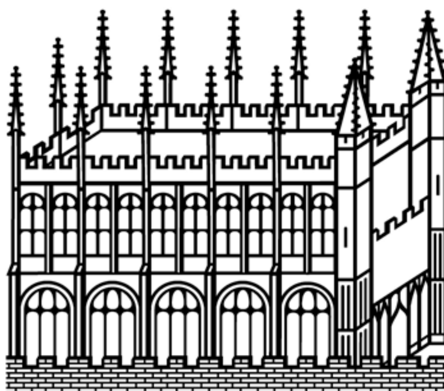

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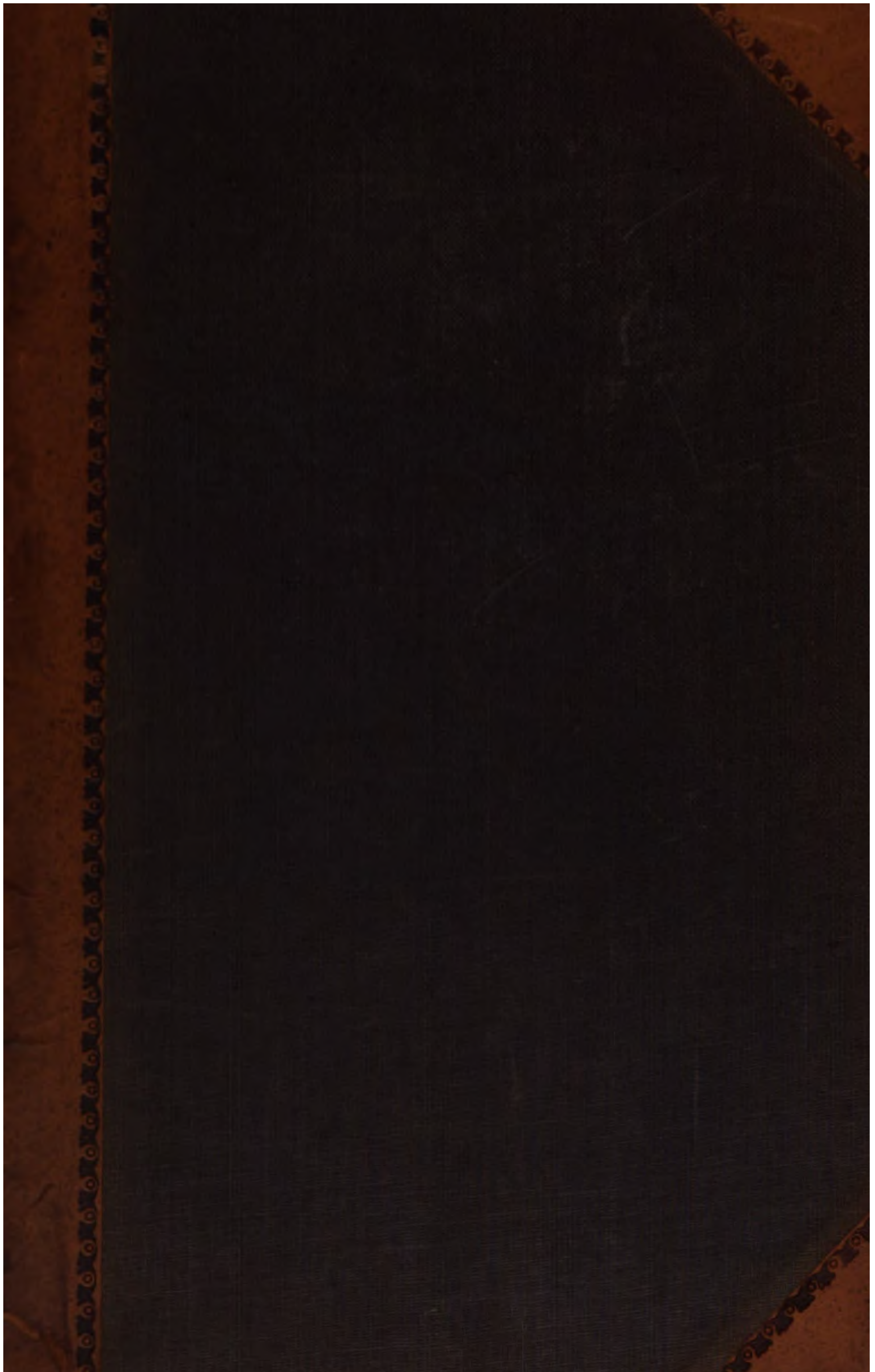

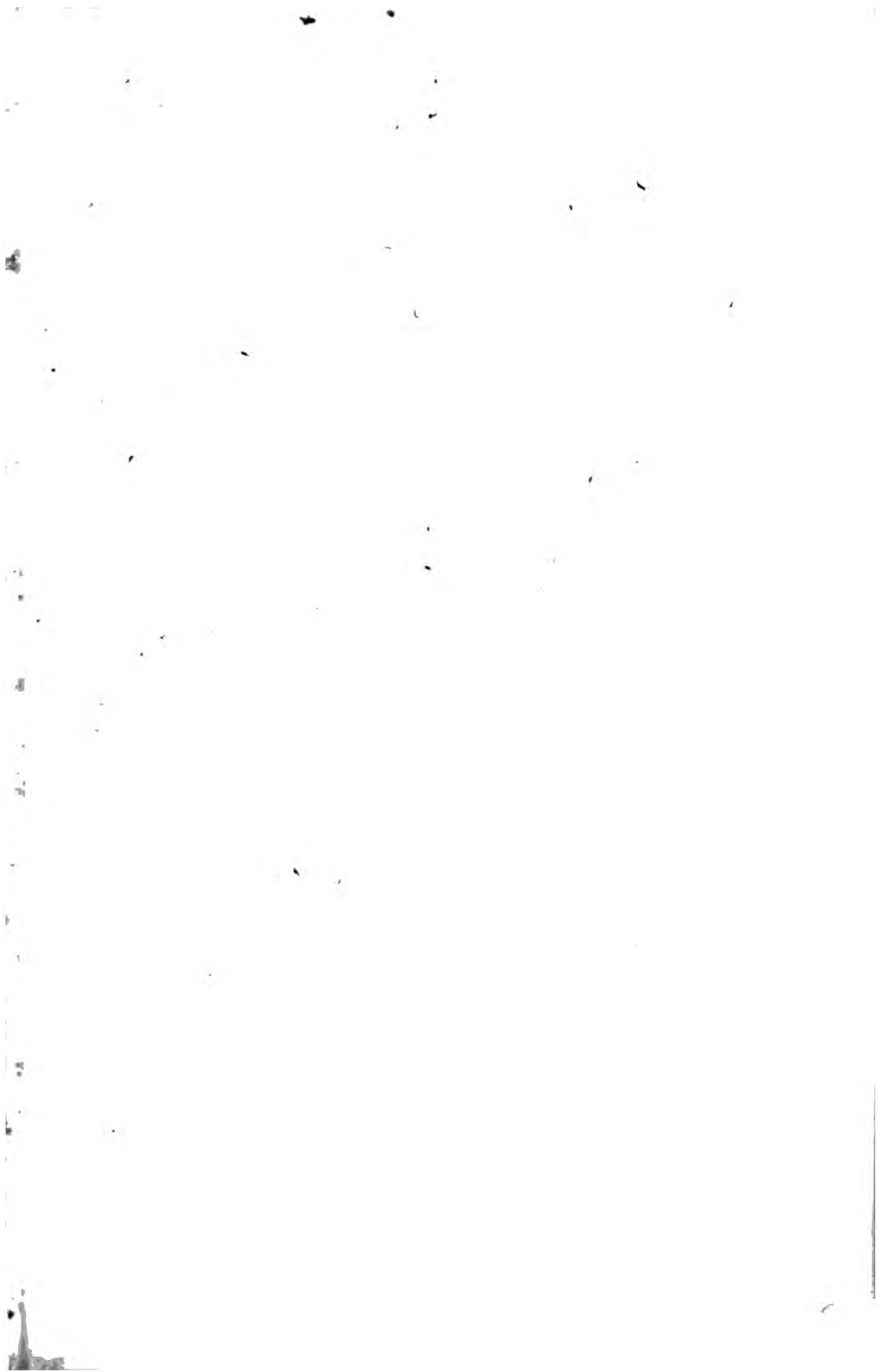

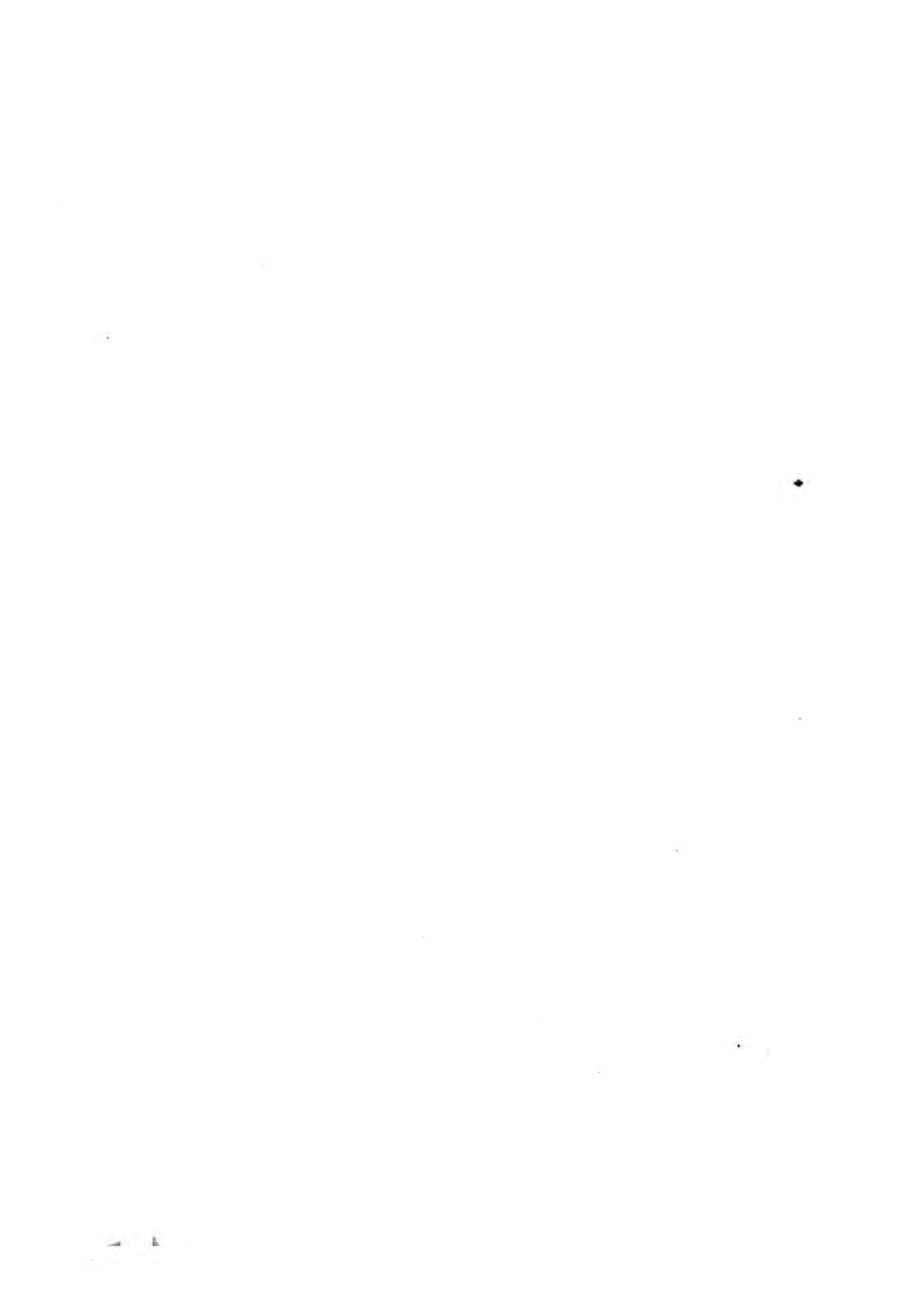

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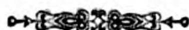

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CHAPTER XV.

A COMMERCIAL CRISIS.

THE private theatricals at the Cedars were postponed till Christmas, and in the middle of November Mr. Hillary removed his household to a big bow-windowed habitation at the western end of Brighton. Francis Tredethlyn followed, as in duty bound, and spent a great portion of his life in hurrying to and fro between London and Brighton by express trains. Never had a better adorer done suit and service to a mistress. There were no lovers' quarrels, no temporary estrangements between these two people. A serene and cloudless sky heralded the coming splendour of their union, and Maude declared again and again that she had never seen such a model pair of lovers.

"Harcourt and I were always quarrelling, you know, Julia," she said; "but then we were both such horribly jealous creatures. I didn't like his turning over music for other girls; though I suppose he was right, poor fellow, and a man must either turn over music or shut himself from society altogether. And he didn't like my going down to dinner with people in crack cavalry regiments; but I'm afraid we rather enjoyed ourselves when we quarrelled, and I used to feel as if it would be the easiest thing in the world to part from him for ever, and go into a convent, or marry somebody I hated, or something of that kind; and then directly we *had* parted, I used to get so silly and miserable, and used to write him such penitent letters, taking all the blame upon myself, and making an idiot of him. But it's so nice to see you and Mr. Tredethlyn, and I'm sure he'll be the dearest husband in the world, Julia, and you'll be able to twist him round your little finger."

It was not with a feeling of unalloyed pleasure that Miss Desmond accepted her friend's congratulations. She was quite ready to admit that Francis Tredethlyn was a model lover, and promised to be the most submissive husband that ever bowed himself before a clever wife's dominion. His presents were munificent, his attention was unfailing, his temper serenely even; and yet there were times when Julia Desmond felt that all was not quite as it should have been.

She had angled very successfully, and the fish she had landed was a splendid prize, victoriously snatched from all other anglers; but oh, what a difference there is between that poor deluded fish, entrapped out of the free waters by the cruel hook of the angler, and the willing bird which flies, of its own loving impulse, to the breast where it fain would shelter!

Julia Desmond knew that, in securing a husband, she had not won for herself a lover; and the knowledge pained and humiliated her. It was a small thing that she should not love Francis; but it seemed very hard that Francis should not love her. Her womanly tact would have stood in the place of affection, and she would have been lavish in the expenditure of a spurious coin, in the way of pretty words and tender looks, which should have had all the glitter and some of the vibration of the real mintage. But with Francis it was altogether different. The young man had no power to simulate, and there was a deadly coldness in his wooing that chilled the proud Irish girl's heart.

