these two reasons,—first, did Ireland stand as at present, it would have been utterly impossible to have fallen into the error of writing that it descended towards Spain, inasmuch as the then most southern shore of Ireland would have lain some hundred miles north of the most southern shore of England; and secondly, if the coast of Ireland approached that of Spain, it would have been placed *exactly* between the north of Spain and south of England.

Having dealt with the literary bearings of the subject, I shall now advert to the scientific evidence. Geology throws some weight into our side of the balance. A certain similarity of the rocks composing the opposite coast-lines of Spain and Ireland is appreciable. It is not, however, to this I would refer so much as to the remarkably strong proof of a submergence of the south coast of Ireland which is exhibited in certain districts;—selecting for example that portion which is notorious as the spot where the English landed under Strongbow, that promontory of the county of Wexford (or Weif's-ford, as the Danes called it) which is named Hook, and where we find in succession three of the oldest geological formations,—the Silurian, Devonian, and Carboniferous. Here, as we pass from the mainland toward the southern or terminal extreme of the projection, we observe the ground gradually falling; and the surface, from having been some hundreds of feet above the water-level in the northern portion, at the furthest, or opposite extremity, shelves in such a sloping manner, that it is a descent of but a few inches from the land to the ocean.

In Youghal, celebrated as the residence of Spenser and Sir W. Raleigh, the observer detects *conclusive* proof of the former projection of the country into a lower latitude; for upon the beach, at low water, may be seen the remains of an immense forest which was at one period terrestrial, but now, stretching, as it does, away to the south, is buried beneath the mountain waves of the Atlantic. This remnant is the key to the mystery. It points to the vast area of Western Europe which, some thousands of years since, was the great bond of union between the now widely distant coasts of Spain and Ireland.

The reader will have no difficulty in conceding the possibility of the subsidence of this great link in the chain of the earth's surface, when acquainted with the fact that Tyre and Sidon, once maritime, are now many miles inland, owing to the retirement of the ocean. Of course, it would be reasonable to suppose that some account of so great a cataclysm ought to exist, and such we have in the traditions of the Irish regarding the formation of certain lakes which are to be seen in their country. These legends inform us that most of the lakes (or loughs, as they are termed) arose at a time subsequent to the colonization by the Tuath de Danaan (who, having come from Spain, must have been of Phœnician descent); and supposing that the connecting land which I have mentioned were submerged, it follows, as a natural consequence, that the adjacent

land would have shared the convulsion in some measure, and hence, by the depression of certain districts, would the valleys be converted into large reservoirs of water, had streams of any capacity traversed them previous to the change. There can be no doubt that many of the inland loughs of Ireland were formed long after the distribution of the existing types of vegetation, because from them a very abundant supply of oaken timber can be obtained, in this way substantiating the local traditions that they were formerly extensive forests, and in like manner accounting for the legends alluded to by Moore :—

“ On Lough Neagh’s banks, as the fisherman strays,
 When the calm, clear eve’s declining,
 He sees the round towers of other days
 In the waves beneath him shining.”

Already the reader may perceive that there is no small quantity of evidence in support of the view advocated. Much of the foregoing mass of facts is, I admit, of a vague nature, and might possibly be interpreted in various ways; and though the entire circumstances point to an early union between the two countries, it is yet not improbable that some part of the migration of the Phœnicians into Ireland may have been performed by ships, which would convey this people from the north projection of Spain to the south promontory of Ireland, which must then have been washed by the Bay of Biscay and Gallic Sea; or, supposing the first result of the submersion of the uniting tract to have been the formation of an island chain, then, by an inter-insular mode of navigation, the same end would have been attained. In any case, of the connection of the two shores at some remote period the following sketch of the mode of distribution of a special group of Hibernian plants will afford conclusive proof.

Among vegetable organisms, as among men, one finds different races, which are characterized by peculiar features; and as, in the case of the latter, we know that nations have sprung up from a few individuals, and that these have then migrated, giving rise, in their turn, to branches of the parent stock, which exhibit peculiarities that indicate with sufficient clearness their derivation; so, among the former, have we tribes, races, and classes of beings which have passed from some centre, and thus, by a sort of colonization, clothed all the regions of the earth with vegetation; and though mingled with those of other climes and kin, they still possess so many of their parental characters, that it is quite possible, judging from their features and position, to infer the nature of the original group from which they have come down, and consequently the portion of the globe from which they emigrated.

In Ireland, as in Great Britain, a very large number of different species of plants is distributed over the surface of the island; and philosophic botany, in investigating the genealogy of these plants, has detected a natural division into three families, according to the sources which,

possibly, they have been derived from. It has been found that some affect mountainous regions, and flourish in such situations only; others enjoy a warmer temperature and more humid atmosphere; whilst a third set is indifferent, and may be found upon the plains and the less elevated portions of the hilly country. The first class comprises many of the plants of Sweden and the northern countries; and toward the south it is less comprehensive, until, finally, it ceases to be represented. The species of the second group are most abundant toward the east; and they are found but to a slight extent in western positions. The third class (with which we have more particularly to do) is hardly to be found in the northern regions, and is highly characteristic of the southern and south-western countries of Europe: hence the conclusion is drawn, that the first is of northern or arctic origin; the second has spread from the middle of Europe; and the third has come from the coast of Africa and the Spanish peninsula. Now, leaving the first and second, let us turn to the last. The southern and western counties of Ireland possess a flora which, as contrasted with that of the remainder of Great Britain, is unique. Most of my readers are already conversant with this fact. Tourists to Killarney frequently meet with a beautiful species of fern, which we have not in England—the Killarney fern, or *Trichomanes radicans* of botanists—a plant of the most exquisitely delicate, semi-transparent, verdant hue, which grows in the greatest luxuriance beside Torc waterfall, and whose praises have been written often enough already. Perhaps one of the best of the many descriptions and engravings of this fern is that by Mrs. Lankester, in her popular history of the British filices, a book that for accuracy, excellence, and cheapness, cannot be surpassed by any of the swarm of cheap scientific manuals with which society is deluged now-a-days. This plant is (as its name implies) found in Killarney; but in no other locality except the north of Africa, Madeira, the West Indies, and western Spain. Another species, which is sure to catch the eye of the Killarney tourist, is the arbutus, forests of which may be seen upon the otherwise barren and rocky islets of the “beautiful lakes.” This plant, though found here, is not indigenous to England, but has been occasionally introduced by gardeners in horticulture; and the only other European station for it is north-west Spain. Then, again, there are no less than six distinct species of the London pride, or saxifrage, confined to Ireland and the Spanish and Mediterranean shores. There are three species of heaths found in southern Ireland, which are essentially Andalusian—*Erica Mackayana*, *E. Mediterranea*, and St. Dabeoch’s heather, not one of which exists naturally in Great Britain. A species (?) of butterwort, *Pinguicula grandiflora*, is also found in southern Ireland, and is said to be a peninsular plant. Finally, one of the orchis tribe, *Spiranthes gemmifera*, grows upon the coast of the county of Cork; and many botanists are of opinion that this plant is not to be found in any other portion of the world: however, more recent observations tend to establish a relationship between it

and another species abundant in western Europe. The reader will at once perceive the circumstance to which the presence of the flora above described points; the question follows, Where did they come from? The plants are common to Ireland and Spain;—how did they reach the former? In one of three ways. Either (1) they were originally *formed* in Ireland; or (2) they were washed across the interseptal water as seeds; or (3) they gradually spread along a large tract of country, which, at a distant period of time, united the now widely separated shores. The first I shall not deal with, for the branch of science which relates to it we may regard as yet vague. In opposition to the second, we have to consider the extreme improbability which it involves; and besides, the fact that those plants which would have been most readily wafted across the ocean have not made their appearance, and those most difficult of conveyance exist upon the Irish shores; also that, on this supposition, it would be impossible to account for the presence of so fragile, delicate, and fastidious a being as the Killarney fern. The third is the only conceivable one, and must have been the medium of colonization. In the midst of the ocean, between the fifteenth and forty-fifth degrees of north latitude, there is seen to the west of Europe a great belt of seaweed, unattached, and which remains always in the one spot. This weed is termed, technically, *Sargassum bacciferum*; and algologists believe (judging by its characters) that it is but a coast plant, which, originally living upon the shores of some continent, when these became submerged, changed to some extent its older features in conformity with its new sphere of existence, and has since been oceanic.

The late Professor E. Forbes, one of the greatest of generalizers among the naturalists of the nineteenth century, was the first to show that a connection between Ireland and the Continent must have existed at some early period, and it is to his researches that much of the matter of the foregoing remarks is due; but the writer does not concur in Forbes's opinion concerning the period at which the plants of Spain passed into Ireland. Forbes held the belief that the migration must have occurred before the glacial period; but this it is difficult to imagine, for the following reason. The *Trichomanes* *could not* possibly have survived the intensely diminished temperature of the ice epoch; and hence, had the colony been existing before, and no recolonization have eventuated subsequently, we should not *now* have a single specimen of this very delicate fern growing naturally in Ireland.

Trusting to the reader for a verdict in his favour, the writer respectfully subscribes himself,

Stagyra.

ARISTOTLE.

NOTE.—It is but just to state that the Rev. D. H. Haigh, of Erdington, Co. Warwick, in a very valuable memoir upon the subject, has arrived at the conclusion that the Ogham alphabet is not connected with any *known* characters, and is to be regarded as a thing *per se*. On the other hand, certain symbols, identical in form with those in Ireland, have been found at Carthage.

A TANGLED SKEIN.

A ROMANCE.

BY ALBANY FONBLANQUE, JUN.

CHAPTER XXX.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF—BY SETTLEMENT.

It was not with unalloyed satisfaction that our "dearest Francis" looked back upon his half-brother's final departure from Tremlet Towers. Not that he regretted it. His bitter jealousy of Steevie made him rejoice in the assurance that the house and the county had seen the last of him; and his own conceit was too great to let him suppose for a moment that what he had said and done was not the sole cause of so agreeable a result. Why, then, was not his lofty mind at ease? Was he a little ashamed of his conduct towards his father—of his cold-heartedness towards a brother who had loved him with such an enduring, manly love? Not a bit of it! He acted throughout *upon principle*; and eloquent were the arguments, most convincing the logic, with which he assured himself that he had behaved in an exemplary manner. Still he was not quite at his ease. He was one of those persons who do mean and disagreeable things "upon principle" only where there is something in the nature of interest to be gained thereby. There was a set-off against the exit of the rebel Steevie, and Mr. Tremlet regretted exceedingly that he had not got rid of him on easier terms.

The fact was, that, for about the first time in her life, Lady Tremlet had shown some feeling. We have seen that she supposed Stephen's absence would only be a temporary one. Had she not encountered him on that stormy autumn morning, whilst walking down to the railway-station, with his carpet bag in his hand? Had he not smiled, and kissed her in his old, tender, protecting way, when she begged him to make haste back to them again? My lady burst into such a rage as those who knew her best never dreamed that she could be capable of, when she learned the truth. How dared they deceive her! How dared they drive him out of her house!—yes, *her* house! He was her only friend; the only one she loved of them all. They were all bad, wicked, crafty designers. She would leave them, and go and live with dear Steevie. Where had he gone? They *must* know. Would he come back? Oh, let somebody go—let Sir George go—and ask him to come back! The poor baronet shook his head, and assured his excited wife that it would be no use (he did not tell her why). Stephen had left what was once his home, for ever. At this news my lady's rage melted into a flood of tears, and all day long

she sat sobbing, wringing her hands, and moaning, "Oh, Steevie, Steevie, why did you go? why did you leave me now? What shall I do! oh, what will become of me! Oh, Steevie, if you only knew! Oh, Steevie, Steevie, save me! Oh, let me go to Steevie!"

It was not altogether love for the absent one, however, which drew these lamentations from the pretty lips of Rhoda, Lady Tremlet.

"Dearest Francis" did not show his wisdom in approaching his mother whilst in this mood, and assuring her of his complete devotion to her and—his mean little mind could not help adding—her interests.

"Oh yes—yes, I know," replied his mother, impatiently; "but you are not like Steevie. I'm not wise and strong like some people; and I used to lean on him so. He was not like a son; and, oh, why did he leave me now, when I am so sorely tem—" and my lady burst into a fresh paroxysm of weeping.

"Let *me* be your support—lean on *me*," cooed the dear fellow, in his most insinuating tones, when this had slightly subsided; but his mother shrank from him with a strange, wild look in her eyes.

"You!" she cried, "*you!* Oh, no, no, no! You, so cold and cruel—you take Steevie's place? never! And if it had not been for you, and your nasty crafty ways—I know what you want—he would be here now to take care of me. Oh, it was cruel of him to go—cruel, cruel; but you—now mark what I say, Francis—you'll repent this. You will! You'll repent it all your life, if you have a heart—if you ever loved your wretched mother."

"It is because I love you so dearly, that I have adopted a course of conduct towards my half-brother which at present you condemn," said he. "I am aware that I shall be misjudged, and perhaps condemned for what I have done," he added, with martyr-like resignation; "but the fear of blame from the frivolous and the worldly-minded has never yet dissuaded me from acting upon principle. You who are so good, and kind, and straightforward, think that all the world is the same. Ah, my dear mother, to what lengths might not your confiding nature have taken you!" and the dear fellow lifted his eyes and hands in deprecation of the sad result.

"Do you dare to suggest that Steevie is not good, and kind, and straightforward?"

"My dear mother, you must remember that he is my father's son."

"Oh that he had been mine—my own, very own!" sobbed my lady; "or that my own had been like him!"

"My dearest mother," said her son, taking her hand as Steevie would have done, to soothe her, "how can you speak thus, when I—?"

"Don't say you love me—don't tell lies, Francis Tremlet," she burst out, angrily. "You know you do not love me, or your father, or anybody but yourself. You would not be a Tremlet if you did. We are all cold, selfish, false-hearted. I love no one—only—only Steevie. I hate myself—I am afraid of myself. Oh, if I had him here to uphold me! my

noble, strong, generous Steevie! Oh, if I only had Steevie, to save me from sin and sorrow—to save me from myself! It is your fault; yes, yours—*yours*,” she cried, again turning upon her son. “There will be no one who will repent it so bitterly as you will; for if it had not been for you, he would never have—he must have gone—he could not—he—Oh, if Steevie——” But what my lady might have added was checked by a violent fit of hysterics, in the midst of which she was carried off to her room, whence she emerged no more that day.

It was sad that my lady found nothing to complain of in her son’s conduct towards his father.

Mr. Tremlet was slightly puzzled to make out what his mother could mean by calling on Steevie to *save her*; but his attention was chiefly directed to her threat, that he would one day repent his conduct towards Steevie. “Confound it!” he mused, “she’s going to leave him that money,”—alluding to the odd thousands of ready money that were at my lady’s disposal by will—“but she must be brought round; Stephen might make improper use of it; besides, it is so bad for a professional man not to be dependent on his profession. He gets so careless and unambitious if he has anything else to rely upon.”

Thus did the dear fellow console himself; but to his surprise he found that his mother—hitherto so plastic in his hands, so forgetful one day of what had caused her pleasure or pain on the day before—was not to be brought round. On the contrary, her moans after Steevie, her entreaties that some one would bring him back to her—poor, weak, helpless thing, she never thought of acting for herself in the matter which she had so much at heart—increased as the time went on, whenever she found herself alone with her husband or her son. The former could not help her—the latter would not.

This, you may be sure, made her son very uncomfortable; nor was it all he had to trouble him. He felt that he had made a great mistake in that unpleasant affair between his father and Messrs. Puddle and Snap. He had held the ace of trumps in his hand, and had let Stephen win the game with a trumpery four! The old, vulgar Tremlet love of money, *as* money, had got into his eyes and blinded him. It was not in the nature of Francis Tremlet to think himself a fool; but he admitted, in his own mind, that it would have been much better for him if he had not acted “upon principle” this time, and had let his mother pay the debt and costs—better even to have paid them himself, than to have given so cheap a triumph to Steevie, and through him to his father.

To his great discomfort the latter made no secret of his arrest. Lord Rossthorne—whose gout had got better—came down to luncheon that very day, and was admiring the horses in Lady Tremlet’s carriage, as it stood at the porch ready for her to take her afternoon drive with the Honourable and Reverend Mrs. Corbyn, and the lady of Professor Spraggle.

“Yes,” observed Sir George, bitterly, “they are very handsome—

thoroughbred, of course! They cost four hundred guineas, a sum which was not forthcoming this morning to save me from a gaol."

"*A what?*" exclaimed the peer.

"Father," cried dearest Francis, in an agony, "pray—"

But Sir George did not heed the exhortation, or attend to the gestures—now threatening, now entreating—of his son. He continued quite calmly,—

"Yes, a gaol! You would not think it to look at this house—the magnificent country seat of Sir George Tremlet, Baronet, as the guide-books call it," he said, with bitterness, "and at all that rich and fertile land about, all pouring in its rents regularly four times a year in thousands; you would not think, I say, that I was arrested here this morning for a debt of some four hundred pounds, and had not four hundred shillings to pay it with."

"Disgraceful!" muttered Mr. Tremlet.

"What's disgraceful?" echoed his father, who had determined to humiliate him; "that I should not have four hundred shillings? Four hundred shillings make twenty pounds, and how can you expect a man whose whole annual income is only £150, to have so much in his pocket in the middle of a quarter? You are unreasonable, Francis." There was an irony in this—said before the peer—which cut the dear fellow like the stroke of a whip, and made him flinch again.

"But the arrest, the arrest," impatiently interposed Lord Rossthorne. "I do not understand—how—who——You are not now—"

"I will explain all," Sir George interrupted, "in good time."

"I really do not see the necessity of any explanation," pleaded Mr. Tremlet; "the thing is past and over. It is a very disagreeable subject—why not let it drop?"

"Because, sir," rejoined his father, sternly, "you have used the word 'disgraceful' in connection with my conduct in the affair, before one of the oldest friends I have, and so I choose to explain."

"If you like to expose yourself—" began dearest Francis, getting very hot.

"Silence, sir!" said Lord Rossthorne, in a subdued voice, and not a shade of violence in the gesture, but still with a tone and manner which would have cowed a bolder man than Francis Tremlet; "your father is speaking to me.—You were arrested this morning for four hundred pounds?" he continued to Sir George, as though there were no such person as his second son in existence.

"There or thereabouts—the amount is no matter. It was the residue, my lord, of an old loan of £1,200, contracted by me more than twenty years ago, for—for a purpose which I need not mention. You know what my position was about that time. I was a rich man, as it were, yesterday, and a beggar at post-time this morning. Well, I borrowed this money. Was there anything disgraceful in that? Nobody supposed that those

cursed mines could not have been pumped out dry, and that I should have been a rich man again. I might have become a bankrupt, and wiped off all my liabilities; but I did not. I wish to God now I had. Is there anything disgraceful in that? I ran away with an heiress; and out of her three hundred thousand pounds, they gave me, knowing my tastes and habits—the habits and tastes of a gentleman—they gave me one hundred and fifty pounds a year. That was how they went to work to make old Mark Tremlet's daughter and Joshua Tremlet's niece love and *honour* me as my wife, and prepare a happy future for us. You know," he went on, in a lower tone, "what money I have had from you. I have borrowed a hundred or two from Coleman; and with this, and what I have saved from my income, I have paid off upwards of two thousand pounds' worth of debts, and have still kept my club, and looked, I hope, like a gentleman. I have not spent fifty pounds a year upon myself. Is there anything 'disgraceful' in that?"

"You owe my mother ninety-three pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence, that you have borrowed from her from time to time," interposed Mr. Tremlet, in a sulky tone, determined that his father should not have more credit than he could help. "If you *will* go into disagreeable subjects, you must admit you have had that to spend too; besides, all your debts were paid for you when you married my mother."

"You are a young man, a very young man, Mr. Tremlet," observed the peer, deliberately, with a shade—just a shade—of contempt in his tone; "but if you should live to be a hundred, I doubt if you will ever know a man who has had *all* his debts paid for him; that is to say, if the discharge of all, by some other, depends upon the confession of all by himself."

"I admit that it requires more moral courage than we find in ordinary people, to avoid making some small concealments," said dear Francis, delighted at the prospect of an argument with the peer; "but two thousand pounds—to say nothing of the ninety-three pounds seventeen and sixpence—is a large sum, and—"

"And what?" demanded Lord Rossthorne, sternly.

"I insist upon investigating if such a sum has been really paid," was the reply.

"By what right?"

The question was an obvious and a simple one; but this dutiful son found some difficulty in answering it. His power in his mother's house had been gained gradually. The poor baronet—the nominal possessor of Tremlet Towers, the sham great landlord and influential squire—had given way at first to small aggressions made by his second son, when that philosopher returned from Oxford for his first long vacation, bursting with the importance and wisdom usually imbibed by young gentlemen of his stamp during their freshman's term. It was then that he first began to realize his position as heir, and that of his father as a pensioner on his

mother's bounty. He was a true Tremlet, was Master Francis, and added to the commandment, "Honour thy father and mother," the words, "provided always that they are rich, and have something to leave you in their wills." The idea of the absolute inheritor of fifteen thousand a year being expected to honour a parent whose income was only a few pounds better than that of the butler, never entered his head. The feeling that it would be just, and kind, and generous, to uphold a gentleman of ancient family in such unfortunate dependency, and, by treating him with respect, win for him the respect of others, was not such a one as was likely to enter the mind of a Tremlet.

No; dearest Francis suddenly discovered that his mother's wishes had not been properly consulted in the management of affairs, and very soon succeeded in convincing her that she had been a very ill-used and neglected woman. In an evil hour the poor baronet gave way—for the sake of peace and quietness, as he said; his dutiful son followed up his advantage relentlessly, and that false step of Sir George's was never recovered. He struggled hard, but it was no use. My lady could not be troubled with complaints of dear Francis; they made her quite ill. My lady must really request that Sir George would not interfere with what dear Francis was doing for the estate—dearest Francis was so very clever. Besides, what could it signify to Sir George what was done to the estate? Sometimes, when father and son came to hard words in her presence, she would burst into tears, and declare that they were killing her. This generally took place when her son was decidedly in the wrong. With two to one against him—with active invasion of his authority on the one hand, and passive resistance against his complaints on the other, what could Sir George do—himself of a weak and temporizing disposition—but give in, and be gradually drawn back, and back, and back, till he became the miserable cipher that we beheld him on the eve of that eventful journey to Parliament Street, *vid* Westborough?

Such was the process under which Mr. Tremlet had elevated himself into the position from which he presumed to discredit his father's statement that he had paid two thousand pounds' worth of debts since his marriage; but Lord Rossthorne's question—short, sharp, and to the point—did not admit of an answer.

"By what right, sir," the peer repeated, "do you insist upon investigating whether such a sum has been really paid?"

Dear Francis, who had got very red in the face, and looked exceedingly awkward, stammered out,—

"Because he—Sir George—says—or rather insinuates, that—that my mother has not—that the allow—the income, I mean, that he gets is not—not enough. That—in short, that my mother has not been liberal towards him, when—"

"The question, then," interrupted the peer, sharply, "is one between your parents, according to your own showing."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Tremlet, thinking that his drift was now understood, and that he should be allowed to continue the investigation.

"Then who made you—their son—a judge between them?" replied Lord Rossthorne, severely. "For shame, young man! If, after what has passed, you think proper to remain a witness to what your father has yet to explain respecting this arrest, I cannot, of course, command your absence; but you will have the goodness to remember that the conversation is between your father and myself, and I must request that it may not again be interrupted."

It would have been well for the dear fellow if he had taken the hint and left the room; but, as I have said before, his mental cuticle was uncommonly tough. He only thought that Lord Rossthorne desired to be alone with Sir George, and therefore remained in order to annoy him. The annoyance, however, was quite the other way, when his father came to recount Stephen's share in the transactions of the morning. Then he saw the peer's noble countenance light up with pleasure, and heard the few eloquent words in which he expressed his admiration of our Steevie's act, and the way in which he had performed it. This was gall and wormwood to Mr. Tremlet, and the one contemptuous glance with which the old lord regarded him from head to foot, when his father told, in a choking voice, how Steevie had left them, never to return again, gave his half-brother plenty to think of for the rest of the day. Assuredly he was paying rather dearly for his triumph. But the worst had not come yet.

At dinner the following day, before all the company, his father—taking a mean advantage of the presence of his ally, Lord Rossthorne—told him—*him*, Mr. Tremlet, M.P. in prospect, and J.P. in fact, the guide and philosopher, if not the friend of all the country side—that he did not know what he was talking about, and had better change the conversation! Here was revolution and anarchy with a vengeance. True it was that he had introduced the subject in question on purpose to annoy the baronet; but little did he anticipate such a burst of insubordination.

He began the conversation by delighting the company with an account of certain additions he was about to make to the pleasure-gardens, and informed them that he had engaged a new gardener—highly recommended by the Duke of Devonshire—to superintend the laying out of the fresh ground. It was delightful to hear the dear fellow mouthing out his *I's* at his father's table, and bragging about what *I* am going to do with this or that, and how much it is to cost *me*.

"And this man," he added, alluding to the gardener, "I shall lodge in that cottage that you remarked the other day, my dear Mrs. Corbyle; do not you remember? I mean the lodge that leads out of the park into the Derby road."

"And what is to become of Bill Grant?" asked Sir George, putting down his knife and fork in astonishment.

“Grant has for many years ceased to be of any service to me. He must make way for others.”

“But what on earth is he to do if he be deprived of a home? His pension is barely sufficient to provide him with food, and he cannot work!” expostulated Sir George.

“He must claim those rights which the laws of his country afford to poor people in his situation,” replied Mr. Tremlet, in a pompous tone.

“Go to the workhouse, I suppose you mean?”

“Precisely!”

“He’d starve first!” exclaimed the baronet, excitedly. “He was born in that lodge, and his father was head keeper there before him. You cannot mean what you say.”

“My dear father,” simpered his son, “you have given me two admirable reasons, not only for meaning what I say, but for carrying out strictly what I mean. In the first place, I am determined to uproot that absurd idea which seems to prevail on the estate, that because I may happen to be satisfied with the conduct of some person in my employment, I am to be saddled with his family. I presume that Grant’s father was paid his wages regularly whilst he was head keeper; and I know that Grant himself has no complaint to make in that respect.”

“It is really quite wonderful to see how careful dearest Francis is in seeing that all the men are paid,” commented Lady Tremlet; and all Mr. Tremlet’s friends agreed that it was a monstrous thing for families to expect successive employment, or to expect to retain in their old age the cottages in which they were born.

“As to this man Grant refusing parochial relief,” continued the orator, “all I can say is, that if he does so, he deserves to starve. I have no sympathy for that foolish pride in the poor, which causes them to regard with aversion the assistance provided for them in times of distress by the institutions of their country.”

“Nor I either,” replied the Honourable and Reverend Mrs. Theodosius Corbyle, to whom the above observation was made. “As a clergyman’s wife, I cannot too strongly reprobate such stiff-neckedness. They ought to be humble, and contented with their lot,” concluded the lady, piously, sipping her iced champagne; “besides, the workhouses are very comfortable.”

“Delightful!” echoed Lady Tremlet; “I went all over ours the other day—or a year or two ago, perhaps it was—and tasted the soup, and really it was excellent.”

“Humph!” said her husband; “how would you like to dine off nothing else for a month?”

“Nonsense, George! how can you be so ridiculous?” retorted my lady; “of course, they have other things for dinner besides soup. Roast beef and plum pudding, and that every day; and when Grant goes, I dare say there would be no objection to the keeper letting him have some game.

I don't mean partridges and pheasants, you know; only rabbits and weasels, and things that are not quite wanted in the house."

Even Mr. Tremlet could not help smiling at his mother's idea of work-house fare, and, fearing a reply from Lord Rossthorne, was not sorry when the subject was changed. Mr. Tremlet returned to his improvements, Colonel Vincent Champneys told a wonderful story or two, and then Professor Spraggle asked if any one had heard how the vacant living of Questerthorpe had been filled up by the Crown.

"I have heard nothing *official*," replied dearest Francis, "but Carlton Chamberlayne is sure to get it!" and this was said with the air of a man who speaks from authority.

"I am sorry to say that my young friend Carlton's chance is anything but secure," said the professor. "Just before dressing for dinner I received a letter from a person usually well informed on these subjects, and he tells me that the preferment is likely to be offered to a gentleman of the name of Treherne, whom I find by the Clergy List holds a little living down in Kent."

The Francis-ites were shocked; for the aforesaid Carlton was of their set.

"Why, it's worth twelve hundred a year!" said Mrs. Corbyle.

"Beside the glebe land," added her husband.

"And such a charming rectory!" observed Lady Tremlet.

"With so much good society all about," added the professor.

"Has the late incumbent resigned?" asked Colonel Vincent Champneys.

"Resigned? oh dear, no! Poor old gentleman, he's dead; he died about a month ago."

"Having been all but imbecile for the last twelve years, if I remember aright," interposed Lord Rossthorne, in his quiet, smiling way.

"Why, yes," replied Mr. Spraggle; "he has not done duty for many years, but he kept two curates, and his nephew officiated occasionally."

"Dear, dear, dear," said Mrs. Corbyle, sorrowfully; "what a shame not to give the living to poor Carlton! and he such a good young man, with such claims too."

"Too bad! too bad!" struck in dearest Francis.

"Scandalous!" exclaimed Roundleby, who had an uncle with a rectory, and was going into the Church.

"Shameful!" echoed Mr. Octavius Flounder, because his patron had said it was "too bad."

"Just shows what you are to expect from the present Government," observed Colonel Champneys, who liked to be well with the majority.

"I knew something of the family once," said Lord Rossthorne, after a pause, "but have lately lost sight of it; tell me, please, what were Mr. Carlton Chamberlayne's claims?"

"My dear lord," replied Mrs. Spraggle, "his uncle was Rector of Questerthorpe for forty-three years!"

"At twelve hundred a year, beside the glebe," rejoined the peer, drily; "but I wanted to know *young* Mr. Chamberlayne's claims."

"He is a gentleman of family, and an accomplished scholar," replied Mr. Tremlet, in his loftiest tone.

"More so than Mr. Treherne?"

"Nobody seems ever to have heard of *him*," said Francis, with a sneer.

"Or even read of him?" inquired the peer, with a malicious twinkle in his eye.

Mr. Tremlet's evil star was in the ascendant, and he said, "No!" whereupon Lord Rossthorne counted upon his fingers seven learned and standard treatises of which Mr. Treherne—our old friend at Kernden—was the author. The dead silence which followed was broken by Lady Tremlet, who observed that if he could write all those books, why did he not mind his business, and write some more? Why could he not leave the Chamberlaynes alone? But *of course* poor dear Mrs. Chamberlayne would continue to live in the rectory?"

"Oh no," said the clergyman's wife; "the new people will turn her out, and be as disagreeable as possible besides, I dare say." Mrs. Corbyle knew how disagreeable "new people" could be, for her husband had brought in a bill of two hundred pounds against the widow of his predecessor, for "dilapidations," because he had added a conservatory and a study to the rectory-house.*

"But will she really have to go?" asked my lady, opening wide her pretty blue eyes.

"Certainly! That is the cruelty of the thing," replied dearest Francis; "when, if the Premier had presented her nephew, she could have remained in the house which has been her home for thirty years."

"I did not catch how long Bill Grant has lived in the East Lodge?" asked Lord Rossthorne of Sir George.

"He was born there. He's now fifty-five," was the reply.

"In-deed!" said the peer.

I do not know what may be the feelings of mice when, having entered a trap, they hear the click of the spring as the catch closes behind them, and they become aware of their unpleasant situation; but I should imagine them to be very similar to those which entered the breast of Mr. Francis Tremlet and his friends, when that sonorous "in-deed" of Lord Rossthorne was heard.

There was an awful pause.

"If—if," stammered Francis, "your lordship means to suggest that there is anything in common between the case of my former gamekeeper and—and—"

* An addition is a "dilapidation" in the eye of the ecclesiastical law.

"I do not remember having drawn any comparison at all," said the peer, very quietly, enjoying his discomfiture.

"But you have insinuated—"

"What?"

"That there is some similarity between—"

"Between what?" pursued his tormentor.

"Why, the case of my old keeper and that of—I hardly like to couple persons so very dissimilar—of Mrs. Chamberlayne."

"Well, now you remind me of it," said Lord Rossthorne, "I think there is much in common between them. Don't you think so, Lady Tremlet?"

"You are joking!" laughed my lady. "Why, Mrs. Chamberlayne is the granddaughter of an earl; and that dreadful old paralytic Grant is—is—oh, a very common man."

"Ah! I see now," said the peer, good-humouredly; "that makes the difference. Common people do not mind being turned out of the homes in which they were born; and the families of gentlemen—of twelve hundred a year, beside the glebe—living in beautiful rectories, *have* a claim in respect of the services of their relatives. Thank you, my dear Lady Tremlet; but where do you draw the line? Is there any love for a home that is only worth fifty pounds a year?"

My lady replied that she did not want to draw any lines. Anybody could see that it was very cruel to turn poor dear Mrs. Chamberlayne out of her nice house. Then her son came to her aid, and began to argue that poor people had no feelings, or very coarse ones; that Bill Grant's feelings were as the fustian of his jacket, and those of the rector's widow as the lace of her wedding veil; and talked such utter, wicked, wanton trash, that his father lost patience, and, emboldened by the events of the day before, bade him hold his tongue or change the conversation.

Assuredly Mr. Tremlet was getting somewhat roughly handled all of a sudden; and he was not the sort of man to submit to such usage without meditating revenge.

In spite of all Stephen had said respecting Colonel Champneys—or rather, I think, *because* he had warned his family against him—that gentleman remained a welcome guest at the Towers. What an agreeable, well-spoken, unselfish person he was, to be sure! Mrs. Spraggle was delighted with him—he spoke so respectfully of university Dons and their wives. Mr. Roundleby, who in his secret heart was inclined to be a fast young man, declared some time afterwards, when he had lapsed from dear Francisism, that Tremlet's friends were all infernal prigs—all but Champneys, who was a regular brick; and the Honourable and Reverend Mrs. Corbyn assured her bishop's lady that, as a clergyman's wife, she had set her face against all officers in the army, believing them to be an unregenerate set; but that she had modified her views since becoming acquainted with the

colonel. He was so serious and thoroughly Christian, was this Colonel Vincent Champneys.

The object of these somewhat contradictory encomiums was not less satisfied with his admirers than they were with him. He was the sort of man who got intimate with you very soon. Introduced to you yesterday, as it were, you found him calling you by your Christian name to-day. Thus Mr. Spraggle soon became "my dear professor;" Mr. Roundleby, "Sam;" and the two young country justices (who were always shooting) respectively "Mat." and "Charlie." The colonel very rarely addressed himself to Sir George; in fact, he treated him with scant civility. Towards my lady he was attention itself; and always spoke to and of her son as *Mr.* Tremlet. Oh, the colonel knew what he was about!

Dearest Francis was not slow in making his guests aware of the position held by his father in Tremlet Towers, and a very few hours sufficed to teach the colonel what was expected of one who wished to be well with the heir. This alone would have induced him to treat the poor baronet in an off-hand, semi-contemptuous manner; but Sir George had been asking him certain questions, unpleasant to hear and difficult to answer, and therefore he determined to put him down. This was not so easily done.

The spell which had given over the once gay and proud George Frankland, bound hand and foot, to the mercy of his rich wife and her methodical son and heir, was one which has made slaves of many better men than he, and crushed their faces into the dust, before meaner scoundrels even than Mr. Francis Tremlet. It was that which is woven by the demon DEBT—a fiend who produces more lies, and tricks, and meannesses, I think, than any other devil in or out of the pit. Once let his clutch fasten upon you, and good-bye to self-respect; good-bye to peace; good-bye even to exertion; for—unless, perhaps, with the very strongest of us—he paralyzes the powers which might be used to throw him off. For years he had sat constantly on Sir George Tremlet's heart—he and another enemy to peace; but in the relief which the baronet felt, when by Stephen's act he was released from the one, he almost forgot the other, although Stephen himself had warned him that his secret was no longer his own. It may be, that when he did remember this, it made him restless, and led him to say and do things which would have cost him a shudder to contemplate a week ago. One of these was to investigate the truth of what his eldest son had hinted respecting Colonel Vincent Champneys. He cross-examined that gentleman so acutely respecting certain statements which he had made about himself and his services, and pressed him so closely as to his right of assuming a military title in England, that the popular gentleman had no resource but to be insolent, and so broke off the conversation. Upon this the baronet sought his wife in her pretty boudoir, and told her Stephen's misgivings and his own more than suspicions, that the pretended colonel was not a fit person to associate with them, and readily convinced her that it was so.