"Are they worth the humiliation?" she thought sometimes, when she contemplated her diamonds before the lighted glass in her bedroom at Brighton. "They are very big, and brilliant, and costly; but I've seen myself look handsomer with a scrap of scarlet ribbon twisted in my hair, than I look to-night with all these stars, and crosses, and serpents flashing and twinkling about me. And then when I go down stairs I must go through all the old stereotyped business; and when I thank him for the flowers that he sent me this morning, he will look at me with his cold eyes, and tell me he is pleased to have given me pleasure. What is he but a clod—a mere clod, nothing but a clod? I ought to remember that; and yet I am angry with him because he does not love me. Why can I not be thankful for my good fortune, and accept my future husband for what he is,—a respectable, well-behaved ploughman, whom an accident has endowed with thirty thousand a year?"

Perhaps Miss Desmond did not particularly care to answer that question which she put to herself in so impatient a spirit. And yet it was a question that might have been answered had she cared to fathom the lower deeps of her own mind; but then there *are* questions which are better left unanswered. Why was she angry with Francis Tredethlyn for that passionless serenity of manner which was so nearly akin to indifference? Why? unless it was because in her own heart there lurked the consciousness that the unpolished Cornishman *might* have been

a very different kind of lover, and that beneath his cold exterior there were slumbering embers which might have blazed into glory had one special torch been applied to them.

Yes, Julia knew this, and the knowledge was a perpetual poison that embittered the wine of success. The pride of the Desmonds had not been entirely trodden out beneath the iron heel of poverty. This girl, who had not been too proud to set herself to ensnare a rich husband, was yet proud enough to feel the bitterness of her degradation.

"If he only loved me," she thought, "I should feel that the bargain was a fair one. But to know that, at best, he only submits to the force of circumstances! He has been drifted into the position of a lover, and he performs the duties exacted of him; just like some non-dancing man who has been persuaded to dance in order to fill the last place in a quadrille, and who dawdles listlessly through the figures, and almost yawns in the face of his partner. And yet I have seen him look at *her* until the dull clay of which he is made seemed to change into a thing of life and fire."

And then Miss Desmond was fain to turn to her new jewel-case for consolation, and to beguile her mind from unpleasant thoughts by the consideration of all those grand things that may be done with thirty thousand a year.

If the young ladies of the household thought it a pleasant thing to spend the brief November afternoons on that delightful esplanade beside the sea, Mr. Hillary did not find a residence in Brighton so entirely convenient. A great deal of his time was spent in journeyings to and fro by the best and quickest express train in England: and there were days when even the facilities of a Brighton railway would not enable the merchant to take his dinner in the society of his beautiful daughter and her companion. There were occasions on which the two girls sat for a wearisome hour or so, trying vainly to amuse themselves by some feminine occupation, or to beguile the time by some feminine discourse, while the soup grew cold and the Brightonian cook grew angry; and then at last were fain to sit down at nine o'clock, and make a dismal pretence of dining without the head of the household.

"I sometimes think so much railway travelling must be bad for papa," Maude said. "I am afraid it must shake him a little; though riding in the Brighton express is almost as good as sitting in one's own room. I fancy papa has not looked so well lately. I have begged him to see Mr. Desborough, our Twickenham doctor, or some London physician: but it's no use, for he won't listen to me. I can't tell you how uneasy I am about him, Julia. He has had so many of his bad headaches lately; and then he says the business in Moorgate Street has been so heavy. Ah, Julia! what is the good of being rich if papa must work as he does?"

Miss Desmond shrugged her shoulders.

"Business men seem scarcely to exist out of their offices," she said,

rather scornfully. She always took care to let Maude know that she looked down upon the Twickenham splendour and its commercial sources. "I dare say your papa will devote himself to money-making as long as he lives."

"I sometimes think we might have been happier if we had been poorer," Maude said, dreamily, by-and-bye. "I can't help fancying how we might have lived in some quiet country place, in a low-roofed, old-fashioned cottage, with a garden all round it and a churchyard close by, and the smell of cows and the cooing of pigeons; and then I need not have been separated from——" She did not finish the sentence; she was talking to herself rather than to Julia. Her face was beautified by an inexpressible softness and tenderness as she murmured that broken sentence. Her thoughts wandered back to the time in which she and Harcourt Lowther had sworn eternal constancy, standing with their hands locked together in the dim summer twilight, on the bank of the shadowy river. She thought of that time, and all the freshness of feeling that had gone down with it came back upon her suddenly like a breath of air from a distant ocean. How frivolous her life had been since then!—how selfish and useless! What a round of dress and decoration, and hurry and weariness! Harcourt Lowther's last letter was in her pocket as she sat musing despondently by the hired Brighton hearth;—his last letter, a most melancholy epistle, full of despairing lamentations about the bitterness of separation and the hardships of Van Diemen's Land. And over and above all these feminine perplexities which tormented poor loving Maude, there seemed real cause for anxiety in the state of Mr. Hillary's health. It was not that the merchant himself complained; he did not complain, and, indeed, appeared to resent any inquiries as to his state, even when those inquiries came from such a privileged person as his only child. But every morning at the breakfast-table, sitting opposite to her father in the bright sunlight, Maude could see a darker shade under Mr. Hillary's eyes, a more weary look about his haggard face. She defied his anger very often, and pleaded earnestly with him, imploring him to consult a physician, but his answer was always very much the same.

"I am subject to this sort of headache; my work in Moorgate Street is peculiarly hard just now. Pray do not trouble yourself, Maude; there is not the least occasion for any uneasiness about my health."

With such assurances as these Miss Hillary was compelled to be satisfied. There had been an air of coldness, or almost displeasure, in her father's manner to her lately, and Maude found to her surprise that he was by no means pleased with the matrimonial engagement that had arisen between Julia Desmond and Francis Tredethlyn.

"Engaged to *her!*" the merchant exclaimed, when his daughter carried him the news of Julia's conquest,—"engaged to Julia Desmond! Why, I fully believed that he came to Twickenham on your account, Maude. I said nothing to you about the matter, because girls have sometimes such

absurd notions, and I thought it better to let things take their course. And so Julia has entrapped him, has she? I ought to have been on my guard against Ryan O'Bryan Desmond's daughter."

"How can you talk like that, papa?" cried Miss Hillary. "I'm sure Julia and Mr. Tredethlyn are really in love with each other, and dear Julia is perfectly disinterested. And then, if Mr. Tredethlyn had been ever so much in love with me—and I'm sure he never cared the least bit about me,—how could you suppose that I could ever dream of marrying him; when I—when he's such a very common kind of person?"

Harcourt Lowther's name had been almost trembling on Miss Hillary's lips, but she had remembered her father's aversion to that name, and had modified the conclusion of her sentence in deference to his prejudices.

"A very common kind of person!" repeated Lionel Hillary, in a thoughtful tone; "yes, yes, my dear, I dare say he is, I dare say he is. But I've seen women as beautiful as you married to commoner men than Francis Tredethlyn."

And then, after a brief silence, the merchant's manner changed all of a sudden; he took his daughter in his arms, and pressed his lips upon her forehead with an almost passionate fondness.

"My darling! my darling!" he cried, "do you think it wouldn't please me to see you married to a man you could love?"

Maude looked up into his face with a sweet smile upon her own: her lips parted, and in the next moment Harcourt Lowther's name would have been spoken and his cause pleaded by those innocent lips. But it seemed as if her father in a manner anticipated what she would have said, for he put her from him suddenly, and turned away with a faint shiver of pain.

"I am very sorry to hear of this engagement between Julia and that young man," he said, with his face averted from his daughter, and his hands nervously shuffling among the papers on the table before him; "I am very much vexed. There, go, Maude; you don't understand, you can't understand. Go, my dear; I'm busy."

No more than this had ever been said between the father and daughter upon the subject of Miss Desmond's matrimonial arrangements, but Maude had been able to discover that her father's vexation was not a matter of the moment, to be forgotten and done with after the first surprise of the announcement. Lionel Hillary was tolerably gracious to Mr. Tredethlyn, but his manner towards Julia changed altogether. There were times when he scarcely took the trouble to conceal his displeasure from that young lady herself. He would sit watching her moodily when Francis Tredethlyn was by her side, and would sometimes, when the conversation gave him an opening, break out into some cynical generality upon the husband-hunting propensities of modern young ladies. Francis was too simple-minded to comprehend the drift of these covert sneers; but Julia understood her benefactor, and defied him with her bold handsome eyes and her flashing teeth.

"He wanted thirty thousand a year for his daughter, I suppose," she thought, when she pondered on Mr. Hillary's discourtesy. "What grasping, avaricious creatures these rich people are!"

Christmas was approaching, and that festival period was to be spent at the Cedars, to which place Maude Hillary was tenderly attached, despite her sentimental talk about poverty and a simple home deep down in the heart of rustic England. The young ladies' portmanteaus had been packed ready for the departure from Brighton, and Maude and Julia only waited for Mr. Hillary to escort them on their homeward journey. He had not been so much with them during the last week or so of their sojourn, and as Francis Tredethlyn only came backwards and forwards with Mr. Hillary, the girls had been left by themselves, with no better occupation or amusement than the reading of new books, the trying of new music, and a contemplation of the blusterous gray waves beating eternally before their windows: for the weather had been cold and stormy of late, and the delicious esplanade had been deserted; only an occasional masculine wanderer, out for a "constitutional," buffeted the winds and strode in dismal loneliness along the pavement beneath Mr. Hillary's windows.

It was only natural, under these circumstances, that the young ladies should have grown weary of Brighton. They had a close carriage at their disposal, but then driving through perpetual tempest is not particularly agreeable even in a close carriage. They went shopping in East Street two or three times during this severe weather, and bought expensive materials for impossible complications of Berlin wool work and gold beads; and, experimentalizing with the same on their return home, discovered themselves at sea in a wide ocean of perplexity. Thus it was that they grew very tired of Brighton, and wished most earnestly for Mr. Hillary's coming.

"Oh for the silvery ring of my own Broadwood!" exclaimed Maude, as she rose from a struggle with a German rendering of "Polly put the kettle on," in seven flats, and ten pages of double arpeggios. "I wonder *who* makes the pianos for houses that are let furnished? I'm sure they must all be made by the same man; and I suppose it's a theory of his own that makes him always use damp wood, and put so much flannel into his trebles.—I wish papa would come and take us home, Julia."

Miss Hillary expressed this wish at least twenty times in a day, and Julia echoed it, as if out of pure sympathy. But Miss Desmond was not a very sympathetic person, and she was really anxious to get back to the neighbourhood of London and Francis Tredethlyn. Nearly a fortnight had passed since the Cornishman had been to Brighton, and Julia was terribly conscious that the link which united him to her was very fragile, and might be broken by any unlucky hazard, unless, indeed, his constancy were sustained by a chivalrous sense of honour. She had as yet had no opportunity of discovering his sentiments on this subject, and she had a vague idea that a small farmer's son, who had taken the Queen's

shilling, would be unlikely to entertain the same splendid notions of truth and loyalty that glowed in the breasts of his superiors.

"I know that he's a very good fellow," Julia thought; "and I don't suppose he would steal anything, or tell a deliberate falsehood; but I dare say he would think it no sin to throw me over at the last moment if——"

There was a point at which Miss Desmond's reveries always stopped short. She did not care to think about that which Francis Tredethlyn might like to do, even if he were free to do as he liked.

Mr. Hillary came home very late upon the evening of an especially disagreeable day. He came down to Brighton by the mail train, and arrived at the hired mansion just as the two girls were gathering together the gold beads and Berlin wools, preparatory to going to bed. But though the merchant had been so much longer away than usual, he seemed in no particular hurry to embrace his daughter; for instead of coming up to the drawing-room, he walked straight to a dreary little study at the back of the house, which had been set apart for his use.

Maude had heard the sonorous knock at the big street door, and flew out of the drawing-room to greet the traveller.

"At last, dear papa!" she cried. "We have been as dull and dreary as a pair of Marianas in a moated grange. Oh, you darling papa, I am so glad you have come. Please take us home to Twickenham, we've had *such* weather; we're as helpless and miserable as those poor working people who go about singing so dreadfully flat when there's a hard frost. We are two lonely, single girls, and we've got no work to do," sang Miss Hillary, with the established nasal drawl, as she skipped down the stairs.

"Kiss me, you wet, cold, melancholy-looking papa," she said, planting herself between Lionel Hillary and the door of his sanctum.

The merchant seemed in no very affectionate humour to-night. He put his daughter aside without looking at her. His face was fixed and stern in expression, and its gloomy rigidity was in no way relaxed as he spoke to Maude.

"Why are you up so late?" he said. "I thought you would have gone to bed an hour ago. I don't want to be worried to-night, Maude; I've some papers down here that want looking into, and I've brought other papers with me. I may have to sit up half the night, perhaps; and, remember, I am not to be disturbed."

"But you will be ill, papa, if you work so hard."

"I shall not be ill, and I know what is best for myself. I cannot and must not be annoyed to-night, Maude."

He went into his room, where the servant had already made an illumination that would have been enough for a chapel or a factory, by means of five flaring gas burners; but Maude followed him, and was not to be put off even by the harsh words that sounded so strangely in her ears.

"Papa," she remonstrated, piteously, "I am sure that you are ill, or that something has happened."

Mr. Hillary laid his hand upon his daughter's shoulder, and put her out of the room,—very gently, but with a certain determination which was quite a new thing in his treatment of this idolized and exacting Maude.

"I tell you, once more, that I am going to be—very busy, and must not—be disturbed." He seemed tired, for the words came slowly, as if the mere utterance of them were a painful exertion. "Good night, my dear; go to bed, and sleep peacefully. God bless you, and take you in His keeping."

His manner changed all in a moment as he said this, and he caught her suddenly to his breast and kissed her passionately, as he had done on that other day when they had talked of Francis Tredethlyn.

But in the next moment Maude found herself standing outside the closed door of her father's retreat, amazed and unhappy. That sudden little gush of affection had been as perplexing to her as Mr. Hillary's unusual sternness of manner. It was all alike strange; and vague fears agitated her as she went slowly up-stairs to the big, barren drawing-room, which looked very little more home-like than a first-class waiting-room at a railway station.

Julia had disappeared, and the flaring gas lamps illumined a great barren desert of Brussels carpet and emptiness. Dear Julia always remembered that her good looks were her only dower, and took care not to waste them by late watching in the glare of many gas burners. Maude sighed as she looked round the empty room, and then seated herself at a table adorned with a gaudy cover that looked like a small Turkey carpet. She took up the impossible Berlin wool work, and the gold beads, and set herself to the task of counting tiny dots and squares on a coloured paper pattern, with a view to discovering where the Berlin wool left off and the beads began. But she was tired and unhappy, and the bewildering dots and squares made her head ache; so she pushed away the work presently, and roamed restlessly up and down the room: now stopping by a table, and taking up a book, only to open it haphazard, and stare blankly at the pages; now lingering by the piano, noiselessly fingering the notes, and tormented with a wild desire to dash into some blusterous march that should startle the slumbering household.

Her father had told her to go to bed. He was going to work very late, and must on no account be disturbed. He had worked late sometimes at Twickenham, but not often, and on those occasions Maude had gone to sleep happily enough, only a little disturbed by the thought of "poor papa" toiling over those cruel business documents. But to-night it was altogether different. At the risk of incurring her father's anger, Miss Hillary paced wearily up and down the desert of Brussels carpet, waiting till she should hear the merchant's step on the stairs, and know that his night's work was over.

She waited, oppressed by a vague uneasiness, and wondering why she was uneasy. Why was it that to-night the thought of her father's toil mingled with all manner of strange fears and misgivings? She was usually so frivolous, so apt to look brightly out upon the sunnier aspects of the world around her; but to-night her heart seemed like a leaden weight in her breast. What was it? why was it? The cheap French clock upon the chimney-piece struck some abnormal number between twelve and twenty, and a distant church clock struck two; but still Miss Hillary waited in vain for that expected step upon the stair. Her father had said that he would be very late, but she had hoped that at the worst his work would be finished in a couple of hours. The time seemed so intolerably long to Maude Hillary, roaming in a purposeless manner about that big room, or standing in the bay-window to listen to the hoarse roaring of the waves, or sitting down to read for five minutes together, but never once knowing what she was reading.

There had been so few troubles in her life, and looking back at the smooth, sunlit ways by which she had wandered from childhood to womanhood, she was seized all at once with a fear that there must be some great grief in store for her. It was quite impossible that she could have altogether withheld herself from some contemplation of that startling question as to her right to be happy in a world where so many people were miserable; but the question had never intruded itself upon her so awfully as to-night.

"I have never had sickness, or death, or sorrow near me," she thought. "My mother died before I was conscious of her existence—as I think—and yet it seems strange that there can be any time when a child is unconscious of a mother's presence, or heedless of her loss. The worst trouble that I can remember is my parting from Harcourt, and I have always hoped that all would come right at last. But to-night—to-night I feel as if there had been something sinful in my happiness. The sermons I have heard at church never came home to me. I never felt that I was a miserable, sinful creature, groping my way upon a thorny path. I'm afraid I have been very wicked; selfish and idle, vain and frivolous."

Looking back at her life, Miss Hillary saw an existence of Twickenham pleasure, water-parties, and picnics, "Star and Garter" dinners, perpetual Parisian bonnets, and turquoise bracelets, pet dogs, new novels, opera boxes, and concert tickets. Perhaps she had never before watched and waited alone at these still hours of the dead winter night, and these unusual thoughts may have been only the natural companions of her loneliness.

She looked at her watch a dozen times in an hour, and at last, when it was nearly three o'clock, her patience was exhausted all at once, and she resolved on going down to her father's room.

"He will be very angry with me for sitting up so late," she thought,

"but I *cannot* go to bed until I have seen him. It will be better to see him ever so cross with me than not to see him at all."

Having once arrived at this determination, Maude Hillary ran down stairs and tapped lightly at her father's door. There was no answer, and she repeated that timid tapping. Again there was no answer, and she tried the handle of the door, intending to steal softly in and surprise the merchant at his work. But the door was locked, and her breath grew thick with the sudden oppression caused by some vague terror. She lost all command over herself, and knocked loudly, calling in a frightened voice, "Papa! papa!"

It was not so strange that she should be frightened. How often she had heard of hard-working City magnates suddenly stricken down in the prime of life by some fell disease, unsuspected until that last fatal moment!

A heavy step inside the little room relieved her of these vaguely terrible fears. The door was opened, and Mr. Hillary stood before her, very pale, very angry. "Maude! how absurd this is! What have you been doing? Why have you been sitting up?"

"Because somehow I *couldn't* go to bed while you were working down here, papa darling. I couldn't; I didn't want to worry you or disobey you; but I don't know what's the matter with me to-night. All manner of ridiculous things came into my head, and I felt that I *must* see you before I went to sleep. Let me come in, papa."

She pleaded so prettily, looking up in her father's face with such tender devotion beaming in her own, that Lionel Hillary must have been something harder and sterner than the stoniest of mercantile men if he had been deaf to her pleading.

"Come in if you like, Maude," he said, with a weary sigh; "I am sorry that you disturbed me. I had very nearly finished my work."

The littered mass of papers that had been scattered on Mr. Hillary's desk when Maude had left him were gone now, and only a few neat little packets remained in their stead. But, placed conspicuously upon the desk, Maude perceived a big envelope with a great red seal, and lying near it a smaller envelope, also sealed.

The merchant had removed his neckcloth. He seemed to have been working hard, for big drops of moisture stood upon his forehead. A great basket near his chair was filled to overflowing with torn scraps of paper, and the shower of waste had fallen far and wide, and lay like snow about the chair in which Mr. Hillary had been sitting.

"Now, Maude," he asked sternly, as his daughter followed him into the room, "what is it that you want with me?"

"Why, to see you leave your work and go to bed, papa. You don't know how late it is."

The merchant smiled a grim smile, and pointed to his watch which lay open on the desk.

"I've been working against time, and I've kept watch upon every quarter of an hour," he said.

"But you have finished now, papa."

"Not quite. I have very nearly finished—but not quite."

Miss Hillary shook her head with a pretty petulant gesture. She was not in the least afraid of her father's anger now. She had been so tortured by dim and shadowy apprehensions, that her spirits rebounded suddenly now that she was by her father's side, and she was bold enough to defy him.

"I sha'n't leave you any more to-night, papa. If you had all the business of the Stock Exchange to transact, I wouldn't let you sit up any longer, ruining your health by brooding over those tiresome papers. Besides, your desk is quite clear, you seem to have done everything."

"No, I have not done everything."

Mr. Hillary had resumed his seat, and was staring absently at the desk before him, where all things looked so neat and orderly that Maude seemed justified in thinking that her father's work was done. There was a row of drawers on each side of the desk. One of them was open, and a bunch of keys hung from the lock. A copy of the *Times* newspaper lay across the top of this open drawer; but as Miss Hillary hung about her father, some portion of the silken flounces or furbelows of her dress brushed against the paper, and it fell rustling to the ground. Lionel Hillary turned suddenly with a look of alarm directed towards the open drawer, and Maude, following his glance, saw something lying among the neat packets of letters and papers,—something which had no business to be there: something which seemed to realize a greater terror than any that her fancy had shaped, however dimly, during those hours of weary waiting in the room above.

The object which seemed so terrible to Maude Hillary was a pistol, a small pistol of very modern fashion, fresh and bright from the hands of the gunmaker. Mr. Hillary was not a man who affected the gunsmith's art, and Maude had never seen such a weapon in her father's possession until to-night;—until *this* night when vague fears respecting him had been so long busy in her brain, only wanting a form into which to shape themselves.

It seemed as if her frivolous girlhood left her all at once. It seemed as if that great terror, coming upon her with such ghastly suddenness, transformed her into a woman—a woman possessed of woman's highest attributes, fortitude and self-abnegation. She uttered no cry of alarm, no exclamation of surprise; but she suddenly closed and locked the drawer in which the pistol lay, and dropped the bunch of keys into her pocket. Then kneeling down beside her father's chair, she put her arms tenderly about him, and laid her head upon his breast. Mr. Hillary had grown very passive all at once, and sat idly staring at the table before him.

"Papa," Maude said presently, in a low, pleading voice, "what is it?

tell me, confide in me. In whom should you trust if not in me? What is it, papa? what does it mean?"

"It means—ruin!" the merchant answered, huskily. He did not turn towards his daughter, but still sat staring blankly straight before him.

"It means failure and ruin, Maude; ruin in its worst shape, its most hideous shape."

"You mean that we shall be poor, very poor, that we shall have to leave Twickenham, that you will be a clerk perhaps in some office, and I a daily governess. I remember when the Gordons failed, and poor Constance Gordon and her brothers had to begin the world afresh, without money, and with very little help from their old friends. Do you think I could not bear as much as that, and be happy still, if you were with me? Ah, papa, papa, do I seem to you such a helpless, useless creature, that you shrink from trusting me at such a time as this?" Hysterical sobs rose in her throat, but she stifled them and went on talking to him in the same quiet, tender voice, and caressing him as she talked. He submitted passively enough to her caresses, but he seemed scarcely conscious of them.

"Trust me, papa; tell me everything. Such troubles as these seem so much less dreadful when once they have been freely spoken of. I remember how Mr. Gordon kept everything hidden from his family as long as he could; and Constance told me that it seemed as if a great cloud was hanging over the house, and there was something in the atmosphere that stifled them all. But when the crash came at last they bore it bravely; and see how well they have got on ever since, in a moderate way. Ah, papa, you have brought me up like a spoiled child, or a princess in a fairy tale, and now that trouble has come to us you think I can't bear it. But I *can*, papa; if you will only be brave, your foolish, extravagant daughter will learn to be wise and patient. I was getting very tired of Twickenham, papa, and shall be as happy as the day is long in a nice little cottage, in some cheap suburb, where I can have pupils."

Lionel Hillary ought no doubt to have been comforted by his daughter's tenderness; but unhappily there are some wounds so cruelly inflamed, that the gentlest application the surgeon can devise is apt to chafe and irritate them. The girl's talk jarred upon the merchant's mind, and it was with a shiver of pain that he turned to her as she left off speaking.

"Child, child," he exclaimed, fretfully, "you don't know what you're talking of. Do you think it is such an easy thing to pass from one of the first positions in the City to a clerkship and a cottage in the suburbs? Do you think there is nothing *between* such opposite conditions? Do you suppose I have only to shut up my books, and wish my creditors good morning, before I walk out of my office? You talk and think like a child, Maude. It is all very well for an old twaddler like John Gordon, who suspends payment upon the first failure that affects his stability, and who

winds up his affairs with a dividend of fifteen shillings in the pound, and the compliments and sympathy of all Basinghall Street. No one will sympathize with *my* fall, though more than I can count will suffer with me. I am not a man to drop under the first blow, Maude; for nearly three years I have been working a rotten ship, with the knowledge that nothing short of a miracle could save me from wreck. The wreck has come. The world will call me a dishonest man, because I waited for that miracle. I waited as the gambler waits at the green table, hoping that the last risk would bring me salvation. With me ruin means disgrace. I tell you, Maude, before the month is out there will be a panic in the City, and men will cry out that Lionel Hillary is a rogue and a swindler. There's not a man who ever dined at Twickenham that won't use his knowledge of my home as a weapon against me. There's not a bottle of wine I ever gave a friend whose price and quality will not be made a reproach against me. Oh! I know how people talk about these things. Go away, child. Your presence only goads and irritates me. It reminds me that I might have done better than I have done, I might have been wiser, I might have saved something—my good name at least. I have loved you so dearly, Maude, Heaven only knows how dearly, for I am no man of big words or sentimental phrases. And now I leave you utterly destitute, the pauper child of a disgraced father."

"But you shall not leave me," cried Maude, with a sudden energy that startled Lionel Hillary. "Papa, why do you insist upon treating me as a child? Why do you judge me by what I have been, rather than by what I can be? Why won't you trust me? why won't you talk to me as if I were a son, and had a right to share your secrets? You have told me the worst, and you see I can bear to know it. I can endure even disgrace; but I cannot bear to lose you. Trust me, papa. I will be patient under any calamity except——" She was seized with a sudden shivering, and clung to him, with a convulsive force in the small hands that entwined themselves about his arm. "You know what I mean, papa," she said. "Believe that I can bear anything if you will be true, and brave, and patient. And even yet the miracle may come. Something may happen at the very last, surely it may, to save your good name."

Mr. Hillary pressed his daughter's hand in acknowledgment of so much tenderness and devotion; but he shook his head moodily as he answered her, "Nothing *can* happen to save me, unless twenty thousand pounds drop from the skies between this and the 10th of January."

Twenty thousand pounds! Maude's thoughts flew to her jewel-case in obedience to the most universal of feminine instincts. Twenty thousand pounds! Alas for that birthday gift of opals and diamonds, the turquoise rings and bracelets, the emerald cross, the delicate pink coral, and all the fragile fantastic toys of gold and enamel, bought in the dearest market of elegant West End dealers, who give three years' credit! Maude,

in all her ignorance, was wise enough to know that these things would not realize one of the twenty thousands required by her father.

"But there is Twickenham, papa," she said; "the Cedars must be worth ever so many thousands."

"And is mortgaged to the full extent of its value," answered Mr. Hillary. "Find me twenty thousand pounds if you can, Maude, but don't worry me with frivolous suggestions. I tell you that it is quite impossible for a woman to understand my position. God help me! I scarcely understand it myself. I only know that everything round me is so much rottenness, and that the crash *must* come next month."

"But you will not think—of that—again?" urged Maude, pointing to the drawer.

"No; I'll wait to the tenth."

"For *my* sake, oh, papa, for my sake."

"No, child; not for your sake, but from a selfish, cowardly clinging to life," cried Lionel Hillary, with sudden passion. "It would be better for you, ten times better, if I were dead. The thought of that was in my mind as I came down here to-night, until the noise of the engine almost seemed to thump out the words, 'Better for her, better for her.' People would have mercy upon you if I were dead, Maude; even those who suffered by me would be less bitter in their reproaches if I were dead. A man can only break his heart once, and when the man is dead, there is no mark for the arrows of justifiable reproach, or the foul garden stuff and rotten eggs of malicious calumny."

"Papa, the help may come; the twenty thousand pounds may be found."

"No, child; there was only one hope of that, and the hope is gone."

For the first time that night Mr. Hillary looked at his daughter; she saw the look, an anxious scrutiny that sent a chill through her heart. She did not ask him what that one hope had been.