“Oh, yes” said my lady, more earnestly than was her wont; “I am sure that he is a wicked, bad man, and he ought to go. Why don’t he go? Tell him to go, please.”

This resolution having been imparted to her son, *he* also had an interview with my lady, the result of which was, that he assured Sir George, the next time they met, that it was all a mistake; that the colonel was a most exemplary person; and that she had asked dearest Francis to request that he would prolong his visit at “the Towers.”

At this juncture it was only necessary for the baronet to express a wish, however proper or simple, to set “dearest Francis” up in opposition to it. The reader is aware that the “dear fellow” was not so thoroughly as heretofore in his mother’s favour, but his father was in deeper disgrace. You will have noticed that in all her complaints against Francis for having caused his brother’s departure, she never once alluded to her son’s conduct towards his father, which had so roused honest Steevie’s indignation.

“How dare he go and get arrested!” she cried, petulantly. “If he had not got into debt, and made those horrid men come after him, there would not have been all that fuss, and dear Steevie would have remained; and, oh! what shall I do without him, now that——Oh, Steevie, Steevie! come back, come back!”

Mr. Tremlet was not one to test the accuracy of his mother’s logic. Anything would do that brought blame upon the poor baronet; and when his wife’s mind was most bitter against him, his amiable son told her what had passed between Sir George and Lord Rossthorne, and discussed with her the alleged payment of that two thousand pounds, armed with the schedule of debts which had been paid on the baronet’s marriage. A long tell-tale list, this. It contained (beside the names of bill discounters and money lenders, and the sums due to them) statements from wine merchants, horse dealers, butchers and bakers, confectioners, and other household tradesmen; half a dozen tailors’, as many jewellers’ and boot-makers’, a silk mercer or two, a *milliner’s*, and four dressmakers’ bills.

“It seems odd,” remarked Mr. Tremlet, “that these milliners and dressmakers’ bills are dated *after* the death of the late Lady Frankland. I suppose they were incurred for my brother. There are no items given, but is not £293 18s. 7d. rather an extravagant sum to spend in one year upon the dress of a little boy of six?”

Lady Tremlet turned deadly pale, and trembled as her son spoke.

“It *seems*,” he continued, “as though every possible extravagance were included in this list. Look over it, my dearest mother, and see if you can suggest any liability which my father is likely to have had, and which is not entered there.”

My lady looked it through, paying especial attention to the mysterious milliners and dressmakers’ accounts, and could not help her son to guess at any further debts.

“And yet he says that he had to borrow twelve hundred pounds just

before his marriage with you," Francis continued, "which is not mentioned here; and that he has paid nearly two thousand pounds' worth of debts—he *calls* them debts—since."

He placed so much stress upon the word in italics, that his mother demanded what he meant. "What should your father pay people money for," she asked, "unless he owed it?"

Mr. Tremlet looked wise, and shook his head.

"Don't shake your head," said she, peevishly—my lady had been very peevish lately—"it makes me quite nervous to see people shake their heads. Why don't you answer?"

"My dear mother," replied Francis, "I really do not like—it is not for me to accuse my father."

"Accuse him! Oh, dear! what do you accuse him of?"

"I? Of nothing. It would be very wrong of me to accuse him at all. I only suspect—"

"What? what?"

"Dearest mother," he rejoined, imitating, as far as he could, Steevie's caressing voice and manner, "let us talk of something more pleasant."

"No," said my lady, resolutely, "I will have an answer. What do you suspect?"

"It is not right that I should tell you," was the reply, delivered in a low and solemn voice.

"Yes, but it is; and you are very wicked if you do not tell me this moment," said my lady, getting more and more excited. "I must and will know."

"Well, if you *must*, you must; but mind, I only suspect. My father's debts were all paid on his marriage; he cannot, he does not pretend they were not. What has he to show for all this money he says he has paid? Nothing. Painful as it is for me to come to any conclusion in such a case, I can form but one; and that is, that my father has some person or persons dependent upon him, of whom we know nothing; and that these sums, and others which he has borrowed of Lord Rossthorne, have gone in supporting them in secret."

Lady Tremlet heaved a deep sigh, and sinking back upon her sofa, did not speak again.

* * * * *

That afternoon, as on the two previous ones, the family barouche was given up to the use of the guests. My lady took an airing in her pony carriage, and was driven, as before, by Colonel Vincent Champneys. He was, as I have said, all attention and politeness to his hostess; there was something even chivalrous in his deference towards her; but she trembled and shrank from him when he addressed her, though she could never keep her eyes off his face when they were in the same company. The expression of her gaze was that of some poor bird fascinated by a serpent, and being drawn nearer and nearer to its doom.

It was almost dark that evening when they entered the park, returning home. Their drive had been a long one.

Just before they drove up to the door, Colonel Champneys said, as though remarking upon something that his companion had been saying, "Your son is right. I have reasons to know that his suspicions are well founded. Rhoda," he added, almost sternly, looking her full in the face with his cold, glittering grey eyes, "have I not told you that this is not your destiny? You are made to be loved, to love, and be happy. You are not happy here, Rhoda. Your destiny is elsewhere, and with another."

My lady hung down her head, and was silent. This took place on the day but one before Stephen fled from Kernden Rectory as narrated in the last chapter. Ah, Steevie, old friend! if you had known then—even then, in the hour of your deepest agony—the retribution which hung over the heads of those who had driven you from your home, you would have forgiven all, and hurried to their aid. But so it was not to be.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE HARDEST KNOT OF ALL.

LORD ROSSTHORNE was from home when Stephen arrived at the castle, but was expected to return in the course of the day. He had left early in the morning by rail, without luggage, and had taken a ticket for B—, which was the nearest station on the main line, the railroad which passed close to Rossthorne being merely a "feeder." Whether their master had booked again at the junction, and, if so, whither he had gone, none of the servants could tell; but he had ordered dinner for two, and a bed to be prepared for a gentleman who was to accompany him home. He had received a telegraphic despatch about half an hour before he left.

Stephen had been expected, as we know, for some time; and even if he had not, his arrival would have caused no apparent commotion in that well-managed household. My lord's "own man" conducted him to the rooms he was to occupy, and respectfully inquired for his luggage. Had Captain Frankland left it at the station? If so, would he please to give him (the valet) the tickets, and it should be sent for. Stephen stammered out something about not having come to make any stay—merely wishing to speak to Lord Rossthorne for a few minutes—no; he had not any luggage to be sent for. The man begged to be excused if he presumed—he was sure he did not mean any disrespect—but had anything happened?—was Captain Frankland ill?—would he take anything? Stephen assured him that there was nothing amiss—he was quite well—he was much obliged, but would take nothing; only—. The well-meaning servant understood what was required of him, and left the room.

"I never saw a gentleman so changed!" he exclaimed, when he

reached the housekeeper's room; "he looks as though he had seen a ghost—all haggard and scared, you know."

Stephen sat, just where the valet had left him, for some hours, before his mind had become sufficiently calm to allow him to think why he had come there, and what good end was to be answered by remaining. He had been thoroughly stunned by the awful disclosure contained in sister Mary's letter, and hitherto had been staggering about vaguely, following consistently but one idea—that of seeking Lord Rossthorne. Have you never, in the midst of some unexpected paroxysm of mental or bodily pain, felt irresistibly impelled to fly to some person or to some place with whom and where to endure it? and until that person or that place is gained, have you not almost forgotten your agony in the anxiety to reach the goal towards which you yearn so strongly, and, it may be, without avail? I hope not; for it is only great gaping heart-wounds which create these phantasies—wounds, the scars of which the best and happiest after-life cannot efface, and which ache at times till the crack of doom, live how long we may.

From the first, Stephen had felt assured that sister Mary knew more than she would own. Why else had she refused to refer him to any member of her family for information as to so (apparently) simple a fact as the whereabouts of an old house in which her sister had once lived? The motive for secrecy was clear now. In that house a child had been born, and confided to that sister's care. There, also, another sister had hidden the proof of that child's legitimacy; and, having acted as confidante between its mother and her unworthy husband, had, at his instigation, falsely pretended that it was dead, till, conscience-stricken, she confessed the truth. She knew full well who was the father of that child. She could guess too truly who was the murderer of Brandron. So mused Stephen Frankland.

We shudder, and our blood curdles, when we read of brave men's bodies being mangled by cannon-shot, or torn and crushed by great accidents; and the most callous of us are glad to throw a covering over the poor bleeding relics, and hide them decently from sight. Let us not pry into the soul of a man smitten so heavily as was poor Steevie. When I try to realize what must have been his thoughts on this dreadful day, I thank the heavenly mercy which made him a very child before his GOD, as are always the best of those who are, as he was, men of men amongst their fellows in this world. Had it been otherwise, Stephen Frankland would have fallen by his own hand.

It was growing dusk before he roused himself from the stupor into which he had fallen, and leaned from the open window, wondering when Lord Rossthorne would come. His room overlooked a road—not the principal one—which led up to the castle from the village; and as he mused, he saw three figures strike into this from a bypath which led from a neighbouring plantation. He did not notice the first nor the second,

but a chill ran through his veins when he saw that the third was Inspector Lager, and remembered what he had said when they had met at the station a few hours ago. The detective had declared that he should arrest the murderer of Brandron that night. "I have him as safe this moment as though he were lodged in Maidstone Jail!" Those were his words. What, then, could he be doing under the walls of Rossthorne Castle? Whilst Stephen yet wondered, the sound of a carriage approaching fell on his ear. Another moment, and it was close at hand. He heard Lord Rossthorne's voice calling to the coachman to stop at a side door, which was used as an entrance in wet weather. The carriage drew up almost directly under the window, and the first person who descended from it was Sir George Tremlet!

A second glance showed Stephen that Lager was approaching the house. He walked first of the three now, and, to his amaze, Stephen recognized in the second man, who slouched along by his side, the long-missing Jim Riley. The third, who was a much younger person than either of his companions, carried a large book under his arm.

Stephen sprang from his room to a corridor outside, which overlooked the entrance-hall, and watched. He saw his father enter with the peer. He saw the butler advance and speak to the latter. He knew well what was said, from the effect produced upon the hearers. The poor baronet turned pale as ashes, and made as though he would return to the carriage. Lord Rossthorne was no less surprised.

"Captain Frankland!" he exclaimed, "when did he come? where is he? Here, show Sir George to his room," he continued, hurriedly, not waiting for a reply. "Where is Captain Frankland?"

"In the blue room, my lord."

"Better not see him now, George," he said, in a low voice, to the baronet, who stood trembling by his side. "Go to your room. Leave it to me to break the news, poor fellow. I will join you again presently."

Stephen did not hear these last words. He had returned to his room as Sir George was about to follow the servant up-stairs, and he was hardly seated again when Lord Rossthorne entered.

"Steevie," he said, holding out his hand, "this is a surprise. I wish I could say that it is a pleasant one."

Stephen rose from his seat, and flushed crimson.

"Oh, don't misunderstand me, my dear boy," resumed the peer; "you are as welcome as ever, but—your father is here."

"I saw him enter with you just now."

There was that in his tone and manner which startled his host.

"Good heavens!" he said, in an agitated voice; "is it possible that you already know—"

"God help me!" sighed Steevie. "I know too much. But to what do you allude?"

Lord Rossthorne took his hand, and wrung it in silence.

"It's a bad, bad business," he said, after a long and painful pause, "but you must bear it like a man, Steevie. Remember, you are not the principal sufferer."

"Is *all* discovered?"

"All! But how on earth has the news reached you? I only received it by telegraph this morning."

"From whom?"

"From himself. I have been over to the Towers to-day. Of course, after what has happened, he could not stay there another hour, so I brought him here. It is safest and best for him to remain here till it has blown over a little."

"Blown over?"

"Of course. This sort of scandal makes a great noise at first, but something else turns up to distract public attention, and then it is forgotten. We must get him abroad as soon as possible, and leave the rest for the lawyers to settle."

"My lord! my lord!" exclaimed Stephen, "there is no such chance for him. Why—why did you bring him here into the very jaws of death? There is not a moment to be lost. He must escape at once. They are only three now; more may arrive at any moment. Let me go to him;" and, wild and breathless with excitement, Stephen sprang towards the door, but the peer threw himself in the way.

"Are you mad?"

"No, but I shall be if you stop me. I tell you I saw the detective Lagger and two others under that window just as you came in. Let me pass. I know him to be a man who will do his duty without fear and without favour. He may have arrested my father whilst we are talking here. Pray—pray let me pass!"

"Nonsense, Steevie; you are excited, naturally enough. You know not what you are saying, my dear fellow. Sit down."

"Lord Rossthorne," said Stephen, firmly, but through quivering lips, "you are about the last man in the world against whom I would raise my hand, but I *will* leave this room—I will save my father."

The brows of the peer darkened. A threat of personal violence was more than he could stand, even from the man whom he wished to adopt as a son.

"If I had known you less well than I do, Captain Frankland," he replied, haughtily, "I might be able to account for this extraordinary conduct; as it is, I cannot. You speak of escaping 'detectives' and 'arrest.' You are labouring under some extraordinary delusion. Nothing that has passed would justify any one in arresting your father. How on earth should it? If you think it kind, or even reasonable, to withdraw him in his affliction from beneath the roof of his oldest friend pray do so; only—Steevie, what is the matter? Are you ill? Lean on me, my boy; you are faint," he said, as Stephen staggered from him.

"No, no. I—I am better now," he replied, sinking into a chair. "Forgive me for what I said then; and tell me—as quickly as—you can—please, what—what has happened at ho—~~at~~—at the Towers." He spoke with his hand pressed upon his heart, and in gasps.

"I thought you knew?"

"No. I was thinking of something else. Never mind what I said, and tell me all—*all*."

"You remember that person who called himself Colonel Vincent Champneys?"

"I do. And I know now—I have conclusive evidence that he is the scoundrel that I took him for. I sent it to my father the day before yesterday. I only got it then."

"It came too late. He has since added yet another act of villany to his list."

"What has he done? Go on, pray go on."

"Steevie, with all her faults, you loved your stepmother?"

"I did—I do; but what of her?"

"She has left her home—eloped."

"Impossible!"

"It is too true."

"But not with Champneys?" cried Stephen. "No, no, my lord, not with *him*."

The old peer made no reply; but Steevie saw, from the expression of his countenance, that his worst fears were realized.

By this time the gloaming had darkened into night, and there was no light in the room. Neither of its occupants cared to call for one, as they both felt they had that to say which is best said if accompanying emotions could be veiled. Stephen rose, and turned aside to the window, where he stood speechless, gazing sternly out into the darkness. Suddenly he returned to where Lord Rossthorne sat, and demanded,—

"We must save her. When did they go? Where have they gone? Is it possible to overtake—to save her?"

Lord Rossthorne shook his head.

"She left her home on Tuesday night," he replied. "This is Friday. They have gone abroad."

"How do you know?"

"Your poor father received a letter from that—" something rose in the peer's throat, and prevented him from getting out the word—"that villain, this very morning, stating where he will be found—"

Stephen started up with a gesture of impatience and surprise.

"—This day month," resumed the speaker. "My dear Steevie, the scoundrel has us completely in his power. He offers to give Sir George the satisfaction of a gentleman—mark his words! *he* give the satisfaction of a gentleman!—at St. Malo, a month hence. Do you think he will take his poor victim there? Not he. In the mean time, he says, he will

give your father any assistance in his power in taking the necessary steps to obtain a divorce."

"A divorce?"

"The very thing he desires himself. Lady Tremlet's fortune is her own for life; a good deal of it her own absolutely. Of course it was for her money that he has committed this act of treachery. It will be all his when he marries her. Ah, Steevie! if her fate, and your poor father's sufferings for the last four years, could be made known to the world, what a lesson they would furnish to those who think that a wife's happiness is to be established by making her husband a dependent upon her and her children! But it is no use moralizing now," he added, with a sigh. "Will you come and see your father?" And the peer rose to leave the room.

Stephen caught him by the arm, and detained him.

"Pray do not leave me," he said. "I have something to tell you that must be said, and there is little time to say it. This last blow for a moment diverted my thoughts, and—and I feel so confused and—lost, as it were," he murmured, pressing a hand to his throbbing brow, "that I fear I can hardly express myself. You must pardon it if I speak vaguely—bear with me, even if your reason seems to revolt from what I say; for as there is a Heaven above us both this night, Lord Rossthorne, I am in sad, in fearful earnest."

"My poor boy! my dear fellow! you are ill. This bad news has upset you," he said, in a fatherly, anxious tone, drawing his chair nearer to where Steevie sat. "Do not dwell upon it. Let me ring for lights, and—"

"No, no! not yet. I am not ill, and you must hear me. Before you told me this bad news, I said that my father was in deadly danger here; that the officer who has come to arrest him is at the gate, if not inside it. He must escape, and at once; for God's sake help me to contrive the means!"

"Escape from what?" exclaimed the wondering peer.

"From a felon's death," cried Stephen, in a voice of anguish. "Oh, my lord! his life is in your hands; be generous, and help me to save it."

"Are you mad, Steevie?"

"No; but I shall be soon, if you treat me thus. Why, why will you waste these precious moments? Why will you not believe—?"

"Believe *what*, in Heaven's name?"

"Listen," said Stephen, calming himself with effort. "When I returned from India, I was accompanied by a gentleman named Brandron."

"I know, I know," interrupted Lord Rossthorne, somewhat impatiently; "he was killed at Westborough. You were very kind to him. I heard all about it."

"He came to Westborough," Stephen continued, not heeding the interruption, "to meet a person whose interest it was to conceal the birth and parentage of a certain child. Brandron was determined that this

child should have its rights; and to prevent the exposure he threatened,—that person murdered him.”

“Vague surmise,—guess-work. Any other romantic story would fit the facts as well,” observed the peer, in a low voice; “but what can this possibly have to do with your father?”

“My lord, it was he who went with Brandron into Westborough Wood. It was he—God help him!—who was the murderer!”

“No! no! no!” thundered the peer, starting from his seat. “Ten thousand times no, Stephen Frankland. How can you, how dare you, bring such an accusation? Your father was not there at all.”

“I saw him.”

“At Westborough?”

“Within a quarter of a mile of the village.”

“You surprise me. But what if he were? There were others—I mean, there must have been dozens of strangers in and about Westborough on that day, as on any other.”

“Hear me out,” said Stephen. “Shortly before his death, Brandron implored me to see justice done to the child, and told me that I should find proofs of her birth secreted in a certain room in Mangerton Chase. I did not know then, nor for some time afterwards, that this was the ancient name of my father’s house.”

“But—but of course you found that this was a delusion—a dying man’s phantasy,” said Lord Rossthorne, in an agitated voice. “You did not discover any papers?”

“I did. I found them all just as they had been hidden.”

“When—when?”

“On the night of the 5th of September.”

“Good God!”

“You know what happened on the following morning. I told my father, in leaving him for ever, that I knew his secret.”

“But he contradicted the—he explained—”

“Nothing. He merely implored me not to betray him.”

“Impossible! Do you mean to tell me he did not deny, indignantly deny, such an accusation?”

“I made no accusation,” replied Stephen, sadly. “Alas! his conscience supplied one. As I have already said, he merely implored me not to betray him.”

“And yet you have done so?”

“Lord Rossthorne!”

“Oh, pardon me, Steevie. I am so agitated—so confounded by what you say, that—that—But if his secret rests with you, how can he be in danger now?”

“Unfortunately, the papers discovered at Mangerton Chase fell into—it would take too long to explain how—into the hands of the detective who is below. He was at the inquest on poor Brandron. He has been

on the search for a clue to his murderer ever since, and now he has him almost within his grasp."

"But I cannot understand—I do not see——Did you read the papers found in Mangerton Chase?"

"I did—all of them, carefully."

"And yet you suspect Sir George Tremlet of being the murderer of John Brandron?"

"Too surely. Because he is the father of the child in whose cause poor Brandron died."

"*He!* Oh, Stephen, think—think again. You are excited now, and—and may be speaking at random. How could those papers prove that?"

"I have pondered painfully over all I am saying to you, Lord Rossthorne," replied Stephen, sadly. "You may be sure that I should not readily come to a conclusion that condemns my own parent of a fearful crime."

"I am sure of that; but to me it seems so monstrous, so wild, and——But go on."

"From the papers, I found that the child, when an infant, had been confided to the charge of one Lucy Alston. There are three Alstons, sisters, who are mixed up in this case,—Susan, Lucy, and Mary. Susan was the servant and confidante of the child's mother. It was she who hid the papers in Mangerton Chase. These prove that the child was confided to Lucy. Susan and Lucy are dead; but Mary lives, till lately a recluse in a convent at Hull,—a stern, unfeeling woman, not likely to be deceived or to deceive; and from her—oh! Lord Rossthorne, pity me, for now I come to my crowning misery—from her I learn that——But I will tell you all.

"You remember the conversation we had in your room at the Towers, respecting—respecting my—my marrying?"

"I do, well."

"You asked me if I loved Grace Lee, and I told you that I did, but there were reasons why I could never marry her."

"Had you then those suspicions of your father?"

"I had."

"Ah! I see,—go on."

"In a moment of happiness,—oh! such deep, unalloyed happiness!" continued poor Steevie, "I forgot the full misery of my position. I told her that I loved her: I asked her to be my wife. I found that she—pure angel that she is!—loved me."

"Oh, Steevie," cried the peer, in an excited but joyful tone, "this makes up for all. I am so glad. My dear, dear boy, I wish you happiness with all my heart. And you will be happy; you will be happy, Steevie, in spite of all, with such a wife."

"Oh, forbear, my lord, forbear!" cried Stephen, to whose heart

every well-meant word went like a stab. "You know not what you say. Grace Lee—who, but for God's mercy, I might have made my wife—is my father's child."

Lord Rossthorne uttered an inarticulate cry of surprise and pain.

"Now do you see," Stephen continued, "how fearfully strong a chain of evidence can be—perhaps already *is*—forged against my wretched father? Between the death of my dear mother and his second public marriage, he contracted a private one; and his wife having died, he sought to conceal the existence of a child, which might have proved an impediment. He got Sarah Alston to pretend that the child was dead; he deceived Brandron, who was a friend of its mother, and procured him an appointment in India. But what is the use of my going through link after link, when I tell you that he has confessed his guilt?"

"No, no; not confessed it,—impossible!"

"Not in words, but in acts. My lord! my lord! there are dozens and dozens of facts, all pointing to him as having killed poor Brandron. It may have been in a struggle; I think—I hope it was without premeditation; but that he struck the death-blow is—I say it to my grief—as certain as—"

"That Grace Lee is his child?"

Stephen bowed his head in sorrowful assent.

Lord Rossthorne rose, and paced two or three times up and down the dark chamber. Then he paused where Stephen sat, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, said, in a voice half choked with emotion,—

"Do you love her?"

"Love her! when—"

"Tush! I know what you mean. I will put my question differently. Did you love her yesterday?"

"With all my soul."

"When you found that she returned your love, did you resolve to deserve it all your life? The first love of a girl like Grace Lee is a holy, solemn trust for a man to receive, Stephen Frankland."

"It is indeed."

"There are few of us who can look back into our lives and say that we deserve it."

"Very few,—not I, for one."

"Honest as ever. Did you resolve to give her all your heart in return, and to keep it always hers? Did you resolve to make her happiness the first object of your life, to shield her from all sorrow,—in a word, to do your utmost duty as a Christian gentleman towards her?"

"I did, I did, my lord;" and the tears which he could not restrain poured down his worn cheeks.

"But this was yesterday!" There was a strange gleam in Lord Rossthorne's eyes as he spoke, and the tone of his voice made it almost seem as though he were mocking Stephen's grief. He took one other rapid

turn up and down the room, and was just on the point of speaking again, when a violent altercation was heard in the corridor outside; and before he could reach the door to see what was the matter, it was violently thrown open, and a glare of light poured into the room, and, for the moment, blinded its occupants.

When their eyes became accustomed to it, they saw Mr. Lagger in the act of locking the door on the inside. He had put down his lamp on the table.

"You know what business has brought me here, Captain," he said, in a firm but respectful voice. "I depended upon the county police; but, as usual, they have made fools of themselves and me. I'm not a-going, though, to let night come on without doing what I've got to do. I'm sorry for you, Captain, very sorry; but dooty's dooty, and must be done; so I call on you in the Queen's name to aid and assist me."

"And I decline to do so," said Stephen, confronting him.

"Captain, you don't know the law. If you assist in the escape of a murderer, you make yourself an accessory after the fact to the murder, and so I tell you."

"No matter, I refuse. Man, how can you call upon me—*me*—to assist in the apprehension of my—my—I refuse; there!"

"Then I shall do my dooty single-handed," said Lagger, drawing a revolver from his pocket; "and take care what you are about. It's best to take these things quietly. People don't get no sort of good by resisting. Ha! at last!" he said, as the sound of horses' hoofs rang in the road below. "That's the patrol; and pretty fellows they are to put on the outside of a horse! Why, I'd have come in less time on my hands and knees. Now," he added, advancing to Lord Rossthorne, and laying his hand on his shoulder, "you see that resistance is useless. *You are my prisoner.*"

"Lagger," cried Stephen, in amaze, "you are wrong; that is not my—That is Lord Rossthorne."

"I know it; and he is my prisoner."

"Stand off, fellow!" exclaimed the peer; "how dare you lay your hand on me?"

"By virtue of a warrant issued yesterday by Mr. Turner and Sir Joseph Sykes, justices of the county of Kent."

"And what, in the name of fortune, do they charge against me?" asked the peer, smiling in spite of his annoyance at this scene.

"You are charged with the wilful murder of John Everett Brandron, in Westborough Wood, on the twenty-ninth of July last. Now you're not obliged to make any reply, but I caution you that if you *do* say anything, I shall take it down, and it may be used in evidence against you."

Before the peer and Stephen could recover from the astonishment caused by these words of the detective, the tramp of men was heard in the passage, Lagger threw open the door, and half a dozen armed police marched into the room, followed by Sir George Frankland.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DISENTANGLEMENT.

“WHAT on earth is the meaning of this?” cried the baronet. “What are these men doing here?”

“They have arrested me for murder,” replied Lord Rossthorne, in a hollow voice. He was deadly pale, almost livid, and huge drops of perspiration stood on his brow.

“Murder? Absurd! Whose murder?”

“I am charged with having killed John Brandron, at Westborough, on the twenty-ninth of July last.”

“There must be some horrible mistake,” said the baronet, getting very pale in his turn, and trembling violently as he spoke. “Why, he was not there at all.”

“How do you know?” demanded Lagger, turning sharp round upon him.

“Because I was there myself,” replied Sir George, “on the very day.”

“Ah!” observed the detective, in his reflective manner, “you was the *other*. I know now. You was the one as went to old Mrs. Riley’s cottage, and wanted to know—”

“Hush-h!”

“Well, *that* ain’t no business of mine. You’re sure you did not see his lordship there—about Westborough, I mean—that day?”

“No. I could take my oath he was not there that day.”

“There! you hear?” said Stephen. “This is some folly, or worse—a conspiracy to extort money.”

Lagger cast a reproachful glance at the speaker.

“Whatever it is,” he said, firmly, “it’s no manner of use talking to me about it here. You must talk to Mr. Turner and Sir Joseph Sykes, in Poundbridge Town Hall, where I’m bound to take his lordship as speedily as possible.”

“The man is quite right, George,” said the peer; “his warrant is regular, and must be obeyed.—Do you propose [this to Lagger] taking me hence to-night?”

“Why, if so be as certain persons had come when they *ought* to have come,” replied the detective, scraping his chin with his fist, and eyeing the county police in a not over-flattering manner, “we could have caught the mail train, got safe to London, and gone on the first thing in the mornin’; but as they’ve bin to sleep, and let the time slip by, it’s impossible. You can stop here to-night, my lord, only you’ll ex-cuse my stopping outside your door, and allow these officers to remain in the house.”

“Certainly. The inconvenience will only be a temporary one.”

“Of course. These sort of things always are,” replied Lagger, drily.

“For the present,” continued the peer, “I suppose I may be left in

peace with these gentlemen [indicating Steevie and his father]; I have much to say to them."

"Say what you please," replied Lagger; "only remember you are not obliged to say *anything*, and—"

"I know; I know. Leave us now. You need not look at the window; it is at least forty feet from the ground, and I am not a squirrel."

The officers then withdrew, and for some moments there was a painful silence. It was broken at last by Lord Rossthorne, who said,—

"Sir George Tremlet, will you answer me one or two questions as a man of honour in the presence of your son, before I ask you to hear what I have got to say in answer to this incredible charge?"

"That I will."

"What do you know about the murder of John Brandron?"

"As little as from the bottom of my heart I believe you do."

"Thanks, old friend!" said the peer, warmly pressing his hand—"thanks! You have said that you were at Westborough on that fatal day. Did you go there to see him?"

"No."

"Did you see him when you were there?"

"As I never knew him, I cannot say whether I did or not."

"Were you aware that certain papers bearing upon business of his were hidden in your house—I mean Mangerton Chase that was?"

"Not I! Who says they were?"

"One more, and I have done," continued Lord Rossthorne, not heeding the question. "Think well now before you answer. Have you ever, in joke or earnest, or speaking ambiguously, given any one to understand, or said what might lead any one to suppose, that you had act or part in Brandron's death?"

"My God! no. How could I? Does any one presume to think that I—"

Stephen sprang forward with glittering eyes, and half choking with the emotion which he had with difficulty suppressed during the above colloquy, but Lord Rossthorne spoke,—

"Hush-h!—hush, my boy!" he whispered in his ear; "enough has been said—hush!"

"No, not enough yet!" replied honest Steevie. "I have done my father a bitter wrong, and will atone for it. Father, can you forgive me? Since the night of the third of September I have looked upon you as Brandron's murderer!"

"In Heaven's name, why?" demanded the baronet, aghast.

Then his son made a clean breast of it, and told him all—all that we know so well had been tormenting him, from his first suspicions to what he had considered the crowning proofs of his father's guilt, namely, his entreaty not to be betrayed when he (Steevie) had said he knew why he (his father) had gone to Westborough, and the statement of Mary Alston

respecting Grace. This told, he ended with a passionate and almost childish appeal—he, the strong, battle-bronzed hero—for that forgiveness which the poor baronet was only too ready to accord.

“The secret of my journey to Westborough, which I fancied you had penetrated when I spoke those unlucky words,” he said, “needs no longer be concealed. I have truly loved but one woman all my life, Steevie, and that woman was your dear mother. But I was a vain fool in my younger days, fond of conquest and intrigue; and a few years after your birth I got entangled in a disreputable connection with a person long since dead, the result of which was the birth of a child—a girl, whom I placed under the care of a woman who had been a servant of my friend Lord Penruthyn, who once rented Mangerton Chase. Her name was Riley.”

“Then she was Mrs. Riley, of Westborough?”

“She was. For years we had no communication beyond my sending her the quarterly payment which I was able to make for the support of the child. At last I received a poor ill-written letter from her, saying that she was dying, and calling upon me to come and take away the child, then grown into a young woman, but, poor creature, an idiot from her birth.”

Oh, how Stephen’s heart leaped!

“I went,” continued Sir George, “but arrived too late. The poor woman was dead; and her son, for some reason which I cannot fathom, had removed the child—to this moment I know not whither. I wish to Heaven I did.”

“May I ask you one question?” said Steevie.

“Twenty, if you like.”

“Under what name did the mother of this child know you?”

“Under my own. That was the reason why I was so anxious to conceal the existence of the child, when I was in the power of Mr. Tremlet, the guardian of the lady who was once my own wife. Lord Rossthorne has told you of this last blow, Steevie.”

“He has.”

“Well, it is all over now,” said the poor baronet, with a sigh; “and there is no reason why the truth should not be known.”

“In our own trouble we must not forget to sympathize in the happiness of others,” said Lord Rossthorne. “Steevie, you have a confession to make to your father. Speak out, man. Do you not see that this error, or lie, of Mary Alston’s is blown to the winds, and that the Grace Lee of yesterday may be the Grace of many a happy year to come? Why do you sit thus aghast? Must I speak for you?”

Stephen tried to explain, but was too agitated to make himself understood. Poor fellow! he had borne up bravely against his misfortunes; but the delight of finding his father innocent of that fearful crime, and of knowing that Grace might yet be his own, was too much for him, and he fairly gave way. So Lord Rossthorne continued the story, and made

clear to Sir George what the reader already knows. Then taking up what remained of the *Tangled Skein*, he unravelled it at a touch.

“The accusation made against me just now,” he said, “necessitates the disclosure of a secret which I thought—which I hoped—would descend with me into the grave. A secret,” he added, bitterly, “which will be public property before to-morrow night, bawled out, I dare say, at the corner of every street, and hawked in every penny newspaper. I am charged with the murder of John Brandron. No, do not interrupt me, please. Let me tell my story in my own way, and hear me patiently. I do not know what evidence may be brought against me upon this charge, but what I am about to tell you is the truth—the plain, cruel truth—so help me God!

“When your father first knew me, Steevie, I was a proud and happy man. I do not know that I could have wished for anything beyond that which I enjoyed. I was rich—I had good health and a happy home. I was ambitious; and such was the state of political parties then, that I had only to hold out my hand for the highest offices in the State to fall into my grasp. I was proud of my name and ancient family; and saw around me five stalwart sons, destined, as I hoped, to perpetuate the one and add fresh lustre to the other. What more could a man desire? I possessed everything in plenty that man could ask; and how did I use all these good gifts and blessings? As a trust confided to me by the *Giver* of all? No! I made them into a throne which I usurped over my less fortunate fellow-men; and, in the plenitude of my power and self-conceit, scorned them as though they belonged to a different race—as though they were beasts of burden, slaves to work my bidding, or foils, to prove, by their misery and disgrace, how great and good a man was I. Pride was my besetting sin—pride of race; and its punishment has been that I am now alone in the world, the last of my name. In those days I lived some part of the year in London; and what was it to me that thousands of miserable wretches were herded together like swine within a few hundred yards of the fashionable square in which my mansion stood? They were out of sight. Their nakedness and squalor did not offend the eye. They were generally quiet in their wretchedness. If they broke our law and disturbed our tranquillity, care enough was taken to punish them, and provide against a repetition of the annoyance; but not a finger was lifted by me, and those like me, to teach them obedience to the natural laws of God, by which His universe is governed. Ignorance, and filth, and crime—those Furies more terrible than any that heathen imagination has conceived—ran riot amongst them, and their handiwork was death—a sudden, terrible, all but incurable fever. The poor creatures, by whose neglect of common decency it was engendered, seldom ventured into the wide, handsome streets where we, who should have taught them better, lived our lives of ease and comfort. If they ventured to loiter there, the police drove them back to their pestilential, teeming courts and alleys. But whose was the power to keep the deadly fever they had produced within their bounds? Who

could prevent *it* from flying where an outraged Providence directed it? It found my dear wife surrounded by every luxury that love could devise, and struck her down. It found my eldest son—my heir, revelling in the strength and spirits of approaching manhood, and in two hours killed him. It passed over his baby brother, smiling in his cradle, and he never smiled again. We fled from the plague-stricken place; but it was no use. The destroyer was in the midst of us—and not only of us, but of our neighbours. The 3rd of June is the anniversary of my birthday. On the 3rd of June, 1825, a true, loving wife, and five happy, handsome children, wished me joy. On the 12th of the same month I was a heart-broken widower, watching beside what they told me must be the death-bed of the only little one that was left me. All the rest had perished. By God's mercy she was saved."

"That was poor Mary," said Sir George, seeing that the narrator paused.