"Papa, trust in me, only trust in me!" she cried; "you do not know of what I am capable for your sake—for your sake. You don't know what I have suffered to-night, and how changed I am by that suffering. Hope for a miracle even, papa; keep things as smooth as you can, and between this and the tenth the twenty thousand pounds may be found. Only tell me one thing. You don't want any one to *give* you the money. If it were lent to you, you could repay it by-and-bye?"

"Yes; with sufficient time I could repay it."

"Then hope for the miracle, papa. Ah! you think me such a child that you are almost angry with me for telling you to hope; but the lion laughed at the mouse, I dare say."

Five minutes after this, Miss Hillary led her father to his room and wished him good night, cheerfully enough, upon the threshold. But under that pretence of cheerfulness, cruel fears and perplexities were torturing her innocent heart. Ruin, dishonour, disgrace; the misery of

many homes besides that one household on the bank of the river,—all these terrors had come very suddenly upon the girl who only that morning had been impatient of the December weather and the dull gray sky.

She went to her room, but only to sit with the door open, listening for any sound in her father's apartment, which was next her own. She sat for nearly two hours shivering with cold, and then crept softly to her father's room and opened the door. The merchant was sleeping, peacefully enough to all appearance, for his breathing was tranquil and regular; so Maude went back to her room. It seemed the bitterest mockery to go to bed, but then Miss Hillary's maid would have been scandalized had she come at eight o'clock and found her mistress still watching. Alas, poor Maude! for the first time in her life she had to submit to that most cruel social penance, entitled "keeping up appearances." She went to bed, and though she seemed to hear every hour, and half-hour, and quarter of an hour chimed by the church clocks, she must have slept at some time or other in that brief remainder of the night, or else how should she have been tormented by those hideous dreams, in which she was always wading through black morasses and turgid waters, carrying in her arms a great bag of gold, which she vainly strove to convey to her father?

CHAPTER XVI.

A DRAMA THAT WAS ACTED BEHIND THE SCENES.

MR. HILLARY escorted his daughter and Julia Desmond back to Twickenham upon the day following that night scene of anguish and terror. They left Brighton rather late in the day, and arrived at the Cedars when the early winter evening had closed in upon the leafless avenues and groves about the old house. Lights were burning cheerily in the long range of lower windows, and in the vestibule and inner hall, and rare groups of stainless marble gleamed white against a background of bright hothouse flowers. Deferential servants came hurrying out as the carriage drove up, and Miss Hillary, seeing her home in all its accustomed brightness and comfort, felt a painful sense of bewilderment. It was so difficult to realize the force of that calamity which had been so lately revealed to her: it was so difficult to believe that all this splendour was so much rottenness, from which there was only one step to poverty and disgrace.

Mr. Hillary had visited his daughter's room very early upon the morning after the terrible confidence between them, and had impressed upon her the necessity of suppressing every evidence of the knowledge that had come to her.

"I have been compelled to trust you, Maude," he said, "and you must prove yourself worthy of my confidence. Heaven only knows how difficult it has been to me to keep the secrets of my business during three years of reverses and misfortunes such as rarely fall to the lot of a speculator. My only chance of floating over this crisis lies in the meeting

with some friend who will lend me the money I want, without looking too closely into the nature of the security I have to offer. But let the state of my affairs once get wind, and all hope of retrieval would be lost. Remember this, Maude, and, if you love me, show a bright face to the world; and above all, beware of Julia Desmond. That young lady is a dangerous person, my dear, and the day may come when we shall have reason to regret having given a shelter to old Desmond's destitute child."

"But Julia is a dear good girl, papa; she would be very sorry for us, I am sure," Maude pleaded, innocently.

"Julia has contrived to feather her own nest so remarkably well, that she would be very indifferent to any calamity that could come to her friends," answered the practical man of the world, who had been by no means pleased with Miss Desmond since that young lady's conquest of Francis Tredethlyn.

Maude kissed her father,—ah, how passionately! She clung to him as she remembered that long feverish dream of the previous night, and the glittering something lying in the drawer; she kissed him, and promised that his secrets should be guarded more carefully than her own life.

"And the miracle *may* be accomplished between this and the tenth of January, papa," she said.

And then, as Lionel Hillary was about to leave his daughter's room, she placed herself suddenly between him and the door, and turned the key in the lock. He looked at her, surprised and perplexed.

"Maude!"

"Dearest father, you have trusted me, and you have exacted a promise from me," said Miss Hillary, with a quiet calmness that was more impressive than any vehemence of manner; "and now I want you to give me a promise, a very solemn promise, my own dear father."

She put her hand upon his shoulder and kissed him once more, clinging to him fondly, looking tenderly upward to his pale, careworn face. Then she took a bunch of keys from her pocket and held them out before him.

"You remember those keys, papa; I am going to return them to you; but I want you to kneel down with me here, now when all that feverish excitement of last night has passed away; I want you to promise me, as you hope for mercy and happiness in a better world when this life is all gone by and done with,—I want you to promise me that you will never again, under any circumstances, in any hour of trial or temptation, think of that dreadful alternative of which you thought last night. Oh, papa! remember it is such a terrible sin even to think of it; for we can never do so until we have ceased to trust in God."

The simple words went straight to Lionel Hillary's heart, that world-weary heart, in which there was but this one tender quality of paternal love still left. No subtle arguments of theologian or philosopher could have so deeply influenced him as his daughter's gentle pleading. He knelt by her side, close to a little table, on which an open Testament was

lying, and pressing his lips upon the sacred page, swore that he would never again contemplate the sin which he had so nearly committed only a few hours before.

"It is a coward's remedy at the best," he said presently; and then he took his daughter in his arms and looked down at her tearful face with a mist before his own eyes, which made that bright young beauty seem blotted and dim. "My Maude, my darling, surely Heaven must have created you to be my guardian angel. I have not been a good man; I have been too much of a speculator for the last few years,—a reckless speculator, perhaps; but when the demon of commercial hazard had his grip strongest upon me, your image was always in my mind. I wanted to leave you rich, secure from all the troubles of this world. I was a poor man in my young days, Maude, and perhaps the bitterness of that early time may have taught me to set too high a value upon wealth. Fortune came to me afterwards, almost as wonderfully as it comes to a prince in a fairy tale, and some recklessness of spirit may have been engendered in me by my own successes and by the times in which I have lived."

"But, dear papa, you need not fear poverty for my sake," said Maude; "only trust in me, and when the time comes you shall find me ready to face it. My life has been very pleasant—too pleasant, I dare say,—I have always felt that it was so when the thought has come to me of all the people who suffer in this world. But you know how the princess in the fairy tale, who has never known a sorrow, goes out all at once into the great forest, more helpless and lonely than the poorest woodman's daughter, and yet no harm ever comes to the princess, papa. If it will only please Heaven to spare your good name, poverty will have no sting for me; and if disgrace *should* come, I will bear it for your sake,—I will bear it without a murmur for your sake, papa."

She broke down just a little as she said this; she could not speak quite calmly of that most terrible loss of all—the loss of her father's commercial honour. She remembered, very dimly, long prosy discussions that she had heard at Mr. Hillary's dinner-table, about men who had failed, and who had failed through some dishonesty or recklessness of their own, and whose downfall had involved the hard-won fortunes of others, making a vast circle of ruin, spreading as the watery circle spreads when you drop a pebble into a tideless lake.

From this time it almost seemed as if a new life began for Maude Hillary. No more careless idling over new music, no more eager commencements of expensive fancy work that was never to be finished! After Miss Hillary's return to the Cedars, any one taking the trouble to watch her closely might have perceived a wonderful alteration in her conduct—a change that was almost a transformation in her very nature. When she opened her piano now, it was for no idle trifling with fashionable difficulties, no coquetting with shakes, and skipping of arpeggios. She

practised steadily, and for hours together. Might not the time be very near at hand in which she would be called upon to gird on her armour, and join the ranks of the bread-winners? She thought of herself in a dingy London street, somewhere in the dreary region between Holborn and the New Road—the region which was once a fair expanse of pleasant meadow-land. She thought of herself toiling as so many women toiled, leading the same dull life from day to day; and her courage did not fail her even before that dismal picture. It was not likely that this change in Maude Hillary could escape the notice of so observant a young lady as Miss Desmond. Julia saw and wondered, but she was far from guessing the real cause of Maude's unusual gravity.

"I suppose she is making herself unhappy about Harcourt Lowther," thought Miss Desmond. "These fortunate people always contrive to find *one* crumpled leaf in their beds of roses. She is making herself miserable about that handsome, worthless soldier, and she thinks herself hardly used because she cannot play at love in a cottage, with a rich mercantile father to pay the expenses of the idyllic *ménage*."

This was how Julia Desmond accounted for Maude's long intervals of absent brooding, and that melancholy shadow which settled on her face whenever she fancied herself unnoticed, and for a while relaxed the heroic effort with which she tried to keep her promise, and guard her father's secret. It was a very hard struggle. All the young idlers, the government clerks, the briefless but literary barristers, the rising artists who had narrowly escaped making palpable hits at the Royal Academy, or at a temple of art which they irreverently alluded to as the "Brish Inst,"—all the accustomed Twickenham loungers flocked down to the Cedars to keep their Christmas holidays in the house of a gentleman whom they regarded as a sort of commercial Midas—a Moorgate Street Fortunatus, from whose inexhaustible coffers flowed the golden waters of perpetual prosperity: and Maude received all the old incense, and was fain to smile something like the old smiles upon her worshippers, while her heart ached with an unceasing pain, and a hidden dread that was like a palpable burden weighed for ever on her breast.

"Oh, if they knew—if they only knew!" she thought. "They court me because they think I am rich, perhaps; but if they only knew what an imposture all this splendour is—these lights and flowers, and grapes and pines, and Sèvres china and Venetian glass, and all this long parade of dinner; if they knew that poverty and disgrace may come to us before the new year has well begun!" Sometimes, in her utter weariness of spirit, sometimes when the social comedy seemed almost too hard to act, Miss Hillary felt suddenly tempted to turn round upon her admirers, and cry to them,—

"Why do you torment me with your hackneyed compliments? I am *not* the daughter of a millionaire; my father is only an imprudent speculator, who is hovering on the verge of a black abyss of bankruptcy and

ruin. Go and offer your worship in some solvent temple, and leave me alone with my father and his sorrows."

This, or something akin to this, Miss Hillary was at times sorely tempted to utter. But she kept her promise. She had promised that no word or action of hers should betray the rottenness of her father's position, and she kept a close watch upon herself. Her adorers—who were by no means so mercenary as she thought them—perceived that something was amiss with their goddess, but were far from associating anything so vulgar as the state of the money market with the lessened lustre of her smiles.

"She's engaged to some fellow in the army, and her father won't let her marry him, and the fellow writes her worrying letters; Miss Desmond told me as much," the loungers said to one another, when they confided in each other about Miss Hillary.

The brilliant Julia had taken care to let Maude's admirers know that her heart had long been bestowed upon a remote object; but she did not go so far as to reveal the name of Miss Hillary's chosen lover; and Francis Tredethlyn had no suspicion that Maude Hillary, and the beautiful heiress of whom his master had so often spoken, were one and the same person. He knew nothing of this; he only knew that Maude seemed as remote from his sphere as the distant stars that shone coldly upon him out of a steel-blue winter sky when he looked from his window at the Cedars. He spent his Christmas at the Cedars,—for Mr. Hillary had been specially cordial and hospitable to him of late, and had resumed all his old graciousness of manner to Julia.

And the private theatricals, the elegant drawing-room exhibition of amateur histrionics, which Maude had planned so merrily in the autumn, were to take place on the first night of the new year,—now, when the poor girl's heart was sinking under the dull pain of that perpetual burden, that dreary terror of the disgrace which might be so near.

She had told her father that a miracle might be wrought before the 10th of January. Of what had she thought or dreamed when she held out that hope? What daring fancy had been engendered out of the excitement of the moment? There are times when a woman feels capable of becoming a social Joan of Arc, a bloodless Charlotte Corday; but then the enthusiasm, the exaltation of the moment is so apt to pass *with* the moment. There had been a vague but desperate intention lurking in Maude Hillary's mind when she had encouraged her father by those hopeful speeches; but the days were creeping past, the new year was close at hand, and nothing had been done. Nothing had been done, and now Miss Hillary was tormented all day long about these wonderful private theatricals, which were to surpass every drawing-room performance since the days when the unhappy daughter of the Cæsars played a *soubrette* for the delight of that taciturn king and grandfather-in-law who did not like to laugh.

All arrangements for the grand entertainment had been made before Mr. Hillary's household removed to Brighton. The play had been selected, the characters allotted to the individuals who were supposed, or who supposed themselves, to be most fitted to play them, but not without as much shuffling and changing as the kings and queens undergo in a game of cards. The drama finally chosen was the "Lady of Lyons," selected no doubt on that grand principle in accordance with which all amateurs go to work, *i. e.*, because it is a play which specially requires accomplished actors in every one of its characters. Of course Maude was to be the *Pauline.* Was she not sole daughter and heiress of the master of the house, at whose expense all the business was to take place? If she had been red-haired, or hump-backed, or lame, the amateurs could scarcely have done otherwise than choose her as the representative of the lovely *Mademoiselle Deschappelles.* But as she was one of the fairest daughters ever spoiled by a wealthy merchant, she was really created for the part, as it seemed; and she had only to order her dresses and let down her sunny hair in the classic disorder of the period, and she would be the loveliest *Pauline* that ever won the simple heart of an aspiring young gardener. But how about *Claude?* At first every one of the amateurs had desired to play *Claude*, and nothing but *Claude*. To wear that impossible velvet coat, with its lavish embroidery of gold and spangles; to snub *Beauseant*, and to patronize *Damas;* to flourish diamond snuff-boxes and rings, and filmy ruffles of point d'Alençon, which are *so* becoming to the unhappy amateur, whose hands are apt to assume the rich purple hues of raw beef under the influence of extreme terror; to hold Miss Hillary in their arms, and cry, "Oh! rapture!" in a ponderous bass voice apparently situated somewhere in those martial jack-boots without which *Claude* would be less than *Claude*,—to do all this seemed to the young men at the Cedars a glory and delight which would be cheaply won by the cutting of one another's throats in a *champ clos.*

And then to what base hypocrisies these amateur actors descended! declaring to one another that after all *Claude* was *not* such a great part! Nay, indeed, was not the heroic gardener something of a spoon, liable to provoke laughter if his velvet coat failed to fit, or his humble blouse looked too much like a little boy's pinafore? *Claude* might be a very fine part, the amateurs argued to each other, in a regular theatre, where there were the gallery fellows to applaud the long speeches, and to stamp their hob-nailed boots in the great situations, and all that sort of thing, you know; but your drawing-room audiences are apt to laugh at strong sentiment; and, in short, for a private performance, *Damas*, or *Beauseant*, or *Glavis* were the great parts.