"It was. Oh, how I loved that child! She was the very light of my eyes; and as she developed into a lovely womanhood, the fear that she might be won away to leave me preyed upon me day and night, and made me suspicious and morose, even to her. It is all vastly well to philosophize, and say that parents must make up their minds that their children will sooner or later marry and leave them, even as they have done their parents in their turn before. Mothers, I believe, feel a sort of pride that their daughters should become wives and mothers in due course of time and nature; but (if I may judge by my own feelings) it is vastly different with a father. The idea that my beautiful, fragile Mary could ever leave me for love of another; that I—I, her father—who had hardly ever let her out of my sight for fifteen lonely years, should give her over to the arms of a stranger, was galling; nay, more than that, it was *horrible*.

"I have no doubt that my great sorrow had made me morbid," Lord Rossthorne resumed, after a pause, and in a more composed tone, "but so it was. I need not tell you that I had long given up all ambitious views. I had no heart for anything, and lived here in close retirement with Mary till she was in her eighteenth year. Then I was over-persuaded by my wife's sister—you remember her, George? she married Algernon Chappel, who afterwards became Lord Manxover—a good-hearted but shallow woman of the world. By her Mary was presented at Court and introduced into society, I accompanying her wherever she went. Will you believe me, Steevie, when I tell you that when I saw her the centre of attraction (as she was at every ball we attended), I felt more than once an almost irresistible impulse to dash into the circle of young fellows who were clamouring to engage her for the dances, scatter them right and left, and carry her off to this grim old castle once more, away from them all?"

"A great friend of Mrs. Chappel's was one George Howell, a lieutenant in a line regiment, on leave from Canada. Of all the young men by whom Mary was surrounded, I was least jealous, least apprehensive of

him. He never obtruded himself upon her as others did; besides, though by birth and profession a gentleman, he was so very far below her, that I considered it impossible that she could ever give him a thought as a lover—she whose beauty, birth, and wealth entitled her to the highest coronet that our peerage could offer. Ah, what a blind fool I was! I think he must have fascinated her with his sad, steadfast eyes, and low, soft voice; but I discovered the spell too late to save her: she loved him!

“Many and many a time have I cursed myself for the folly of the course I pursued on this discovery. What must I do in my wisdom but insult the man she loved, in her presence, by way of winning back her heart from him to me; be constantly telling her that she should marry him only over my dead body, by way of seeking to make her forget him; be hard and cold to her, by way of making her contented with her lot with me; accuse, mistrust, and—as a final piece of madness—imprison her in her rooms, by way of obtaining her confidence, and teaching her not to deceive me! She did deceive me. She had a clandestine correspondence and stolen interviews with Howell. But it was I who drove her into deceit. Finally, I sent her away into the country to live with her aunt, who—I must do her justice—heartily opposed Howell’s pretensions. Chappel’s country residence was then near his father’s estate, in a wild, lovely district on the borders of Derbyshire, on the Lancashire side, not far from Buxton. *There*, I thought, she will be safe, particularly as I had used some influence I possessed at the Horse Guards to get the remainder of Howell’s leave cancelled, and to have him ordered to join the depôt of his regiment in the Channel Islands.

“I have said that I had no fears on this score till it was too late. There was one about me who saw clearer than I did, loving as I was—jealous and fearsome of this very danger. This was John Everett Brandron, my foster-brother.”

At these words a cold shudder ran through Stephen Frankland, for they brought upon him the remembrance of what Brandron had said in his delirium; how he had all but denounced this foster-brother as his murderer—as the man who had done the wrong, to demand reparation for which he had come from India.

“This Brandron had been for many years my secretary, and a sort of general manager of my estates and agent in my affairs. He was of a stern, unprepossessing character, but a man of the strictest honour, and in heart and soul devoted to me and mine. He had known my Mary from her infancy, and, strange as it may appear, loved her—he, a man older than myself!—with a patient, silent, and, of course, hopeless affection. I was blind to this also till the end came. *He* saw what was passing, and told me of it. I was indignant at the bare suggestion, and, in return for his anxious warning, gave him the first harsh words he had ever received from my lips.

“Well, time passed by, and Mary returned here, much changed, as I

thought, and looking worn and ill. She would sit silent for hours, and I often saw tears stealing down her cheeks. Woe is me! They were of my causing, and they washed away the roses from her bonny face.

“One dreadful day, the memory of which haunts me still, she fled; and so well were her measures taken, that nearly a month passed before I could obtain a clue to where she had gone. At last I received information which hurried me, George, to your house in Derbyshire, then, as you know, under lease to the Penruthyns; and there, attended only by her maid, Sarah Alston, I found her on the very eve of giving birth to a child!

“Penruthyn, I believe, was more sinned against than sinning; but you may remember, Tremlet, what sort of reputation his brothers enjoyed in those days. Not a woman—married or single, gentle or simple—was safe from them. Judge, then, what were my emotions when I found my loved child in such a condition and in such a house! The truth, bad enough in itself, was a blessed relief; and the truth was, that during her visit to Derbyshire my daughter had been privately married to George Howell.”

“Who basely deserted her in her hour of sorrow!” burst out Stephen, in a tone of indignation.

“No, my boy,” replied the peer, sadly; “who was drowned at sea whilst hurrying to console her. When the news came to him that she could no longer conceal her secret from me, he left Guernsey—where he was stationed—in an open boat, and tried to make Weymouth. Poor fellow! A sudden squall arose, the boat foundered, and he was lost in sight of the lights of the town. This, however, was not discovered till long after poor Mary’s death, and up to this moment is known only by me. Let me pass quickly over what followed the birth of the child. My darling faded gradually away; and when she was gone, I committed the crime—the folly—which has embittered my years. I was so enraged against Howell, that I resolved never to acknowledge his child. I hushed up my daughter’s flight as well as I could, pretending—whilst moving heaven and earth, secretly, to find her—that we had had a quarrel; that I was in the wrong; that she had merely returned to her aunt; had written, asking me for forgiveness; and that I had consented to her remaining. I implored Lady Manxover to bear me out in this, and she did. I had my poor darling removed privately to her house, and there she died. Only three persons shared my secret,—Lady Manxover, Sarah Alston, and Brandron. I won the first two over to my scheme, but stern John Brandron was obdurate. He swore that Mary’s child should be acknowledged, and urged her rights in spite of me and my pride; and it was only by bribing Sarah and Lucy Alston to declare that the child had died (Lucy not knowing whose child it was), that he reluctantly agreed not to disclose the marriage. From this moment our connection ceased. I obtained him an appointment in India, and we parted.”

"I find from his papers," said Steevie, "that he received a sum of twelve hundred pounds shortly before he left England. What was that for?"

"That was his savings. I had invested them for him, and there was some difficulty about realizing the securities; so that the money could not be obtained till just a day or two before he sailed."

"It was not a bribe, then?"

"A bribe! No," replied Lord Rossthorne; "the Bank of England could not bribe John Brandron to be a party to a lie, as I—a peer of the realm—was driven by my cursed pride to be."

"Was the Lucy Alston whom you have mentioned ever in the service of the Penruthyns?" asked Sir George Tremlet.

"She was."

"How very strange!" ejaculated Sir George. "This Lucy Alston was the mother of my poor afflicted child. She gave it birth about the time when poor Mrs. Howell must have died."

"She did; and both children remained with her till her death," resumed Lord Rossthorne, "when they were taken charge of by her sister Susan (or Sarah, as she was sometimes called, because there was another servant called Susan in my house), until I removed my grandchild."

"Is he still living?" asked Stephen, unable to control his curiosity.

"It was a girl, Steevie—a poor helpless girl—that I cast adrift in the world without a protector. Many a time I repented of the act. Do me the justice to remember that I was half mad when I committed it. But it could not be recalled. My heart yearned towards her as she grew into womanhood and became the very image of her mother. She lives still, Steevie, and I have never lost sight of her. Can you realize how I must love and honour those who have loved and honoured my child in spite of the dark stain that I have cast upon her birth? Will you wonder at my wishing to make you my adopted son, when I tell you that the child of my own darling Mary is no other than your affianced bride, Grace Lee?"

"Grace Lee!" exclaimed Sir George, in amaze.

"Henceforward Grace Howell till I die, then Lady Rossthorne, a peeress of Great Britain in her own right. Poor Percy Coryton has lost his chance of a seat in the House of Lords."

"By Jove, Steevie!" cried his father, "think of that."

"I shall love her none the better for it," he answered, with a sigh; "but pray don't mind me; I am so dazed with all that I have heard. Go on, pray go on, Lord Rossthorne, about Brandron."

"You are ashamed to love the daughter of a murderer, I see."

"Nothing could make me ashamed to love Grace Lee," replied Stephen, stoutly; "but this must be cleared up. Was it you who walked with John Brandron into Westborough Wood on the afternoon of the 29th July, 1858?"

"It was."

Sir George fell back aghast; and Stephen resumed, "I have been

so deceived by circumstantial evidence that I will believe no more of it. This much I know from Brandron himself,—Susan Alston wrote to him in India, confessing that the child—your daughter's child, as you own—was living. He appointed a meeting with you to compel justice to be done it; and up to the hour of his death he believed that yours was the hand that struck him down."

"Good heavens, Steevie!" cried the peer, amazed by what he heard; "you must mistake. It could not be. Did he mention my name at all? No, he could not, or you—"

"He did not mention your name, though repeatedly urged to do so. I tell you, my lord, that though he refused to denounce you, he said things which satisfy me, beyond the possibility of doubt, that he considered you his murderer."

"Then why did he not denounce me?"

"For the sake of your daughter, whom he loved, and of her child, he desired that no shame should fall upon you if you performed the act of justice which he demanded."

"Did he say so?" asked Lord Rossthorne, in a choking voice.

"He did."

"Steevie, had he his senses when he said this?"

"Once I thought that he had not—that what he said was merely the ravings of delirium; but everything he told me has turned out so true that I can think so no longer."

"True even to the fact of my being his murderer?" asked the peer.

Stephen made no reply.

"Stephen Frankland, I have committed many sins; some—the gravest, perhaps, in man's eyes—I have confessed to you this day; but, as I hope for forgiveness of all when I stand before the judgment-seat of God, I am not guilty of Brandron's death! I left him alive and well that day in Westborough Wood, as I hope for salvation!"

Stephen looked him full in the face as he spoke those solemn words. There was no falter in his speech, not a quiver in his countenance. Steevie believed him, and told him so, wringing his hand with emotion.

"I had long wished to do what he required," Lord Rossthorne resumed, "but lacked courage to take the first step. Moreover, there had been great difficulty in my way, and to my sorrow it remains. I had destroyed as far as I could—I need not here tell you how—the evidences of my child's marriage. Brandron, however, told me where I should find others, and I left him, fully resolved to do all that he could ask. I sought for those proofs where he directed, but they were not to be found."

"Where—where was it that he told you to seek?" demanded Stephen, eagerly.

"Strangely enough, in an old room, the door of which had long been bricked up, at Tremlet Towers."

“The room at the end of the tapestried corridor?”

“That was it.”

“And you—*you* searched there? How? When?”

“During my late visit. You must forgive me, Sir George. I knew I could give you no valid excuse short of the truth for opening that room; so whilst you all thought I was laid up with a fit of the gout, I broke through the brickwork under the tapestry, working at night, and in the middle of the day when every one was out, and at last made a hole sufficiently large to thrust my body through into the room. I found the place indicated by Brandron as the depository of the proofs, but they were not there. I am afraid that Susan Alston was only too faithful to the evil trust I reposed in her, and that she destroyed them.”

“She did not!”

“Steevie! How can *you* know?”

“Because they are in my possession.” Then Steevie told how he had anticipated the peer, had found the papers, how Lagger had surprised him at their perusal, and how he had rushed to the conclusion that it was his father who was working outside the door on that eventful night. He also stated, as well as he could from memory, the contents of those papers, and the letters which had been found in Brandron’s possession at Westborough.

“It is plain now why this charge has been brought against me,” said the peer, gloomily. “That letter of Susan Alston’s conveys a dreadful suspicion against the person of whom she speaks, and they have identified that person with me, because I am, or was, interested in concealing the parentage of the child, and thus they have concluded that I had a motive in silencing poor Brandron.”

“I agree with you that the papers contain an inference that the person who was interested in concealing the birth of the child was the person who murdered Brandron,” said Sir George Tremlet, “but they must go a step farther before they can implicate you. They must show either that you are the man who met him at Westborough, or prove poor Mary’s marriage, and identify you as her father. Now, did any one see you with Brandron that day?”

“Only some boys; and they could not describe me. They would not know me again. In fact, they mistook that detective who is here now, for me, at the inquest.”

“I think I know what has led to your arrest,” said Stephen. “At first the detective suspected the father of the child mentioned in Alston’s letter; and the marriage certificate found by me being destroyed by rats, on the part where the description of the father—his rank, his parents’ names, and so on—is entered, he went to compare it with the original, for the purpose of supplying these details.”

“But how did he know where the original was to be found?” asked Sir George.

“Oh, that was stated plainly enough on the certificate. He will

examine the registry books of Craigsleigh, and there he will find that the bride was the daughter of Lord Rossthorne and—”

“Do I understand you that the description of the bride’s parents is also obliterated from the certificate?” asked the peer, in an eager, excited tone.

“Yes, entirely.”

“Then they have no case against me,” said Lord Rossthorne, decisively. “Oh, Steevie, I wish they had, as far as this goes, for I am innocent; but the want of this part of the certificate renders it impossible that my dear grandchild’s rights can ever be legally established.”

“How so, when there is the register?”

“The page in the register which contains the entry of her mother’s marriage *has been destroyed.*”

“Then,” said Steevie, smiling, “I shall not marry a peeress. It is getting late now, and I have too long delayed to do what I ought to have done an hour ago, only I have been too excited and confused to think of it. Is there an electric telegraph, my lord, at your station?”

“I am sorry to say there is not. It is only a loop line.”

“Which is the nearest station where there is one?”

“B——, but it is twelve miles off.”

“Will you lend me a horse to carry me there, and not mind my riding him hard?”

“With all my heart! but what do you want to do?”

“Cannot you guess?”

“Humph! I think I can. Poor child! poor child! This must have been a sharp, though, thank God, a short trial for her. Don’t spare my horses, Steevie. I would say *send*, but I know your heart says *go*.”

Stephen raced to B——, and set the lightning in motion. CLICK! *click!* went a needle at Poundbridge station—one message. CLICK! *click!* again—another,—both from B——. A sleepy flyman woke up and sent to harness his horses. He was to have five pounds—so said second telegraphic message—if he delivered the first at Kernden Rectory in an hour.

It was long past midnight when Stephen returned from B——. He was quietly making his way up to his bedroom when one of the county police met him in the passage, and thrust a slip of paper into his hand.

It was a summons, requiring him to appear at the Town Hall, Poundbridge, on the following day, as a witness against Charles, Baron Rossthorne, on a charge of wilful murder; and to produce all papers in his custody or control which he had obtained from John Everett Brandron, deceased or otherwise, by reason of information by him given.

HASTE! POST-HASTE!

FIVE hundred and ninety-three millions of letters were poured out of the capacious cornucopia of the General Post Office, and scattered over every quarter of the world, during the year 1861. These flowers and fruits of national intellectual energy have had, however, a widely diversified and disproportioned destination. Four hundred and eighty-seven millions fed the curiosity and anxiety of England; fifty-six millions drifted into Scotland; and fifty millions into Ireland: or, taking the number of the population, twenty-four letters to each person in England; eighteen to each person in Scotland; and nine to each person in Ireland. There is, however, another interesting comparison to be made. The average number delivered to each person in some of our large commercial capitals, is singularly irregular; but it strikingly exhibits, at a glance, the relative industrial activity of each place. Thus, for instance, in Liverpool, the proportion of correspondence averaged as high as twenty-six letters to each person; and in Birmingham, thirty; in Manchester it rose to thirty-one; in Bristol to thirty-three; in Dublin to forty; in Edinburgh to forty-three; and in London, where the moil and toil of the human mind and hand and heart are at their greatest intensity, to no less than forty-seven. How eloquent are these figures!

Astonishing as they are, the marvel is, nevertheless, not fully understood and appreciated, unless we glance back upon the epistolary circulation of past years, and by distinctive items mark out and individualise the various stages by which this gigantic machinery—this Briarean-handed system—has grown up to be what it is. If, for example, we contrast the year 1861 with the year 1860 only, the difference displays an increase of twenty-nine millions in the twelve months; or if we go back to the year 1840, when the penny postage was first introduced, we find that the increase up to the present time has been no less than the prodigious figure of five hundred and seventeen millions. Steam and iron have contributed their share to this enormous circulation. Without our iron roads, we could not have conveyed with such rapid facility and punctuality the ponderous correspondence of the world. But not to steam and railways alone is the creation of this vast system due. Education, the thirst for knowledge, the newly but almost universally developed desire to communicate with friends at a distance, by the medium of pen, ink, and paper, is, doubtless, the main cause; and it is a great fact, a mighty phenomenon,—one, indeed, that cannot too closely be studied,—that the supply has created the demand, no less than the demand the supply. There is continually going on a reciprocal action; and increase of appetite grows by what it feeds on. The stimulus is reproducing itself each year, with increasing intensity. It is more greedy than the thirst of Tantalus; for whilst the one languishes and tastes not,—the punitive gales of Hades

dashing back the cooling wave as it reaches his lips,—the other tastes and thirsts, with a growing thirst that will not be satiated.

Again: the Post Office is the magnificent offspring and a splendid triumph of civilization. In an age when only the very few—in fact, only an infinitesimal fraction—of society were able to read, there could exist but a very limited correspondence. Where, too, were the motives for writing? In the Middle Ages, for instance, when literature and the very rudiments of learning were confined to the convent or the cloister, who were to take up the pen to write? Where, too, were the materials to come from? What paper-mills existed in England? Where were the Wrigleys and Macmurrays of the present day? the Gottos and Parkins; the Partridge and Cozens; the Gillotts and Mitchells? Alas! the great mass of the people were serfs or bondsmen, tethered to the soil on which they delved and toiled. Cities were rare, and villages no larger than hamlets, scattered abroad at irregular intervals, and holding but little communication one with the other. A stray pilgrim or a wayworn traveller sufficed, in those days, to tell all the news that even the most hungry listener cared to hear; or if any were curious and eager for more than the welcome stranger had to tell, romance and legendary marvels were easily invented and doled out to their ignorant credulity. No doubt, had they been gifted with the power, those gallant, luckless warriors, who were compelled, willy nilly, to seize a halbert, and serve under the banner of some feudal baron against some domestic or foreign foe, in distant fields on the borders of Wales, on the marches of Scotland, or more remote still, to engage the French in Picardy, Normandy, or Guienne, would have been but too glad to have sent home a line or two to their lady-loves, or their wives and sisters, or a narrative of their daily experiences to the aged Nestors of the village. But “where ignorance is bliss, ’tis folly to be wise;” and as there were no post offices in those days, so it was fortunate that they had no learned aspirations. We are allowed to presume that our Norman kings were able to scribble, or to sign a document with something more than X (his mark). Henry the First had the reputation of being a learned scholar, and was honoured with the distinctive title of Beauclerc; but whether it was they or their secretaries who did the caligraphic business, it was to the necessities of these early monarchs that the postal system owed its origin. The king summoned his barons from all quarters of the kingdom, by writs, and held frequent communication with his sheriffs by letters. The pen had to be used, and Mercuries despatched, whenever he wished to assemble his parliament, or to muster his forces, or to replenish his treasury. Those who carried the letters, or writs, were called Nuncii, and formed part of the royal household. So early as the reign of King John, the payments to nuncii for the conveyance of letters are to be found entered into the Close and Misæ rolls; and these payments may be traced, in an almost unbroken series, through the records of subsequent reigns. Nuncii were also attached to the establishments of the powerful and formidable

barons of the time. It would have been impossible for them to have carried on their secret intrigues, or open wars against their princes, their liege lords, or even to have held peaceful intercourse one with the other, without these flying couriers, who, on powerful steeds, rushed during all weathers, and by unfrequented ways, and through almost pathless woods, across the country, from castle to castle. As, however, correspondence grew, the economical arrangements for the transmission of letters grew likewise. The nuncius of the time of King John was obliged to provide his own horses throughout the journey. In the reign of Edward the First he had found it convenient, and probably a saving of money, to hire horses at fixed stations, or *posts*. In 1461, Edward the Fourth, who was carrying on a Scottish war, arranged, at intervals of twenty miles, a change of riders, who, always ready to start when the courier arrived, were enabled to travel a hundred miles in one day. This, of course, was considered expeditious work. On ordinary occasions, private enterprise, which does everything in England, undertook the management of these posts; but on special occasions, such as an insurrection in the provinces, or a war with Scotland, or some fiery Hotspur, the Government thought proper to take the affair in hand. A statute in 1548 fixed a penny a mile as the rate to be charged for the hire of post-horses.

In progress of time the postal system began to acquire a still more definite form. James the First created an office called the office of Postmaster of England for Foreign Parts, and this functionary was to have the "sole taking up, sending, and conveying all packets and letters concerning his service or business to be despatched in foreign parts, with power to grant moderate salaries." Mathewe Le Quester, and Mathewe Le Quester his son, were by royal letters patent appointed to this high office; all others being publicly prohibited from directly or indirectly exercising or intruding themselves in any way that would interfere with the monopoly of Mathewe Le Quester, and Mathewe Le Quester his son. Mathewe Le Quester, however, it seems, determined to convert his new office into a sinecure, for very shortly after we find him appointing William Frissell and Thomas Witherings his deputies, and his Majesty accepting the substitution. The king, "affecting the welfare of his people, and taking into his princely consideration how much it imports his state and this realm, that the secrets thereof be not disclosed to foreign nations, which cannot be prevented if a promiscuous use of transmitting or taking up of foreign letters and packets should be suffered," "forbids all others from exercising that which to the office of such Postmaster pertaineth, at most perils."

During the civil wars, the postal system became still further developed; but it was in the year 1656, during the reign of that potent prince and able reformer, Oliver Cromwell, that the most complete step towards the establishment of a general post office was taken; for in that year an Act was passed to settle the postage of England, Scotland, and

Ireland. This has served for the model of all subsequent measures. The preamble sets forth "that the erecting of one General Post Office for the speedy conveying and carrying of letters by post, from all places within England, Scotland, Ireland, and into several parts beyond the seas, has been and is the best means not only to maintain certain and constant intercourse of trade and commerce between all the said places, to the great benefit of the people of these nations; but also to convey the public despatches, and to discover and prevent many dangerous and weak designs which have been and are daily contrived against the peace and welfare of this commonwealth, intelligence whereof cannot well be communicated but by letters or escript." It also enacted "that there shall be one General Post Office, and one office styled the Postmaster-General of England, and Comptroller of the Post Office." Besides this officer, who had the horsing of all through posts, and persons riding in post, all other persons were forbidden to "set up or employ any foot posts, horse posts, or packet boats." All these arrangements were confirmed by Charles the Second, in the first year of his restoration; amended by William of Orange, and his successor, Queen Anne. From that period down to the accession of Queen Victoria, no less than 150 Acts have been passed, affecting the regulations of the Post Office. Ninety-nine of these, however, were repealed, either wholly or partially, in the first year of her present Majesty's reign, and others substituted, meeting the requirements of the present day.

It seems, however, that notwithstanding the public at large were obliged, so soon as the Government took the Post Office system in hand, to pay a fixed rate for their letters, the privileged classes, with a perverse instinct, at once sought exemption from the impost. Very early after the establishment of a postal system we hear of "franks." Parliamentary franking existed we know in 1666, for on the 19th October of that year an entry is registered in the Journal of the House of Commons, to the effect "that Edward Roberts be sent for in custody of the serjeant-at-arms or his deputy, to answer his abuse and breach of privilege in exacting money of the members of this House for post letters. In the Paper Bill, which granted the Post Office revenue to Charles the Second, a clause provided that all the members of the House of Commons should have their letters free, which clause was left out by the Lords on the dog-in-the-manger principle, because no similar provision was made for the franking of their letters; but a compromise was at length effected, on the assurance that their letters should pass free. In 1735 the House of Commons instituted some investigation into the subject, and again, in 1764, a committee was appointed to inquire into several frauds and abuses in relation to the sending or receiving letters and parcels free from the duty of postage. Among various abuses proved to exist, it is related that "one man had, in the course of five months, *counterfeited twelve hundred dozens of franks of members of Parliament*; and that *a regular trade of buying and*

selling franks had been actually established with several persons in the country. Resolutions restricting and regulating the privilege were accordingly passed; but from time to time it was gradually extended, until finally abolished, with very few exceptions, on the 10th of January, 1840. Seven millions of franks out of sixty-three millions of General Post letters passed, it was estimated in 1838, through the Post Office annually.

In 1840, however, a plan was proposed by Mr. (now Sir) Rowland Hill, which altogether changed the management of the Post Office. Two or three years previously, the plan upon which this change was based had been submitted, first privately to the Government, and afterwards to the nation, in the form of a pamphlet, entitled "Post Office Reform; its Importance and Practicability." The main features of Mr. Hill's plan were explained in the pages of the pamphlet with great moderation and acuteness. The Post Office Reformer, or we might almost say Regenerator, proposed, first, a great diminution in the rates of postage; secondly, increased speed in the delivery of letters; and thirdly, more frequent opportunities for their despatch. But the most unique, in fact the fundamental feature in the new system, was the proposal that the rate of postage should be uniform, and charged according to weight. Another time-saving and money-saving suggestion was, that the payments should be made in advance. The justness and propriety of a uniform rate Mr. Hill proved from the fact, that the cost attendant on the transmission of letters was not to be measured by the distance they were carried, for he proved, on indisputable data, that the actual cost of the conveyance of letters from London to Edinburgh, when divided among the letters actually sent, did not exceed one penny for thirty-six letters. Besides this great fact, which could not be gainsayed, the obvious advantages of simplicity and economical management strongly recommended the adoption of Mr. Hill's new plan, and excited public sympathy in its favour. Petitions from the most eminent merchants, bankers, and men of science in the metropolis were presented to both Houses of Parliament. These were eventually so effectual that, on the 17th of August, 1839, a bill to carry out into practical operation these suggestions was introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the suggestion of the Duke of Richmond, then Postmaster-General, and became law. On the 10th of January, 1840, the new Act was put in force, a uniform inland rate of postage of one penny per half-ounce payable in advance, or twopence payable on delivery, being adopted.

In the year 1840, the first entire year of the penny postage, 191,931,365 letters passed through the General Post Offices of the United Kingdom; and from that time to the present the numbers have gone on increasing till they reached, in 1861, the prodigious and almost incredible figure of five hundred and ninety-three millions! In a financial point of view, however, the new arrangement was by no means a triumphant success. The sands of Pactolus were not washed down by the epistolary stream

which swept through the channels of the Post Office that year. The revenue in 1839 had amounted to £1,649,088; in 1840 it reached only £495,514, a loss of £1,153,574 being sustained thereby; even so lately as 1845, it only attained the sum of £760,588. In 1848, however, the additional advantage of a book post was introduced, by which single volumes could be sent to any part of the United Kingdom at a uniform rate of sixpence per pound; and this privilege has been gradually extended to the British Colonies. This was followed, in 1855, by the reduction of the rate of postage for printed sheets to one penny for a quarter of a pound, and twopence for half a pound. In 1857 a new regulation was introduced, by which a packet might contain any number of sheets, written or printed, but the written matter was not to be of the nature of a letter. It might consist of bound books, or maps, or prints, or rollers, or whatever is necessary for the safe transmission of literary or artistic matter, provided it did not exceed two feet in length, depth, and width. One condition, however, and a stringent one, was made, namely, that every packet should be open at the ends or sides. Such a packet may be sent to all the British Colonies at the rate of threepence for four ounces, and sixpence for eight ounces. An exception, however, is enforced with regard to Ascension Island, the East Indies, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, and the Gold Coast, to all of which the rates are one-third more, whilst the weight is restricted to three pounds. By various conventions effected by the indefatigable exertions of the Post Office authorities, the foreign postage of letters has been materially reduced; in some cases fifty, and in others varying from seventeen to twenty per cent. The rates to all the British Colonies were, in 1857, reduced to the uniform price of sixpence the half-ounce, payable in advance.

Five hundred and ninety-three millions! "Prodigious!" as Dominic Sampson would exclaim. Some, more curious than wise, might be tempted to calculate how many square miles this vast number of letters would cover; or, if piled one upon another, how many columns of the height of the Monument they would make; or what sized pyramid they would form; or how far they would go to line the girdle of the earth. We leave this task, however, to that wonderful arithmetician, Mr. Babbage's machine, or to those greatly little minds who love to compress the Iliad into a nutshell, and write the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments in a circle no bigger than a sixpence, or perpetrate some other monstrosity of ingenuity, which is labour without result. Why are they not members of the Law Amalgamation Commission? For ourselves, we take it as an indication of the vast intellectual thought which is restlessly toiling in this country, and increasingly extending to all the nations of the earth. How many heads must have been at work, how many hands have plied the pen, to produce this vast ocean of correspondence! How true is the old proverb, "Many a mickle makes a muckle"! how many tens and hundreds of thousands of minds have been fermenting to produce this vast

aggregate! Again; could we peruse these numberless pages, what a kaleidoscopic view of society we should have!—what a myriad phases of humanity would be revealed to us! All thoughts, all passions, all delights, whatever moves this mortal frame, would find their exponents in the natural language of an unvarnished letter. The dark, and the bright, and the neutral tint; every degree and shade of feeling and suffering, of enjoyment, hope, and apprehension, would here be pictured before us. Every impulse, every virtue, every aspiration, every grief that sways the human heart, would there be portrayed. At last, this poor nature of ours has found expression, and the soul needs no longer know its own bitterness in solitude; for a thousand messengers are ready to take burden of our emotions, and convey them to sympathizing hearts, even to the uttermost ends of the earth. This marvellous activity, seething and surging throughout the depth as well as on the surface of society, produces a history, if it could be read, of stupendous magnitude and tremendous import! Yet, *cui bono?* for what all this moiling and toiling, this thinking and writing? How calm, and tranquil, and unenterprising were the days of our ancestors! They lived in a lily-of-the-field state of felicity. Comparatively speaking, they toiled not, neither did they spin; their daily wants were easily supplied, for they had knowledge of but few necessaries. But the facilities of communication, the increased requirements of civilization, tend to create a restless, turbid, and ceaseless fermentation of mind and matter, which can scarcely be intensified without damaging seriously this breathing house of ours not made with hands.

Take the merchant, the man in business, the official,—what a life is his now! Thirty years ago he came to his office in the morning, and the postal delivery having taken place, the labour of the day was cut out to his hand; he knew the extent of his work, and could precisely predicate the termination of it towards the close of the day. But now, two or three deliveries from the country, and almost hourly deliveries in the metropolis, perpetually interfere with his morning arrangements; and when at mid-day he dreams he can see the end of his business, a new batch of letters arrives. He has not a moment of quietude or rest. To increase his embarrassment, the telegraph is at work side by side with the post; and at any moment—ay, up to the very point of shutting up his books and locking his desk—he may have new orders placed in his hands—imperative and immediate. There is no repose, no suspension of thought, only one perpetual whirl of business, one constant strain upon the mind, and all because education has taught us to read and write, and the post office has given us facilities to communicate speedily and regularly with each other.

We leave it, however, to the hypercritical to pursue this tone of disparagement. Our postal system is a magnificent one. However much it may tax our energies, it is a vast instrument for good, and the compulsory activity which it produces is a hundredfold better than that lethargic

state of existence into which ignorance and incuriosity had for centuries plunged the nations. We have recorded, rather than tabulated, the number, the marvellous number of letters which are annually transmitted through the post. We would just further mention, that besides these, upwards of seventy-two million newspapers, and nearly twelve million three hundred thousand book-packets, were delivered last year by the same efficient machinery. Look, again, at the distances travelled, and the means of conveyance. Last year our mail-bags passed over, for Great Britain and Ireland alone, upwards of one hundred and fifty-one thousand miles of road per day, being carried by railway, mail coaches, carts, steam-packets, boats, and foot messengers.

Of course, every one imagines that the mails are transmitted to the greatest extent by railways. Such, however, is not the case. Whilst the railways convey the mails only about *forty-four* thousand miles per day; and coaches, omnibuses, and carts, over *thirty-three* thousand; foot messengers trudge over a length of *seventy-one* thousand—more than doubling the latter, and almost doubling the former in distance. Whilst, too, we are amazed at the great distances traversed by our mails, we cannot be less struck by the immense rapidity and punctuality with which they fly from point to point. Even the ordinary mail traffic is conducted with expedition and with every precaution against unnecessary delay. From India, from Australia, from America, from the Brazils, from the Cape, from the West Indies, from Canada, from Egypt, from Morocco, from Timbuctoo if necessary, or the South Sea Islands, as well as from every part of the European continent, arrangements have been so admirably made, that the mails are conveyed with the least possible loss of time.

It is, however, in times of emergency and on express occasions that the efficiency of the postal system is best attested, and of this we have recently had a striking proof. When the important news was expected from the United States, on which depended war or peace; when the people—not only of England, but also of France—were on the *qui vive* to know how the affair of the *Trent* would be viewed by the American Government, and what answer Secretary Seward would give to the ultimatum despatched by Earl Russell, every means was adopted to expedite to the utmost the intelligence for which the nation, as it were, was panting. Of course, in traversing the Atlantic, the steamer which brought the despatches had its natural elements of wind and water to contend against; and it was but a simple effort on the part of her commander to make his way as rapidly as possible from New York to the coast of Ireland. It was at this point, however, that the tug of war commenced. It was at this point that the servants of the Post Office took the matter in hand, forwarding the despatches with the utmost expedition. So satisfactory, indeed, were the results, that they deserve to be recorded in detail.

The *Europa* arrived off Queenstown, about five miles from the pier, at 9 p.m. on Monday night. Her mails and the despatches from Lord

Lyons were placed on board the small tender in waiting, and arrived at Queenstown pier at 10.5 p.m., at which point they were transferred to an express steamboat for conveyance by river to Cork. Leaving Queenstown pier at 10.10 p.m., they arrived alongside the quay at Cork at 11.15 p.m., and thirteen minutes afterwards the special train left the Cork station for Dublin, accomplishing the journey to Dublin, 156 miles, in four hours and three minutes—that is, at a speed of about forty-one miles an hour, including stoppage. The transmission through the streets from the railway terminus in Dublin to the pier at Kingston occupied only thirty-six minutes, and in four minutes more the special boat *Ulster* was on her way to Holyhead. The distance across the Irish Channel, about 66 statute miles, was performed by the *Ulster*, against a contrary tide and heavy sea, in three hours forty-seven minutes, giving a speed of about seventeen and a half miles an hour. A special train, which had been in waiting about forty-eight hours, left the Holyhead station at 8.13 a.m., and it was from this point that the most remarkable part of this rapid express commenced. The run from Holyhead to Stafford, 130½ miles, occupied only one hour forty-five minutes, being at the rate of not less than fifty-four miles an hour; and although so high a speed was judiciously not attempted over the more crowded portion of the line from Stafford to London, the whole distance from Holyhead to Euston, 264 miles, was performed by the London and North-Western Company in exactly five hours, or at a speed of fifty-two miles and two-thirds an hour—a speed unparalleled over so long a line crowded with ordinary traffic. The entire distance from Queenstown Pier to Euston Square, about 515 miles, was thus traversed in fifteen hours and three minutes, or at an average speed of about thirty-four and a quarter miles an hour, including all delays, necessary for the several transfers of the mails from boat to railway, and *vice versa*. By means of the invention for supplying the tender with water from a trough *in transitu*, the engine was enabled to run its first stage, one hundred and thirty and a half miles, from Holyhead to Stafford, without stopping.