So there was a good deal of chopping and changing, with vengeful feelings attendant thereupon; and at last, after almost all the privileged guests at the Cedars had made themselves hoarse in the endeavour to cultivate that bass voice and peculiar melodious gurgle so often heard on the stage, and so

rarely heard off it,—after innumerable tryings on of velvet coats and cocked hats before cheval glasses,—it transpired all at once that nobody wanted to play *Claude Melnotte*. The noblest hearts sank with a sickly terror before the thought of all Twickenham assembled in solemn conclave to listen to those long speeches with which the peasant husband endeavours to appease the natural anger of his bride. One by one the amateurs had made the awful discovery that after all there is some touch of art, not to be learned in a day, even in the actor's trade. One by one they had discovered that they lacked *physique* for the leading character; and that after three acts or so of blank verse, they were apt to become hoarse and roopy, and to break ignominiously from that melodious bass gurgle into a treble squeak. So it came about that there was no one to play *Claude*, and Miss Hillary clasped her hands in anguish, and demanded what was to become of her. All Twickenham and Hampton Court, Richmond and Ham, and all sorts of people from town invited to witness the "Lady of Lyons," and no *Claude Melnotte!* One of the government clerks, who fancied himself an embryo Buckstone, timidly suggested "Box and Cox" as a fitting substitute for the drama; but Miss Hillary turned from him with disdain. "'Box and Cox'!" she exclaimed, contemptuously; "why, my dresses are all ordered, and the white satin for the wedding dress is to be five-and-twenty shillings a yard. I *must* have some one for *Claude*."

And then at last it was discovered that Francis Tredethlyn, who had volunteered to carry a tea-tray, or a coal-scuttle, or to announce a carriage, or to perform any ignominious part in the drama for Miss Hillary's pleasure,—it was discovered all at once that this young man was able to act. He was no untaught Macready, no ready-made Keen, but he was able to do what the best of the government clerks and literary barristers failed in doing; he was able to roll out the melodious blank verse in a big, deep voice, that never failed him to the end of the chapter. The stage is almost as great a leveller as death himself, and on that little platform at Twickenham uneducated Francis Tredethlyn was quite as much at his ease as the well-bred young men about him: more at his ease, for he was not so bent upon distinguishing himself, and was indeed only eager to oblige Miss Hillary. All this had happened before the autumn visit to Brighton, and now when Maude returned to the Cedars she found busy workmen making a perpetual hammering in the apartment which had been chosen for the scene of the entertainment. Mr. Hillary did everything in a superb manner; there was to be no pitiful contrivance of folding-doors festooned by suburban carpenters, but accomplished people from town had come down to the Cedars, and a magnificent archway of white and gold spanned the lofty billiard-room which the merchant had built at one end of his house. All the arrangements were to be perfection; the lighting of the small stage was to be a miracle of art, the grouping of the furniture had been studied by *genre* painters of no mean pretensions. Poor Maude grew sick at heart as she heard all these details discussed. She looked

back, and wondered, as she remembered what a frivolous creature she had been only a few months ago, and how this amateur dramatic performance had seemed a matter of supreme importance to her; and now she repeated the words mechanically during those long rehearsals, in the course of which the amateurs had so many angry disputations, and so cruelly victimized Mr. Hillary's pale sherry.

At last the new year began, and at ten o'clock upon the first night in January long lines of carriages filled the avenue at the Cedars, and the road outside the lodge gates, until the neighbourhood was luminous with flaming lamps that glared redly in the winter darkness. People came from far and wide to see Miss Hillary play *Pauline*, and to devour Mr. Gunter's supper, though Miss Hillary's heart might be breaking, and the merchant's head splitting with the weight of care that pressed just now upon his over-taxed brain! But people *do* get through these things somehow; and Lionel Hillary walked about his drawing-rooms, looking supremely gentlemanly in a stiff cambric cravat, and uttering mild commonplaces for the edification of new arrivals.

People get through these things. Poor Maude's head ached with a dull pain as her maid arrayed her in a dress of white silk, showered with rosebuds, and flounced and looped with lace and ribbon. Would any of this finery be paid for? Miss Hillary wondered, as she saw her splendour reflected in the cheval glass; or was it altogether dishonesty and wickedness? She shuddered as she thought of this; but the entertainment of to-night was only a part of the grand hypocrisy which might help to float Mr. Hillary safely over the terrible crisis, and Maude determined to be true to her promise. So she smiled at Julia Desmond, when that young lady, who was to play *Madame Deschappelles*, came to exhibit herself in powder and patches, and brocade and diamonds, and with half the point lace in South Audley Street bestowed upon her handsome person. Miss Desmond had consented with amazing graciousness to perform the matronly *rôle* allotted to her; but she had determined to look like a marquise of the time of Louis Quinze, and she had despatched Francis Tredethlyn on half a dozen shopping expeditions, until that gentleman was fain to wonder how a few ribbons, brocaded fabrics, and yellow old lace flounces could cost the big sums for which he wrote cheques in favour of the West End tradesmen to whom Julia sent him.

The two girls admired each other's dresses, and the maid joined in a perfect chorus of laudations with a young lady who *would* play the *Widow Melnotte* in a nine-guinea black moire antique, and a point lace cap and apron, and who kept snatching a manuscript copy of her part from her pocket, and furtively gabbling its contents in dark corners. The girls admired each other, and sailed down the broad staircase together, and went straight to a little anteroom, where half a dozen gentlemen, in attitudes expressive of supreme mental agony, were bending over half a dozen copies of the "Lady of Lyons," and gabbling vehemently.

There is no occasion to describe this amateur performance at the Cedars, inasmuch as it very closely resembled all other amateur performances. Miss Hillary, stepping on to a stage for the first time, was, to say the least, not *quite* a Helen Faucit, and was on the point of breaking down now and then in some of her grand speeches; but she looked so beautiful in her perplexity and confusion, that the elegant audience encouraged and supported her by the gentlest tappings of spangled fans and pattings of tight kid gloves. There were no tiresome boys in the gallery to urge her to speak up; no critical chimney-sweeps to murmur their disapproval, or hint that she had better go home and learn her part. There was only admiration for her timid loveliness, and the soft music of her tremulous voice.

Of course there were the usual number of dead pauses in the drama, technically known as "stage-waits," the solemn silences in which the actors stood still and looked imploringly at one another, while the voices of amateur prompters—always inciting their victims to the utterance of wrong speeches—were painfully audible throughout the assemblage. Mr. Tredethlyn rolled out his blank verse with a sturdy courage that was worthy of all praise; and if his hands were a little red, and his blue cotton blouse slightly suggestive of Newgate Market, he had acted with his brother soldiers in very rough amateur performances out in Van Diemen's Land, and now and then some touch of natural fire, some little bit of tender pathos, startled the well-bred audience into applause. It may be that now and then Francis Tredethlyn found himself carried away by the spirit of the scene. Did not that romantic drama bear some likeness to his own story? This beautiful *Pauline*, this unapproachable being whose lovely image filled the peasant's dreams, who was she but Maude Hillary herself? Perhaps if Miss Desmond had been the *Pauline*, Francis might have seemed as cold and tame as the rest of the Twickenham amateurs: but the eyes that looked at him tenderly or reproachfully to-night were the only eyes in all the world that had the power to move him deeply. He acted well, therefore, as the dullest man will act sometimes under the influence of some factitious excitement: and when the curtain fell upon the final scene of happy and triumphant love, the audience were loud in their praise of "that handsome-looking Mr. Tredethlyn, who was just the very man for *Claude Melnotte*."

Then there was a final parting of the curtains and a shower of bouquets, all in the orthodox style, and Maude felt perfumed petals fluttering about her as she curtseyed to her indulgent audience.

All through that last act she had surprised those well-bred spectators out of their natural languor. The *Pauline* who had been so tame and unimpassioned in the grand cottage scene, was carried away by a strong tide of passionate feeling in that last act, where the half broken-hearted daughter pleads for her insolvent father. Sobs almost choked Miss Hillary's utterance more than once in this scene; and when at last her head lay for a

few moments on Francis Tredethlyn's breast, the young man's martial decorations were wet with real tears. The sight of that emotion moved him strangely, though he beheld in it nothing more than the natural excitement of a highly sensitive organization. After the little ovation that came with the close of the drama, he followed Maude Hillary into the anteroom, where the rest of the amateurs were discussing the night's business, and flirting with the splendid Julia, and thence to an inner room, less brilliantly lighted, and quite unoccupied. Beyond this inner room there was another apartment—the study in which Francis had fallen an easy victim to the wiles of the Hibernian enchantress,—and it was to this room that Maude hurried, still followed by Mr. Tredethlyn.

He had no business to follow her. He knew that very well. His business was with Julia, who had acted *Madame Deschappelles* with wonderful spirit, and for whom the evening had been one long triumph, inasmuch as her lace, and diamonds, and brocade, and dark eyes, and white teeth had been the subjects of universal admiration. Mr. Tredethlyn's business lay in that brilliantly lighted antechamber where Julia sat amongst the government clerks, and barristers, and grand military dandies, while an accompaniment of perpetually popping champagne corks mingled pleasantly with the noise of their laughter. He knew this, and yet he followed Maude to the dimly lighted study, where the red glow of the fire flickered on the bindings of the books and the frames of the pictures. He could not leave off being *Claude Melnotte* all in a moment. The exaltation of the mimic scene was still upon him. Just now he had been carried quite away by the influence of the poetic situation; and when he flung down the sham money, which was to release the merchant's daughter from her hated suitor, a warmer thrill of triumph had stirred his breast than had ever been engendered by the possession of Oliver Tredethlyn's thousands.

And now he could not fall back to his old position all at once. Only a minute or two ago Maude Hillary had been sobbing on his breast,—his bride, his wife; and he half fancied he had some kind of right to sympathize with her emotion. He stopped suddenly on the threshold of the study, quite unmanned by the sight of Mr. Hillary's daughter half kneeling, half lying on the ground, with her face buried in the cushions of a sofa, and her hands clasped in a despairing attitude above the fair tangled hair that had so lately lain upon his breast. Her whole frame was shaken by the vehemence of her sobs; and before such a picture as this it was scarcely strange if poor country-bred Francis Tredethlyn quite forgot that he was *not* Claude Melnotte. He bent over the prostrate girl, and laid his big fingers gently upon one of those little bejewelled hands clasped so convulsively above the fair head.

"Miss Hillary," he exclaimed, "dear Miss Hillary, for pity's sake tell me what distresses you—what has happened—what is wrong—or——I

—I beg your pardon—you have over-fatigued yourself, and you are hysterical; let me send for your maid."

"Oh, no, no, no!" cried the girl, rising to her feet and standing before him, but with her face still hidden from him, hidden by her outspread hands and her dishevelled hair.

"Shall I call Julia? she is in the room yonder."

"Oh, no! I—I want to speak to you, Mr. Tredethlyn; stay just a little, please. Ah! it is so hard, so cruel, but the last chance! In all the world there is no one else who can save me—and my father—my poor, miserable, bankrupt father!"

Francis looked at Miss Hillary in complete bewilderment. Her father—her bankrupt father! Why, then, she was still thinking of the scene that was just finished, and the commercial troubles of Monsieur Deschappelles; which character, by the way, had been enacted by a very young man of a sickly cast of countenance, and an inclination to hang his head dejectedly throughout the performance of the drama. It is a rule amongst amateurs to assign the elderly and ineligible characters to the youngest and meekest members of the company; whereby Monsieur Deschappelles is usually represented as a young person of some nineteen summers, with flour in his hair, dirty streaks, supposed to represent wrinkles, upon his face, and a tendency to squeakiness in his voice.

"I am sure you are over-fatigued, over-excited by the play," urged Francis; "do let me call Julia."

"No!" cried Miss Hillary, dropping her hands from before her face. "Oh, Mr. Tredethlyn," she exclaimed, almost passionately, "can't you understand—can't you see that I am in earnest? Do you think that scene just now would have made me cry as it did if it had not reminded me of my own sorrow? Mr. Tredethlyn—I—I know you are a good man, that you would not be slow to do a kindness for any one who needed your help; I know that; and I—I thought I should have courage to speak to you, but now the words won't come—I——"

Her dry lips moved, but made no sound. She clasped her hands once more before her face. Heaven knows how desperate was the effort that she made. It is not such an easy matter to borrow twenty thousand pounds; even though the borrower may be young and beautiful, and accustomed to perpetual adoration.

"Miss Hillary, you speak of help—needing help—from *me*. For mercy's sake, tell me how I can help you. Do you think there is anything upon earth that would give me such pride and delight as to be of service to you?"

The enthusiasm of the moment lighted up Francis Tredethlyn's countenance like a sudden glow of summer sunshine. Maude uncovered her face and looked at him, and saw at once that her cause was gained; her father's preserver was found. She had not counted in vain upon Francis Tredethlyn.

"I want you to lend papa twenty thousand pounds," she said; "I know that he will repay you honourably. He has some difficulties—terrible difficulties in his business,—but the loan of twenty thousand pounds would smooth them all away. I know that you are very, very rich, Mr. Tredethlyn, and that you can afford to lend such a sum of money, or I should never have dared—"

"You would not have dared, Miss Hillary? Oh, can you doubt that I would give the last sixpence I have in the world, the last drop of my heart's blood, to save you from one pang? Twenty thousand pounds! Take forty—fifty thousand—the utmost farthing of my fortune, if you will—squander it—throw it into the river yonder, if the waste of it can give you a moment's pleasure. Oh, you don't know, you don't know how I love you!"

He had been acting *Claude Melnotte*, and the intoxication of the sweet sentimental poetry was strong upon him; beyond which it is just possible that he may have taken a little more sparkling Moselle in the course of his dramatic exertions than can safely be taken by a young man of sanguine temperament. All prudence, all power of reticence left him in that moment, and he dropped on his knees at Miss Hillary's feet, like a lover in a stage play. She was so beautiful—she seemed so far away from him, even now, when her distress had brought her a little nearer than of old,—that this attitude of adoration seemed quite natural to him, almost the only attitude in which he dared address her.

"Oh, if you knew how I love you," he cried, passionately,—"if you could only believe or understand! But I am so ignorant—so unworthy—so far beneath you."

Miss Hillary drew herself away from him with a gesture of mingled surprise and disgust.

"You dare to talk to me like this, and you are the affianced husband of my friend!" she cried. "Oh, Mr. Tredethlyn, you take a very mean advantage of my father's difficulties and my distress."

"Yes!" answered Julia Desmond from the doorway. She had been standing on the threshold for the last few moments, watching this interview behind the scenes. "Yes! it is altogether mean and shameful, Maude Hillary. You have taken a noble course, I think, when you fling your father's debts upon the man who was to be my husband, and coolly ask him for the trifling loan of twenty thousand pounds." She laughed bitterly as she named the sum. "Twenty thousand pounds—and you ask your friend's lover to turn money-lender; and you bring your tears and hysterical sobs, and a thousand pretty amateur dramatic devices to bear, in order to obtain what you want, and all in the most childish innocence, of course. And then you turn upon the man whom you have lured to your feet by a hundred tricks and artifices, and make a charming show of surprise and indignation. Ah! it is shameful, Maude Hillary—mean, and cruel, and false; and bitter shame shall come to you for this night's work."

The Irishwoman was superb in her indignation. Those flashing eyes and glittering teeth, hereditary in the race of the Desmonds, seemed to light her face with an infernal kind of splendour: such a splendour had many a fated victim seen upon the countenance of the duelling Irish colonel, just before he fell prone on some lonely field beside the Shannon. It was against Maude that the fuller fury of Julia Desmond's rage was directed,—against Maude, of whom she had always been jealous, in whom she had continually found a triumphant rival. It was only after that outburst of jealous rage that Julia turned upon her recreant lover. Francis had risen from his knees, and stood a little away from the two girls, with a dogged moodiness upon his face: he was sobered by Maude's indignation and Julia's passion, and he was dimly aware that he had acted like a scoundrel.

"As for you, Mr. Francis Tredethlyn," Miss Desmond said presently, "I suppose I have no need to tell you that all is over between us, and that I bitterly repent the humiliation my own folly has brought upon me. I should have known how much I risked when I stooped to regard a person whose code of honour belongs to a different world from that in which I have been reared. I suppose amongst *your* people it is the fashion for a man to pledge himself to one woman and then make love to another; but such is *not* the custom in the circles where the Desmonds have been used to be welcome. I should have known what I had to expect when I came into this house. I should have known what I had to anticipate when I trusted in the truth and loyalty of a man who is not a gentleman."

Throughout this speech Julia's hands had been moving rapidly, but with unfailing purpose, though they trembled a little all the while. One by one she had unfastened the diamond ornaments that had glittered upon her head and wrists, her throat and bosom, and now the jewels lay in a little heap at the feet of Francis Tredethlyn. One by one she had thrown them there during that passionate speech. She *could* not act her play out. She had been unable to support the character she had undertaken. The fiery blood of the Ryan O'Bryan Desmond had asserted itself in spite of all the promptings of prudence, all the bitter schooling of experience. It was very dreadful to be poor and dependent. It would have been delightful to be mistress of thirty thousand a year; but Julia Desmond, coming to the threshold of the study, had heard Maude's appeal for the twenty thousand pounds, and Francis Tredethlyn's impassioned avowal, and patience and policy had alike deserted her. Carried away by the impulse of the moment, she renounced everything. At last Francis Tredethlyn spoke for himself.

"I know that I have acted very badly," he said. "I had no right to speak; I never should have spoken but for that play. I think I must have almost fancied myself that poor gardener's son, who dared to worship the brightest creature that ever crossed his pathway, and in an evil hour told

her of his madness. Ah, forgive me, Miss Hillary; do not hate or despise me for what I said just now; let it pass like the play in which we acted to-night.—And you, Julia—Miss Desmond, I am not too proud to ask your forgiveness for the wrong I have done you. I have been very guilty, and I accept your reproaches in all their bitterness. But when I promised to be your true and faithful husband, I only made a promise that I am still prepared to fulfil. You will at least do me the justice to remember that I did not profess any warmer feeling than admiration and esteem."

"Your justification is only a new insult, Mr. Tredethlyn," Julia answered, coldly. "I wish you good night."

Her passion had been something terrible in its suppressed vehemence some moments before, but she was quite calm now. She swept towards the door leading out into the corridor; but as she passed the merchant's daughter she stopped, just long enough to utter one brief sentence close in the young lady's ear.

"You shall suffer for this, Miss Hillary," she said.

She left the room; but Maude followed her, crying,—

"Julia! Julia!"

She hurried along the corridor and up the staircase, following closely upon Miss Desmond; but when she reached that young lady's room, the door was shut in her face, and only one answer came to her almost piteous pleadings for admission,—

"I have nothing to say to you, Miss Hillary. I only regret that I must pass one more night in this house."

So Maude was obliged to go away in despair, and, meeting her maid at the door of her own room, was informed that Mr. Hillary had been inquiring for her, "ever so many times," the maid said; "and I've been looking for you everywhere, Miss, to know when you'd have your dress changed."

Yes, there was to be more changing of dresses before Maude's work was done. She resigned herself with a sigh to the hands of the young person who waited upon her, and then went down-stairs, gorgeous in pink silk and crape puffings, and with a crown of dewy rosebuds on her head, to receive the compliments and congratulations of her father's friends, and to act her part in that social drama which was quite as difficult a performance as the "Lady of Lyons."

Francis Tredethlyn sat quite alone in the little dimly lighted study at the end of the long, rambling mansion, while Mr. Hillary's guests finished the evening with a little dancing, a great deal of flirting, and a perpetual sipping of sparkling wines, in out-of-the-way corridors and lobbies, where there were hothouse flowers and low chintz-covered ottomans, and an air of loneliness conducive to flirtation. Francis Tredethlyn sat alone, with Julia's diamonds still lying at his feet, and brooded over his position. He had outraged Maude, whom he adored. He had injured Julia, to

whom he was bound by every sentiment of honour and good faith. No words can express the bitterness of his remorse as he sat pondering upon what he had done. "False to my cousin Susan, false to Julia Desmond," he thought, "nothing but mischief has come to me since I inherited that miserable money. I have no right to be amongst these people. I never should have come to this house, where *her* presence has always seemed to turn my brain."

He looked down at the diamonds lying on the carpet, and smiled bitterly as he remembered how much money they represented,—more than had been spent on Susan Tredethlyn in all the girl's joyless life—ten times more than would have restored the young man's father to solvency and comfort, that time when his uncle refused him the loan of two hundred pounds.

He stooped and gathered together the fallen jewels. There was a writing-table near him, with pens, and paper, and sealing-wax, and all necessary implements. He selected a large sheet of paper, and packed the diamonds into a parcel. But before sealing the packet he wrote a few lines on the margin of the paper :—

"DEAR MISS DESMOND,

"I beg you to retain the enclosed. They were given to you as an evidence of my esteem and admiration, as well as of my gratitude for your indulgent kindness to one so much beneath you as myself. I implore you to forget and pardon what has happened to-night. I am too ignorant of the world in which you live to know what I ought to do ; and I can only assure you that I am ready to submit myself entirely to your discretion, and still hold myself bound by every word I said in this room on the day when you promised to be my wife.

"Yours sincerely,

"FRANCIS TREDETHLYN."

No one but the servants knew when or how Mr. Tredethlyn left the Cedars on that first night of the New Year; but a little before one o'clock the next day a letter was delivered to Mr. Hillary—a letter from the assistant manager of a certain bank in the City, informing the merchant that a sum of twenty thousand pounds had that morning been placed to his credit.

LADY-BELLE.

Under the beeches, so tenderly green,
Lady-belle rode on her palfry white;
Where the long branches came down like a screen
To shelter her bonny brown hair from the light.

Lady-belle rode through the dark forest plains,
Singing as blithe as a lark in the sky;
Suddenly dropp'd she her silvery reins,
And leap'd from her saddle with tremulous cry.

Herbert of Avondale lay on the ground,
Pallid and lifeless, with blood on his vest;
Lady-belle, uttering never a sound,
Fell with her bonny brown hair on his breast.

"Lady-belle, tell me, is't you that I see?
Long have I journey'd to kiss your sweet face:
Craigieburn met me, and how could I flee?
Lady-belle, pray that my soul may have grace!"

"Sweetheart!" she murmur'd, and kiss'd him again,
Folded him close to the warmth of her cheek;
"Sweetheart!" she cried—but her tears fell like rain;
"Sweetheart!"—nor more could the Lady-belle speak.

Through the dim forest a horseman did ride,
Dark was his visage, and darker his eye;
"Thou and thy leman," he scornfully cried,
"Together, my Lady-belle, this day shall lie!"

"Harm but one hair of young Avondale's head,
And a wild curse, which no power may turn,
Shall follow thee—follow thee though thou wert dead
And asleep in the churchyard, thou false Craigieburn!"

Blacker his face grew; he spurr'd on his steed—
Cruelly slew he the fair Lady-belle—
Check'd not a moment his headlong speed,
To glance at the spot where the lady fell.

Craigieburn fled with his teeth set hard,
Safety in far castle towers to seek:
Lady-belle lay on the dark forest sward,
Her bonny brown hair on young Avondale's cheek.

And now, in the night, when the pallid moon charms
Spirits to wander throughout the dark shades,
They say that the Lady-belle folds in her arms
Her lover afar in the dim forest glades.

W. Black.

CORAL AND CORAL ISLANDS.

It will be necessary for us to treat our subject historically in its general form, but more especially from two distinct scientific points of view, viz., zoologically and geologically.

Coral from a zoological point of view will occupy much of our attention, for it will be our duty to explain and describe the form, structure, habits, and mode of life, and also the localities and general distribution, of that remarkable form of animal life which is popularly known and incorrectly described as the "coral insect."

The subject treated geologically will have reference chiefly to the extension of those coral reefs and islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and to the importance and influence to be attributed to coral in modifying the relative distribution of land and water. We shall also have to refer to the alternating phenomena of growth and destruction, by means of which large coral formations are arrested in their course of construction, or altogether destroyed, before they can become the abode of man.

Coral, considered as an individual substance, may be defined to be carbonate of lime in a natural form, produced by an animal of the polype kind, the particles of carbonate of lime being firmly cemented together by a gelatinous secretion produced by the same animal.

With regard to the formation of coral, in former times most extravagant opinions prevailed. Ovid conceived it impossible that coral could be formed as hard as we find it. He thought that under the sea, and continually subject to the action of water, it was soft and pliable, and that it only became firm and hard on exposure to the influence of the atmosphere. Marsigli, an Italian naturalist, considered, like many others, that coral was a marine plant, and thought the polype animal the flower. Of this opinion was Dr. Parsons, who contemptuously denied that coral could be the work of a minute jelly-like animal. "It could be produced," he said, "only by sure and patient vegetation." One of the most fanciful theories is that suggested by Baker, the microscopist, who supposed coral to be produced by chemical action in the crystallization of mineral salts (carbonate of lime) in sea-water, in the same manner as we see the particles of mercury and copper, suspended in aquafortis, assume tree-like forms and curious arborescent delineations, like mosses and shrubs. This theory, however, is erroneous. Modern research has placed our knowledge of the coral animal beyond any reasonable doubt; and though, perhaps, more information is still wanted with regard to the detail of reef and island building, the principal features of the subject are thoroughly well understood.

Coral animals are called polypes, because they belong to that class of the animal kingdom that lives in masses, formed by an aggregation of individuals, called a polypedom, and in which there is a central habita-

tion, common to all the separate individuals, called a polypary, and where there exists in some respects a community of vitality. They are also called zoophytes, or plant-animals, because they resemble vegetable products in their form and in some of their characteristics. The polypary of the coral, or stem, or central axis (the coral of commerce), is a hard, dense, calcareous tree, without leaves, but with many branches. The polypary is covered with a membrane or skin, principally gelatinous, but slightly calcareous. When the polypedom has been recently taken from the water, and is still fresh, this covering is easily detached from the central axis.

The structure of the central axis will have to be considered in two aspects,—when the animal matter is separated from the lime, and when the lime is separated from the animal matter.

The general appearance of the internal structure of coral is porous and cellular, though not unfrequently the cellular appearance is altogether obliterated, from the structural changes continually going on, both in the cell walls and in the calcareous deposits within the cells; the former being gradually absorbed, and the latter undergoing a species of crystallization.

On boiling sections of coral in *liquor potassæ*, the organic constituents are removed, and the residuum will be found to be composed of a number of closely aggregated spicules of carbonate of lime. These spicules, however, have themselves an organic base; for on dissolving them in dilute acetic acid, a gelatinous-looking body is left, which still preserves the shape of the spicule. On reversing the experiment—that is to say, treating the axis of the coral with hydrochloric acid—the lime is destroyed, and the organic constituents remain. This residuum of animal matter presents a highly organized appearance. It consists of a thin membranous tissue, through which is dispersed a complex vascular system, the vessels of which are most minute, some being only one five-thousandth part of an inch in diameter, and some very much less. The smaller vessels seem to perforate the larger ones in pairs, and these larger ones communicate with, and terminate at, the base of the polype cell. At the point of junction minute valves are discerned, the duty of which is supposed to be to prevent the reflux of nutritive matter produced by the digestive organs of the polype.

In the membrane which covers the central axis the cells of the polypary are situated, in each of which a polype lives, the membrane serving to connect the different individuals.

The substance of the polype is not throughout its whole mass of equal firmness or density, and its tissues seem to be composed of somewhat different materials. The body or trunk is altogether gelatinous, and of fleshy appearance; the lower portion or foot, that part which is inserted in the common membrane, is more cartilaginous than gelatinous, and is strengthened with thin calcareous plates, which are differently disposed in different varieties of the polype. The body or trunk is globular in shape,

with a large central cavity, containing the stomach and other vital organs. It is soft and fleshy in consistency, nearly white in colour, and almost transparent. At the apex, or outer end of the globular mass, is an orifice—in fact, the mouth of the creature. This orifice is fringed with eight conically shaped tentacles or arms (the animal's prehensile organs), which are ciliated at the edge. By dissection it is shown that the body or trunk of the animal is composed of a number of membranous tubes, arranged longitudinally and parallel to each other, and so closely packed and connected together that it is extremely difficult to separate them. The foot or lower portion of the animal is, in fact, a continuation of these tubes, though much modified in structure; the tubes farthest from the central axis being only slightly thickened, whilst those in proximity to it are of a solid character and consistency, due to the presence or incrustations of spicules of carbonate of lime, closely bound together with a cartilaginous substance. These lower and harder tubes, which adhere to the central axis, have been generally called "the polypiferous cells;" and some naturalists insist that they are distinct from the animal itself; but the better opinion appears to be that the tubes are, in fact, nothing more than a hardened prolongation of the bodies of the polype animal. When, therefore, we speak of the polype retiring into its cell, we should say that the polype retires within a retraction of a part of its own body.