Such are some of the numerous improvements which have been introduced into the Post Office within the last few years, and by means of which society is enabled to communicate, with infallible punctuality, its thoughts and requirements to one another. But still further improvements have been introduced, affecting the financial arrangements of the nation, of so intelligent and useful a character, that we may not overlook them. We refer to the Money Order Office and the Post Office Savings Banks. Previous to the year 1840, the Post Office had been accustomed to grant orders on local post offices for sums under five guineas, on which five per cent. was charged; but as the order was on a separate sheet, it involved double postage. At a subsequent period the charge was reduced to a fixed sum of one shilling for amounts between two and five pounds, and sixpence for sums less than two pounds. In November, 1840, however, these charges were reduced to sixpence and threepence respectively, and

the effect was prodigious. In the three months ending February 5th, 1841, the amount paid on such orders was £59,432, against £814 in the corresponding months of 1840. For some time, however, the expense of the Money Order Office, for which a distinct staff had to be organized, exceeded the profits; but the increase of business developed so largely and rapidly, that this department has long since been a source of revenue to the Government. We must here, however, make an exception. Ireland has not realized those hopes, in this respect, which were entertained of her, and she figures but badly in the official tables.

In 1859, the total of Money Orders issued in the United Kingdom was 6,969,108, by which money was transmitted to the amount of £13,250,930; and last year, the number issued reached 7,580,455, involving a sum of £14,616,348; the commission received by the Government being upwards of £128,000. This system, however, is far from being perfect, although it has been rapidly developed. There are many available stations where, as yet, no Order Office has been established. This defect, however, is being rapidly remedied. Last year, 113 additional offices were opened in England and Wales, 16 in Ireland, and 10 in Scotland; the whole number established in the United Kingdom being 2,722. It is a curious fact, that of those established in 1861, eleven have been closed for want of business. The issue of Money Orders, however, is not confined to Great Britain and Ireland. This privilege is extended to Canada, Victoria, Western Australia, Gibraltar, and Malta; and it is expected that before long we shall be able to transmit through the same medium the equivalent of the Queen's coin to New Zealand, Queensland, and the Cape of Good Hope.

Besides the Money Orders machinery, however, the plan of registered letters is, as the public well know, in force. With these facilities at their disposal, it might be imagined persons would never be so foolish or careless as to risk their little "all" by sending it unprotected. This, however, is not the case. Notwithstanding the frequent remonstrances made by the Postmaster-General to the senders of letters containing money or other articles of value, against the practice—notwithstanding his unceasing appeals in favour of resorting to registration—large sums are constantly being sent without any sort of notification. Neither their own interest, nor consideration for the letter-carrier or other persons through whose hands such letters have to pass, restrain these thoughtless folk. Unregistered letters in great numbers, with valuable enclosures, are still daily posted; and, in fact, so great are the evil results of this stupid practice, that the Post Office authorities have decided on obtaining fresh powers for preventing, if possible, its continuance. Henceforth, all unregistered letters, which from their bulk or form seem to indicate that they contain coin, passing through the London office, will be taken from the general mass, treated as registered letters, and subjected to a double registration fee; whilst, as an additional encouragement to registration, the rate is

about to be reduced from sixpence to fourpence. In France, the posting of an unregistered letter containing money or valuable articles, is treated as a penal offence; and, looking at the consequences which result from the reckless practice in this country, we may well ask, Why is it not so considered here? However, it is to be hoped more moderate and gentle measures will be found an effectual curb. The frequent exposure of the cases at the Old Bailey, where postmen have been convicted of robbing letters, as well as the reiterated expostulations of the Postmaster-General and of the press, ought to convince the public not only of the impropriety, but of the absolute immorality, of placing temptation in the way of so poor a paid class as the letter-carriers. It is almost incredible, but the fact is, nevertheless, true, that men of the cautious and business-like habits of bankers, in too many instances yield to an avaricious—we cannot call it economical—feeling, and prefer to send packets containing large sums of money as ordinary letters. It is true it is a matter evidently of calculation with them; they seem to regard the little additional postage which they would have to pay for registering, a kind of superfluous premium, and calculating the risks and the average number of thefts—which, fortunately for the people and to the honour of the Post Office, bears but a small per-centage to the total circulation—imagine they are the gainers in the long run. Of the security of registered letters there can be no doubt; the arrangements made by the Post Office authorities afford the means of tracing every letter or packet from its posting to its delivery; and, as these examinations are recorded, the proportion of loss to the whole number of registered letters is easily ascertained. In fact, it has been ascertained that, including those sent abroad, for which, of course, the authorities in St. Martin's-le-Grand are only partially responsible, the proportion does not exceed one in 90,000. From time to time, indeed, statements are publicly made that many registered letters, and these of great value, have been stolen; but these are only *canards*, intended to stimulate the public appetite for excitement. On many occasions these reports are groundless; and nearly always, when there is some foundation in fact for them, they are exaggerated. Only a short time since, it was pretended, on the authority, it was asserted, of the secretary, that a registered letter had been missed, containing cheques and bank notes to the value of five thousand pounds; that the cheques had been cashed, and that the whole sum had been realized. This was a nice little story to go the round of the press, and make the fortune of a penny-a-liner; and more so, as there *was* a particle of truth at the bottom. There *had* been a registered letter stolen, but by a device, says the Postmaster-General, which it is not likely will be repeated. The letter *did* contain a large amount of money—not five thousand, however, but eighty pounds; the cheques were not cashed, and the bank notes were in halves. As to the report circulated that the statement was founded on the authority of the secretary, we may readily imagine this to be a pure invention. Officials,

especially those who have attained experience and position, are not likely to reveal the secrets of their working dens. Notwithstanding, therefore, the disappointment which it will cause that vast gaping multitude which loves to read exciting paragraphs, we are bound to add that the owner of the registered letter recovered the amount he had posted to the last farthing.

Philanthropists have been at a loss for language in which to eulogize the humanizing and civilizing effects of savings banks, as exercising and maturing, to a vast extent, the three attributes of Foresight, Intelligence, and Frugality. What, then, must be said of that machinery which facilitates a hundredfold the development of that excellent and reproductive principle? The introduction of penny savings banks was a noble enterprise; but the alliance between these institutions and the Post Office was a still greater good. On the 17th of May, 1861, through the exertions of Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, an Act was passed to grant additional facility for enabling the people to deposit small sums at interest by means of the Post Office; and was put in operation on the 16th of September of the same year. On that day, 301 Post Office savings banks were opened in England and Wales. The regulations for the conduct of those establishments, and, in fact, the general arrangement for the receipt and disposal of the deposits, received long and careful consideration, and fortunately were found to be, from the very commencement, so effective and sufficient that they have been carried out with little difficulty and modification. The public quickly appreciated the advantages of the measure. Without a day's delay the applications were numerous; and various localities, which had not been provided with one of these economical treasuries, immediately petitioned for the benefit; and with laudable energy and zeal in this good cause, the Post Office authorities have gradually extended the action of the system. At the present time there are, altogether, no less than 2,532 Post Office savings banks; of these, 1,795 are in England, 129 in Wales, 299 in Scotland, 300 in Ireland, and 9 in the Islands. Up to the 31st of March, there had been in the United Kingdom no less than 91,965 depositors; these had entrusted no less a sum than £735,253 16s. 4d. to the care of Government.

Some notable and significant facts connected with this subject may be mentioned here. More than one-third of the whole amount deposited in the United Kingdom was received in London and the London district, that is, within twelve miles of the General Post Office; one-half of the large sum received in Kent, and ten-elevenths of the still larger sum received in Surrey, were deposited in those portions of the counties which lie within the limit of the London district; Staffordshire, Lancashire, Hampshire, and Yorkshire, rank next after Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent. If we take the average amount of a deposit in the Post Office savings banks and in the old savings banks, we shall find for the United Kingdom the result to be £3 12s. 8d. for the former, and £4 18s. 1d. for the latter; showing that, although the same relation to each other exists between these banks, the

Post Office banks have reached a larger proportion of small depositors. This is a gratifying result, and doubtless attributable to the superior facilities offered by the latter, and more especially, perhaps, to the fact that they are open daily, and for several hours, besides being situated almost at the door of the people. The total sum deposited in the United Kingdom up to the 31st of March, included the sum of £139,171 4s. 9d. transferred from old savings banks. The trustees of the savings banks of Bermondsey, Brixton, Cheshunt, Enfield, Hoxton, Kirkby Stevan, and other places, considering the superior facilities and the complete security afforded by the Post Office banks, have resolved to shut up their own institutions, which they had hitherto maintained at considerable inconvenience to themselves, solely for the benefit of their poorer neighbours; and it is expected that many other banks will soon follow their example. Already, no less than 700 friendly and charitable societies and penny banks have transferred their funds to the Post Office savings banks.

Before concluding this notice of the Post Office system, we should mention that, in 1855, several improvements of a minor character, referring simply to matters of detail, were introduced with great success. Country letters to London, or passing through London, were either sorted at the provincial office or during their transmission by railway, and thus the morning delivery in London was expedited by nearly one hour. Pillar boxes were also erected in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin; and have since been extended to most of the considerable towns in the United Kingdom. By the substitution of road letter-boxes, the number of post offices last year was diminished by thirty-six, making the whole present number 11,405, of which 813 are head offices, and 10,592 sub-offices. On the other hand, the number of road letter-boxes was increased by 476; thus the whole number of public receptacles for letters is now 14,354, as compared with 13,914 last year, and with little more than 4,500 previous to the establishment of the penny postage.

Curiously enough, in the south of Ireland there was at first a prejudice against the use of road letter-boxes, owing, apparently, to a fear of insecurity; however, the surveyor of the district reports that the public now protect these boxes, the former prejudice fast disappearing. In 1855, London was also divided into ten districts,—East Central, West Central, North, East, South, West, North-east, North-west, South-east, and South-west, having separate head quarters, by which letters posted in a district for a neighbouring place are spared the loss of time incurred by the transmission to the chief office. By this means a more speedy delivery is attained, the sorting of the inland letters being thereby greatly facilitated.

Of course, complete, admirable, and unrivalled as our postal arrangements undoubtedly are, there is still a large margin for improvement, not only in the question of speed, but in the question of regularity in delivery. Every year, however, efforts are being made to remove the most obstructive

obstacles to the rapid transmission of letters. Wherever it is possible, railways have been substituted for coaches and omnibuses, and again, coaches, omnibuses, and carts for foot messengers. We would point out, nevertheless, to the authorities, that there is much to be done even in the matter of short routes. Frequently—adhering, we suppose, to an old arrangement, for we can account for it in no other way—the letters are made to travel in a zigzag fashion, to double about as a hunted hare might, instead of being conveyed from point to point by a mathematical straight line. Not long since a complaint was made, and very justly too, that Portsmouth, important seaport as it is, is badly used, letters for it being taken, not by the direct line through Guildford, but by the roundabout way of Bishopstoke. Again, letters to Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, we hear, instead of being taken through Guildford and Portsmouth, by which many hours might be saved, are made to take a very large circumbendibus, going by way of Southampton to Cowes, and from Cowes on to Ryde. Is it that the Post Office authorities are ignorant of the topographical position of these places?—can such ignorance exist in high quarters? Or are they anxious to oblige the South-Western Railway in preference to the Guildford and Portsmouth line? Whatever may be the cause, it is hardly fair to the public that such a flaw should exist in our postal arrangements. Always the shortest and quickest route should be adopted, and no question of previous surveys be allowed to interfere with the rule of transferring the responsibility of conveying the correspondence of Great Britain from the shoulders of one company, if it be found that those of another are better able to bear it.

However, these are abuses which only require time and comment to have them removed. We have already seen what a vast and gigantic labour the Post Office has undertaken; and we cannot but bear testimony to the admirable and satisfactory manner in which it discharges its duty. We may well be proud of this noble system, as it is without a parallel in the world.

LADY DIPLOMATISTS.

CARDINAL MAZARIN, who, as everybody knows, frequently employed women to carry out his political plans, once made the remark, "*Les femmes sont dignes de regir un royaume*;" and, in truth, women have at times ruled like men, holding the reins of government with a safe, firm hand; and just history will not deny them great thoughts or great deeds. The reigns of Queen Elizabeth, Maria Theresa, and Catharine II., are among the most brilliant in the history of their countries; but they are exceptions to the rule. Woman is not made to govern—she is incompetent to carry out strict justice; and the reigns of women are generally marked by precipitation, a tendency for arbitrary undertakings, and more especially a martial spirit. The heart is woven up in politics, with all its impulses and susceptibilities, which calculate less than they crave; and hence originates the rule of favourites, who are summoned to their influential posts by a woman's feeble heart, rather than their own talents and merits. On one of these reefs the reigns of nearly all women—the most eminent not excepted—have been stranded; and however brilliant they have been for the moment, the after pangs have soon been felt. Such were the reigns of the Spanish Isabella, Margaret of Denmark, Queens Elizabeth and Anne, the Empress Maria Theresa, and the Russian empresses; and however fine their reigns may have been for a season, we seek in vain among the majority of them for deeds and institutions which the verdict of later history has declared to be valuable. In an aristocratic republic—as England of to-day has been not unfairly called—the crown can be placed without hesitation on a woman's head, because among us the Sovereign cannot personally interfere in the government; and the reign of Queen Victoria furnishes a proof that a woman is more easily enabled to recognise the fulfilment of her regent duties in the fulfilment of her family duties, than is a man, whose desire it always is to prove his personal influence in public affairs, to a greater or less extent. The reign of our Queen, therefore, though so justly applauded, must not at all be cited as a proof that women are competent to govern, because the sole task of an English sovereign, in the present development of political relations, is to abstain from governing.

We have no intention, in these remarks, to offend the fairer sex; and we wish them, as compensation for their inability to govern, all the greater influence in their family over their husband, so soon as the latter has put on his dressing-gown. They will still be able to prove to the stronger sex, who are called upon to govern, that they are subject to their beauteous eyes, and frequently compelled to carry out their wishes, even beyond the family circle. If women were granted a place in the political affairs of the State by the side of their husbands, or if too great scope were allowed even to their radiant influence, they would only become estranged from

their family, and thus an incurable wound would be dealt to the social, as well as the political order of things. This lesson History has often taught us with her warning voice. We cannot have a more striking proof of our assertion than the case of France. In that country, women have always sought to exert an influence beyond the family circle; and a still current proverb says, that in France they are the real men. In what other European country, however, has the social basis of political and social order been so shaken as in France? and hence pious and sensible women have ever recognised that it is not their business to be active in politics. A striking instance of this will be found in Macaulay's history, when he describes Princess Mary's behaviour, on being informed that she was heiress to the British crown. By her directions the Prince of Orange was appointed co-regent, and she always kept her promise, that he should be the actual monarch.

The case is different, however, when we turn to another official character, which women, according to the almost universal opinion of authorities on the law of nations, are allowed to assume—namely, the ambassadorial. Up to a short time ago, it was an undeniable principle that the appointment of an envoy was entirely independent of sex. Moser, in his work "*L'Ambassadrice et ses Droits*," declared that it was an exploded idea that only men were suited for diplomatic missions; and, on the contrary, history teaches that those political affairs in which women played a part, were most cleverly arranged; and hence this writer stepped forward as champion for woman's rights in this respect. Many other writers have advocated the same claim; and the legal ground upon which they base it is practice. It has been from the earliest times the custom among European sovereigns to employ women on diplomatic missions, so that in this way a law of usage has sprung up, and no prince has the right to refuse recognition to an ambassadress, should she be sent to his court. Let us now investigate the real nature of this practice.

The oldest instance of a woman being invested with an ambassadorial character, is the mission, in 1525, of Princess Marguerite of France, widow of the Duc d'Alençon, to Madrid, in order to obtain the liberation of her brother, Francis I., from the Emperor Charles V. The king's mother, who held the regency during his absence, certainly sent her daughter with express commissions, intended to produce the desired result, but she did not invest her with the slightest official character. Of an even earlier date is the diplomatic mission of Margaret, daughter of Emperor Maximilian I., who, in the year 1508, when she was widow of Duke Philibert of Savoy, concluded the well-known league of Cambray. She carried on the negotiations, not only in the name of her imperial father, but also in that of King Ferdinand of Spain; while Cardinal Amboise negotiated for the King of France and the Pope. Margaret, by her cleverness, succeeded in arranging this treaty, which was so injurious to Venice. A few years later, in 1529, a peace was made at Cambray,

which is known in history by the name of the "Ladies' Peace," because two ladies were the negotiators—the mother of Francis I., and the aunt and governess of Charles V. The following details about this peace, which was so injurious to Francis I., are interesting. The two ladies, Louise of Savoy and Margaret of Burgundy, lived in two adjoining houses, between which they had a door of communication made, so as to enjoy each other's society uninterruptedly. Louise possessed her son's confidence as fully as Margaret did her nephew's; and both had managed the business of the State during a lengthened period for their pupils. It would be difficult to understand the treaty upon which the two ladies agreed at Cambray, if we were not aware that Francis I. was disposed to make any sacrifice for the sake of liberating his two sons, who were kept prisoners at Madrid by the emperor. Several other instances of diplomatic action on the part of princesses at that period may be cited; thus Wicquefort, in his well-known work, "*L'Ambassadeur et ses Fonctions*," alludes to the diplomatic missions of Eleanor, Queen of France, and Maria, Queen of Hungary, who, in 1537, concluded at Bonnecy a three months' armistice in the names of Charles V. and Francis I. Still, Moser draws attention to the fact that princesses must not be regarded as envoys, because they never received ambassadorial letters of credit, but merely ordinary full powers for the purpose of their negotiation. Later writers have, therefore, based their claim for the right of ladies being appointed envoys, upon two other instances: they are the notorious Aurora, Countess von Königsmark, whom Augustus the Strong sent to Charles XII. of Sweden; and an ambadress of Louis XIV., la Maréchale de Guebriant.

Marie Aurora von Königsmark was born in 1666, at the Agathenburg, near Stade. This lady, who was renowned for her beauty and her wit, lived for several years on the most intimate terms with King Augustus, and was afterwards nominated Abbess of the princely imperial foundation of Quedlinburg. While living at her abbey, Augustus was hard pressed by the King of Sweden, and was without means to oppose him, and unable to pay the small body of troops that he still possessed. On hearing of the sore straits of the man whom she still loved, the Countess Königsmark hastened to Dresden, in order to arouse the King, and remind him of the duties of his lofty position, which he forgot in rioting and dissipation of every description. She spoke about the old glory and renown of his name enthusiastically, as a woman can speak to her lover; but the King had lost all his energy, and could not be induced to take any bold or decided step. The lovely lady, therefore, resolved to go herself to Charles XII., whose pride and arrogance were so painful to her Augustus. She received a secret mission to the Swedish King, who, however, refused to receive her; he hated women, and was rather pleased at venting this hatred on the loveliest and most amiable of his contemporaries. After great difficulty, the Countess contrived to catch the King in camp. She got out of her carriage, and delivered an address; but the King did not

reply to it, and merely bowed and rode on. At length the Minister, Count Piper, obtained permission to invite the Countess to a court banquet; but the lady, as an imperial princess, demanded a special seat at table. Charles ordered that she should be placed below all the other ladies; and when Count Piper, in his surprise, asked the reason, the King replied that, as an ex-mistress, she had no claim to a better seat. All the Minister's representations were fruitless; and Aurora did not appear at the banquet. Her mission had failed, and she returned to her convent. She revenged herself on the King by a biting pasquinade, which in all probability he never saw. The question now arises whether this beautiful and really gifted woman is to be regarded as an ambassadress in the strict sense. The most important thing to establish the ambassadorial character is the letter which accredits the envoy to the foreign sovereign. But Aurora had no such letter. Real, in his "*Science du Gouvernement*," and Voltaire, in his "*History of Charles XII.*," draw special attention to this fact; and Wicquefort indirectly allows it, by stating that there was never more than one real ambassadress, la Maréchale de Guebriant.

When King Ladislaus IV., of Poland, lost his first wife, Cecilia Renata, of Austria, in March, 1644, he selected a new consort soon after, in the daughter of the deceased Duke of Mantua, Marie de Gonzaga, Duchesse de Nevers. The marriage contract was signed by Louis XIV., at Fontainebleau, on September 26th, 1645; and on November 6th in the same year the marriage took place in the palace of the Palais Royal, at which the King of Poland was represented by his envoy. On her journey to Poland, Louis gave her as companion la Maréchale de Guebriant, whom he also expressly appointed his ambassadress to King Ladislaus. In the letters of credit she received (so Flassan tells us, in his "*Histoire Diplomatique de France*"), she was called by the King "*Ambassadrice extraordinaire et Surintendante de la conduite de la Reine de Pologne.*" She was by birth Renata von Beck, and widow of Marshal Guebriant, who was killed at Rotweil, in 1643. All writers are agreed in speaking highly of her skill and great cleverness in diplomatic negotiations; and on this mission she had ample opportunities for employing both these qualities. The princess whom she accompanied was considered one of the loveliest ladies of her age, and had not always held aloof from gallant adventures. These had been represented to the King with great exaggerations; and calumnies of every description had brought him to such a state, that, when the princess entered the Polish territory, he most decidedly refused to consummate the marriage with her. He put forward, as his excuse, his constantly increasing debility, and insisted upon her returning to France. On this occasion Madame de Guebriant displayed her undoubted diplomatic abilities; she managed to overcome all the difficulties prepared for her at the Polish court; and at length imbued the King with so staunch a conviction of the virtue of his future consort, that he no longer objected to marry her, whatever attempts might be made in influential quarters to induce him to

adhere to his first intention. On this occasion, the ambassadress gained the Polish King's favour to such a degree, that he gave orders for her to be treated at his court with the same honours which had been paid to the Austrian Archduchess, the sister of the King of Tuscany, when she brought her daughter, the King's first consort, to the Polish court. Madame de Guebriant insisted on these honours being fully paid to her; and even claimed precedence of Prince Charles, the King's brother. From this arose a squabble, which, however, was decided by Ladislaus in favour of Madame de Guebriant. On her journey through Poland, she had also claimed and received, in the provinces which she passed through, all the honorary distinctions to which an envoy can lay claim.

Louis XIV. very frequently employed ladies in matters connected with his foreign policy, and in this way he succeeded in exercising a marked influence upon the conduct of our Charles II. In order to get this king into the net which French intrigues had laid for him, he sent over the crafty, dissolute Louise de Queronnailles, or Madam Carwell, as she was called in the popular language of the day. Louis, however, did not give the lady the official character of an envoy; but her mission was purely confidential, and so confidential indeed, that Madame de Queronnailles speedily became the King's mistress, and in this quality exercised such influence over him, that she drove away all her rivals, whose number was not trifling. In this way, however, she succeeded in obtaining an authority which perfectly answered the expectations which the King of France formed from her charms and cleverness.

The following is an interesting example of the diplomatic ability of an Oriental princess. In 1460, Sultan Mahomed marched with a powerful army against David, the last Comnenus of the kingdom of Trebizonde, who was allied with Ursun, Prince of the Turcomans. He first intended to attack Ursun, but Sarah Chatun, mother of this prince, managed to form a treaty with the Sultan, by which she secured her son's kingdom, but betrayed his ally. She then conducted Mahomed by secret roads, where no resistance was offered him, by her management, into the heart of David's territory. Unprepared as he was, the latter could offer no resistance, and Mahomed at once took possession of the capital. Out of the treasures which he found here, Sarah Chatun received a noble reward in gold and jewels for the services which she had rendered him; and thus the old and venerable kingdom of Trebizonde was overthrown by the faithless intrigues and crafty diplomatic arts of this princess.

We are bound to mention here the Chevalier d'Eon, that mysterious being, who attracted universal attention in the second half of the last century. Everybody supposed him to be a woman; and yet he had served as soldier and diplomatist with great distinction. When very young, he entered the army, and displayed much bravery in several engagements; but he soon turned to a diplomatic career, and was first attached to the French embassy at St. Petersburg. At a later date, he

was sent as private agent of the King to London, and so gained his good will by the talent with which he carried out the difficult task entrusted to him, that he received the cross of St. Louis, and was appointed secretary of the legation in London. At that time he was generally supposed to be a woman; the nobility made heavy wagers about his sex, but the Chevalier maintained a discreet silence on the subject. He published his *Memoirs* about this time; and the French Government accused him of distorting facts, and of acting indiscreetly in making other facts known, and hence he was dismissed from his post. In consideration of his former services, Louis XVI. gave him a pension of 12,000 francs, under the condition, however, that he must appear in public in female clothing. The Chevalier returned to Paris, where he went about in that costume, with the cross of St. Louis on his breast; and when he afterwards returned to London, he retained the same attire. He died in London, in the year 1810, and his death seems to have solved the doubts about his sex; at any rate, he is called a man on his tombstone, the inscription on which is, or was, "Charles Genevieve Louis Auguste Timothée d'Eon de Beaumont, né le 16 Octobre, 1727, mort le 21 Mai, 1810."

From all these facts, we may fairly arrive at the conclusion that the *Maréchale de Guebriant* is the only real ambassadress about whom we can feel certain; the other diplomatic ladies whom we have mentioned (of course we leave out of the question those who had but an indirect influence in political affairs) only performed the business of an envoy, but did not possess his official character. Real certainly mentions a Persian ambassadress, but from his general remarks we cannot discover whether the lady has really a claim to this character; and when we take into account the *status* which Islamism grants to woman, it is doubtful. The doctrine, therefore, put forward by writers on the law of nations, that the choice of an envoy is entirely independent of the sex, stands, as we see, on a very weak foundation. According to the principle that one swallow does not make a summer, the mission of *Madame de Guebriant* must be regarded as what it really is—an historical curiosity, but not as a rule. Hence, to our great regret, we are bound to deny our lady readers any right to be ambassadresses—at least, in the sense in which we have hitherto employed the term. On the other hand, we most heartily wish that some of them may become ambassadresses in the other sense, namely, as wife of an ambassador. In order to leave them in no doubt as to the privileges and advantages accruing to them in that quality, we will now proceed to discuss the claims of an envoy's wife.

These privileges were the subject of the liveliest discussion among the publicists of the eighteenth century. Moser, the real founder of the science of the law of nations—(Hugo Grotius, who is usually considered so, derived his materials from the habits of the old Greeks and Romans, rather than those of his contemporaries), produced a valuable work under the title of "*L'Ambassadrice et ses Droits*;" and other writers have paid

similar attention to the ladies. Authors of the following century were less gallant. We find in their works scarce any notice of the privileges of an envoy's wife. This neglect is partly due to the alterations that have taken place in diplomatic relations. Up to the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, the great Powers, with the exception of Prussia, sent only envoys of the first class, and the wives of such functionaries are those who have pre-eminent claims to dignities and privileges. Since this congress, however, all the great Powers, up to a few years back, only employed envoys of the second class, whose wives possess far inferior privileges. The present Emperor of the French was the first to restore first-class envoys, and the other great Powers, excepting Prussia, as well as Spain and the Porte, have followed his example. Since this change, the rights of ambassadors' wives have been again discussed; and only a few months ago the Russian newspapers produced a decree of the Austrian Minister of War, according to which all guards, inside and outside the capital, must turn out and present arms to the wives of foreign envoys, when they were going to court. It is said that this was ordered at the request of the Duc de Gramont, the French envoy, who stated that this was always done in Paris.

Prior to the introduction of permanent embassies, envoys' wives were unknown. This institution was first developed in the sixteenth century; because it was not till that period that the system of the political balance of power sprang up, which brought the princes and states of Europe into closer contact. The magnificent discoveries of that age, the impulse given to commerce, and various other circumstances, led to the encouragement of this system, which could be only maintained by the introduction of permanent embassies. Since then it has become the custom for envoys to take their wives with them to foreign courts, which was not the fashion with the old envoys extraordinary. In ancient times, as Tacitus informs us in his "Annals," it was considered prejudicial for envoys to be accompanied by their wives. Even in the year 1638, this custom does not appear to have become general; for we read that the French envoy at the Hague said, laughingly, when the Spanish envoy arrived there with his wife, "*Que c'était une ambassade hermaphrodite.*" Still, this custom had been introduced at a much earlier period, and the basis laid for that official character of an envoy's wife, which has become for her the source of such valuable privileges. This occurred at Rome during the reign of Pope Sixtus V.

Count Olivarez was at that period the Spanish envoy at Rome. His wife, who accompanied him, lived, at first, in great retirement; but after her confinement, the envoy asked the Pope to do her the favour of giving her his blessing, and permitting her to kiss his foot,—a distinction generally granted to ladies of princely birth alone, on their first leaving the house. Sixtus V., however, gave his assent, because he was desirous to gain the Spanish envoy over; and in the solemn audience granted to the Countess Olivarez for the purpose, the Pope addressed her as "*Signora Ambascia-*

trice." This was an unheard-of thing in Rome, and threw all the noble society into a state of excitement; but the immediate result was that the Countess was everywhere addressed by the new title. This fashion soon became general, and hence comes the official title of "Ambassadrice," granted to the wives of envoys at all European courts. This official title, however, was the basis of the official character which people began to invest these ladies with. The envoys of the first class, namely, immediately represent the person of their sovereign, and publicists declare that the ambadress shares in her husband's "*caractère représentant.*" From this fact we may explain the comprehensive ceremonial privileges conceded to an envoy's wife; while the claims of the wives of envoys of the second, third, and fourth classes (of whom it is customary to say that they do not represent their sovereign in person, but merely in business), are explained by the fact that they are regarded as belonging to the ambassador's suite. The law of nations grants them all the privileges conceded to this suite, in which are counted, in addition to the envoy's children, the secretaries, *attachés*, and the chaplain to the embassy.

As regards the ceremonial claims of the ambadress, they attained their highest development at the French court, under Louis XIV. The official character of an ambadress was scarcely allowed at the court of the German Emperor, and, in fact, there were great variations at the European courts in the nature of the distinctions granted to her. So much, however, may be established, that an ambadress has a right to a solemn and official audience on arrival and departure, which is generally accompanied with the same pomp as is employed for her husband. It has been stated that in former times it was a very general rule for these ladies to be permitted to sit down in the social circles of emperors and queens; but this statement is not quite correct, for this privilege was expressly refused at the English court, and that of the German Emperor. Moser gives a detailed account of the solemnities usual at the several European courts. At the French court the ambadress was fetched by the *Introducteur des Ambassadeurs* "in a royal coach, for an audience with the Queen," in whose apartments she met the King, who kissed her on the forehead. As she entered the palace, all the sentries presented arms, and she was led to the Hall of the Ambassadors, where she met a lady in waiting, who placed herself on her *left hand*, and accompanied her to the Queen's apartments. As the ambadress entered, the Queen rose; the former made a feint to kneel, but the Queen prevented her, and kissed her on the forehead. She then was handed a tabouret, on which to sit among the duchesses present. The solemnities at the leave-taking audience were the same; and after these audiences there was usually a banquet. In the same way the ambassadors paid solemn visits to the royal princesses, and very frequently to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The same solemnities took place at these audiences at the court of Spain; and Louis XIV. expressly obtained from this court reciprocity in

the ceremony to be observed with his ambassadress. A perfectly similar ceremony was also observed at the English court, with this difference, that the ambassadress was not allowed to sit down, but, on the other hand, she was fetched by a royal yacht so soon as she came in sight of the British coast. At the Russian court, official audiences for ambassadresses do not appear to have been introduced until 1762. These ceremonial privileges were very strictly kept up at the Papal court. When a foreign envoy had his audience on arriving, the Pope sent his wife his greeting and blessing, and soon after she was granted a solemn audience, at which three sofa cushions were given her for a seat. The details of this ceremony were arranged most carefully, and indeed the Papal See displayed the strictest accuracy in all such official matters, which it inherited from the Byzantine court, so notorious for its exaggerated and clumsy grandeur.

The ceremonial claims of ambassadresses were finally regulated at the Congress of Westphalia, and Moser writes on the subject, "The ambassadresses displayed themselves at this great meeting in all their splendour, and on this occasion brought forward several claims, which were afterwards converted into a rule." These claims referred chiefly to the ceremonies which the ambassadresses wished to see observed in their mutual intercourse; and owing to the length of the congress, disputes on points of etiquette broke out, which must at times have been very welcome, when we reflect on the dearth of amusement supplied by the cities of Münster and Osnabrück. On this occasion, a fashion which has since been maintained at several courts, was introduced, of observing, on the arrival of an ambassadress, exactly the same ceremonial as on the arrival of an envoy. The latter received the first visit from his colleagues, according to their rank, either in person, or by a card. Each came as quickly as he could, and no particular succession was observed. The precedence of the European sovereigns had not yet been finally settled, and so it often happened that when an envoy fancied that a visit paid to another ought to have been paid to him, the most obstinate disputes began, which often terminated by producing a war between the countries which the quarrellers represented. We need only turn to Wicquefort, or Callière's "*De la Manière de Négocier avec les Souverains*," to form an idea of the countless disputes of this nature, which frequently led to the most piquant scenes. The Popes, especially Julius II., tried at times to stop this source of squabbling, by drawing up a table of precedence for European sovereigns; but it was not recognised. The first rank was granted, without opposition, to the envoy of the German Emperor; but France, Spain, England, and at a later date, even Sweden, contended for the second place.

These disputes of the envoys were taken up at the Congress of Westphalia by their wives, who carried them on much more violently and recklessly than their husbands did. There was abundant opportunity for this, because the rule was strictly adhered to that every newly-arrived lady

should return the visits of her female companions, exactly in the same rotation as they had been paid to her. Moreover, as every envoy had brought his wife to Münster, there was ample scope for squabbles for precedence in this little town, where they were shut up so long. Moser gives us a long list of examples of this nature; and the wife of Servien, the French envoy, seems to have distinguished herself most by her quarrelsome temper. On her journey to Münster she had had a dispute at the Hague with the Princess of Orange about the first visit, and she carried on the same game at the Congress of Westphalia. Thus, for instance, this lady and the Countess Sannazar, ambassadress from Mantua, had a tremendous quarrel, because the latter paid the first visit to Madame Brun, the Spanish envoy's wife. Her husband had a similar quarrel with the Hanseatic envoy, because the latter also paid the first visit to the Spanish ambassador. In consequence of these quarrels, banquets at this congress often terminated with sanguinary conflicts among the servants; and similar quarrels occurred at the Congress of Nimeguen. Moser tells us of one between the French and the Spanish ambassadors, because the latter received the first visit from the wife of the Swedish envoy, when she appeared in public after her confinement. Even the envoys themselves were not always so gallant as to avoid squabbles with the ladies about precedence. M. de Brenne records such a case as occurring between the French ambassador and the English ambassadress, on the occasion of the marriage of Charles I. with the French Princess Henrietta. The envoy was not willing to allow his colleague's wife an envied seat in the king's coach upon the departure of the newly-married couple; but when his appeal to the monarch had no result, he expressed himself satisfied. In the previous century a Prussian envoy behaved with even less gallantry to a Danish ambassadress. She claimed precedence, but he most unceremoniously thrust her back.

The Congress of Vienna deprived ambassadresses of the chance of quarrelling with one another, or with the envoys. The regulations drawn up on March 19, 1815, decided that ambassadors at the different courts should rank according to the date on which their arrival was officially announced to the court. By this most simple arrangement, which now holds good at every court in Europe, the old disputes for precedence among the envoys are abolished, and nothing is left to the ambassadresses but to yield to the new order of things. Formerly the pretensions of envoys and their wives to precedence over persons of a non-ambassadorial character, were very far-fetched; and at times it happened that they claimed precedence of the princes and princesses of the court to which they were accredited. Imperial and royal envoys at times considered themselves superior to the princes and electors to whom they were sent; they even expected cardinals to yield to them; and Moser tells us of a quarrel of this nature between Cardinal Grimani and a Spanish ambassadress, in 1702, which led to a terrible fight between their servants

in the streets of Rome. A papal decree, however, expressly claimed, in 1750, precedence for cardinals. Such cases, after all, are isolated, and the ambassadresses, as a rule, only demanded to be ranked immediately after princesses of the blood. At the Roman court they had carried on for many years a quarrel for precedence with the princesses of the Houses of Colonna and Ursini. It commenced in the time of the first ambassadress, Countess Olivarez, and cropped out again every now and then. Similar disputes between ambassadresses and ladies belonging to the nobility, took place repeatedly in these countries; and Wicquefort tells us of one between Countess Lilienroth, wife of the Swedish envoy, and a Countess Horn, which led to a sharp exchange of notes between her husband and the States-General. There are no established rules as to the rank of envoys and their wives, although various formal treaties have been made on the subject between different states. As a rule, considerable difficulty arises as to the position of ambassadresses to the minister of foreign affairs and their wives. At the French court there used to be entire equality; but nowadays these ministers appear to have precedence of ambassadors at nearly every court. The rank of ambassadresses is most certainly determined in our country, where they rank after the viscountesses, although they take precedence of those ministers who are not members of the nobility.