Let us now inquire as to the particular kind of *community of vitality* that exists in the polypedom.

First, as to the community of the vascular system, or community of circulation. It was obviously very important to determine whether vascular circulation was complete in each individual polype, or was common to the whole mass of the polypedom; because, in a great measure, upon this question depended the kind and amount of connection that actually subsisted between the different members of the polypedom. It was reserved for Milne Edwards to set this question at rest. After a careful examination and dissection of a variety of the polype similar to the one under consideration, he was enabled to demonstrate a perfect vascular system, not only in the individual polype, but throughout the whole polypedom. In fact, he discovered and traced the ramifications of minute vessels throughout the entire membrane covering the central axis; and he further discovered that the inter-communication through the whole mass of the polypedom was effected by the permeation and penetration of vessels into the central cavities of the individuals.

For the discovery of *community of nutrition*, we have also to thank Milne Edwards. By community of nutrition is meant that where food is taken in, digested, and assimilated by an individual polype, the nourishment thereby derived is appropriated to the sustenance of the general mass. Milne Edwards made his experiment in the following manner:—He injected a blue-coloured liquid into the central cavity of an individual polype, and then watched the result. At first the polype retained the

whole of the fluid; but after a little time indications of the blue colouring matter became apparent, slowly traversing minute vessels towards, and ultimately emptying into, the central cavities of other polypes; hence he conjectured that food digested by one individual ultimately nourished other members of the polypedom.

We have now to inquire, Does there exist any community of sensation? Is every individual polype independent in its sensations? The better opinion appears to be that there is *no* community of sensation. Experiments seem to justify that opinion. If, when an individual polype is fully expanded and looking like some beautiful flower, a point on its surface is irritated, as by pricking with a needle, *that* individual touched will alone shrink and appear to feel the impression. If, however, the experiment be made massive, as by a blow, and the shock be diffused over a large surface, then will the polypedom be affected and show symptoms of sensations. Yet even then no sensations appear to be produced at a comparatively remote part of the polypedom.

We have now finished with the architects and builders, and turn to their works—the structures themselves. Coral reefs and coral islands, in their greatest extent and perfection, are seen in the South Pacific Ocean. The localities and distribution of the coral polype are limited to a very small area, for coral reefs are seldom found more than three or four degrees on either side of the equator.

The largest known coral reef is the "Great Barrier" reef that runs for one thousand miles parallel to the coast of Australia, and at a distance from the shore of from twenty to sixty miles. The barrier reef of New Caledonia is four hundred miles long. The Maldive Archipelago, in the Indian Ocean, is four hundred and seventy miles long, and averaging fifty miles in breadth. It consists of a very large number of coral islands and islets, the largest of which is eighty-eight miles in length by about twenty miles in breadth. The Chagos group of islands, many of which are submerged, extends over an area of one hundred and seventy miles long by eighty miles broad.

The term "coral reefs" is used popularly and in a generic sense to designate all kinds of coral-building, but naturalists classify them under three heads:—1st, lagoon islands, or atolls. 2nd, barrier or encircling reefs. 3rd, fringing or shore reefs. The lagoon islands or atolls have met with the largest share of attention, not from their greater extent or importance, but on account of their surprising beauty. All have agreed as to the intense feeling of astonishment that one experiences on first viewing one of these coral atolls. One beholds, says Darwin, "a vast ring of snow-white coral, often many miles in diameter, holding within it a low verdant island, the centre of which is a calm, still expanse of water (a kind of lagoon), which, from reflection, is of a bright but pale green colour. In this lagoon one sees here and there a firm spot of land, just a little elevated above the level of the water, on which there grows

luxuriantly the palm and the cocoa-nut tree; while on the outside of the ring the great and foaming billows of the Pacific Ocean lash, with unremitting fury, the dazzlingly white shores of the coral island."

Barrier reefs are hardly less marvellous or less important than atolls; they encircle groups of small mountainous islands, and are often of immense extent. Sometimes the reef is visibly connected with the land that it surrounds, but this is of rare occurrence; more generally, a long line of foaming and dashing breakers marks the separation between the open sea and the smooth waters of the channel beyond.

With regard to fringing reefs, there is but little that will require explanation. They are of comparatively small extent, and only differ from the barrier reefs in having no separating channel between them and the shore. Coral reefs of a very dangerous character, but insignificant in extent, are found encircling worn-down rocks or submerged banks; and others, again, are scattered, quite irregularly, wherever the sea may happen to be shallow. In order to understand the detail of coral-building, it is necessary to keep in mind two important facts, viz., that coral polypes require to be continually washed and submerged by the waves of the ocean, otherwise they soon die; and also that the polypes cannot live at any great depth, therefore the position and actual locality of the living working animal is limited to a very few fathoms below low water mark; we have therefore little hesitation in deciding that the opinion formerly entertained, viz., that the polypes built up uninterruptedly from the bottom of the sea to the surface, is altogether untrue. Still, there was some evidence to support such an opinion. Coral has been brought up from a depth of 1,200 feet; and, moreover, a continuous ridge or cliff of coral has often been found extending downwards from the surface of the sea to at least that number of feet. How, then, are these conflicting facts to be reconciled? In this way:—A slow imperceptible depression of the bed of the ocean has taken place simultaneously with the building up of the coral; therefore, assuming that the coral polype first attached to and began to build upon some just submerged rock, or the apex of some mountain just covered by the sea, the rock or mountain has lowered and lowered slowly and gradually, perhaps during enormous periods of time, throughout which the little polype has vigorously built up and added on to the rock or mountain a solid limestone cap; thus, after the lapse of ages, the huge rock or mountain has, as it were, sunk through the solid bed of the ocean and disappeared, and the coral rock, taking its place, appears to rise up majestically from the bottom of the sea to the surface of the water.

The coral polypes usually attach themselves to and begin to build upon the external margin of the reefs; the result of this is, that as soon as the upward growth of the coral is checked by the death of the little animals on coming to the surface of the sea, a lateral extension will immediately take place; this soon gives the dish-like form to the coral islands, and also explains the existence of the lagoon in the centre of the island, for the

water left there by the receding tide is held fast and cannot drain off, on account of the greater elevation of the external rim or edge; for there the polypes, being more frequently submerged, live longer, and therefore build longer and higher than their companions who are not so much covered by the sea. The coral-building polypes are of numerous and different species; even on the same reef or island several species or varieties will be found.

The important process of consolidation of the coral rock commences after the upward growth is arrested. It is easy to conceive that the action of the waves would speedily break off portions of the coral; those fragments, being washed and swept about by the tides, serve to fill up the interstices. The continued friction of the water smooths down irregularities, rounds off points and edges, and finally wears down the coral into a rock-like mass. It is further cemented together by the cohesion of any detritus, and by the constant washing of the sea-water, carrying with it calcareous matter in solution, and sand. This limestone rock (as it now deserves to be called) is white in colour and very hard, and is said to be sonorous under the hammer. At first it will have the appearance of a true conglomerate, but ultimately the percolation and infiltration of the water charged with calcareous sediment will reduce the whole to a homogeneous mass, in which it is impossible to detect any trace of its organic origin. The new land is not long before it is visited by sea birds; salt plants take root upon it and a soil begins to be formed, first on little spots here and there in the midst of the lagoon, then more land and less water, until the water is finally driven out and ejected from its ancient dominion. Land birds now visit the forming island, and deposit the seeds of trees and shrubs; a cocoa-nut is thrown on shore; everything tends to accelerate its formation; every high tide, and still more every gale, brings something' until finally it becomes fit for the habitation of man; and then he comes and takes possession in the name of the whole human race, to whom all the earth is given.

That this is the mode in which coral islands are formed, is established by the fact that every separate step in the process has been most distinctly observed. In an island in which the consolidation and cohesion had not proceeded very far, Captain Flinders discovered not only sand and shells of echini, &c., but also small pieces of wood and pumice-stone, and other extraneous bodies, which probably the tide had washed up when the cohesion first began. Thus some islands are covered and overflowed by the sea at every returning tide; some are raised above high water mark, but destitute of vegetation; and, lastly, some abound with trees and vegetation, and are fit for the habitation of man. Hitherto we have assumed the uninterrupted growth of the coral under favourable circumstances. We have assumed continuous, unchecked progress and development, from the first attachment of the coral polype until the final completion of an island awaiting the occupation of man. That this is rarely, if ever the case, is evident from the consideration of this one fact,

namely, that the polypes have, for aught we know to the contrary, been building for thousands and thousands of years in the same area in which we now observe them; and that, assuming an unchecked growth of coral, at the same rate of building as that which prevails at the present time, from a period contemporaneous with the deposition of what geologists call the tertiary strata, to modern times, the result would be, not reefs and islands, but huge continents of land. But there exists, in the phenomenon of subsidence of the bed of the ocean, an agent powerful for destruction; for then full scope is given to the erosive action of the sea-waves. Against these destructive forces the brave little polypes fight single-handed, and sometimes with woeful discomfiture. In the short space of ten years a beautiful island, covered with rich verdure, with birds and animals upon it, and peopled, too, by the Polynesian islanders, has been swept away and utterly destroyed. In one island visited by Captain Moresby a most desolate scene is depicted. At high water this island was completely washed over by the tide, but at low water a landing was effected. He found that the work of destruction had been fearfully rapid. At one spot he found graves of recent dead; at another, remains of a well; besides many other indications of occupation by man at a very late period.

Darwin mentions another instance. Some natives whom he met pointed out an island covered with water, except at low tide, upon which they positively assured him they had seen cocoa-nut trees growing but a very short time previously. When Darwin saw it, it was thickly covered with live working coral.

Thus do these conflicting powers carry on a never-ceasing contest. The coral polypes, with an industry that never flags, and energies that never tire, build up slowly and methodically a beautiful island in the middle of the sea, an oasis in the midst of the dreary desert of waters. A convulsion of the solid bed of the ocean takes place, subsidence follows, and the beautiful green island is depressed beneath the waters, and exposed to the destroying action of the ocean. The contest now becomes fiercest. At every recurring tide the waves rush forward with fearful violence, and strive to tear down the solid rampart of stonework. Sometimes they succeed, and the island disappears, and leaves no wreck behind. Sometimes, however, the victory remains with the little polypes, for their unremitted labours will restore the havoc committed upon their work, and the island will gradually reappear above the waters, and again bear the beautiful verdure with which nature seems to delight to ornament it.

MY FIRST BRIEF.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

I HAD seen the commander of the steamboat before, but had never spoken with him. He was a lean, wiry, undersized man, with a clever, rat-like face, much tanned by weather. He wore no nautical garb; none of those gold-laced caps, anchor-buttons, and navy-blue suits, in which our British captains delight; but merely the everlasting swallow-tailed coat, black pants, and satin vest, which seem as essentially a part of an American as his skin itself. The captain was tramping up and down his little den in a great state of fretfulness, biting his nails, stamping his heels on the floor, and viciously kicking a half-open locker in which his bedding lay during the daytime. The usual simile for a man thus angrily promenading an apartment is, or used to be, a caged lion; but the captain's size and features precluded a comparison with the king of beasts, and he put me more in mind of a restless lynx or an uneasy racoon.

"Shut the door, Juba," commanded the skipper; "shut the door, and take yourself off out of eavesdropping range. If I catch your black ears near my cabin door I'll nail 'em to the woodwork, spry as wild cats, I will."

Juba closed the door, and I heard his splay feet, in their ill-fitting shoes, scuffling away over the matting. The captain waited, listening, with his head on one side, for a moment or two, and then eyed me with anything but pleasure as he exclaimed,—

"Well, mister, may I ask *what* you reckon will be the upshot o' this?"

"That, sir," said I, not without a certain austerity—"that, sir, I wait to learn from yourself."

The Yankee gave me a long and piercing stare, and then turned his face from me, and proceeded to ignite a match and kindle a cigar, just as though what I had said had been too absurd to require an answer. After a while he spoke again, in measured jerks, between the puffs of his cigar:—

"Innocence is—puff—a good dog—but—puff—common sense—puff—brags it, I reckon. I've heerd—your grit was good—but the pitcher—can go too often—to the well—I some think."

"Do you want to drive me mad, sir," cried I, exasperated beyond all endurance, "that you persist in your inuendoes and dark speeches? It would become you better, as commander of this vessel, to remonstrate with your passengers respecting their inhospitable and brutal treatment of an unoffending stranger."

But here Captain Jonathan Willis interrupted me, plucking his half-consumed Havannah from between his thin lips, and crushing it under his heel.

"Mighty unoffending!" exclaimed he, in his shrill tones; "and a stranger! most allfired sartain that last, sirree!"

Then dropping his voice, and giving me a glance in which scorn and pity were blended, he added,—

"Mebbe you don't know, mister, that 'Nezer Trail, of Troytown, Missouri, sails in this bit of hollow timber?"

More mystery! Ebenezer Trail! Who, in the names of Œdipus and Sphinxes, was he? and why should his presence specially concern myself? Yet it was evident that the captain fully believed that the last statement ought to have crushed me, for he continued winking and nodding in the most expressive manner, while I gazed at him with dilated eyes and a brain more muddled than became a member of my clear-headed profession. The skipper was the first to speak.

"Most darned ugly fix you've placed me in, mister!" said he, as he resumed his promenade. "I'd have given fifty dollars out of my own pocket sooner than it should have been so, I would. The *Henry Clay* will suffer for it in repytation—I know she will. There hasn't been an unpleasantness aboard the barky ever since last fall, when the Lynchers took out the other chap of your sort, down Baton Rouge way."

The other chap of my sort! Delphi was limpid to this, and the Pythian intelligible in comparison.

"What did they do with him?" I gasped out.

"'Spect they hung him!" was the cool reply. "I saw what the buzzards had left of him—and buzzards won't eat broadcloth nor yet bones—hanging on the cypress trees last trip."