We will shortly allude to a few ceremonial claims of ambassadresses. They, for instance, are allowed to go to court with six horses and outriders, and to bear the title of Excellency; and, at the beginning of the reign of Henry IV., they had the right of driving into the Louvre in their coaches. The Venetian ambassadress at the French court enjoyed the special privilege that, when she was confined, the King was godfather to the child, held it at the font, and made it handsome presents. Valuable presents were also frequently made to these ladies by the sovereigns. At the papal court, these consisted mostly of relics, or an *agnus Dei*; presents which, at that day, had a far greater value in the eyes of ladies than they would have at present. Ceremonial claims of so prominent a character were, as we stated, not conceded to the wives of envoys of a lower rank; still, they were treated very courteously, and the wives of secretaries of legation, even, were never denied admission to court. Admission to court, however, has been denied even to ambassadresses, for irregular conduct, and the same has occurred in consequence of disputes; as, for instance, in 1782, in the case of the wife of the Austrian envoy at Stockholm. This lady had refused to kiss the queen's hand upon introduction, unless the latter consented to kiss her cheek, and she was, consequently, not presented at court. At a later date, the ambassadress attended a ball at the city hall, at which the royal family were also present; and the master of the ceremonies intimated to her that, as she had not been presented, she could not remain in the society of the royal family. The imperial court regarded this in the light of an insult; the ambassador

was recalled, and his post remained vacant till 1788. The question has been frequently asked whether ambassadresses, when belonging to a different creed from that of their husbands, have a right to a special form of worship, and this question may be of practical importance in countries like Spain, Turkey, &c. This privilege is almost universally conceded, by writers on the subject, to ambassadresses, on account of their *caractère representant*, but it is as unanimously refused to the wives of other envoys, and with some show of reason. The privileges of the latter are merely based on the circumstance that they form part of the suite of the envoy, their husband; and only the envoy himself has, according to the law of nations, a claim to his own private religious service, in the case that his co-religionists are not allowed to perform public or private worship in the same city.

Other envoys' wives are equally privileged with the ambadress in this immunity and exemption from the legislature of the power to which their husband is accredited, but there have been a few cases in which this privilege has been broken through. Thus, in the last century, the wife of the Spanish envoy, at the court of Savoy, was arrested for debt, but as soon as the Duke obtained cognizance of the fact, he ordered her liberation, and apologized to the King of Spain in a letter written with his own hand. In the same way the wife of the imperial envoy, Count Plettenberg, was insulted, in 1737, by the troops of the Archbishop of Cologne, at the siege of Nordhausen Castle; the Emperor took up the matter very warmly, and wrote very urgent letters both to the archbishop and to his allies, the electors of Brandenburg and the Palatinate, in which he ordered them to respect the law of nations. We have already alluded to the quarrel for precedence between the Swedish ambadress, Countess Lilienroth, and the Countess Horn; in the squabble, the Countess Lilienroth felt herself insulted because the other lady said to her, "*Madame, vous êtes une impertinente;*" and her husband made a heavy complaint to the States-General thereupon. At a later date, she imagined herself insulted by a young lawyer, who spoke to her while she was leaning out of window one evening; but as he had not employed insolent language, the States-General saw no reason to give the ambassador the satisfaction which he demanded; whereupon the latter asked for his passport, and went off to his native land. Lucky is the envoy who has not a wife so jealous of her privileges as the Countess Lilienroth, and who appears to have caused her poor husband incessant trouble.

An occurrence, which might have had serious consequences, took place at Vienna in 1730, with the wife of the Prussian envoy, Von Brandt. She was driving, with her daughter, past a religious procession, and the mob, excited by a priest, insisted on the two ladies getting out, and on their refusal, they were forcibly dragged forth by two men. The Austrian Government had the latter at once thrown into prison, and they afterwards asked pardon of the envoy on their knees, and in chains; but the priest escaped without any punishment, because the Government declared that it

had no jurisdiction over him. As undoubted as the inviolability of ambassadors' wives, is their freedom from the jurisdiction of the foreign state ; and these, as well as all other privileges, remain equally valid after their husbands' death. The practice of the several courts has always been the same in this respect, although some writers have now and then made the arbitrary assertion that, by the death of an envoy, his widow at once returns to private life. This idea originates from a confusion between the functions of the embassy and its privileges : the former certainly cease through the demise of the envoy, but not the latter. Should these cease and determine before the return of the ambassador and his suite to their native country, it only takes place at the expiration of a certain period, which is either decided by the laws, or peremptorily settled by the foreign sovereign. These principles are applicable to the wives of all envoys, and especially to ambassadresses, who, as we have seen, possess a more independent title to their privileges than the mere fact of belonging to their husbands' suite. Moser has written a special treatise on the subject —“ How long an ambassador's widow enjoys the privileges of her deceased husband ;” and one of the cases which he quotes is interesting. The wife of a foreign envoy at the Viennese court remained there when a widow. No time was settled during which she must return home, or lose her privileges and be regarded as a private person, and hence, when she died, a few years after, she still held the ambassadorial privileges, which had never been recalled during her lifetime. Upon her death, the question was raised whether these privileges were applicable to her will, and the Imperial Court of Exchequer gave an opinion to the contrary effect. Moser attacks this judgment, and declares that the court was incompetent to decide the question, because the lady was not subject to its jurisdiction during her lifetime.

As a rule, a period is allowed in most countries for the duration of the ambassadorial privileges of the widow of an envoy—generally one year ; and the same is the case if the ambassadress should remain in the foreign capital, after her husband's recall, or with him. After the expiration of this time, the ambassador's wife becomes a private person, just in the same way as if she had returned home immediately upon her husband's recall.

THE CHILDLESS MOTHER.

BY THOMAS MILLER.

WITH one hand pressed against her head,
This, to herself, the lady said :—

“ But Sorrow cannot always weep,
Nor Grief be ever making moan !
For tears will dry, and sighs will sleep,
And Memory be left all alone,
To pace the chamber of the mind—
With gloomy shadows overcast—
And see if she can solace find
Among those pictures of the past
With which it everywhere is hung,
The living mingling with the dead ;
And round the shifting circle swung
So quick—I look on all in dread.

“ Thus ever on the past I gaze,
What was, still linked to what is now,—
Like one who in a wildering maze
Goes round about, but knows not how.

“ I sleep !—but in my love awake
Still feel about for him in bed,
Shifting my arm, as if to make
A pillow for his pretty head.
And in my dreams again I fold
My darling closer to my bosom.
Then wake to find the spot is cold
Where nestled once my blue-eyed blossom.
His form in many a thing I see,
In many a sound I seem to hear him
Calling, as he once called to me,
And start, as if I still were near him.
As when I hummed some plaintive ditty,
Of Babes who in the Wood lay dead,
And woke his childish tears of pity—
The only happy tears we shed.
Quiet doth now the kitten lie,
Which he in turn did tease and nurse ;

It played about when he was by :
Still is the creaking rocking-horse,
Of which I did so oft complain,
When mounted there he shook the floor :
Oh ! could I have thee back again,
My child ! I ne'er would murmur more.
That rocking sound awoke the bird,
And it would sing, and thou wouldst shout
Until the very house seemed stirred.
Now—a sad silence hangs about,
Made sadder if that poor bird sings.
I fix my eyes upon the door,
For back another voice it brings,
Whose music I shall hear no more.
Worse than a desert unto me
My garden seems ; I sit for hours,
And all the while I only see
A little coffin filled with flowers.
And then sometimes I sit and mend
The garments in thy gambols torn ;
And while I o'er them fondly bend,
Forget they will no more be worn ;—
Think how this rent was made in play,
And that while climbing on my knee ;
And then I throw the work away,
And clasp my hands in misery.
The mat on which thou knelt'st to pray,
My folded hands enclosing thine,
I now bow down on thrice a day ;—
To me it is a holy shrine.
I doze at times ; and fancy brings
His footstep sounding on the stair :
His little hands untie my strings,
His busy fingers pull my hair.
And then I waken with a start,
And wonder how the inward eye
Makes such a fluttering at the heart,
Then say, ' This love can never die.'

I fondly hoped I should have seen
Thy children gathering round my knee ;
Pictured the comfort they'd have been
In my old age to thee and me,
With her thou to thy heart wouldst fold :
But while I sat and wove the chain

In fancied links of lengthening gold,
It suddenly was snapped in twain.

“I saw thee in my dreams last night,
Sitting beside a starry gate,
'Mid other children robed in light,
Who for their mothers seemed to wait,
As if they feared to go alone,
Where golden pillars stretched away,
Lost in the brightness of a throne.
And in my dream I heard thee say,
'My mother now will soon be here ;
She is already on her way.'
And then I seemed to enter there,
And thou didst lead me by the hand,
And to an angel named my name,
Who by the starry gate did stand.
And while I hung my head in shame,
And feared he would not let me in,
I heard these pleading words from thee,—
'Angel! my Mother's greatest sin,
While upon earth, was loving me.'
And then we both knelt at his feet,
While heavenly music 'gan to sound ;
And voices, for this earth too sweet,
Anthem'd within, 'The lost is found!'"

POPULAR EDUCATION IN BENGAL.*

ONE of the most important features in the Indian Chancellor of the Exchequer's detailed financial statement, is the fact that part of the surplus revenue of the empire is to be applied to the promotion of popular education in India. Last winter, the natives themselves had taken up the question of education. On the 3rd of October, a public meeting of a large number of educated men was held in Calcutta; an "Appeal to the British Nation" was adopted, and sent to England: though unsuccessful, as far as the obtainment of pecuniary aid from this country is concerned, the movement has, we understand, resulted in the establishment of a college in the metropolis of British India. It is worthy of remark that a statesman of high standing and Indian experience was asked to lead the movement originated by the natives; but he doubted the likelihood of deriving immediate support from Great Britain, and almost instinctively said that there would be a surplus in the revenue of India during the present year, and that some portion of it was sure to be devoted to the dissemination of knowledge. This, we are glad to say, has actually come to pass. Much of the success in that object, however, will depend upon the manner in which the public fund is laid out.

We propose in this paper to take a brief review of what has been hitherto done for the promotion of education in Bengal—a country which contains nearly 30,000,000 of Her Majesty's subjects—and will conclude with indicating the shortcomings of the system pursued, throwing out, at the same time, a few suggestions of our own. At the outset it ought to be premised, however, that our remarks shall apply to *native* education only, and not to English education, as given at colleges and schools, the good influence of which must necessarily be confined within the small circle of high and rich classes.

So far back as the year 1835, Mr. William Adam was appointed by Lord W. Bentinck to investigate the condition of native education in Bengal. New as the field was, Mr. A. succeeded, by his painstaking inquiries, in publishing three reports, which are still referred to by educationists as very valuable documents on the subject. He found that, in the vernacular schools, a little knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic only was aimed at. In the case of the seminaries of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian learning, Mr. A., while justly acknowledging the importance of old Oriental literature, could not fail to notice the insufficiency of either Sanscrit, Arabic, or Persian education for the proper enlightenment of the mind. He suggested various means for improving these schools; such as public and periodical examinations of teachers and

* 1. Reports on the State of Education in Bengal. By William Adam, Calcutta, 1838.

2. Reports of the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal. Calcutta, 1855—58.

scholars, distribution of rewards, publication of improved school books, establishment of normal schools, &c. Valuable as these and many other suggestions were, they were not immediately adopted by the Government. Indeed, very little was done by Government towards improving native education until the time of Lord Hardinge's administration, when a hundred model vernacular schools were established. There was, however, no adequate supervision provided for them, and consequently, so far from proving models to schools founded by natives, most of them ceased to exist within a short time.

It was in 1854 that Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch (dated 19th of July) was sent to India, and educational operations were commenced in good earnest. Happily for Bengal, the services of Mr. Hodgson Pratt were then available. Though not at the head of the Education Department, on account of his juniority, Mr. Pratt practically took the lead in the improvement of native education. He either originated, or chiefly helped to carry out, the following measures:—

The organization of a committee for the improvement of schools. The committee considered the details of school management, compilation of school books, &c., and published a valuable report on the best methods for adoption.

The institution of a Vernacular Literature Society, for the publication of cheap books of a healthy character.

The issue of a politico-literary Bengali newspaper, and a Bengali penny magazine, with plates. These periodicals far surpassed in merit their predecessors, published in Calcutta.

The circulation among teachers of a pamphlet explaining the proper management of schools, and the art of teaching.

The dissemination of an urgent appeal to the zemindars and others, pointing out the motives of Government in adopting the educational measures, and the advantages which all classes would derive from the spread of education, supported by texts from Sanskrit.

The establishment of a school of industrial arts, which, though short-lived, has produced many pupils, who are now earning their livelihood as draftsmen, lithographers, photographers, engravers, modellers, &c. What an acquisition these men are to Bengal, may be appreciated by comparing their productions with those of the genuine native school.

The Government, at the same time, supported by its newly-created staff of a director, four or five inspectors, and several deputy inspectors, established model and normal schools, and sanctioned grants-in-aid to institutions established by natives. It was, we believe, at the instance of Mr. Woodrow—a very energetic inspector—that the “circle-teaching” system was established. Three or four indigenous schools, situated three or four miles apart, conducted by *gurumohashoys*, or village teachers, constituted a circle, which was placed under the superintendence of a person of comparatively superior education. With all this apparatus, and

the constant supervision of inspectors and their deputies, the Education Department manifested an activity which, in the old *régime*, it had never before shown.

In another direction, the Rev. Mr. Long (of *Nil Durpan* celebrity), heartily devoted to the good of the people among whom he has been placed, has been labouring for the attainment of the same object, viz., the improvement of native education. He visited, very often at great personal sacrifice, a large number of natives at their homes, encouraged them to use their best efforts for the amelioration of their countrymen, and brought to light these important facts,—that within the last quarter of a century, not less than 8,000,000 Bengali books have been printed and sold, while during half a century, more than 1,800 distinct works, either original or translations from Sanskrit, English, and Persian, have been produced.

All this is good enough as a beginning, but ought not to be made the *ne plus ultra* of native education. We are prepared to show that the success hitherto attained has fallen far short of the means employed. The very existence of indigenous schools and literature, so far from telling favourably for their further improvement, is, in fact, a bar against such progress; just as one can write a good or a bad sentence on a piece of blank paper, but nothing legibly on a piece which is soiled with spots. Further, the present educational measures themselves are susceptible of modification, so as to be more efficacious than they have hitherto been.

What sort of education ought the natives of India to receive? Assuredly the solicitude of this country ought not to be limited to making the Indians better readers, writers, and accountants only. The writers of the famous Education Despatch of 1854, expressed their wish “*to see that education extended in India which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, science, philosophy, and literature of Europe; in short, of European knowledge.*” This ought to be the legitimate object of both the British Government and British nation. But there are defects in the present system, which place the attainment of that object very many years further off. To descend into detail.

The natives want better model schools and normal schools than they have. The experimental and moral sciences and useful arts should form the chief element of instruction in such institutions. This is a subject which has never attracted adequate attention. The easy studies of history, geography, and fables, prevail at present. This is a mistake. Such instruction is valuable for the expansion of the mind, where it is not already encumbered with prejudices. But the case is different with a Hindu child. He (to illustrate our point) is taught by his friends and relatives to believe that the earth is flat, and is surrounded by oceans of salt, curd, milk, &c., and he cannot accept a mere statement to the contrary in a printed book. He innocently thinks that if there can be an ocean of salt, which is an article of food, and the existence of which is confirmed by the pious pilgrims who annually repair to the confluence of the Ganges

with the sea, why should not there be as well an ocean of curd, or another of milk? The parents look upon a book of geography as a repository of falsehoods. The importance of history is not at all acknowledged, except as it records the workings and exploits of the gods. It is considered a mere waste of time to care to know what an Alexander or a Caesar had done in the countries of the *Mlechchhas*, or barbarians. The fables of *Æsop*, in Bengali, excite laughter among the natives, and bring down contempt upon European learning itself. The consequence of such a mode of instruction is, that a Hindu lad, when he comes out of a vernacular school, remains as staunch a Hindu at heart as ever. Nay, the writer of this article has known *alumni* of English colleges, who could expatiate on the beauties of Shakspeare, who could tell at a moment's reflection the distance between two inconsiderable towns in England, yet who worshipped the idols in all seriousness. To set completely aside Hindu superstition, a scientific and moral education alone is competent. Almost at every step, the student will find positive proofs as to the trustworthiness of European science, and the foolishness of the ideas of his own ignorant countrymen. History and geography should be confined to the higher classes in the school. The useful arts will not only be naturally liked as an elegant occupation, but will prove attractive to pupils from motives of mere gain. Knowledge of improved agriculture and manufactures should also form a part of study in certain vernacular schools.

A native deputy magistrate once said to a deputy inspector, "You are scattering food before people who do not feel hungry." We have, however, reason to believe that a scientific education will be sufficiently effectual to create an appetite for European knowledge. The improved institutions will thereby be held in more respect than schools generally are.

Of course, superior teachers are required. They should not only be initiated into the art of teaching, but also into an intimate knowledge of particular sciences, as natural philosophy, chemistry, geology, the moral sciences, &c.

The students, after finishing their course, should receive suitable rewards; we mean beside the usual reward of scholarships, and books, or certificates. Let them have appointments under Government. We are in a position to quote a few lines from the unpublished official reports of a deputy inspector. He says, writing to his superior, "It would be repeating what you already know—that the people of this country do not appreciate education. They understand it to be only as a means of securing employment under Government; and when this does not happen, they deem it worse than useless. Their reason is, that if a lad had not been detained at a school, he might have been useful in other ways." Again,—“It is repeatedly brought to my notice that so few persons have obtained employment under Government from among the holders of certificates. On my mentioning the fact to Mr. C——, the revenue

commissioner of the division, he said that those that are educated at schools are not properly qualified to fill up situations. Now this fact clearly shows, on the one hand, the low estimation in which the school-educated persons are held (perhaps justly) by the highest local functionaries, on account of their inferior capacities to hold responsible situations; and, on the other, the distrust on the part of the people in our promises of enabling their children to fill up Government appointments in future by subjecting them to school education. This circumstance alone is sufficient to nullify our best efforts." The objections of the commissioner might be obviated by giving instruction in official business at schools; and thus the *alumni* of schools would be rewarded, while uneducated and unprincipled *amlah*, who now monopolize the offices and courts of justice in the country, would be superseded by persons of higher moral character and efficiency.

Another means of improving native education is to clothe the officers of the department with some sort of authority. Mere exhortation on their part has proved insufficient. To quote again from the deputy inspector's report,—“To point out to the people the intrinsic worth of education, is, according to them, exposing our weakest side. I felt the full force of what Mr. R. B. Chapman has said in regard to the people of Behar (Report for the quarter ending January, 1856, para. 14). The inhabitants of Keudraparah actually said that I have been sent by Government ‘to curry favour’ with the people. Inhabitants of other villages express their wonder at the Government being so unreasonable as to send a person for the purpose of advising them to establish schools, without being, at the same time, ready to maintain those schools at their own expense.” The truth is, that in a country like India, scarcely anything for the public good can be done, except by a *haqueem*, or “one having authority.” We do not recommend that the legitimate functions of a judge or a magistrate should be taken up by an inspector, or his deputy; but we believe that, very advantageously, the inspectors of schools may be made honorary magistrates; and their deputies, inspectors of *thanas*, or police stations in the country. Thus the notoriously corrupt police in Bengal might be kept in check in their malpractices; while the officers of the Education Department would be enabled to perform their own proper duties more satisfactorily, without entailing any additional expense to the State.

Little or nothing has been done for providing efficient means for the education of the females. The subject itself has now and then attracted the attention of British philanthropists in India, but very seldom has the right way to success been taken. It has been suggested that educated European females of high character should be employed as missionaries; that they should frequently visit the homes of rich and respectable Hindus and Mahommedans, and try, by conversation, to enlighten the inmates of the *zenanah*. A knowledge of medicine would be invaluable in such teachers. Times have now so far changed that, we believe, the natives

will open their doors to the female missionaries, if they avoid interference with the Hindu and Mahommedan religions.

It is certainly desirable that the impetus to the advancement of a nation should originate from within. Such has been the characteristic of the enterprising nations of Europe. But the case is far otherwise with regard to the people of India. Their minds are so crippled by a false religion, with its concomitant evils, that they can do nothing great of themselves unless help comes from without. The Government cannot, for obvious reasons, do everything; the co-operation of the British nation with them is needed. It would, we think, be mere waste of time to expatiate on the necessity of such co-operation, in ameliorating the physical, moral condition of nearly 200,000,000 of people now under the sway of Great Britain.

TREASURES.

A CURL of dark brown hair,
 Hid in a locket of gold;
 A ring set round with pearls,
 Of fashion quaint and old.

That locket nestles close
 In my bosom, night and day;
 That ring—since it left the finger
 Of the dear one far away.

The ring I wear for hope,
 The locket I wear for faith;
 The heart that throbs beneath them
 Will be true till my day of death.

Take them both to my lover,
 When I am freed from strife:
 There are many joined by death,
 Who might never be one in life.

KINGSWOOD CLARE.

THE AMATEUR OF FASHION.

GODDESS more devoutly worshipped than the Bona Dea; more honoured than Dīana of the Ephesians; more revered than the Athenian Pallas; more loved than the Aphrodite of Paphos; more powerful than Juno,—FASHION,—thou universal deity of modern civilization, who from the banks of the muddy Seine dost issue oracles that are as clearly understood and as implicitly obeyed by the Thames as by the Neva, by the Tagus as by the Danube, by the classic Tiber as by the mighty Mississippi, by the blue Adriatic as by the foggy Scheldt,—what copious reminiscences could I produce respecting some of thy most celebrated devotees!

What sacrifices at thy altar have I seen! What eccentricities of praise have I heard! What extremes have I witnessed!—what contrasts beheld! From long waists to no waists; from hoops to close-fitting gowns; from strait skirts again to balloon crinolines; from Babel-like coiffures to flowing crops; from coal-scuttle bonnets to pork-pie hats; and from the most expansive of flops to the most Lilliputian of “mushrooms.” In the other sex, from cocked hats to flower-pots; from wide-awakes to turbans; from wide skirts to swallow-tails; from ruffles to turned-back wristbands; from stand-ups to fall-downs; from frills to fronts; from pantaloons to peg-tops; from buckled shoes to wrinkled Hessians; and from Bluchers to Alberts.

What unalterable ceremonials have I seen discarded!—what exclusive prejudices abandoned! At Court; at the opera; in the ball-room; at the concert; on the race-course; in the park; at the hunt; and upon the sea-beach. Ever-changing, ever-exacting power, what a vista is presented to the eye when I look back upon the drama of life that owed all its human interest to thy favour, whether conferred upon the senseless extravagance of a Hughes Ball, the childish fooleries of a “pea-green Hayne,” the real accomplishments of a Bulwer, the effeminate dandyism of a Brummell, or the refined taste of a D’Orsay!

Time and space not being available for doing justice to such a varied retrospect, my readers must rest content with a scene or two in which every walking gentleman found it necessary to support a character of some sort, and individuals moving in the very highest positions came forward to play a particular *rôle*. Rank having set the example, wealth followed as a matter of course, as closely as Birmingham imitates Paris jewellery, and Spitalfields copies Lyons silks.

Towards the conclusion of the first decade of the present century, a young man made his appearance in the height of the London season in Bond Street, attracting as much attention from the loungers about Long’s and the old Naval Club nearly opposite, as the remarkable vehicle in which he was seen. He drove a pair of horses that, from their figure and action, must have been matched at an enormous expense; the curricule, then new

—for such it was—was pronounced the most elegant carriage that had ever been turned out of Long Acre. The body, beautifully painted and richly lined, was shaped like a concave scallop-shell, mounted on light springs. The new harness glittered with silver; and conspicuous among the ornaments was a crest, displaying a gamecock with expanded wings and open beak, with the legend beneath, “While I live, I’ll crow.” The wheels were bright with well-harmonized colours, and a highly polished cross-bar was balanced over the backs of the well-groomed steeds, whose foam tossed about like flakes of snow as they curveted and champed under the guidance of their driver.

The stranger was of medium height, yet of well-proportioned figure. His features did not find many admirers, but this may have been owing to the darkness of his complexion, for though somewhat harsh in their outline, their expression was not disagreeable. The blackness and curliness of his hair and whiskers, added to the tropical tint of his skin, made many of the spectators set him down as an Eastern prince; and it was readily believed that he was some powerful and wealthy rajah, direct from India, on a visit to the illustrious “John Company.” He wore the queer-shaped beaver hat then in vogue; a tall shirt collar, encircled by a yellow bandana, with a scientific tie; a close-fitting blue surtout, the front entirely covered with frogs and braid; tight pantaloons of ribbed cloth, of the same colour; and Hessian boots, carefully wrinkled up the leg, and set off at top with a rich tassel.

By his side sat a younger man, somewhat different in complexion, as well as in other characteristics; but as he happened to be the writer of these pages, I shall, of course, be excused any further reference to them or him.

My companion was no Eastern prince; he was the heir of an extensive coffee planter in the island of Demerara, reported to have left immense wealth, as well as large estates, with almost innumerable slaves, producing vast quantities of sugar as well as coffee. He had recently arrived in England, with the determination of making a figure in the gay world of London, in which the reputation of £40,000 a year to squander had already sufficed to bring him a fair share of fame, though only within a circumscribed limit. His portrait, however, was being engraved for a magazine, and his patronage was eagerly sought by such West-end tradesmen as had contrived to learn his residence.

The cause of my being associated with him was to be found in the fact that he was paying his addresses to a kinswoman of mine, who, however, was far from being satisfied that “to that complexion she must come at last,” and gave him no encouragement. I, being frequently in her company, shared largely in the attentions the dusky suitor bestowed upon her family, and, as I must confess, liking the fun of the thing, was often with him when he drove through the public thoroughfares.

He was extremely amiable, and possessed a simplicity of character that

made us look more indulgently on his eccentricities. He was liberal to profusion, and permitted no expense to hinder the realization of any idea that promised to bring him under the favourable notice of the higher classes of English society.

No channel seemed so directly and expeditiously to lead to this cherished object as the stage. Rumours had reached London that he had astonished the audience of a provincial theatre by his performance of one of the most arduous characters in the English drama. Suddenly all his numerous acquaintances about town received private and confidential announcements that he was about to make a similar experiment,—indeed, had paid a large sum for permission to appear on the metropolitan boards, in one of Shakspeare's finest plays. Our astonishment was increased when we beheld in the Haymarket bills the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet" advertised for representation:—

ROMEO, BY AN AMATEUR OF FASHION.

HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN LONDON.

Of course I made my way to the little establishment in the Haymarket on that memorable evening; in truth, everybody went who had the slightest knowledge of the new actor. As the fame of his singularities and of his enormous fortune had by this time spread far and wide, the house was crowded in every part.

If there is one character in the wide range of the wonderful creations of our great dramatic poet that makes unusual demands on the person, the voice, the features, and the talent of the individual attempting its personation, it is the ardent lover of the impassioned Juliet. Imagine, therefore, a countenance that might readily have been mistaken for that of a creole, and a figure which at every movement betrayed total ignorance of dramatic gesticulation, dressed in a conventional costume that then passed unchallenged as the dress of an Italian nobleman of the sixteenth century, the most remarkable portions of which were, a white satin hat, surmounted by a plume of ostrich feathers of the same colour, on a head with the wiry black hair at the back tied in the shape of a door knocker, with a short pigtail; white satin tunic, breeches, and shoes, profusely ornamented with gold spangles and modern jewellery; and fine silk stockings that covered a pair of legs jealously maintained in a position before the spectator the most favourable to the display of their symmetry. Imagine such a person in such a dress, with the addition of a diamond-hilted Court sword of the nineteenth century—one of my West Indian friend's latest extravagances—indulging in gestures totally new to a theatrical audience, and grimaces equally original, and shouting in a voice curiously harsh, and the reader will comprehend something of the effect he produced.

From the commencement of this singular performance, boxes, pit, and

galleries were in an exalted state of good humour. Indeed, the majority of the crowded house having been furnished with tickets at the cost of the new actor, ought not to have been otherwise. They testified their gratitude by their lively appreciation of his merit—every movement, almost every look, exciting their approbation; and this was given not only with a hearty zeal that testified to its genuineness, but occasionally with a heartier mirth that as conspicuously evinced their satisfaction. All the interesting passages won rounds of applause; but in the balcony scene the impression created was tremendous. Charles Kemble, though a very great favourite, had never produced half the effect. Many persons were affected to tears; which, however, streamed down cheeks untouched by the slightest influence of sorrow.

The crowning portion of the performance was unquestionably the catastrophe. Though the actor had exerted himself with wonderful success from his first remarkable entrance before the footlights, he appeared to have reserved his greatest dramatic powers for the final scene. Every portion won the most vehement plaudits, which rose to demonstrations of an extraordinary description when he died upon the body of the really unfortunate Juliet. Round after round of vehement applause followed each other in rapid succession—every one rivalling his neighbour in a determination to do justice to the claims of this theatrical phenomenon.

In the very midst of the storm the dead Romeo solemnly rose to life, and, his ostrich plumes majestically waving, his spangles shining like stars, with his diamond-hilted rapier carefully carried in his hand, advanced, wearing a highly gratified smirk upon his dusky visage, towards the orchestra, and gravely placing his legs in the favourite position, bowed to his enlightened patrons amid a hurricane of *encores*, bravos, and other encouraging exclamations. He then—still bearing the precious deposit—solemnly walked back to his post beside his poisoned mistress,—in whom certain movements about her waist showed that she was far from being as dead as she looked,—and deliberately—with identically the same gestures and articulation—*died over again!*

The performance was so thoroughly unprecedented, and created so unusual an impression on the mind of the play-going public, that the new actor was called upon more than once to repeat it. I may as well here add, that his reputation travelled far and wide. His good nature was appealed to frequently, and never in vain, by travelling Thespians, who were certain of crowded houses—barns, I mean—whenever they were so fortunate as to announce in their bills the name of “The Amateur of Fashion.” The result was, that he became so completely identified in the popular mind with the character he personated, that he ever afterwards received its name as a prefix.

Notwithstanding this (as my friend was pleased to consider it) “brilliant success,” he was not brought any nearer to the fulfilment of his ambitious desires. He received invitations, it is true, to routs and

assemblies where a few notabilities were seen, and was for a time looked upon, at least at Lady Corke's, as a lion of some repute; but the wish of his soul was to gain admission to the circle at Carlton House, where he was sure to meet the deities of fashion, who made that celebrated mansion their Olympus. Unfortunately, the Prince of Wales had never noticed "The Amateur of Fashion," and months passed away in the hope deferred that makes dreamers of impossible distinction occasionally heart-sick.

He now ventured to express to certain "gentlemen at large," who borrowed his money, rode in his curricle, and ate his dinners, his secret aspirations: these, in the same extremely confidential manner, found their way, by various channels, to some of the Prince's attendants or associates, and, as it was supposed, through them to the ear of His Royal Highness; for one day, to the Amateur's inconceivable, to his inexpressible gratification—a gratification that with incredible activity he presently endeavoured to diffuse in every possible direction—a letter came to his address, by the twopenny post, enclosing an invitation card to the next evening reunion at Carlton House.

It is impossible to describe the excitement this much-coveted distinction created in the mind of my eccentric friend. His tailor was sent for post-haste, and at least an hour of precious time passed in deciding upon the materials of a new dress suit. The handsomest ruffles, the most perfect cravat, were purchased without delay, and entirely regardless of expense. He was measured for a pair of pumps, that were to be fastened with gold buckles set with diamonds. The diamond-hilted sword was polished all over with wash-leather and a silk handkerchief; and diamond buttons, a diamond brooch, and a diamond ring bought for the occasion.

All proper preparations having been completed, he rehearsed the speeches he intended to make to his royal host, and prepared himself to take his share in the brilliant conversation that must necessarily ensue.

The night fixed for the party arrived, and Carlton House was as gay as a profusion of wax lights, an abundance of rococo furniture, and a throng of ultra-fashionable company could make it.

It is vain to attempt to do justice to the magnificence that, at the period to which I refer, or rather in this and one or two equally celebrated palatial residences, was considered taste. I will therefore merely say, that the domestics wore their state liveries, and the officers of the Household their Court suits, both displaying themselves conspicuously in the sculptured vestibule, along the well-lighted, crimson carpeted staircase, and in the luxurious anterooms that led into the grand saloon, where the princely host and his patrician company had assembled.

As the most prominent figure in a most remarkable *tableau*, I am bound to delineate him with more than ordinary care; but the Prince of Wales, under the peculiar circumstances I am endeavouring to narrate, demands talents from his portrait painter to which I am afraid I can put forward no pretensions.

In his dress, as in his manners, His Royal Highness aimed at perfection. His toilet, therefore, was singularly refined and elaborate. On this particular occasion he wore the uniform of his regiment, which unquestionably set off his handsome person to the greatest advantage. It was splendidly embroidered; in short, it was in every respect worthy to adorn a royal colonel who possessed unrivalled connoisseurship in dress, and was known to be as thoroughly acquainted with the anatomy of a coat as he was perfect in the physiology of a cravat—the most exalted attainment then possible in the dandy curriculum.

With his fine head of hair carefully powdered and confined behind by a ribbon, he stood sipping out of a Sevres coffee-cup, in the centre of a group of both sexes, to all of whom he was conversing in high spirits, whilst other distinguished-looking persons stood or sat at a distance, as though belonging to a less privileged coterie. Some talked in a low tone, as they supplied themselves with the refreshing beverage that was being handed round, but many contented themselves with playing the more quiet part of observers.

Most of the gentlemen were in uniform, showing that they belonged either to the Court, the military, or the naval service; but there were some half-dozen individuals in private dress—that is, wearing the fashionable evening costume of civilians. Its striking features were a long-tailed cloth coat, with lace ruffles; high shirt collar, bound by a fold of stiffened muslin, tied with an elaborate bow; satin waistcoat and breeches; silk stockings and pumps. Such persons were well-known caricatures; and many, indeed, figured in the print-shop windows in St. James's Street. They were the leading "dandies" of their day. It must be confessed that the Prince was growing stout, but still was graceful in person, and handsome in face.

There were a few ladies in the apartment, all more or less partaking of the best type of English aristocratic beauty, richly appalled in full Court costume—small waists and demi-trains—with ostrich feathers in their hair, and rare jewels on their arms, necks, fingers, and ears; but the most remarkable was an aristocratic brunette, with lustrous dark eyes, wearing a rich robe of Genoa velvet, trimmed with Mechlin lace, and a turban apparently made of a Delhi scarf, in which the plumage of a bird of paradise increased the effect produced by the large diamonds fastened on the folds. She stood near a piano, then just invented as an improvement on the harpsichord, at which sat a foreign professor, a dark-visaged man, with a head of black curly hair, dressed in the latest Parisian fashion, who enjoyed high patronage as a musicmaster.

The Prince, having delivered himself of a repartee with princely success, joined the patrician beauty at the piano, and presently they sung together the tender duet from "Il Don Giovanni," "*La ci darem*," to the professor's accompaniment. Very tenderly indeed was it vocalized, interrupted only by a murmured *bravo!* or *bravissimo!*—*brava!* or *bravissima!* from the

swarthy possessor of the music-stool, or a whisper of admiration from the courtly *cognoscenti* in the background.

At the conclusion, the pianist broke out into transports, expressed partly in enthusiastic French, partly in energetic Italian, and the attentive chorus in the rear ventured to breathe audibly their transports in the vulgar vernacular.

"Well, Latour, have I fallen off much in my singing?" inquired the royal vocalist, taking a pinch of the choicest of Fribourg's productions, from a gold snuff-box set round with brilliants.

"Fallen off!" exclaimed the Court musician, apparently in extreme amazement; "on the contrary, your Royal Highness has improved marvellously! And as for my Lady Countess, her voice is ravishing! The divine *maestro* would have been in ecstasy to have heard his *duo* to such perfection. I have reason to be proud of two such unrivalled pupils!"

The professor glanced round the circle with confidence, and beheld, as he expected, the fullest confirmation of the justice of his opinion. The Prince was evidently pleased—singing was one of the qualifications His Royal Highness prided himself in possessing in an eminent degree; and the Countess might have appeared to be blushing, had no one been aware that her colour was only transient, when affected by the agency of soap and water.

"Yes—ah! the thing is pretty! Exceedingly good style, Mozart! Nice music to go to sleep to," here exclaimed, in a drawling manner, an elaborately dressed gentleman, belonging evidently to the class of civilians I just now referred to, coming languidly forward from an ottoman where he had been reclining, and, it must be confessed, yawning during the performance. "But I'm monstrous glad I wasn't asked to sing it! Horribly fatiguing, I should think!"

"Ah, Brummell!" replied the Prince, good-humouredly, "we don't expect such prodigious exertions from you. A man who surrenders all his time to the study of his person cannot, we know, find leisure for cultivating his voice."

The sentence was regarded as a *bon mot*, and a general laugh followed its delivery—a laugh, though, by no means boisterous, as the exertion it would have required, the tight-laced exquisites, who assisted in producing it, could not have attempted. The Court musician was the only person who appeared to thoroughly enjoy the joke. His hilarity, however, was a little in excess.

"Mr. Brummell is content to gain distinction in a quiet way!" observed one of the circle, with a particularly hilarious and rather intellectual countenance. "He has evidently no ambition of making a noise in the world!"

"Not bad, Sherry, by Jove!" cried the Prince; and immediately the silk bags on the coat collars of the gentlemen, and the ostrich feathers in the head-dresses of the ladies, were agitated by the same mirthful inclina-

tion—the possessor of the music-stool laughing at least a semitone higher than before.

“I’m obliged to you, Mr. Sheridan, for your opinion of my vocal powers,” answered the beau, with a bow that was scarcely perceptible; then added, with much emphasis, “Nevertheless, I beg permission to remind some people that *the animal* usually considered to make the loudest noise in domestic life, rarely gets appreciated as one *out of the common!*”

The professor did not join the laugh this time.

One of the royal pages now appeared at the door, and immediately a gentleman of the Prince’s suite moved towards him. He presently returned, and remained for a few minutes in earnest conversation with another member of the Household, apparently in a higher position, who was conversing with a lady near the piano. The latter functionary speaking somewhat imperatively, attracted the attention of his royal master, who was turning over the leaves of the dark-eyed Countess’s music-book, while M. Latour played a piece of his own composition, that he had lately dedicated to his patron.

“What is it, Bloomfield?” inquired the Prince, looking up. The person thus addressed displayed an invitation card, which he said had just been presented at the door.

“A manifest forgery!” exclaimed His Royal Highness, examining it through a gold eye-glass; then added, with a look of displeasure, “Some one has taken an unpardonable liberty in concocting this.”

There were signs of more than ordinary curiosity in all the guests, male and female, and those in the background came forward to show the interest they took in the very strange affair.

“Do you know this person, Brummell?” inquired the Prince, placing the card in his hand. The dandy, with a critical face, read the name written upon it. His features in a moment expressed the most intense astonishment, with a large amount of indignation.

“I know him!” he exclaimed, apparently horror-struck, “why, he makes sugar and sells coffee,—in short, is a sort of grocer. How *could* I know such a man?”

He passed the card contemptuously to a largely whiskered exquisite, who had been glancing at the inscription over his shoulder.

“Do *you* know him, Alvanley?” inquired their host.

“Is it the black fellow who played *Romeo?*” replied the individual thus addressed, affectedly, and elevating his eyebrows and his short collar simultaneously. “Of course, I don’t know him in the least.”

“Are you acquainted with him, Petersham?”

“I cannot boast of that honour, I assure your Royal Highness.”

“Is he a friend of yours, Sherry?”

“Not that I know of. But were it possible for the poor man to patronize me handsomely, I couldn’t be so hard-hearted as to object to his countenance.”

When the laugh had subsided, the great dandy said authoritatively, "The person is not presentable; that style of thing cannot be permitted here, positively."

The Prince seemed to have been good-naturedly waiting for an excuse for not disappointing the dupe of an unworthy trick. He looked round the circle, and beheld in the general expression a decided disinclination to associate with the alleged "sort of grocer."

Time brought about its revenges, when the neglected, almost forgotten dandy, after a long expatriation, in vain strained his feeble sight to observe a recognition in the countenance of "the fat friend" of his brighter days, as the latter, a crowned king, passed through the French town in which he lingered out a melancholy existence. The change that awaited the Court wit was still nearer, and was at least equally humiliating.

"I do not like this affair at all," observed the Prince, at last, with a vexed look; then added, in a kindly tone, to Colonel Bloomfield, "Go to this gentleman, and undeceive him in a way not to hurt his feelings,—taking care to express the extreme regret of the Prince of Wales that such an *accident* should have occurred.

"Now, Lady Jersey," he said, turning to the dark-eyed countess, "let us try, with Latour, something by the new Italian composer, whose productions are now so much in vogue on the Continent."

"My dear sir!" exclaimed a fashionably dressed man, as he stopped a sedan that had just left the portico of Carlton Palace, and in a very cordial manner addressed a gentleman in cocked hat and Court suit, richly ornamented with diamonds, with a diamond-hilted sword at his side, who, as the few murky lamps at the house doors and the links of the bearers showed, possessed a singularly sombre complexion, "let me congratulate you on your well-deserved distinction! Of course you found His Royal Highness a most charming host?"

"Oh, there was some irregularity, Major; I do not exactly understand what," cried the unsuspecting dupe, putting his well-curled head close to the window. "But the Prince sent me a most kind message. I have no doubt that His Royal Highness will speedily set it right."

The chairmen presently proceeded with their burthen into Pall Mall, where they were again stopped.

"Ah, my dear fellow! is it you?" exclaimed another cordial voice. "'Pon my life, I'm delighted to see you looking so well. Just come from the royal party, eh? Didn't the Prince greatly admire your diamonds?"

"Well, Doctor, you see there was a slight mistake; but I have no doubt that I shall be sent for by His Royal Highness, from whom I had the honour of receiving a most obliging message."

The sedan was suffered to proceed; but it seemed as if all its occupant's most particular friends were in the streets that lay in his way home on this particular night, and at this particular hour; for along Pall Mall,

and up St. James's Street, in Piccadilly, and even to the door of his lodgings in Dover Street, the chair was continually being stopped by well-dressed gentlemen, who rivalled each other in the warmth of their congratulations.

All received slight variations of the same reply, in which the civility of the Prince of Wales was always prominently referred to. My friend felt wonderfully pleased at the prodigious interest his visit to Carlton House had excited, and never entertained the slightest suspicion of the hoax that had so successfully been played upon him.

The simplicity of the Amateur of Fashion was displayed in as striking manner in the Pump-room at Bath. He was surrounded by persons of both sexes, possessed of certain pretensions to rank and fashion; and one gentleman of influence expressed unqualified admiration of his legs,—then, as usual, in close-fitted pantaloons and well-wrinkled Hessians. In a moment they were in the favourite position, regarded by the owner with a smile of complacency. A captain in the Guards ventured, in a delicate way, to insinuate that a limb so perfectly shaped must owe something to art, especially at the graceful swell in the rear.

Far from being offended, or even surprised, at the suggestion, the Amateur appeared to take it quite as a matter-of-course compliment, and, dexterously pulling off his boot before the astonished company, offered to submit to any extent of inspection. This seemed too much for some of those who were nearest him, particularly the ladies, who, in evident apprehensions of what might come next, made a hasty retreat.

Not noticing this, my dusky friend, with a settled gravity which indicated his idea of the importance of the transaction, fluently descanted on the genuineness of the member, turning it about in every possible direction, that the amused spectators might see it to the best advantage. Toes, heel, calf, shin, and instep, were equally well ventilated, amid a chorus of wondering exclamations; till the performer, as though prompted by a sudden recollection, placed himself in his favourite position, gazing with ineffable content on silk stocking and pantaloon.

His lendings and spendings proceeded in a reckless course; but after a few seasons, the estate at Demerara, large though it was, began to give signs of exhaustion. Sugars fell, either in value or in quantity, and coffees were so depreciated in the market, that the heir of the wealthy planter found himself straitened in his resources. In time he was obliged to dispose of his handsome curriole—crowing cocks and all, to send his valuable horses to Tattersall's, and to deposit numerous diamonds, including his magnificent sword, with the relation usually appealed to for assistance in a reverse of circumstances.

These expedients not sufficing to set the Amateur of Fashion at his ease, and West India property, in consequence of political changes, descending rapidly in deterioration, he found himself quite unable to meet his liabilities. He expatriated himself, and lived for several years in quiet

retirement in a well-known town on the French coast, much frequented by Englishmen who stood in any apprehension from their compatriots John Doe and Richard Roe.

My friend was thus lost sight of altogether in his old haunts, and by his old associates; indeed, his name and fame had sunk into entire oblivion, when he contrived to effect an arrangement with his creditors, and once more made his appearance in London. No longer, however, dashing in his brilliant equipage through Rotten Row, or astonishing the *habitués* of Fop's Alley with the lustre of his jewels. Even the frogged coat was discarded in favour of a garment suited to an elderly gentleman with a limited income. Nevertheless he clung with more than a lover's devotion to pantaloons and Hessians; and by these, notwithstanding his long absence, he was sure to be recognized wherever he went.

"Bless my heart, Raikes," cried an old member of Arthur's, "here's Romeo Coates!"

Newspapers and magazines were simultaneously thrown down, and there was a general rush to the open window, with as evident a curiosity as if caused by the advent of a resuscitated Pharaoh. Their astonishment was largely increased when they beheld the individual on whom they were gazing—who had overheard the exclamation—stop suddenly in his promenade, walk gravely back, and plant himself before the window in an attitude and with a manner familiar to all who had known him in his palmy days.

"My name, gentlemen," he said, "is *Robert Coates*."

He then took off his hat with a theatrical bow, and resumed his walk with the dignity of a well-graced actor retiring from the footlights after an ovation of popular applause. The effect of this demonstration on the members of Arthur's may, perhaps, be imagined; it certainly cannot be described.

Alas, poor Romeo! The end of my eccentric but amiable friend was truly lamentable. He had been married many years, and lived on the wreck of his fine fortune in quiet respectability. On quitting Covent Garden Theatre after an operatic performance, he remembered that he had left his *lorgnettes* in the box he had just vacated. He sprung out of his carriage, and rushed across the road, then crowded with vehicles; a cab, being driven rapidly away, knocked him down, and he was killed by the wheel going over his head.

The few survivors of his old friends lamented him sincerely; for, notwithstanding his vanity and folly, he possessed an excellent heart, and was in many respects an accomplished gentleman,—a marked contrast to more recent amateurs of fashion, whose careers have been remarkable only for coarse profligacy and vulgar excess.

VELUTI IN SPECULUM.

NOVEMBER is generally a dreary month in England, we allow, and we are prepared to admit the truth of the statistical statements as to the number of suicides committed in that month, which are annually produced in the papers after the miraculous shower and gigantic gooseberry have gone the rounds. But to us the first of November of this year appears, as it were, encircled by a golden halo, for it is the witness of the dull close of a still duller Exposition. No longer will country cousins disturb us at the moment when we are settling the affairs of the nation, very much at least to our own satisfaction; no longer shall we walk ourselves into a Saharian thirst, and be compelled to quench it at Mr. Morrish's hospitable though mercenary counter; no longer shall we hold verbal contests with omnibus cads, who take us to be fresh from the country, and charge, or at least try it on, accordingly; and, lastly, we see a prospect of the "Peep o' Day" vanishing from the Lyceum boards. These are no trivial boons; and we accept their accompaniment by a November fog as a necessary memento that unclouded happiness is not permitted to mortals.

Among the signs of the times connected with the deceased Exhibition, not the least remarkable is the quantity of books written by Continentals on the much-vexed question of English life and manners. Most of these have already found commentators; and while critics have made a mockery of such men as Assollant and Larcher, who deliberately perverted the truth in order to pamper the worst passions and prejudices of their countrymen, we confess, for our part, that we have felt over-satiated by the compliments lavished on England by Esquiros and Rodenberg. In fact, this is one of the many cases in which he who steers the middle steers the safest course. Among such, M. Hector Malot, some time "our own" correspondent to a French journal, holds a conspicuous place; for while he nothing extenuates, he certainly sets down nought in malice. Suppose, therefore, that we canter through his pleasant pages, and pick up whatever novelty he may have to offer about "Modern Life in England." *

M. Malot sets out by telling his readers that his are essentially surface pictures, but at the same time he has striven to the utmost of his ability to avoid caricature. While wishing to eradicate the prejudices that still exist among his countrymen on the subject of the Market of Smithfield, and the sale of a wife for half a crown and a pot of "portaire," he has the ulterior wish of inducing English authors "no longer to employ those facile means of success which, in order to flatter the traditional taste, represent us [the French] as a composite of barbers singing romances, amorous man-cooks, ridiculous dancers, and poor devils feeding on frogs, and unable to walk without wooden shoes." But, query, where should

* "La Vie Moderne en Angleterre." Par Hector Malot. Paris: Michel Levy Frères.

we find the English author so foolish as to draw such a portrait of Frenchmen, when he calls to mind Inkermann and Magenta?

We certainly allow that the Gaul who does not possess the English tongue must find a difficulty in making his way in London. Even if he rush, like the moth at a candle, upon the mendacious "*ici on parle Français*," and pull up the sluices of his eloquence as only a Frenchman can do who has been for some time debarred from the use of his own language, he receives a severe chill when confronted with the daughter of the house, whose knowledge of French is based on three quarters at a Peckham boarding-school. Still, M. Malot is quite right when he recommends his readers to put up with any discomfort rather than throw themselves into the facile arms of Leicester Square. We hardly know an Englishman who would have the boldness to pen such straightforward remarks as the following:—

"As this quarter [Leicester Square] has nothing English about it, cafés organized in the style of ours are found here, and their strange population must be seen. One morning I entered a café of this description; but though it was very early, I was not alone. Customers had arrived before me, whose livid faces, muddy clothes and linen, clearly said that they had not spent the night in their beds. Seated at bare tables, they talked politics; for, speculating on the interest which every proscrip inspires, their ambition is to have themselves accepted as political victims. By degrees, one corner of the room filled; faces and garments, though coming from the four parts of the world, all had that air of relationship which equal misery engenders, and the language was, with more or less correctness (let us not be proud of it), French. When they had talked sufficiently, they called for dominoes, and began playing, each marking his score on the marble table with a slate pencil, which he produced from his pocket. About the breakfast hour, the landlord came in and went up to the players; 'By-the-bye,' he said to them, 'I warny ou that I do not want any bad half-crowns to-day. I am willing to take them now and then, so that you may not starve; but I took too many yesterday, and will have none to-day.' All the denizens of this quarter are not, of course, of this stamp, but there are a good many such, and it is no recommendation in English eyes to live there."

Our author remarks, however, and we fully coincide with him, that the comfort of which the English so often talk is not to be found in a lodging-house. But even when the benighted and intelligent foreigner has found a bedroom, other and more serious difficulties beset him, not the least of these being locomotion in London, — a city "which is immensity in uniformity." Street succeeds street, and squares squares, with a regularity that produces an idea of infinitude; but though the mind may admit that idea to some extent, it is impossible for the legs to do so, and when they wish to rest, where is the foreigner to seat himself? The squares, which, says our author, are often magnificent gardens, are carefully locked up, and the visitor to London can only repose in a gin-palace or an eating-house. Over both these, M. Malot breaks the staff: of the first, he says that the life is simply disgusting; of the second, that the food is insipid,

as it consists of meat first roasted, and then put to boil in hot-water dishes. As for the pastry, the crust is as heavy as a lump of lead, and as sticky as a piece of cheese. As for salad, the delight of the Continental, it is composed of a sort of grass bearing the name, and seasoned with a white dressing that burns like vitriol, and is kept in bottles enwrithed like snakes. Assuredly nothing too bad can be said against the species of hair-oil known as salad dressing, and which makes the eater sigh for the fragrant Lucca oil and white vinegar of France, which requires no other condiment beyond a pinch of salt. Here is another and equally well-merited growl from our Gallic friend :—

“Though eating and drinking are two things which occupy the most space in the life of a foreigner in London, there is still a third which is no less important, and that is going where he wants to go. At the outset we are bound to say that there are no human legs which can resist the fatigue of London. Let those who fancy themselves good walkers, come and make essay of their prowess in a city thrice as large as Paris, and they will have the conceit taken out of them. Add to this, that, even if their legs had sufficient strength to carry their body, memory would certainly not have sufficient power to guide the feet, for London is a labyrinth of more or less placarded streets. Thus, there are thirty or forty that bear the name of King Street, twenty or thirty Princes Streets, and an infinity of others which, even in the same quarter, often bear the same name. Besides, in order to complicate this disorder, the names of the streets are not put up at every corner, and you often only find them at the beginning and the end. In this way, if you come out into the middle of the Commercial Road, which is more than four miles in length, you may be forced to walk for more than half an hour without knowing where you are ; and the same is the case in Oxford Street and Piccadilly.”

When the first oblong slips of paper were left at our houses, demanding money for the Metropolitan Board of Works, we were confidently informed by the press that London was about to possess its ædiles, and that all such complaints as the above were going to be stopped. Messrs. Thwaites and Co. certainly obtain their money—or know the reason why ; but their promises have proved as nugatory as those of the General Omnibus Company,—whose name be Anathema Maranatha—more especially on the Brompton Road. M. Malot allows that our Hansom's are superior to the Parisian *fiacres*, but he again complains of the complexity of fares. Thus, he states that one day, leaving the Great Exhibition in a shower (and who ever left it otherwise?), a cabman asked him five shillings to convey him to the British Museum. Fortunately for him, a complaisant Englishman (and there are such, he carefully adds, between brackets) intervened, and he struck a bargain for half a crown. But all this is to be altered in the good time coming, if not by Mr. Cowper, then by the new Cab Companies, whose mission it will be to teach Mr. Cabby that honesty is the best policy. We are inclined to endorse M. Malot's remark, that the best plan for a foreigner in London, under the existing vehicular *régime*, is to be rather cheeky in his dealings with cabmen and buss cads. And now for

a good word on the Thames steamers, which our author calls the busses of the river.

“This is often the quickest and cheapest mode of locomotion. It is also the most agreeable, for assuredly the Thames is the glory of London. Perhaps this great silent highway of England does not produce the same feeling of admiration and astonishment in those who have seen the fine rivers of America; but in us, who are accustomed to calm and limpid streams, on which float here and there a few white-sailed vessels, it acts powerfully, and excites, first surprise, and then, through reflection, enthusiasm. It becomes the personification of England; active, busy, sombre, and irresistible in her onward course. It is a complete personification, for the genius of the seas reigns up to London Bridge, where it hands over its might to the genius of trade. London is *triste*,—that is, underneath,—but there is no sadness which cannot be distracted by the spectacle which the Thames offers. Go, at London Bridge, aboard a penny steamer, and proceed up stream to Chelsea, passing under the bridges, marvellous for strength and boldness, which connect the two cities, in the midst of crossing vessels, and between the banks on which forests of chimneys smoke: or go down the sea-arm from London Bridge, through the ships which arrive from all countries of the world; pass the docks in which float the flags of all nations; proceed as far as Gravesend, that pretty town surrounded by green meadows, and if you feel any vexation with the English, or any injustice toward England, you will be affected by entirely different feelings, and understand a part of the strength and greatness of this country. The Thames will have effected the miracle.”

One of the things which next strikes the visitor to England—so says our author, and in this Doctor Rodenberg, in his “Tag und Nacht in London,” fully agrees with him—is the power of the English press. At the first glance, the country appears to be one huge reading-room, in which everybody has but one desire—that of perusing the papers. But there is a thing even more surprising still to M. Malot, and that is the perfect liberty of the press. In England, a man fancies that he has something to say, and, for a certain amount, establishes a paper to say it. As our author justly observes,—

“If the editor denounce a fact, incriminating any department, and which offends or insults an official, he receives no *communiqué*. He can labour, study, and write; his time is not devoured by journeys which he is compelled to make, to-day to a minister, who makes him pay for his indulgence; to-morrow to a magistrate, who makes him feel his importance. His hours can be better employed than in receiving messages, half officious, half official, telling him, ‘Yesterday you published an article against the Papacy, and your paper is going to be stopped. You ought to have produced the article the day before yesterday, for our policy changed in the night.’ . . . In France, if, with the best faith in the world, we announce that the president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, in a town of the south, has been accused of an outrage on public morality, and it happens, on the contrary, to be a president of a town in the south-east, all the presidents in the south might bring actions against us. We are forced to leave the spot where we are known, to go and defend ourselves in a town where our opponent has powerful influences at his disposal, and, on reaching it, we shall not be allowed to offer proofs of the fact which we have denounced; we only go to hear ourselves sentenced by judges whose verdict we are not allowed either to discuss or criticize.”

What strikes us more in the above excerpt than its truth, is the boldness of the utterance. Time was, and not so long back, when a French paper would have been crushed for such remarks. In a work of which we hope to say something next month—"New Babylon," by Pelletan—we equally find the author attacking the moral and material corruption of Paris with an acridity which touches on the Biblical. It is from such *indicia* as these that the solution of the Italian question should be demanded, and not from the vague and misty despatches of Thouvenel, which only see light when a sop has to be thrown to Europe. We have ever held to the belief that the Emperor Napoleon meant fairly by his people, but that he was constitutionally indolent, and allowed his name to be prostituted by his ministers; and the wider liberty allowed to the French authors generally serves to prove that the time is at hand when Louis Napoleon will grant free scope to public discussion. And it should not be left out of sight, that while the Emperor of the French, who has reasons to fear light, as all despots must have, is slowly letting the door swing back, and allowing the blessed sunshine of free thought to enter, William of Prussia, the constitutional monarch, *par excellence*, of Germany, the ally and friend of England, has just put down with febrile terror the foolish maunderings of a disappointed old man like Varnhagen Von Ense, whose only pleasure in later life was to record the tattle of each day, and revel in the thought of the Pandora's box of mischief which he left behind him. Surely a state of things such as M. Malot describes as existing in the British press would not be very dangerous to any monarch, no matter whether despotic and naturally liberal, like Louis Napoleon, or constitutional in theory, and, by grace of God, like the King of Prussia.

"What precedes, though very cursory and incomplete, will, I trust, give an idea of the strength and importance of the newspaper in England. The liberty of discussion has created this strength, and free trade has created this importance. As everybody can write freely and print freely, without all the restrictions of the licence, and all the arsenal of penalties which cause a French printer never to know whether he may not wake up in prison, newspapers have been started in large numbers, addressing themselves to all the ends of thought, and all the wants of the intellect; and the result of this rivalry is that the newspaper has been enabled to penetrate everywhere, and force itself upon all, bearing light into the darkest corners, and with it life and health. What we derive most clearly from any comparisons we may make, is that the English nation, so coarse and ignorant ten years ago, has made immense progress on the path of artistic education. Now if we seek what has entailed this result, we find that it is instruction; if we seek what has provoked this want of instruction and reading, we find that it is the newspaper; and, lastly, if we seek what it is that has given the newspaper this power, we find that it is liberty."

Turning to matters theatrical, we find M. Malot severe, but not unfairly so, even though he ventilates the theory that dramatic art has been killed in England by the adaptation of pieces from the French. This subject, however, has been so thoroughly and honestly discussed by M. Esquiros in his last volume, that nothing now can be said. In truth,

M. Malot more than once expresses his acknowledgments to this author, who has done more to produce a perfect knowledge of England in France than any other of his predecessors. The only thing, perhaps, that may be objected to M. Esquiros is, that his framework is too vast, and that in his desire to make his countrymen know England as it is, he enters into details which will render his work one of a generation, and not of a lifetime. Still, the difference between Esquiros and Malot is excessive, and we are pleased to find the latter mentally taking off his hat to his great master. Esquiros, in truth, is *sui generis*: there is not, in all probability, an Englishman now living, who could give us such an appreciation of Paris as Esquiros has offered of England. Bayle St. John probably approached the nearest to it in his "Purple Tints;" but it must be borne in mind that Esquiros has to describe England, while all our writers confine their attention to Paris, which is France. Now, a Liverpuddlian or a Mancunian would set his bristles up, and vow an undying vengeance against the *St. James's Magazine*, if we were so bold as to assert that London was England. Of course we, as Londoners, believe it; but the truth is not to be spoken at all times. But now hear a Frenchman, who makes remarks which we are emboldened to say that no Frenchman ever made before him.

"At the first glance, when we study the exercises of sport, we are greatly disposed to look at them from the funny side, and poke our fun at them. And for my own part I confess that, with my French education, I often regarded races as a simple pretext for speculation; cricket as an exercise consisting in tiring oneself, and which produced pleasure in an equal ratio with perspiration; regattas as a carnival in which the end sought was the most astounding costume possible; and boxing as the ignoble massacre of persons who were afraid of a sword or a pistol. But when you descend slightly below the surface, you very quickly perceive, on noticing these sports as practised in England, that they have their very serious side, and a most practical utility, which is worth bringing to light. By her races, England has obtained a breed of horses which, for speed, triumphs over all others, and which in staying powers is only beaten by the Arab horses. At the same time, the love for horses has become so general, that every breed has been improved by the incessant care bestowed on it, from the racer to the team horse. By her regattas, England has spread a taste for the navy through every corner of a country which makes such an enormous consumption of sailors. By cricket, pedestrianism, and even, to a certain point, by pugilism (I will not constitute myself its defender, but it must be said that it has put down duelling, and, to some extent, cowardly brutality)—by these three exercises she has developed physical force, and consequently combated the diseases to which the climate of the north predisposes, at the same time as it combated the drunkenness which results from idleness. For a people which has neglected all corporeal exercises only to super-excite the brain, these results, it appeared to me, were worthy of pointing out. Action does not determine success, so much as enduring and lasting. For the latter qualities, physical strength is good, and we should do well to remember the fact in France."

The chapter devoted by M. Malot to our volunteers is very just and fair, and he displays an unexpected degree of appreciation. He indicates

the difficulties with which the volunteers have had to contend, pokes some good-humoured fun at their exaggerated bands and love of lace; but for all that, offers his sincere meed of praise to the movement, and declares that in the end the volunteers will be the salvation of both England and France,—of England, because when that country begins to have entire confidence in its civilian army, the nation will refuse the enormous budgets dragged from it through a fear of France; while it is to be hoped that, when this has been effected in England, the military outlay of France will be brought to a fairer proportion.

A very well-worn subject with French writers is the English Sunday, and on this head M. Malot imitates his predecessor, who remarked, “As I always tell the truth, I must say that I have seen an Englishman who had not red hair.” M. Malot confesses that he never hungered or thirsted in London on Sunday, nor was he compelled to satiate his pangs with a pound of jujubes and distilled water at a chemist’s shop. Still, for all that, he insinuates that there are pleasanter ways of spending a Sunday than in London, and that the English themselves only endure it with silent revolt. Here is an anecdote to the point:—

“One Sunday I had stated that I was going into the country, but unexpectedly returned. The house was deserted; the servants were at church, and only the landlady was in. I had left her in her parlour reading her Bible, and found her now in my room, with a white apron, a hammer in one hand and a box of nails in the other, amusing herself with driving nails into my wall. Thus surprised, her confusion was great, grotesque, and painful. To help her out of the embarrassment, I took the hammer from her hand, and prepared myself to drive in the last nails. ‘Oh no,’ she said, as she checked me, ‘not with the hammer;’ and as I looked at her in surprise, ‘with the gimlet first,’ she added. ‘And why so?’ ‘Because we shall make less noise.’ What an answer! In two words, she had foreseen everything: on one hand, she saved appearances; on the other, she discharged one half the sin on to my shoulders. I was her accomplice.”

It is certainly a great recreation to drive nails into a wall on a Sunday; but the English, says M. Malot, have even a greater one on that day, in burying their dead; for they thus escape the monotony of home, and enjoy the pleasant prospect at Woking or Epping Forest Cemetery. But the rigid observance of the sabbath might be conceded, if it filled the churches with the faithful; but our author states that this is not the case, as there are in London nearly one million and a half inhabitants who never enter a church. As M. Malot remarks,—

“It is difficult to understand how the English, who also suffer from this annoyance, can support it; and yet they do support it—they wish for it, and like it; not because it gives them any satisfaction—they have not yet reached the stage of feeling amusement in annoyance—but because, being the consequence of a national institution, it becomes national also. ‘I am weary,’ an Englishman says to himself, ‘but I am accomplishing a duty. I honour the constitution of my country, and I have the inappreciable satisfaction of not being like a Frenchman.’ All, it is true, have not this sublimity in resignation and there is a goodly

number whom the observance of Sunday renders the most unhappy beings in the world ; for being placed between the very natural desire of not feeling bored, and the exigency imperiously imposed by the *convenances* of not appearing to amuse themselves, they offer the foreigner who sees them in this composite state a spectacle which amply rewards him for the cold beef which the Sunday forces him to eat in the taverns, and the cups of tea which it makes him drink. It is a sweet and just revenge."

Very clever is the chapter which M. Malot devotes to English novel-writers, and the ever-recurring comparison between Dickens and Thackeray. Of the former he says, that if he had not lacked sincerity in his depiction of the passions ; if he had not subjected himself to certain conventionalisms which have nothing in common with art, he could take his place among the greatest novelists. "Dickens," to quote our author's own words, "possesses humour, truth of observation, sensibility, depth, movement, and life ; but for all that he is not perfect. He has obeyed the taste and hypocrisies of his country, and has not dared to raise the fig-leaf which English prudery has chastely placed on human nature ; he has given us the entire man, but he has been obliged to forget the heart. His qualities are his own, and make him great—his fault belongs to his country."

During the early period of his stay in London, M. Malot tells us that he passed through these mental phases. The first was amazement ; for he had never imagined so much movement, nor so much order, nor such silence in the midst of noise. He spent days in Cheapside and Cornhill, looking at the crowd, the shops, and the vehicles. When his legs were exhausted, he went to London Bridge, where he took boat, and proceeded up the river, having the whole city before him, with its steeples, bridges, ships mingled with houses, its parks, its docks, its palaces and hovels ; and thus continuously in variety produced a vertigo. The next stage M. Malot passed through was lassitude ; for he soon found London life monotonous, as he had to do with actors constantly playing the same scene, with the same zeal and decorations. He did not know where to find bread that was not too spongy ; or meat that was not too fat, and his *ennui* became opaque and stupefying. He only comprehended one thing—that architecture exerts a real influence on human happiness. Those, he says, who do not hold that art in high esteem, should visit London, and they will return with the conviction that it is as useful from the moral as the practical point of view ; while they will also feel what sadness a black colouring can imprint on the mind and the character. From this depressing stage he passed into the third and last, when he began to notice that the uniformity was not so great as he had imagined. Insensibly, original details emerged from the mass, and curiosity arrived. But the foreigner, in this last phase, must make a complete abstraction of his artistic tastes and feelings.

"With the exception of a few churches, he must resign himself to a sad

uniformity of bricks—plaster porticos and guillotine windows ; for, in spite of what the English may say, there can be no question of art raised about Trafalgar Square, the most "unlucky and portentous square in the world ; nor about the Houses of Parliament, which are externally an enormous plaything, whose model, reduced in cork, would figure agreeably on an *étagère* ; nor about the pitiable statues which dishonour St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, and the London squares. I know very well, that when a man belongs to a country which allows a statue like that of Louis XIII. to be erected in a square like the Place Royale, he has no right to feel very proud ; still he can laugh heartily on looking at Nelson unrolling behind him a cable, which resembles anything else sooner ; the great Wellington pointing to the White Horse Cellars ; or George III. borne away on a steed which terribly humiliates royalty."

Still M. Malot allows that it is absurd for a foreigner to expect to find Paris in London, and the latter city possesses sufficient originality and grandeur not to require to be aught but itself. London, in truth, is not a city, but a conglomeration, something like the United States of America,—a confederation formed by proximity, but without any necessary link. The rule is, each for himself, and chance for all. Rich here, poor there,—nothing in common between them ; one half enjoys, the other half perishes. We will not follow M. Malot in his walks through London, as we wish to make room for our last extract.

"When we have seen a city in detail, we naturally feel a desire to see it and comprehend it in its entirety. In Paris nothing is easier ; you have only to go up the Montmartre, when you have the whole city beneath you, with its belt of hills. You can see where it started, what it is to-day, and whither it is going ; one glance fixes it. In London this is not the case. The hills there are of no great height, and all around the loftier buildings floats an atmosphere of smoke or fog, which arrests vision within a couple of yards ; hence it is difficult to select one's place and hour. It was on a Sunday morning that I ascended Primrose Hill ; the countless chimneys were not sending forth their black clouds, and the sky was pure. As far as my eyes could reach, I only saw roofs and ever roofs, with a few clumps of trees here and there ; but nothing striking or original issued from this gray scene. It was strength in its superb continuity ; but only strength. I stood for a long time gazing ; then slowly descending to the Regent's Park through the silent and deserted streets, I said to myself that a people which possessed strength and perseverance, even if it had not the ideal to an equal extent, was a great people, and that the qualities which give strength and success were, unfortunately, but too often exclusive."

And here we must take leave of our pleasant companion through London, with a hearty shake of the hand, and a confident hope that we may meet again soon, and resume our agreeable and instructive stroll.

HISTORICAL PERSONAGES,

AS ILLUSTRATED IN MINIATURE ART IN SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

PART I.

IF there be any truth in the dicta of those two very different minded persons, Jonathan Richardson and Horace Walpole, on the value of the limner's art, viz., "Let a man read a character in Lord Clarendon (and certainly never was a better painter in that kind), he will find it improved by seeing a picture of the same person by Vandyck;" and, "A portrait of real authenticity calls up so many collateral ideas, as to fill an intelligent mind more than any other species of painting"—at what shall we estimate the value of these widely-collected portrait treasures now brought together at South Kensington, lent by no less than one hundred and eighteen contributors? The cabinets of Penshurst, and those erst of Strawberry Hill, of Drummond Castle, and Hamilton Palace, and many others, have been ransacked to form this galaxy of celebrated and illustrious personages. The poets, heroes, and statesmen of England have "come out strong" indeed; and of that portion of the softer sex which the *Sieur Brantome* quaintly terms, "*claires et nobles femmes*," there are constellations of exceeding brilliance from the hemispheres both of France and England. The cycle of *Louis the Magnificent* receives gorgeous illustration from the hand of that prince of enamellists, *Petitot*; while *Janet* and other French limners vie with their contemporaries in England—*Hilliard*, the two *Olivers*, *Cooper*, *Bernard Lens*, and our entire school of eminent miniaturists—in portraiture of the celebrities of their respective times.

To what sentiments, then—to what faculties, do these varied portraitures appeal? and by what laws are their merits estimated? The answer will show that most of the sentiments they awaken are such as exist in the bosom of almost every man.

It may, perhaps, be with truth asserted, that no human creature in a sound state, mental and corporeal, ever existed who was quite unsusceptible of that pleasure which arises from the sight of a clever imitation. The exclamation of a clown, on beholding the pictured face of any person familiarly known to him, will immediately attest the pleasure which he receives from the deception. The most experienced critic will also derive satisfaction from the *look of life* which a skilful artist can infuse into his works. Here, then, is one appeal extending to every beholder.

Others, in addition to the pleasure derived from this source, feel great delight from delineations of female beauty; and nowhere can more exquisite specimens be found than in these miniatures.

Dr. *Donne*, whose *vera effigies* we have by *J. Oliver* (1,908,* in the

* These figures correspond with those in the Catalogue of "Works of Art on Loan at the South Kensington Museum," part 2.

catalogue), in his poem on the storm in which the Earl of Essex (2,227) was surprised returning from the island voyage, says,—

“A hand or eye
By Hilliard drawn, is worth a history
By a worse painter made.”

And Peacham, “On Limning,” says, “Comparing ancient and modern painters brings the comparison to our own time and country; nor must I be ungratefully unmindful of my own countrymen, who have been and are able to equal the best of occasion served, as old Hilliard, Mr. Isaac Oliver, inferior to none in Christendom for the *countenance in small*.”

But the greatest obligation we have to Hilliard is his having contributed to form *Isaac Oliver* (1555—1617). “Hitherto,” remarks Horace Walpole, “we have been obliged to owe to other countries the best performances exhibited in painting; but in the branch in which Oliver excelled, we may challenge any nation to show a greater master, if, perhaps, we except a few of the smaller works of Holbein. Don Julio Clovis, the celebrated limner, whose neatness and taste in grotesque were exquisite, cannot be compared with Isaac Oliver, because Clovis never painted portraits, and the latter little else. Petitot, whose enamels have exceeding merit, perhaps owed a little of the beauty of his works to the happy nature of the composition. We ourselves have nobody to put in competition with Oliver, except it be our own Cooper, who, though living in an age of freer pencil, and under the auspices of Vandyke, scarce compensated by the boldness of his expression for the truth of nature and delicate fidelity of the older master. Oliver’s son, Peter, alone approached to the perfection of his father.”

Among the numerous portraits contained in that splendid cabinet known as the *Digby Miniatures*, purchased at the Strawberry Hill sale, and now owned by Miss Burdett Coutts, is that noble miniature copied by Peter Oliver from a picture by Vandyke (No. 2,151). It is a large oblong group of Sir Kenelm Digby, his wife, the Lady Venetia, and their sons, Kenelm and John. This, pronounced by Walpole to be “*the most beautiful piece of the size to exist*,” was discovered, with several others, in the garret of an old house in Wales, belonging to Mr. Watkin Williams, a supposed descendant of Sir Kenelm Digby. That genuine model of the staunch royalist and gallant cavalier, Sir Kenelm, attended Charles Prince of Wales, with that “*dear dog and gossip*,” Steenie, upon their romantic expedition to Madrid, in 1623. On his return, in the following year, he married Lady Venetia Stanley, whom another miniature (2,153), taken apparently at about the age of nineteen, shows to have been, as Lord Clarendon mentions, “of an extraordinary beauty” as well as of “an extraordinary fame.” A more perfect personification of blooming youth and dazzling loveliness can scarcely be imagined. The rich, fair tresses, parted from off a noble brow, float over shoulders of snowy whiteness—the entire contour of limb and feature harmonizing a true type of the high-bred

English girl, whose lofty standard of beauty might well disdain every art of dress and coquetry. Another group of great historical interest is the still larger one of the More family (2,650), after Holbein, by P. Oliver. This fine work has miniature full-lengths of Sir John More, his celebrated son the Chancellor, Sir Thomas, and his wife, Anne Cresacre; their son John, and three daughters, Margaret Roper, Elizabeth Dansey, and Cicely Heron; and portraits, also, of the Chancellor's grandson, Mr. More, for whom this picture was painted, his wife, and their two sons, with a view of the garden of their house at Chelsea. Here we have one of England's worthies, as described by his friend Erasmus (2,459), conversing affably with his family,—“No man living so affectionate to his children as he, and loving his old wife as if she were a young maid; so excellent of temper, that whatsoever happeneth that could not be helped, he loveth it as though nothing could have happened more happily.”

Another large-sized miniature by the elder Oliver (1,945), a full-length of Richard, third Earl of Dorset, claims our attention. It is painted on a thick and smooth piece of card, quite plain at the back (9½ inches by 6¼), signed in gold letters on the matted floor, “Isaac Ollivierus, fecit, 1616.” The earl stands at a table, resting his right hand on a plumed helmet. Beneath his feet is a Persian carpet; the rest of the floor is covered with an Indian matting of a complex pattern. He is bare-headed, wearing a stiff, standing-out lace band or collar. His complexion is sallow, and hair and eyes dark brown. His dress is white, with blue stockings; and the trunk hose is of blue, profusely ornamented with suns, crescents, and stars. The rest of his armour lies on the ground, and has been illuminated with silver. The centre portion of the background is dark grey, with rich blue and silver curtains descending on either side. He was born in 1589, in the Charter House, London, and married the celebrated Anne Clifford (2,046) in 1609; he resided at Knole, and died 1624. His widow, Anne Clifford (1,910), married afterwards Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery (1,911). Her sway in the north of England was almost regal, and her spirited answer to Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State to Charles II., is well known: “I have been bullied by an usurper, I have been neglected by a Court, but I won't be dictated to by a subject. Your man sha'n't stand.—Anne Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery.” She survived her second husband twenty-six years (died 1676).

Authentic portraits throw a light upon other matters besides the history, properly so called, of the illustrious dead. Costume and manners receive striking elucidation, to say nothing of their interpretation of points and allusions that would otherwise be left obscure in our early poetry and drama. How varied and numerous are the changes of fashion in dress herein depicted! and how illustrative of that proverbial fickleness of the English on that score, which justified the old limner's joke in 1570! That worthy being employed to decorate the gallery of the Lord Admiral

Lincoln with representations of the costume of the different nations of Europe, when he came to the English, drew a naked man, with cloth of various colours lying beside him, and a pair of shears held in his hand, as in rueful suspense and hesitation. Or the earlier conceit, to the same effect, of Andrew Borde, of Physicke Doctor, "*alias* Andreas Perforatus," who, to the first chapter of his "Boke of the Instruction of Knowledge" (1542), prefixed a naked figure, with these lines,—

" I am an Englishman, and naked I stand here,
Musing in minde what rayment I shal weare :
For now I wil weare this, and now I wil weare that,
And now I will weare—I cannot telle whatte."

The Tudor and Stuart reigns receive ample and admirable illustration: the first at the hands of Mabeuse, Holbein, and Hilliard; the latter from the two Olivers, Cooper, and Lens—our seventh and eighth Henrys figuring numerously with all their families. Of Henry VIII. there are no less than nine portraits, at different periods of his life, with all his wives, save Anne of Cleves. Among the curious effigies of the burly monarch is a full-length carved in *hone* stone, and another in boxwood by Holbein, both from the Strawberry Hill collection. Of his gallant compeer at "the Field of the Cloth of Gold" there is no miniature exhibited, though we have a quadrangular portrait of him in Limoges enamel (1,695); but there is a full-length of his queen Claude the *Good*, by Janet (2,431), and also of their unfortunate son François (2,430), the dauphin, poisoned in 1536. Their *gaillarde* son-in-law, James V. of Scotland, familiarly known as the Fitz-James of Scott's "Lady of the Lake," and "the Gude Man of Ballangeich," is here (2,742). His first queen, Magdalene of France (with whom the first interview was had after the fashion he was so fond of—disguised as a servitor in her father's dining-hall), having died at Holyrood forty days after her landing in Scotland, James next married Mary of Lorraine, by whom he had an only daughter—the ill-starred Mary Queen of Scots. This likeness of him, by an unnamed artist, fully bears out the metrical limning of Sir Walter, from whatever source he drew it :—

" Not his the face, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare ;
The sparkling glance soon blown to fire
Of hasty love or headlong ire."

Of his lovely child, poor Mary Stuart, there are seven portraits—all, as usual, strangely differing from each other. Of these we will speak hereafter.

In a book of portraits in pencil, shaded with red and black crayon (owned by the Earl of Derby), of celebrated persons, exhibited among the specimens of rare books, there is one very delicately executed of the too

famous Marguerite, the author of the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles." Marguerite of Angoulême, Duchess of Alençon, Queen of Navarre, only sister of Francis I., wrote a series of tales so full of "bold discourses and ticklish expressions," that La Croix du Maine doubted any woman could have composed such a book. Brantome and La Fontaine both acknowledged their obligations to it; and Montaigne calls it *un gentil livre pour son étoffe*; and Bayle says it is "after the manner of Boccace's novels," and "has some beauties in that kind which are surprising." Strange to say, after all the interest and laudation which it excited, the genuine *Heptameron*, after remaining in manuscript for more than three hundred years from the Queen of Navarre's death, was only published some nine years since, by the *Société des Bibliophiles Français*. Marguerite died in 1549.

We have a likeness of the dull and feeble-minded Henry II. of France (2,426), whose sole accomplishment—expertness in bodily exercises—led to his death in 1559. At a splendid tournament given in honour of the nuptials of his sister and the Duke of Savoy, Henry had carried off the honours of the day; but towards the close of it, having unfortunately chosen to run a course with the Count de Montgomerie (an ancestor of the present Earl of Eglinton), captain of his Scottish guards, the lance of the stout knight shivered in the encounter, and the broken truncheon entering the King's eye, penetrated to the brain. Henry languished eleven days, and died at the age of forty-one, on the 10th of January, 1559. There is a likeness of his consort, Catherine de' Medici (2,429), neglected throughout his reign for the beautiful Diana of Poitiers, for which *spretæ injuria formæ*, by the way, she afterwards too fully indemnified herself when the sceptre of her weak and bigoted sons fell within her grasp.

The historic illustrations afforded by the miniatures of this period are especially interesting, from the close connection which existed between France and Scotland through the Guises, consequent upon the marriage of James V. with Mary, daughter of Claude de Lorraine, Duke of Guise. During the long minority of Mary Stuart, those foremost statesmen of their age, Francis and his brother the Cardinal, profited by their family connection to establish the complete ascendancy of the French alliance in that country. And on the marriage of the young Queen of Scots in 1558 (the year of our great Tudor queen, Elizabeth's accession), the influence of Guise became paramount. Francis II., having died without issue, after a reign of scarcely eighteen months—the shortest in the French annals—was succeeded by his brother, Charles IX., a boy of ten years old, of whom we find a portrait (2,427), a full-length, at a more mature age, by Janet. The queen-mother now assumed the exercise of sovereign power. Accused by the Catholics of "apostasy," the flames of religious persecution soon spread furiously; and after ten years of strife and bloodshed, the catastrophe of St. Bartholomew occurred. We look with profound interest on the noble, grave, and intelligent countenances of the three illustrious brothers Coligny

(2,412, 2,413, 2,414), who played so memorable a part in that great religious tragedy. The first victim was the brave Admiral Gaspar Coligny, murdered in his bed by Besme, the myrmidon of Henry of Guise, who himself waited below while the assassin brutally plunged his sword into the old man's heart, and would not be satisfied until the bleeding corpse of the victim was flung down from the window at his feet. The elder, François, had happily died three years previously (1569). Odet, the younger, had fled to England, where he was also murdered, one year before the massacre. Though Cardinal of Chatillon, he embraced the Reformed faith. On the failure of the Protestant chiefs to carry off the young king, Charles IX., in order to free him from the influence of the Guises, the religious wars began with the battle of St. Denis. In this affray the Cardinal did his *devoir* like a brave soldier. "Il y fit très bien," says Brantome, "et montra au monde qu'un noble et genereux cœur ne peut ni mentir ni faillir, en quelque lieu qu'il se trouve, ni en quelque habit qu'il soit." The result of that day caused his proscription, and he fled to England, where he was welcomed by Elizabeth. He died at Hampton Court, 14th February, 1571, from poison administered by his valet, who was shortly afterwards arrested at Rochelle, and there executed for the crime.

Charles IX. did not long survive the grand *battue* he had of his Huguenot subjects, when he fired his arquebus at them from the window of the Louvre during the St. Bartholomew. He had been labouring for some time under a dangerous affection of the lungs; this was aggravated by an excessive nervous agitation, which had never left him since the fatal day of the massacre. On his death-bed he suffered fearfully from the agonies of remorse in looking back upon the atrocities which had disgraced his reign, and which, if not their original author, he had at least culpably sanctioned. His couch was frequently bathed in blood, a natural consequence of his disease; and this was interpreted by many into a sort of judicial retribution on his crimes. He expired ere he had completed his twenty-fourth year. His brother, Henry III. (2,428), another full-length by Janet,—worthless and contemptible, like all the race of Valois,—was frivolous, effeminate, and shamelessly depraved. Totally without principle, he was at the same time slavishly superstitious, and even rigid in all the externals of religion. He quickly lost whatever reputation he had acquired by the victories of Jarnac and Montoncour, and became an object of universal odium, disgust, and contempt. He was murdered by Jaques Clement, an excited priest, in 1589.

These full-lengths by Janet are highly interesting and valuable, as being executed at a time (the early part of the sixteenth century) when the artists who formed the school of Fontainebleau had already exerted a powerful influence in France, in every grade of art. And though that revival had imposed upon the French what they termed *la grande manière* ("the fine style"), portraiture continued, as we here see, to preserve its

national characteristics, — naturalness, elegance, tenderness, and gentle power.

The art of the miniaturist survived, therefore, that of the calligrapher and illuminator. An offspring of the illuminated manuscript, it was the first species of the miniature portrait of the Middle Ages; and, polished by all that delicate labour which pen and pencil bestowed upon the vellum, it blossomed forth freshly from those lovely designs, and long preserved in France the ingenuousness of its origin, its native hue and manner. Though miniature painting itself is in water colours, it is not at all similar, be it known, in its process to that used in water-coloured drawings in general. Instead of being applied in washes, or by different tints laid over each other, the colours are entirely dotted, stippled, or hatched upon the surface; although sometimes only the face and other flesh parts are so executed, as those requiring greater finish and delicacy, while the drapery and background are either partially or wholly executed according to the usual or less laborious mode of water colours. The material employed for painting upon is generally *ivory* or *vellum*, sometimes Bristol-board, or other drawing-paper of that sort. Ivory, however, is preferred, as not only being more durable, but bearing out the colours with greater brilliancy. Extremely limited in its subjects, it recommends itself by the extreme softness and delicacy of the colouring, and by its excluding all those harsher markings and lineaments of the countenance which must, even if softened down, be indicated in any picture of the size of life.

Waagen, in his "Treasures of Art in Great Britain," remarks, "It appears to me that in no department have the English artists attained so high a state of perfection as in this. On this small scale they are far more successful in mastering the difficulties of form, so that the deficiencies of drawing observable in larger works of art no longer disturb the eye here; while with this is combined a tastefulness of conception, a power of colour, and a precision and elegance of finish, which leaves nothing to be desired."

Another remarkable change, however, has lately befallen the art of "limning in small," namely, the discovery of photography.

THE DISINHERITED;

A TALE OF MEXICAN LIFE AND ADVENTURE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FATHER AND SON.

Now that we have given the reader all necessary information about the events accomplished at the Hacienda del Toro, we will resume our narrative at the point where we were compelled to leave it—that is to say, we will return to the village of the Papagos, and be present at the conversation between Thunderbolt and Stronghand in the Pyramid. The two men, walking side by side, went up to the top of the Pyramid. They traversed the bridge of lianas thrown over the Quebrada at a great height, and entered the Pyramid on the right. They descended to the first floor—the Indians they met, bowing respectfully to them—and stopped before a securely fastened door. On reaching it, Thunderbolt gave it two slight taps; an inner bolt was drawn, the door opened, and they went in. They had scarce crossed the threshold ere the young Indian, who had opened the door, closed it again after them. A strange change had taken place in the two men; the Indian stoicism they had hitherto affected, made way for manners that revealed men used to frequent the highest society of cities.

“Maria,” Thunderbolt said to the girl, “inform your mistress that her son has returned to the village.”

In giving this order the old gentleman employed Spanish, and not the Comanche idiom which he had used up to the present.

“The senora was already aware of her son’s return, *mi amo*,” Maria answered, with a smile.

“Ah!” said the old man, “then she has seen somebody.”

“The venerable Padre Fray Serapio came an hour ago to pay the senora a visit, and he is still with her.”

“Very good; announce us, my child.”

The girl bowed and disappeared, returning a moment after to tell the two gentlemen that they could enter. They were then introduced into a rather spacious room, lighted by four glazed windows—an extraordinary luxury in such a place—in front of which hung heavy red damask curtains. This room, entirely lined with stamped Cordovan leather, was furnished in the Spanish style, with that good taste which only the Castilians of the old race have kept, and was, through its arrangement, half drawing-room, half oratory. In one corner an ebony *prie-dieu*, surmounted by an ivory crucifix, which time had turned yellow, and several pictures of saints, signed by Murillo and Zurbaran, would have caused the apartment to be taken for an oratory, had not comfortable sofas, tables loaded with books, and butaceas, proved it to be a drawing-room. Near a silver brasero two persons were sitting in butaceas.

Of these, one was a lady, the other a Franciscan monk ; both had passed mid-life, or, to speak more correctly, were close on fifty years of age.

The lady wore the Spanish garb fashionable in her youth, that is to say, some thirty years before. Although her hair was beginning to grow white, and a few deep wrinkles altered the purity of her features, still it was easy to see that she must have been very lovely once on a time. Her skin, of a slightly olive hue, was extremely fine, and in the firm marked lines of her face, the distinctive character of the purest Aztec race could be recognized. Her black eyes, shaded by long lashes, and whose corners rose slightly, like those of the Mongolians, had an expression of strange gentleness, and her whole face revealed mildness and intelligence. Although she was below the ordinary height of women, she still retained the elegance of youth ; and her exquisitely modelled hands and feet were almost of a microscopic smallness. Fray Serapio was the true type of the Spanish monk—handsome, majestic, and dreamy—and seemed as if he had stepped out of a picture by Zurbaran. When the two gentlemen entered, the lady and the Padre rose.

“ You are welcome, my darling child,” the old lady said, opening her arms to her son.

The latter rushed into them, and for some minutes there was an uninterrupted series of caresses between mother and son.

“ Forgive me, Padre Serapio,” Stronghand at length said, as he freed himself from the gentle bondage ; “ but it is so long since I had the pleasure of embracing my mother, that I cannot leave off.”

“ Embrace your mother, my child,” the monk answered, with a smile ; “ a mother’s caresses are the only ones that do not entail regret.”

“ What are you about, Padre ? ” Thunderbolt asked ; “ are you going to leave us already ? ”

“ Yes ; and pray excuse me for going away so soon ; but, after a lengthened separation, you must have much to say to one another, and a third person, however friendly he may be, is always in the way at such a time. Moreover, my brothers and I have a good deal to do at present, owing to so many white hunters and trappers being in the village.”

“ Are you satisfied with your neophytes ? ”

The monk shook his head mournfully.

“ No,” he at length answered ; “ the Indians love and respect us, owing to the protection you have deigned to afford us, Senor Don—”

“ Silence ! ” the chief interrupted him, with a smile ; “ no other name but that of Thunderbolt.”

“ That is true ; I always forget that you have surrendered the one you received at your baptism ; still, it is one of the most noble in the martyrology. Well,” he continued, with a sigh, “ the will of Heaven be done ! The glorious days of conversion have passed, since we have become Mexicans ; the Indians no longer believe in the Spanish good faith, and

sooner than accept our God, persist in their old errors. This makes me remember that I have a favour to ask of you."

"Of me? Oh, it is granted beforehand, if it be in my power to satisfy you."

"Dona Esperanza, with whom I have spoken about it, leads me to hope that you will not refuse it."

"Did you not say to me one day that the senora's name brought you good luck? It will probably be the same to-day."

The monk took a furtive glance at the old lady.

"This is the matter, my dear," she said, mingling in the conversation; "the good father wishes your authority to follow, with another monk, the warriors during the coming expedition."

"That is a singular idea, father; and what may your object be? for I presume you do not intend to fight in our ranks."

"No," the monk answered, with a smile, "my tastes are not warlike enough for that; but if I may judge from the preparations I see you making, this will be a serious expedition."

"It will," the old man answered, pensively.

"I have noticed that generally, during these expeditions, the wounded are left without assistance. I should like to accompany the Indians, in order to attend to their wounds, and console those whose hurts are so serious that they cannot recover; still, if the request appear to you exorbitant, I will recall it, though I shall do so reluctantly."

The old gentleman gazed at the monk for a moment with an expression of admiration and tenderness impossible to describe.

"I grant your request, Padre," he at length said, affectionately pressing his hand. "Still, I am bound to make one remark."

"What is it?"

"You run a risk of falling into the hands of the Mexicans."

"Well, what matter? Can they regard it as a crime if I perform on the battle-field the duties which my religion imposes on me?"

"Who knows? Perhaps they will regard you as a rebel."

"And in that case—?"

"Treat you as such."

"That is to say—?"

"You will run a risk, father, of being shot; and that is worth thinking about, I suppose."

"You are mistaken, my friend; between duty and cowardice no hesitation is possible; I will die, if it be necessary—but with the conviction that I have fulfilled to the close the sacred mission I have undertaken. Then you grant my request?"

"I do so, father, and thank you for having made it."

"Blessings on your kindness, my son; and now the Lord be with you. I shall retire."

In spite of much pressing, the worthy father insisted on going away,

and was conducted to the door of the apartment by the two gentlemen, in spite of his efforts to escape a mark of honour of which he considered himself unworthy. When the door closed after him, and the three persons were really alone, Dona Esperanza, after a long look at her son, gently drew him towards her, and, obliging him to sit down on an equal, she lovingly parted off his forehead his clustering locks, and said in a sweet, harmonious voice, in which all the jealous tenderness of a mother was revealed,—

“I find you sad, Diego; your face is pale, your features are worn, and your eyes sparkle with a gloomy fire. What has happened to you during your absence?”

“Nothing extraordinary, mother,” he answered, with an embarrassment he tried in vain to conceal. “As usual, I have hunted a great deal, travelled a long distance, and, consequently, endured great fatigue; hence, doubtless, comes the pallor you notice upon my face.”

The old lady shook her head with an incredulous air.

“A mother cannot be deceived, my boy,” she said, gently. “Since you have been a man I have seen you return only too often, alas! from long and perilous expeditions. You were fatigued—at times ill, but that was all; while to-day you are gloomy, restless—”

“Mother!”

“Do not argue, for my mind is made up, and nothing will alter it. If you refuse me your confidence, Heaven grant that you may select a confidant who understands you so thoroughly.”

“Oh, mother! this is the first time a reproach has passed your lips.”

“Because, Diego, this is the first time you have refused to let me read your heart.”

The young man sighed and hung his head, without replying. Thunderbolt, who had hitherto been a silent spectator of the scene, gave Dona Esperanza a meaning glance, and walked up to her son.

“Diego,” he said to him, as he laid his hand on his shoulder, “you forget that you have to give me a report of the mission I entrusted to you.”

Stronghand started, and eagerly sprang up.

“That is true, father,” he replied; “forgive me. I am ready to furnish you with all the details you desire, of what I have been doing during my absence from the village.”

“Sit down, my son; your mother and I give you permission.”

The young man took a chair, and after reflecting for a few seconds, at a further remark from his father, he commenced the recital of all he had been doing while away. The narrative was long, and lasted nearly two hours; but we will not relate it, because the reader is acquainted with most of the facts the young man stated. Thunderbolt and Dona Esperanza listened without interruption, and gave unequivocal signs of the liveliest interest. When he had concluded his story, his mother fondly embraced

him, while congratulating him on his noble and generous conduct. But Thunderbolt regarded the matter from another point of view.

"Then," he asked his son, "the man who arrived with you is the Major-domo of this Don Hernando de Moguer?"

"Yes, father."

"Though I am an Indian by adoption, I will not forget that Spanish blood flows in my veins. You will pay this Paredes, as you call him, the amount of the bills, and I will send them to Hermosillo to be cashed hereafter. You did well in bringing him with you, for an honest man must not fall victim to a villain. Although this affair does not in any way concern us, I am not sorry to do a service to an old fellow-countryman. Let the Major-domo leave the village this very night; in order to prevent any accident on the road, you will have him escorted to the hacienda by Whistler and Peccari, and three or four warriors. They will be more than sufficient to frighten any scoundrels that may attempt to stop him; and as, moreover, we are in a direction entirely opposed to that in which the Hermosillo road runs, no one will think of stopping him."

"I can accompany him myself, with your permission, father."

The old gentleman gave him a piercing glance, which compelled him to look down.

"No," he replied; "I want you here."

"As you please, father," he said, with feigned indifference.

And he rose.

"Where are you going?"

"To carry out your orders, father."

"There is no hurry; the day is not very advanced yet, and I want to talk with you; so return to your chair."

The young man obeyed. Thunderbolt reflected for a moment, and then said,—

"How do you call this hacienda?"

"El Toro."

"Let me see," the old man continued, as if striving to remember; "is it not built on the exact site of the ancient Cosala?"

"So people say, father."

Dona Esperanza listened to this conversation with considerable anxiety. In vain did she try to discover her husband's meaning, and ask herself why he thus obstinately brought the conversation back to so hazardous a subject.

"Is it not a strong place?" the sachem continued.

"Yes, father; substantially built, and crowned with almenas."

"In truth, I now remember having seen it formerly; it is an excellent strategical position."

Dona Esperanza looked at her husband with amazement blended with alarm; she could neither account for his coldness nor his persistence. He continued,—

“Have you ever entered this hacienda?”

“Never, father.”

“That is vexatious; still, I presume you are acquainted with some of its inhabitants. A man cannot save,” he added, ironically, “the life of such a man as this Don Hernando de Moguer must be, without his trying to testify his gratitude to the man who did him the service.”

“I know not whether that is Don Hernando’s idea, for I never had the honour of seeing him.”

“That is strange, Don Diego; and I cannot understand why you did not try to form his acquaintance; however, that is of little consequence, as far as my plans are concerned.”

“Your plans, father?” the young man asked, in amazement.

“I will explain to you that we intend to commence the expedition with a thunder-stroke; our first attempt will be to seize the Real de Minas of Quitovar, where the main body of the Mexican forces is now collected. The Hacienda del Toro, situated scarce ten leagues from Auspe, commanding the three roads to Hermosillo, Ures, and Sonora, and built at a very strong position, is of immense importance to us for the success of the war. I had thought of appointing you to carry it by surprise, but as you have no friends in the place, and seem not to care greatly about it, let us say no more on the subject. I will give the command of the expedition to Whistler and Peccari; they are two experienced chiefs, endowed with far from common tact, and will carry the hacienda by a surprise, because the Spaniards, not anticipating such an attack, will not be on their guard. As for you, my son, you will follow me to the Real de Minas. And now, my dear Diego, I have nothing more to say to you, and you can withdraw.”

The young man had listened in secret horror to this revelation of his father’s plans. He was so full of terror that he did not notice that Thunderbolt, though he pretended at the beginning not to know the hacienda even by name, had described its position with a precision that showed that, on the contrary, he must be perfectly acquainted with it. He stood for a moment crushed by the thought of the terrible danger Dona Marianna would incur if the Apaches took the hacienda. His father took a side glance at him, and attentively watched the various feelings reflected in his face.

“Forgive me, father,” the young man at length said, with an effort, “but I should like to offer an objection.”

“What is it, my son? Speak; I am listening.”

“I do not think it would be prudent to try and surprise, with a band of savages, a house so far advanced in the interior of the country.”

“That is why I selected you. You would have taken a band of white and half-breed trappers and hunters, and would have passed unnoticed, owing to the colour of your skins. Your refusal greatly annoys me, I confess, but as I do not wish to force your inclinations—”

"But I did not refuse, father," the young man exclaimed.

"What! you did not refuse?"

"No, father; on the contrary, I ardently wish to be entrusted with this confidential mission."

"In that case, I misinterpreted your silence and ambiguous remarks. Then you accept?"

"Gladly, father."

"Very good; that is settled. Now go and send off that Paredes, for it is time for him to return to his master. As for you, my son, breathe not a syllable of what we have discussed; you understand the importance of discretion under such circumstances. Embrace your mother, and leave us."

The young man threw himself into his mother's arms, who tenderly embraced him, and whispered in his ear, "Hope!"

Then he withdrew, after bowing respectfully to his father.

"Well, Esperanza," the old gentleman said, rubbing his hands, so soon as his son had left the room, "do you now begin to guess my plans?"

"No," she answered, with a gentle smile; "but I believe that I understand them."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HATCHET.

STRONGHAND quitted the Pyramid in a state of indescribable agitation. The word his mother had whispered in his ear at parting incessantly recurred to his mind, and led him to suppose that Dona Esperanza, with that miraculous intuition Heaven has given to mothers, that they may discover the most hidden feelings of their children, had divined the secret he fancied he had buried in the remotest corner of his heart, and which he did not dare avow to himself. On the other hand, the strange conversation he had held with his father, and the proposal which concluded it, plunged him into extraordinary perplexity. His father's conduct appeared to him extraordinary, in the sense that he did not understand how the old gentleman, who justly enjoyed among the Indians a reputation for stainless honour, could be preparing treacherously to attack the man to whose succour he came at the same moment with such noble disinterestedness. All this seemed to him illogical, incomprehensible, and in direct opposition with the word "hope," which he fancied he could still hear buzzing in his ear. Still, as he was obliged to cross the torrent, and go some distance before reaching his calli, he had the time to restore some degree of order in his ideas, and resume his coolness and self-mastery before he reached his own door. Two men were standing there—Whistler and Peccari.

"Come along, Stronghand," the trapper shouted, so soon as he saw him; "we have been waiting for you a long while."

"Waiting for me?" he asked, in surprise.

"Yes. Sparrowhawk warned us, on the part of Thunderbolt, that the chief and myself were to hold ourselves in readiness to escort the man who entered the village with you wherever he thinks proper to go."

"Ah! Whistler has spoken well," Peccari remarked, laconically.

"What else has happened?"

"Nothing, except that Thunderbolt has made this man a present of a mule, laden with rich wares, as Sparrowhawk says. But go on, and he will tell you about it himself."

Stronghand entered, and found the Major-domo busily engaged in making his preparations for a start. So soon as he saw the hunter, Paredes eagerly walked up to him, and shook his hand several times.

"You are welcome, comrade," he said. "Carai! you are a man of your word, so forgive me."

"Forgive you for what?" the young man asked, with a smile.

"For having doubted you, caramba."

"Doubted me?"

"Yes, on my word. When I saw you leave me this morning in this hole, like a useless or noxious animal, I doubted your sincerity. In a word, as you know, anger is an evil counsellor; still, all sorts of stupid thoughts occurred to me, and I was on the point of running away."

"You would have done wrong."

"Carai! I see it now; hence I feel quite confused at my folly, and beg you once again to forgive me."

"Nonsense," the hunter said, with a laugh, "it is not worth while to torment yourself about such a trifle. An escort of resolute men will accompany you to the hacienda, and as in all probability your master, on seeing that you have brought the money he sent you to fetch, will not ask about what may have happened to you on your journey, I think it unnecessary for you to give him details which would interest him but very slightly, and give rise to unpleasant comments."

"That's enough," the Major-domo said, with a knowing smile; "I will not breathe a syllable."

"That will be the best."

"Be easy. Ah! that reminds me that, as I have received the money from you, you must have the bills. Here they are, and once again I thank you."

The hunter took the bills, and concealed them in his bosom. There was a moment of silence. The Major-domo walked about the calli with an air of embarrassment, though his purpose was now finished, and the hunter comprehended that he had something to say, but did not know how to begin it.

"Come," he asked him, "what else is there that troubles you, my friend? Let me hear."

"On my faith," the Mexican replied, at length forming a resolution,

"I confess that I should be delighted to prove my gratitude to you for the service you have done me, and I should not like to leave without doing so; but, unluckily, it embarrasses me more than I can express."

"What, is that all?" the hunter said, gaily. "Why, that is a very easy matter."

"Is it?" he remarked, with surprise. "Well, you will not believe that I have been racking my brains over it for more than half an hour, and brought nothing out."

"Because you seek badly, my friend; that is all."

"Then you have found it?"

"You shall see."

"Carai! you cannot imagine what pleasure you will cause me."

"You know that I frequently hunt in your parts?"

"Yes; I am aware of that."

"Well, the first time I find myself near the hacienda, I will come and ask hospitality of you."

"Ah! that is what I call a good idea; and even if you brought ten comrades with you, you would see how I should receive you. I only say this much,—I am in a position to treat you well."

"I take you at your word; so that is settled."

"You pledge me your word?"

"I do."

"Very good. Now I shall start happy. Come by day or night, as you may think proper, and you will always be welcome."

"I fancy it would be rather difficult to get into the hacienda by night."

"Not at all. You will only have to mention my name."

"Well, that is settled; and now be off. Only four hours of daylight remain, so do not delay any longer."

"You are right; so good-bye. Do not be long ere you remind me of my promise."

"I will bear you in mind."

They left the calli. Seven or eight hunters and Indians were mounted, and awaiting at the door their guest's good pleasure to start. The Major-domo shook the hunter's hand for the last time, mounted his horse, gave the signal for departure, and the little band started at a gallop through a crowd of women and children that had collected through curiosity. Stronghand looked after them as long as he could see them, and then thoughtfully returned to the calli. For a very long time he remained plunged in earnest thought; then he stamped his foot passionately, and exclaimed, in Spanish,—

"No; a thousand times no. I will not take advantage of the man's kindness to abuse his confidence like a coward. It would be a disgraceful deed."

These words doubtless contained the result of the hunter's reflections, and were the expression of the resolution he had just formed.

Several days elapsed, and nothing of an interesting nature occurred in the village. The military committee sat several hours during the interval. The plan of the coming campaign was definitively arranged, and the collection of the Indian forces was the only thing that delayed the outbreak of hostilities. Whistler returned to the village four days after his departure, and reported to the hunter that Paredes reached the hacienda without any accident, and nothing had disturbed the tranquillity of the journey.

In the mean while, the different Indian tribes forming the great confederation of the Papagos began flocking into the village. Ere long there were no quarters left for them, and they were compelled to camp on the plain, which, however, was no hardship to men accustomed to brave all weather. On the twelfth day after Paredes' departure, the trachesto convened all the chiefs to a general meeting at sunset, in order to perform the mystic rites of the great medicine before opening the campaign. At the moment when the sun disappeared below the horizon in clouds of purple vapour, the amantzin, or first sorcerer of the nation, mounted the roof of the medicine hut, and by a sign commanded silence.

"The sun has withdrawn its vivifying heat from us," he said, in a powerful voice, "the earth is covered with darkness, and this is the mystic hour when man must prepare for the struggle with the genius of evil—begin the great medicine."

At the same instant, animals of every description appeared from all the lodges, from the corners of the streets, gliding down the ladders of the pyramids, or coming from the plain; quadrupeds, birds, and reptiles collected in the village square, with horrible cries, overflowed the streets on all sides, and spread out over the country for a league round. These animals were Indian chiefs, clothed in the skins of the beasts they wished to represent. Not only do the Indians imitate with rare perfection the different cries of animals, but they have also made a special study of their manners, habits, mode of progression, and even of the way in which they eat and sleep. Nothing can furnish an idea of the horrible concert composed of these cries,—hisses, snapping, and roars, mingled with the furious barking of the dogs. There was in this strange scene something savage and primitive, that powerfully affected the imagination. At intervals silence was suddenly re-established, and the sorcerer's voice rose alone in the night.

"Is the evil principle conquered?" he asked; "have my brothers trampled it under foot?"

The animals responded by horrible yells, and the noise began again worse than before. This lasted the whole night through. A few minutes before sunrise the sorcerer repeated the question for the last time, which had hitherto received no other answer but furious yells. This time the pure and melodious voice of a young girl rose in the silence, and pronounced these words:—

“The Master of Life has pity on his red children; he sends the sun to their help; the evil principle is conquered.”

At the same instant the sun appeared in its radiance. The Indians saluted it with a cry of joy, and, throwing off their disguises, they fell on their knees with faces turned up to heaven. The sorcerer, holding in his right hand a calabash full of water, in which was a sprig of worm-wood, sprinkled a few drops to each of the cardinal points, crying, with an inspired air,—

“Hail, O sun! visible minister of the invisible Master of Life! listen to the prayers of thy red sons. Their cause is just; give them the scalps of their enemies, that they may attach them to their waist-belts. Hail, O sun! all hail!”

All the Indians repeated in chorus,—

“Hail, O sun! all hail!”

Then they rose to their feet. The first part of the mysteries of the great medicine was accomplished, and the sorcerer retired. The trachesto, or public crier, took his place, and invited the principal chiefs of the confederation to dig up the war-hatchet. This characteristic ceremony consists in going in procession into the medicine lodge, where the oldest chief digs up the ground with his scalping-knife, at a spot the sorcerer indicates, and draws out the great war-hatchet, the emblem of the strife about to commence. When the hatchet is unburied, the chiefs quit the hut in the same way as they entered it. At their head marches, between the chief entrusted with the sacred token of the nation, and the brave of the great calumet, the chief who has dug up the hatchet, which he holds with both hands to his breast, with the edge turned outwards. On leaving the lodge, the chiefs silently draw up in front of the ark of the first man, opposite the war-post, and chance decides which chief shall have the honour of dealing the first blow on the emblematic post with the sacred hatchet.

The Indians, like all primitive peoples, are extremely superstitious; hence they attach an immense importance to this ceremony, because they fancy they can draw a good omen from the way in which the blow has been dealt, and the depth of the notch made by the edge of the blade. Lots were drawn, and chance selected Stronghand. A flattering murmur greeted this name, which was loved by the Indians, and belonged to a man whom they regarded as one of their greatest heroes. Stronghand quitted the ranks, walked into the open space in front of the ark of the first man, and seizing the hatchet which the chief presented to him, he raised it above his head, whirled it round with extreme dexterity, and then dealt a terrible stroke at the war-post. The blow was dealt with such violence, the hatchet penetrated the wood so deeply, that when the sorcerer attempted to withdraw it, according to the usual custom, in spite of all his efforts he could not succeed, and was obliged to give up the attempt.

The warriors uttered a shout of joy, which, spreading along the crowd

assembled to witness the ceremony, was soon converted into a hideous clamour. The war would be lucky. The omens were excellent. Never, even by the confession of the oldest sachems, had such a blow been dealt the post. Stronghand was congratulated by the chiefs and warriors, who were delighted at the result he had obtained. When the hatchet was at length withdrawn from the post, the warriors retired to make way for the squaws, and the scalp-dance began.

This dance is exclusively performed by women, and in this affair alone the men make way for them. This dance, which is regarded as sacred by the untamed Indian nations, only takes place under grand circumstances,—at the beginning of an expedition, or at its close, when it has been successful,—that is to say, when the warriors bring back many scalps and horses, and have suffered no loss themselves. The women display an excitement in this dance which speedily degenerates into a frenzy, which fills the minds of the warriors with martial ardour. When this dance was ended, and the squaws had ceased their insensate cries and gestures, the final ceremony was proceeded with. This ceremony, of which we only found vestiges among a few tribes of the Upper Missouri, and the Aucas, or Pampas Indians, seems peculiar to the Papagos. It consists in sacrificing a brood mare, which has not yet-foaled, and reading the future in its entrails.

We can easily understand that the sorcerer who undertakes the explanation says what he pleases, and must be believed through the impossibility of contradicting his statements. On this occasion, either because he wished to share in the general joy, or that, through deceiving others, he had succeeded in deceiving himself, and putting faith in his own falsehoods, he announced to the attentive warriors the most splendid and successful results for the coming expedition. These prophecies were greeted as they deserved to be,—that is to say, with the greatest favour,—and, according to custom, the body of the mare was given to the sorcerer, and this was, doubtless, the greatest profit he derived from the whole affair.

Then, when all the rites were performed, the order was given for each warrior to prepare his horses, his weapons, and his provisions, for the expedition might set out at any moment. The Papagos chiefs had succeeded in collecting beneath their totems 30,000 warriors, all mounted on excellent horses, and about four thousand armed with guns. It is true that the Indians, though so skilful in the use of the axe, the lance, and the bow, are deplorable marksmen, and have an instinctive dread of fire-arms, which prevents their taking a proper aim. Still, some of them succeed in attaining a relative skill, and are dangerous in a fight. But the greatest strength of the Indian army consisted of the sixty or eighty white and half-breed hunters, whom the hope of plunder had induced to join them.

Thunderbolt, while retaining the supreme command of the army, appointed three chiefs as generals of division; they were Sparrowhawk,

Whistler, and Peccari. Stronghand took the command of twenty-five white hunters, whom he selected among the bravest and most honourable, and was entrusted with a special mission by his father. All being then in readiness to begin the war, the Indians, according to their invariable custom, only awaited a moonless night to invade the territory of their enemies under cover of the darkness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WHITE-SKINS.

THE return of José Paredes to the hacienda caused Don Hernando a lively pleasure. Still, the sum he brought, though considerable, was far from sufficing for the constant outlay in working the mine, and would hardly cover the demands of the moment. Don Rufino did not in any way show the amazement the sight of the Major-domo occasioned him, after the measures he had taken to get rid of him. Still this surprise was converted into anxiety, and ere long into terror, when he reflected on the time that had elapsed since his departure.

In fact, it would take three weeks to proceed from the hacienda to Hermosillo and back, even at a good pace, and yet the Major-domo had only been absent for nine days. It was evident to the senator that Paredes had not been to Hermosillo, and yet he brought back the money for the bills! What did all this mean? There was something obscure in the whole affair, which Don Rufino burned to clear up; but, unhappily, that was very difficult, if not impossible.

He was supposed to be ignorant of the motive of the Major-domo's journey, and consequently could not interrogate him; and then again, even had he ventured to do so, Paredes would probably not have answered him, or, if he had done so, it would only have been in mockery; for the worthy Major-domo, with the infallible scent which upright and faithful men possess, had detected the wolf in sheep's clothing, and although he had no apparent motive, as he was unaware that the senator was the concoctor of the plot to which he had all but fallen a victim, he felt an instinctive aversion for that person, and displayed a marked affectation in trying to avoid any meeting with him.

In Sonora, as in other countries, it is not easy to meet at a moment's notice persons who will discount large bills to render you a service. The man who had given the money for these must be very rich, and most desirous to assist the Marquis. However much the senator thought of the subject, he could not call to mind any land-owner for fifty leagues round capable of acting in such a way. Moreover, the discounter must have been aware of the plot formed against the Major-domo, for otherwise he would not have proposed to take the bills. Could Kidd be the traitor? In a moment the senator recognized the absurdity of such a

suspicion. It was not probable that the bandit had declined to kill the Major-domo; but that he should have allowed him to escape without robbing him, was an utterly unlikely circumstance. Moreover, Kidd had everything to fear from the senator, and would not have risked playing him such a malicious trick.

As always happens when a man indulges in probabilities without any settled starting-point, and proceeds from one deduction to another, Don Rufino attained such a monstrous conclusion, that he was really terrified by it. Still, throughout all his wanderings, a very logical remark escaped him, which proved that, if he had not discovered the truth, he was not very far from it.

"The red-skins are right," he muttered, "and their proverb is true. In the desert, trees have ears, and leaves have eyes. I remember that my conversation with that picaro of a Kidd took place near a very close-growing thicket; perhaps it contained a traitor. Henceforward I will only discuss business at the top of an entirely unwooded hill; and yet," he added, with a sigh, "who knows whether a spy may not be concealed in a prairie dog-hole?"

All these reflections the senator made while walking in extreme agitation up and down the room, when the door opened, and Don Ruiz made his appearance.

"Senor Don Rufino," he said to him, after a mutual exchange of compliments, "will you kindly come to the drawing-room? Our Major-domo, who, as you may have noticed, has been absent for some days, has brought most important news, which my father would like you to hear."

The senator started imperceptibly, and gave the young man a suspicious glance; but nothing in Don Ruiz's open face caused him to suppose any hidden meaning in his words.

"Is anything extraordinary happening, my dear Don Ruiz?" he asked, in a mellifluous voice.

"I have as yet received but very imperfect information about the grave events that threaten us; but if you will kindly follow me, you will soon learn all."

"Be it so, my dear sir—I am at your service;" and he followed Don Ruiz to the saloon, where Dona Marianna, the Marquis, and José Paredes were already assembled.

"Why, what can be the matter, my dear senor?" the senator asked, as he entered; "I confess that Don Ruiz has startled me."

"You will be more startled when you know the events. But sit down, pray," the Marquis answered, and then said to the Major-domo, "You have your information from a good source?"

"I can assert that all I have told you is true, *mi amo*. The Papagos have allied themselves with I know not how many other tribes of ferocious pagans, and we may expect to see them burst upon us at any moment."

"Caspita! that is serious," the senator said.

"Much more than you suppose; for the Indians are this time resolved to expel the white men for ever from Sonora, and establish themselves in their place," answered Paredes.

"Oh, oh," Don Rufino said, "they are undertaking a rude task."

"Laugh if you like, but it is so."

"I do not laugh, my worthy friend; still, I do not believe the Indians capable of attempting so mad an enterprise."

"In the first place, I am not your friend, senor," the Major-domo said, roughly; "and next, it is probable that when you have seen the Indians at work, your opinions about them will be considerably modified."

The senator pretended not to notice the bitterness contained in this remark, and replied, lightly,—

"I never saw any wild red-skins, and Heaven preserve me from doing so. Still, I strongly suspect the inhabitants of this country of making them more formidable than they really are."

"You are wrong to have such an opinion, my friend; and if you remain any time with us, you will soon have proof of it," the Marquis said.

"Are you going to remain here, exposed to the attacks of the pagans, papa?" Dona Marianna asked, with terror.

"We have nothing to fear from the Indians," the Marquis replied. "The rock on which my hacienda is built is too hard for them. They will break their nails before they can pull out a single stone."

"Still, father, we cannot be too prudent," Don Ruiz observed.

"You are right, my son; and as I do not wish your sister to retain even a shadow of anxiety, we will immediately place ourselves in a position of defence, though it is unnecessary. During the grand insurrection of 1827, the Indians did not once attempt to approach El Toro, and I greatly doubt whether they will attack it this time."

"*Mi amo*," Paredes replied, "believe me, do not neglect any precaution; this insurrection will be terrible."

"Come, come," Don Rufino asked, "tell me, Senor Major-domo, who the person is that informed you so well?"

Paredes gave him a side glance, and replied, with a shrug of his shoulders,—

"It is enough that I know it; no matter the name of the man to whom I owe the information. If you fancy that it is a friend who warned me, you will be near the truth."

"Permit me, senor," the senator answered, with a frown, "this is more important than you fancy. You must not thus create an alarm in a family, and then refuse to give proofs in support of your assertions."

"My master knows me, senor; he knows that I am devoted to him, and also that I am incapable of uttering a falsehood."

"I do not doubt, senor, either your honesty or your truthfulness; still, a thing so serious as you announce requires, before being taken into

consideration, to be based on evidence with proofs, or a respectable name, in default of anything else."

"Stuff! stuff! the main point is to be on your guard."

"Yes, when we know whether we really ought to do so. Consequently, in my quality as a magistrate—and I ask the Senor Marquis a million pardons for acting thus in his presence—I command you to reveal to me at once the name of the man who gave you these alarming news."

"Nonsense!" the Major-domo said, with a shrug of his shoulders; "what good would it do if I were to tell you the name of an individual you do not know, and whom you never heard mentioned?"

"That is not the question. Be good enough to answer me, if you please."

"It is possible that you may be a magistrate, senor, and I do not care if you are. I recognize no other masters but the Senor Marquis and his children here present; they alone have the right to question me, and them alone I will answer."

The senator bit his lips, and turned to the Marquis.

"Come, Paredes, answer," the latter said. "I really do not at all understand your obstinacy."

"Since you order me to speak, *mi amo*," the Major-domo continued, "you must know that the person who told me of the insurrection of the pagans is a white hunter, called Stronghand."

"Stronghand?" brother and sister exclaimed simultaneously.

"Is not that," the Marquis asked, "the hunter to whom we already are so greatly indebted?"

"Yes, *mi amo*," the Major-domo replied, musingly; "and it is probable that he has not yet finished."

Although it was the first time the senator heard the hunter's name mentioned, by a kind of intuition he felt a species of emotion for which he could not account.

"Oh," Dona Marianna cried, eagerly, "we must place entire confidence in Stronghand's statements."

"Certainly we must," Don Ruiz added. "It is plain that he wished to warn us, and put us on our guard."

"But who is this man who inspires you with such profound sympathy?" the senator asked.

"A friend," Dona Marianna replied, warmly, "for whom I shall feel an eternal gratitude."

"And whom we all love," the Marquis added, with emotion.

"Then you accept his bail for Paredes?"

"Yes; and believe me, my friend, that I shall not neglect the advice he gives me."

"Very good, senor; you will therefore permit me to remark that Senor Paredes' obstinacy in not revealing his name must fairly appear to me extraordinary."

“Senor Rufino, Paredes is an old servant who enjoys a very pardonable freedom, and believes that he has acquired the right of being believed on his word. Now,” he added, “let us discuss the means to prevent a surprise. Paredes, you will at once mount your horse, and order all the peons and vaqueros to bring the ganado and horses into the hacienda. You, Don Ruiz, will prepare the necessary corrals and cuartos to lodge the men and animals; collect as much forage and provisions as you can, for, in the event of a siege, we must not run the risk of being reduced by famine. How many peons have you under your orders, Paredes?”

“Excellency, we have about eighty able to bear arms and do active duty, without counting the women, children, and old men, whom we can always turn to some account.”

“Oh, oh,” the Marquis said, “there are many more than we require; I see that it will be unnecessary to summon our miners from Quitovar.”

“The more so,” Paredes objected, “because Captain de Niza, whose position is far more exposed than ours, will already have enlisted them in his service.”

“That is probable,” the Marquis answered, as he rose. “Go and carry out my orders without delay.”

The Major-domo bowed to his master, and went out.

“Will it please you, senor, to grant me a moment’s interview?” the senator then said.

“I am at your orders, senor.”

“Oh, do not disturb yourselves,” the senator said, addressing Don Ruiz and his sister, who had risen to leave the room; “I have nothing secret to say to the Marquis.”

The young people sat down again.

“I confess to you that what this man has just said,” Don Rufino continued, “has greatly startled me. I never saw any Indian bravos, and have a horrible fear of them. I should therefore wish, Don Hernando, however strange so sudden a request may appear to you, to obtain your permission to leave you so soon as possible.”

“Leave me!” the Marquis replied, with amazement, “at this moment?”

“Yes; it seems as if coming events will be very serious. I am not a man of war, nor anything like it, for I am frightened at anything that bears a likeness to a quarrel; but Congress claims my immediate presence at Mexico, were it only to inform the Government of the situation in which this state is, and urge it to assume energetic measures.”

“Senor Don Rufino, you are at liberty to act as you please. Still, I fear that the roads are not quite safe, and that you will expose yourself to serious dangers by obstinately insisting on departing.”

“I have thought of that; but I fancy that when I have once reached Arispe, which is no great distance from here, I shall have nothing more to fear. Will you allow Don Senor Don Ruiz to escort me to that town?”

"I can refuse you nothing, *senor*. My son will accompany you, since you do him the honour of desiring his escort."

"Yes," the senator continued, taking a side glance at *Dona Marianna*, who had let her head drop on her chest; "I wish to entrust *Don Ruiz* with an important letter for you."

"Why write? it would be far more simple to tell me what you wish in a couple of words."

"No! no! that is impossible," *Don Rufino* answered, with a smile that resembled a grimace; "that would demand too much time: moreover, dear sir, you know better than I do that there are certain things which can only be settled by ambassadors."

"As you please, *senor*. When do you propose to start?"

"I frankly confess that, in spite of the regret I feel at leaving you, I fancy that the sooner I set out the better."

"It is only ten o'clock," said *Don Ruiz*, as he rose; "by hurrying a little, we can reach *Arispe* to-night."

"Famous! that is better. Allow me, *Don Hernando*, to take leave of you, as well as of your charming daughter, and pray accept my thanks for the noble hospitality I have received in your mansion."

"What, are you not afraid of travelling in the great heat of the day?"

"I only fear the sight of the Indians, and that fear is enough to make me forget all others. Excuse me, therefore, for leaving you so suddenly, but I feel convinced that I should die of terror if I heard the war-cry of those frightful savages echo in my ears."

Don Ruiz had left the room to give the requisite orders, and his sister followed him, after making a silent curtsy to the senator, whose intention she was far from suspecting. The apprehension expressed by *Don Rufino* was greatly exaggerated, if it was not entirely fictitious; but he instinctively felt that the ground was beginning to burn beneath his feet at the hacienda, and he wanted to get away, not only to guard himself against the perils he foresaw from the ill success of his plot, but also to try and refasten the broken threads of his intrigue, and carry out his plans with the shortest possible delay.

The revolt of the Indians, by interrupting the work, paralyzing commercial transactions, and, consequently, creating enormous difficulties for the *Marquis*, admirably assisted the senator in the realization of the plans he had long been forming in the dark. Moreover, he desired, during the short ride he was going to take with *Don Ruiz*, to obtain in the young man a precious ally, who would serve him the better because he would do so without any after-thought, and without seeing *Don Rufino's* object. He also thought it better to write and detail his intentions to the *Marquis* in a letter, rather than discuss them with him, for the grand diplomatic reason that the man who writes is the only speaker, must be heard, and, consequently, does not fear a refutation till he has completely explained his ideas.

After a few moments, Don Ruiz returned to state that the escort had mounted, and that all was ready for a start. Don Rufino repeated his farewells to the Marquis, but the latter would not let him depart before he had drunk, according to the hospitable fashion of the country, the stirrup-cup,—that is to say, a glass of iced orangeade. Then all three left the room, for, in spite of the entreaties and objections of the senator, his host insisted on accompanying him to the patio, and witnessing his departure. Two minutes later, Don Rufino Contreras, accompanied by Don Ruiz, and followed by six confidential peons, well armed and mounted, left the hacienda, and took the direction of Arispe, which they reached at nightfall; after a rather fatiguing journey, it is true, but which, however, was not troubled by any accident of an alarming nature. The only thing the travellers noticed, and which proved to them how thoroughly the news of an approaching invasion of the Indians had spread along the border, was the complete solitude of the country, which resembled a desert.

All the ranchos they passed were deserted; the doors, windows, and furniture had been removed by the inhabitants, and carried off by them in their flight; they had burned or destroyed all they were compelled to leave behind them; their horses and cattle had also disappeared, which gave a look of indescribable melancholy to the numerous plains the little party crossed. The crops had been cut in the green, or burned, in order that the Indians might not profit by them; and thus, ere the wretched country was ravaged by the red-skins, it had already been completely ruined by its inhabitants.

Don Rufino contemplated with stupor the desolate aspect of the country, for he could not at all understand the strange tactics of the inhabitants. When they reached the gates of Arispe, they found them closed, and guarded by powerful detachments of soldiers and *civicos*,—a species of national militia, paid by the rich inhabitants to repress the devastation of the marauders who swarm on the Indian border. It was only after interminable debates and infinite precautions that the barrier guards at length consented to let the travellers pass. All the streets in Arispe were defended by strong barricades. The town resembled one large camp. The soldiers were bivouaced on all the squares, and sleeping round the bivouac fires; which were lighted as much to keep off the sharp, night cold, as to cook their scanty rations.

Don Rufino possessed, on the Plaza Mayor of Arispe, a large and handsome mansion, at which he resided when business summoned him to Arispe. It took him more than an hour to reach it, owing to the numberless turnings he was compelled to take, and the barricades he was forced to scale. The door of the house was open, and a dozen soldiers were quietly bivouaced in the saguan and patio, but Don Rufino did not at all protest against this arbitrary violation of his domicile; on the contrary, he boasted of his senatorial title, and seemed very pleased with the liberty the soldiers had taken. Don Rufino would not allow Don Ruiz and his peons to seek

a shelter anywhere but in his own house; he forced them to accept his hospitality, and they did so without any excessive pressure, for both men and horses were beginning to feel the want of a few hours' rest, after an entire day's journey, made in the stifling heat of the sun.

CHAP. XXVII.

S E R I O U S E V E N T S .

NOTHING equals the rapidity with which a new fortune is established, except, perhaps, that with which an old family falls, through the eternal balancing of accident, which elevates some and lowers others, thus producing incessant contrasts, which are one of the claims of existing society, and of the equilibrium that presides over the things of this world. With a few exceptions, the first and last of a race are always two powerful men, created by the struggle, endowed with great and noble qualities, and who are always equal to circumstances. Unfortunately, of these two men, one, sustained by capricious chance and the benign influence of his star, sees all obstacles fall before him, and his rashest combinations succeed. In a word, success frequently crowns his efforts, contrary to his expectations. The other, on the contrary, unconsciously yielding through the law of contrast to the malign influence attaching to his race—having fallen by the fault of his predecessors from an elevated position—compelled to struggle on unequal terms with enemies prejudiced against him, and who render him responsible for the long series of errors of which his ancestors have been solely culpable—sees himself, so to speak, placed without the pale of the common law; his most skilful combinations only succeed in delaying for a few years an inevitable fall, and frequently render that fall the more startling and certain.

What we say here is applicable to all the degrees of the social stage; not only to royal families, but to the miserable beggar's brood. Each revolution that changes the face of an empire, by bringing up to the surface unknown geniuses, at the same time plunges into an abyss of wretchedness and opprobrium those who for centuries have oppressed entire generations, and have, in their time, placed themselves on a level with the Deity, by believing everything allowed them.

Time, that impassive leveller, bringing progress in its train, incessantly passes its inexorable square over all that raises its head too high,—thus pleasing itself by raising some and humiliating others. It has constituted itself the sole arbiter of human ambitions, and the real representative of that moral equality which would be an Utopia, if the great organic law of the harmony of the universe had not thus proclaimed its astonishing principles.

On the very day when Don Ruiz, after escorting Don Rufino Contreras to Hermosillo, returned to the hacienda, a courier arrived

simultaneously with him. This man, who was mounted on an utterly exhausted steed, had apparently ridden a great distance, and was in an excessive hurry. No sooner had he reached the Toro than he was introduced into the Marquis's study, with whom he remained shut up for a long time. Then the courier, on leaving the study, remounted his horse, and set off again without speaking to a soul. The almost fantastic apparition of this man caused the occupiers of the hacienda that instinctive fear which people generally experience from things they cannot account for.

The Marquis, whose face was usually imprinted with an expression of sad and resigned melancholy, had, after this interview, become of a cadaverous pallor; deep wrinkles furrowed his forehead, and his eyes stared wildly. He walked up and down the huerta for a long time in extreme agitation, with his arms crossed on his back, and his head bowed over his chest. At times he stopped, beat his forehead furiously, uttered incoherent words, and then resumed his walk mechanically,—obeying an imperious want of locomotion rather than any other motive.

Dona Marianna, seated at a window of her boudoir, behind a muslin curtain, followed her father's movements, for she felt frightened at his state, and had a foreboding that she would have to share some of the sorrow which had fallen on him. The Marquis at length stopped, looked round him like a man who is waking up, and, after a moment of reflection, returned to his apartments. A few minutes after, a servant came to inform Dona Marianna that her father was awaiting her in the red chamber. In spite of herself, the maiden felt her apprehensions redoubled, but hastened to obey.

This red chamber, into which we have already had opportunity to introduce the reader, and which Don Hernando had not entered since the day when his brother was so inexorably disinherited by their father, was as cold and gloomy as when we saw it. The sole difference was, that time, by tarnishing the lustre of the hangings and tapestry, and blackening the furniture, had imparted to it a tinge of sadness, which made the visitor shudder so soon as he entered. When Dona Marianna reached the red chamber, she found her father already there; he gave her a silent sign to take a seat, and she sank into an arm-chair in a state of undisguised alarm. A few minutes after, Don Ruiz entered, followed by José Paredes. The Marquis then seated himself in the spacious arm-chair that occupied the centre of the dais; he ordered the Major-domo to close the door, and began, in a feeble, trembling voice,—

“My children, I have summoned you hither because we have to discuss matters of the deepest gravity. I have called to our council Paredes, as an old servant of the family, whose devotion we have known so long, and I trust you will not think that I have exceeded my rights in doing so.”

The young people bowed their assent. Paredes placed himself by their side, and the Marquis continued:—

“ My children, our family has for many years been tried by adversity. Hitherto, respecting the happy carelessness of childhood, I have sought to keep within my own breast the annoyances and grief with which I was incessantly crushed ; for, after all, of what good would it have proved to lay a portion of the burden on your shoulders ? Misfortune advances with gigantic strides ; it catches us up one after the other, and it was better to let you enjoy the too short days of your happy youth. I have, therefore, struggled for all of us, concealing the grief which at times overwhelmed me, restraining my tears, and always offering to you the calm brow and the tranquil appearance of a man who, if he were not entirely happy, was satisfied with the share of good and evil Heaven had allotted to him. Believe me, my children, I should have continued this conduct, and kept to myself all the cares and annoyances of such a life as I lead, had not a sudden, terrible, and irremediable misfortune, which has fallen on me to-day, forced me, against my will, to impart to you the melancholy, frightful condition we are now in, and acquaint you with the posture of my affairs, which are yours, for I am only entrusted with the fortune which will be yours some day if we succeed in saving it.”

The Marquis stopped for a moment, overcome by the emotion which contracted his throat.

“ Father,” Don Ruiz replied, “ you have ever been the best of parents to my sister and myself. Be assured that we have anxiously awaited this confidence, which has been so long delayed in the fear of causing us a temporary sorrow ; for we hoped we might be able to assume a portion of the burden, and thus restore you the courage necessary to support the gigantic struggle in which you have engaged with adverse fortune.”

“ My son,” the Marquis said, “ I know your heart and your sister’s. I am aware of the respectful affection you feel for me ; and in the misfortune that is now bursting on me, it is a great satisfaction to have the intimate conviction that my children will heartily combine in supporting and consoling me.”

“ Be kind enough, then, father, to tell us what the matter is, without farther delay. The courier with whom you were shut up so long this morning cannot be a stranger to the determination you have formed. Doubtless he was the bearer of evil tidings ?”

“ Alas ! my son,” the Marquis answered, “ for some years past fortune has been treating our house with incomprehensible severity ; everything is leagued against us, and our fortune, which was immense under the Spanish rule, has constantly diminished since the proclamation of Mexican independence. In vain have I tried to contend against the torrent which carried us away ; in vain have I forgotten all I owe to my name and rank, and attempted to regain what I had lost by honourable enterprise. All has been of no avail, and my efforts have only served to prove the inutility of my attempts. Still, I had hoped a few days back that I should be able to render fortune more favourable to me. I foresaw

a chance of saving some fragments of our old fortunes ; but to-day I have attained the melancholy conviction that I am entirely ruined unless a miracle intervene."

"Oh, things cannot be so bad as that, father!" Dona Marianna exclaimed.

"Yes, my children, we are ruined—reduced to utter misery," the Marquis continued, sadly. "We have lost everything; even this hacienda, built by one of our ancestors, which will be speedily sold—perhaps to-morrow—for the benefit of our creditors."

"But how has such a great misfortune occurred?"

"Alas! in the same way as misfortunes always happen when fate has resolved on ruining a man. For a long time past, business has been in a state of collapse, owing to the disastrous negligence of the Government; and the news of the fresh revolt of the Indian mansos and bravos has raised the alarm of the merchants to the highest pitch. The panic is general among the bankers and persons whose capital is engaged in mines; several houses at Hermosillo, Ures, Arispe, Sonora, and even Mexico, have already suspended payment, and thus everything has been paralyzed at a single blow. Then, to complicate matters even more, a pronunciamiento has taken place in Mexico, and at this moment we have not only an Indian border war, but the interior of the country is suffering from all the horrors of a civil war.

"Do you know this officially, father?"

"Unfortunately, I cannot entertain the slightest doubt on the subject. For this reason; under such circumstances as the present, one thing inevitably happens. Creditors insist on the immediate repayment of their advances, while persons indebted to you, if they do not fail, defer payment so long that it is, practically, of no service. Now, the letters I received this morning, and they are numerous, may be divided into two classes; my debtors refuse to pay me, while my creditors, fearing a loss, have taken out writs against me, so that, if I have not paid them within eight days the round sum of 380,000 piastres, I shall be declared bankrupt, imprisoned, expelled from my estate, and this hacienda, the last thing left us, will be put up to auction, and probably purchased for a trifle by one of the ex-vassals of our family, who has grown rich at our expense, and does not blush to take our place."

"Three hundred and eighty thousand piastres!" Don Ruiz muttered, with stupor.

"That is the amount."

"How can we possibly get it together?"

"It is useless to dream of it for the present, my son. This hacienda alone is worth double. At other times I could have offered a mortgage, and as I have nearly 300,000 piastres owing to me, you see that I could have easily confronted this fresh stroke of fortune. But now it cannot be thought of; it will be better to give way, and allow our creditors to divide

the spoil. I hope you do not suppose, Ruiz, that I have the intention of defrauding my creditors of the little that is left me?"

"Oh no, father; but what do you propose doing?"

"Carai!" Paredes then said, "that is easily settled. I possess, through the liberality of the Moguer family, a rancho, which owes nothing to anybody. It is yours, *mi amo*. My mother and I can easily find another shelter. Well, if this wretched lodging is not so fine or handsome as this, it will, at any rate, afford you a shelter, and save you from applying for it to strangers. Is it so, excellency? will you honour the old house of your servant by your presence?"

The Marquis seemed to reflect for a moment, and then held out his hand to Paredes, who kissed it.

"Be it so, my friend. I accept your offer," he said. "Not that I intend to inconvenience you for any length of time, but merely during the few days I shall require to save, if possible, some fragments of my children's fortune from the general shipwreck."

"Do not think of us, father," Dona Marianna said, with emotion. "We are young, and will work."

Paredes was delighted at the acceptance of his offer.

"Oh, do not be frightened, *mi amo*," he said; "the old rancho is not so dilapidated and miserable as might be supposed. I trust, with the help of Heaven, that you will not be very uncomfortable there, and, at any rate, you will have no cause to fear the visits of certain parties."

"You are unjust, Paredes," the Marquis replied. "Don Rufino Contreras, to whom you allude, is one of my best friends, and I must speak of his behaviour in the highest terms of praise."

"That is possible, *mi amo*, that is possible," the Major-domo said, shaking his head with an air of conviction; "but if I may be permitted to express an opinion about that gentleman, I fancy we had better wait a while before fully making up our minds about him."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing, *mi amo*, really nothing. I have an idea, that is all."

"That reminds me, father, that, on leaving me, Don Rufino gave me a letter, which he begged me to deliver to you so soon as I reached the hacienda."

"Yes; he informed me of his intention of writing."

"Hum!" the Major-domo said, between his teeth, but loudly enough for the Marquis to hear him; "I always had a bad idea of men who prefer blackening paper to explaining themselves frankly in words."

During this aside, the Marquis had opened and read the letter.

"This time, at any rate," he said, "Don Rufino cannot be accused of want of frankness, or of not explaining himself clearly. He warns me of the measures taken against me, and after showing me, in a most gentlemanly manner, the precarious nature of my position, he ends by offering me the means of escaping from it in the most honourable way; in one

word, he asks for my daughter's hand, and offers her a dowry of one and half million piastres, besides liquidating my debts."

Dona Marianna was crushed by the blow so suddenly dealt her. The Marquis continued, with the bitter accent he had hitherto employed,—

"Such is the state we have reached, my children; we, the descendants of a race of worthies noble as the king, and whose escutcheon is unstained, have so fallen from our lofty social position, that we are too greatly honoured by the offer of a man whose grandfather was our vassal. But such is the way of the world, and why blame it when we live in an age in which everything is possible?"

"What answer will you give to this strange letter, father?" Don Ruiz asked, anxiously.

Don Hernando drew himself up proudly.

"My son," he replied, "however poor I may be, I do not the less remain the Marquis de Moguer, the only thing, perhaps, which cannot be taken from me. I know the obligations I owe to the honour of my name. Your sister is free to accept or reject the offer made her. I do not wish, under any pretext, to influence her determination in so serious a matter. She is young, and has still many years to live; I have no right to enchain her existence with that of a man she does not love. She will reflect, and follow the impulse of her own heart. Whatever her resolution may be, I approve of it beforehand."

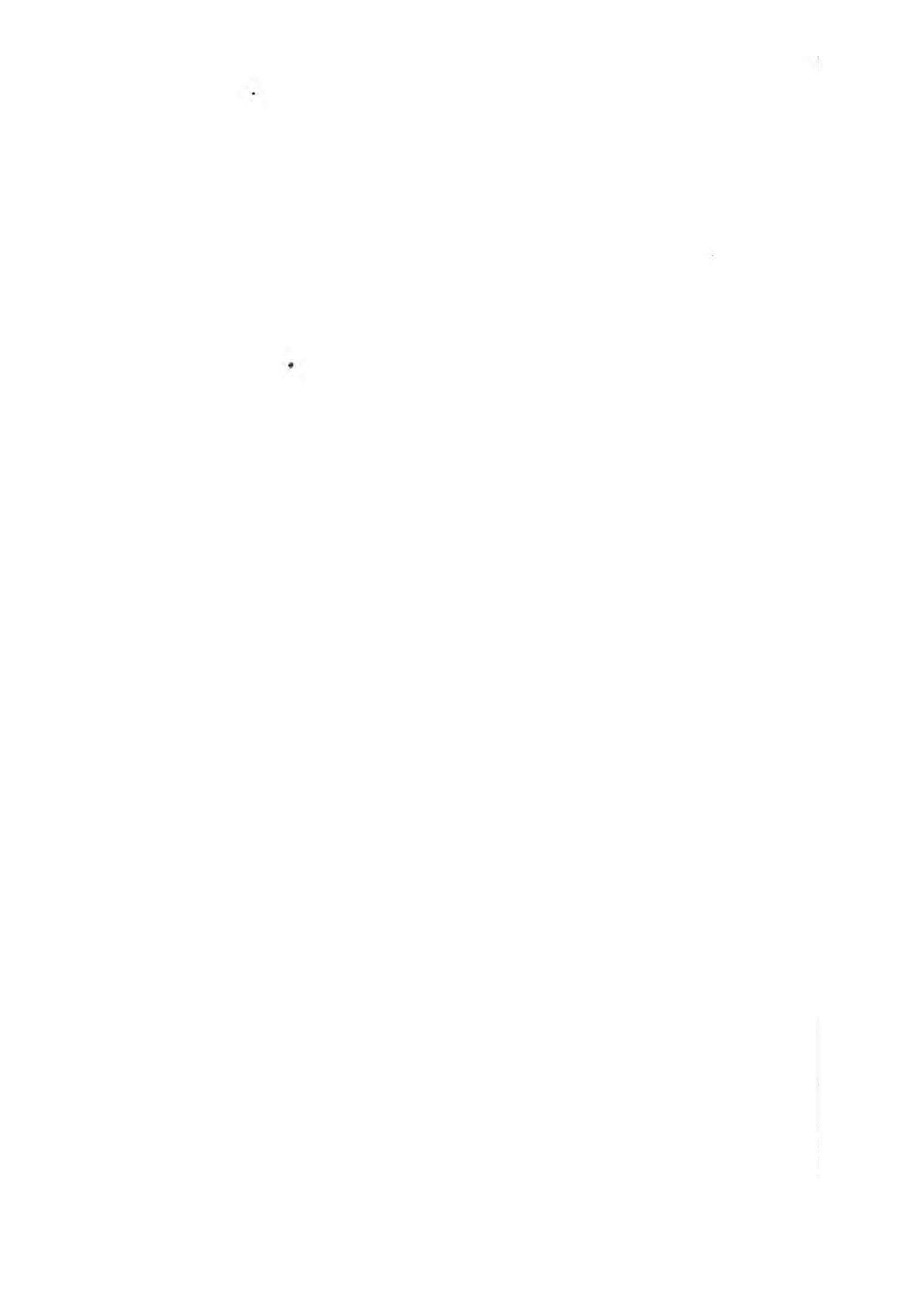
"Thanks, father," the maiden answered, gently. "And now grant me a last favour."

"What is it, my child?"

"I wish for a week before answering this request, for I am so surprised and confused that it would be impossible for me to form any resolution at present."

"Very good, my child; in eight days you will give me your answer. And now withdraw: but do you remain, Paredes; before leaving the hacienda for ever, I wish to make some arrangements in which your help will be necessary."

Brother and sister, after bowing respectfully to their father, slowly quitted this fatal chamber, which persons never entered save through a misfortune.



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