A cold moisture broke out upon my forehead, and my knees knocked together, as I heard this comprehensive summary of the fate of my predecessor; although what he had done to deserve such a doom, or what fatal bond of resemblance might exist between myself and him, was more than my bewildered intellect could solve. The captain saw my agitation. A gleam of something like genuine pity passed over his hard-lined face. He peered cautiously about, lifted a warning forefinger, and in a low, chuckling whisper uttered these remarkable words:—

"If you ask my advice, mister, I'll sell cheap. Here it is, free gratis for you, in one syllable:—slope!"

"Slope!" I mechanically repeated.

The captain nodded. "Hist!" said he. "I hope none o' those darned niggers are listening, for it might cost me a life, it might, and I've none to spare. Never mind! my old mother was a Bible Christian, and thought pretty much as you do. Look here! Next place we stop at, to take in wood, is Venice wharf. The *General Washington*, upgoing boat, will be there two hours hence or so; do you slip out, and hide behind the wood-piles till we're out of sight. Never mind your traps; skin's worth more than shirts and coats. Get aboard the *General Washington*, tie up your face as if you'd got the toothache, and never open your mouth to speak till your feet touch the soil of Illinois. Then you'll be safe. Hush!" And the captain opened the door, and gently pushed me out of his

cabin, and shut me out. I went on deck. I sat down, far from any of the passengers, and I must have passed the next half-hour in a state of something like stupefaction; and yet my weary brain worked. Either I was mad, or everybody else must surely be fit for a strait waistcoat. What could have induced the skipper to volunteer such extraordinary counsel as that of flight? Surely a pitiful desire to possess himself of my scanty baggage could not have been the motive of his curious advice. Besides, what was the original cause of the dislike of the passengers to myself? While I was still feebly busy with this dark enigma I perceived that the *Henry Clay* was approaching a little wharf, around which clustered a few hovels of rude log-architecture. A bell tinkled with vociferous shrillness, and a white board nailed to a tree bore in long black letters the one word "Venice." There was a huge wood-pile for the use of passing steamers, and two or three German labourers in homespun clothes were bustling among the heaps of fuel.

I remembered that this was the place at which the captain had advised me to slip away. The moment was singularly propitious for escape; the dinner-gong had, not ten minutes before, called the passengers to the principal meal of the day, and all except myself had trooped off to the grand saloon. I could not eat; I was wretched and careworn; and so it fell out that when the plank was laid between the steamer's gangway and the wharf, nobody was on deck except the pilot, the steersman, and myself. The firemen and stokers came tumbling out of the engine-room to assist in embarking the fuel, but they paid no sort of attention to me, as I leaned over the light side-rail.

The wood was got on board rapidly and roughly, and already the man whose duty it was to cast off the tow-rope that secured the *Henry Clay's* bows to the shore was standing beside the post over which the loop passed. Still I gazed idly upon the scene, on the dark forest, the imperfect clearings, the chocolate-hued earth, and the poor hovels of this namesake of the mistress of the Adriatic. Suddenly Juba, the black, napkin in hand, came softly up, stepping as if he were treading among eggs, and with a face of importance whispered in my ear,—

"Massa, massa, captain send Juba say, dis Venice, dis de destination massa booked for."

I gave a start. Of course I had *not* booked for Venice, but for New Orleans. But I quickly appreciated the skipper's kindness in renewing his well-meant hint in such a manner as to provoke as little suspicion as possible. For a moment the idea of flight sprang up within me; the shore was temptingly close; the plank was within a couple of yards; two strides would place me in safety. I hesitated. I pleaded inwardly the *pros* and *cons.* of the case. Some instinct urged me not to waste time, not to throw away a chance, but to fly at once, and to hide behind the wood-piles until the *Henry Clay* should be hull down on the low horizon. But pride and shame were up in arms to prevent so ignominious a retreat

from an invisible danger. After all, I was innocent. I was an honest man, the citizen of a friendly country, travelling on a lawful errand. What had I to fear? However capricious the people of the West might be, I should take the most dignified course in remaining to brave the matter out. Besides, in my portmanteau were a dozen shirts, two of them with embroidered fronts; my best frock and dress coats, patent leather boots, slippers worked by the fair hands of—never mind whom, and other articles that I was loth to lose. Moreover—and it is wonderful how petty and great considerations link themselves together in mental debate—I should be disgraced for ever in the esteem of my two military uncles, as the first poltroon who ever bore the name of Phelps. So I burked and kept down the sensible instinct of self-preservation, and let the shallow reasonings win the day.

And as I lingered, behold, it was too late. The mooring-rope was cast off, the plank was slipped inboard, the bell tinkled, and the answering splash of the paddles threw all the yellow water into foam, and the *Henry Clay* slipped from alongside the wharf of Venice, and glided fast down the endless river. A chance the more was added to the limbo of lost and neglected chances. Juba had left me without waiting to see the result of his message, and I sat alone, moping, and upbraiding my own tardiness, during the remainder of dinner-time. For, by a not uncommon revulsion in the human mind, after having omitted to embrace the easy transition to safety and freedom while the steamer took in wood at Venice, I was actually half disposed to jump overboard and swim ashore at all hazards, before the boat was a rifleshot from the bank. But I did nothing. I stood thinking of the marvellous and unaccountable treatment which I had experienced, and wishing from the bottom of my heart that my feet were on the pavement of Fleet Street once more.

The passengers came up in knots, and all gazed at me, and nudged one another, and spoke together mysteriously. The skipper came up, and gave a perceptible start as he espied me, but avoided catching my eye, and soon disappeared, whistling shrilly and beating a tattoo with his fingers on the woodwork, as he vanished into the depths below. On we went; our next stopping-place was Hopefield, in Arkansas, but it was not to be expected, with all the speed of the boat, that we should arrive there before night set in. Determined not to allow the boorishness of my fellow-travellers to annoy me, I drew out my note-book, and amused myself by jotting down in short-hand a quantity of miscellaneous information on various matters. I was thus usefully employed when my attention was attracted by a loud trampling and buzz of conversation, and lifting my head I perceived that six gentlemen were approaching with the obvious intention of addressing me.

Three of the party were known to me by name:—Colonel Budge, who had charged me with the heinous offence of "tampering" with his coloured servants; Captain Hiram Greenpole, the catcher of my hat, and the very

author and mainspring of all the mischief; and a stately Virginian, Colonel Tarleton, by far the most gentlemanly and respectable of the Southern chivalry on board. The other three were utterly unknown to me. Colonel Tarleton seemed by common consent to have been voted chief of the party, for he it was who, stepping before the rest, removed his hat with such an air of lofty politeness, that I felt myself constrained to rise and return the salute.

"You have before you, sir, a deputation from the honourable passengers on board the *Henry Clay*," said the Virginian, in a tone of dignified hostility, such as would have become an ambassador presenting his sovereign's ultimatum at a foreign court.

"Well, sir?" returned I, outwardly calm, but inwardly perturbed.

"Sir," said the Virginian, "I have examined the books of this steamer, and I discover that you have entered your name as Hector Phelps, of the Inner Temple, London."

"Sir, I have," was my reply; "and I am not ashamed of it."

Here a stir, and what the newspapers call a "sensation," ensued, while some one muttered the words, "Hardened miscreant." The colonel waved his hands to entreat silence.

"I invite you, sir," said he, earnestly, "to disclose the truth. Would that you might be able to justify yourself! It would save me, sir, a most unpleasant office, and yourself from consequences which you ought to have weighed before entering on your present career."

"I must take leave to say, sir," I began, but the colonel interrupted me with,—

"Hush, misguided man! you are not now in a position in which effrontery can avail you anything. The most brazen forehead, the most subtle tongue, would fail *now* to hoodwink those who must shortly be your judges. Denial and subterfuge will not mend matters, nor patch a rotten cause. Your only hope of mercy lies in instant confession, frank and free confession, and the denunciation of your wretched accomplices."

I stared at the incomprehensible speaker,—perplexity, indignation, alarm, struggling for mastery over my mind; but never a word could I stammer out except, "Accomplices?"

"Yes, sir, accomplices!" thundered the Virginian, with a severity of eye and voice that would have roused the envy of an attorney-general; "for you cannot surely pretend to deny what is established by proofs clearer than the noonday."

"Fell the skunk!" broke out an angry man from behind the tall colonel. The latter lifted his hand to implore silence.

"A moment, I beg!" said he; then, turning to me, "Miserable incendiary, unhappy fanatic, speak at once, and earn a milder penalty by giving up the names of those hidden villains of whom you are but the hired instrument. Speak, sir!"

Here was a predicament. Not only was I shunned, bullied, annoyed

in all ways, warned to fly, baited like a bear, but I was put on my trial without a copy of the indictment, and was compelled to listen to epithets the most unwarrantable,—"incendiary," "fanatic." I felt assured that such language would be actionable in all countries. Then, too, I was desired to name my accomplices, and to denounce my employers. Now I had no accomplices; and as for employers, surely Nailer and Clutchit, who had retained my services in the great case, could not be the "hidden villains" so darkly alluded to.

"If there be a law of libel in America"—I began, shaking all over with passion; but I was not suffered to proceed.

"Sir," said the colonel, "remember that your hat,—ah, you change colour now!—yes, sir, your hat has been in the hands of Captain Hiram Greenpole, here present, and was by him submitted to the ocular scrutiny of four gentlemen of credit and veracity. And you owned to it, sir,—you owned to it,—shamelessly avowed the truth! Do you deny it now, sir?"

"Deny what?" I asked, with quivering lips, not at all certain whether to knock my tormentor down, or to fling myself overboard. But the patience of the deputation was exhausted.

"Words are wasted on so black-hearted a scoundrel!" bawled little Colonel Budge, shaking his cane at me.

"He's confessed it once, and that's enough for any Regulators' Court in the West, I kinder fancy," remarked Hiram Greenpole; while the others showered on me such flowers of speech as came uppermost; and Colonel Tarleton, stepping aside to reveal a puffy, yellow-visaged planter who stood behind him, exclaimed,—

"Self-convicted criminal! behold the man whose property you have stolen, whose house you have conflagrated, whose family you have consigned to destruction! Grovel, serpent, at the feet of the injured Ebenezer Trail!"

And the Virginian, clutching me by the collar, endeavoured to force me to kneel at the feet of the yellow-faced man, who rolled his jaundiced eyes tragically at me, while all the other passengers set up a roar or squeal of applause, and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs enthusiastically. Was all this a grim play, an ugly drama? Or was I not Hector Phelps, but somebody else? Had my identity been changed by one of those strokes of witchcraft of which we read in old books of *diablerie?* I struggled, and threw off the Virginian's grasp.

"I am a peaceable traveller," said I, gasping, "a member of the English bar, a gentleman—"

"Liar!" "Impostor!" "Double-milled, deep-red, madder-dyed villain!" cried several furious voices, and I was again roughly collared, my hat was torn from my head, and passed along from hand to hand, every one attentively examining it, and breaking into a cry of triumph or execration at the result of the scrutiny. In vain I struggled, fought, and pleaded. The majority overpowered me; my hands were tied together

with two flaming silk bandanas, a red and a yellow one; my pockets were searched; my letters, purse, card-case, pocket-book, and the rest of my property were taken from me. The Virginian secured my note-book, and exultingly announced that its contents were in cipher, and that when the key should be discovered it could hardly fail to lead to important revelations. In vain I shouted forth protestations of my innocence, threats of the vengeance of Great Britain, and scraps of international law, until I was hoarse. No one listened to me. A hundred and eighty tongues wagged at once; nor from the babel of sounds could I derive any more definite idea as to my position than that I was a very hardened rogue indeed, and that I was likely to die impenitent.

Nor were all the members of the company disposed to endure the law's delays; for some rough men of Arkansas and Missouri proposed to inflict condign punishment upon me then and there; and it was all that Colonel Tarleton and the more respectable passengers could accomplish to prevent my being severely handled.

"Patience, gentlemen, patience!" I heard the colonel cry; "the majesty of the law shall be vindicated. Wait, only wait, till we can hand him over at Hopefield to those who will cut short his career of crime."

I heard all this, but sullen despair had come over me, and I no longer pleaded for the hearing which was so obstinately denied me. I sat on a bench to which I had been hustled rather than led, and awaited the pleasure of my captors with something of the stupid meekness which bewildered faculties produce. Evening, the short twilight of that southern latitude, was falling fast; the mist rose white above the tawny river, and the cries of wild animals resounded from the forest. Then night came on, darkly clear; the stars shone gorgeously overhead in the moonless sky; the fire-beetles glowed among the bushes on the bank; I heard the deer belling, and the long howl of the wolf, and the hoot of the owl, and the whooping of the goatsucker. And then the gong beat out the noisy summons to another meal, and I sat on the deserted deck, but not now alone. A man, armed with a rifle, stood sentry in the gangway—sentry over me. He stood, pensively whistling, with his back turned, looking at the black outlines of the ghostly forest, and going through tune after tune. Mechanically my weary mind began to follow his sibilant melody, and I listened as "Nancy Dawson" changed to "Lucy Neal," and as "Ride a Rail" melted imperceptibly into "Yankee Doodle," when a quick tread cut the musician short in the middle of a bar.

"Git along, Sam, and ask the barkeeper for a brandy cocktail. He can score it to my total. I'll take gyard awhile," said the new comer, and the sentry went willingly off, resigning his gun and post to the volunteer.

"Be back in a pig's whisper, Sam!" was the parting injunction of the new comer, in whom I now recognized the captain of the steamer.

"Well, mister," said Captain Willis, in cautious tones, "didn't I

tell'ee, and warn't I a true prophet? Now you're regular treed, and no mistake."

I tried to clear my brains. "Captain Willis," said I, "I do solemnly assure you that I must be mistaken for somebody else. My name is, as my letters, which have been scandalously taken from me, must prove, Hector Phelps."

"Whew!" whistled the skipper, scornfully; "what's the use of sticking to a stale trick? All's blown, man."

"And," pursued I, "I am quite innocent of every and any offence against the laws of the United States."

"Cut that palaver short, mister," said Willis; "'taint the first time, by chalks, that I've heerd chaps say that, but they never got believed so far south-west, I caution you. Now listen, for I see Hopefield lights yonder in the clearing, and Sam'll be up in a minit to take his gun again, and so open your ears as you love your neck. You're a sad scamp—you needn't snort so indignant; but I don't like to see a man strung up like a mangy cur, let alone burning alive, which ain't improbable nouther, seeing what you did at Rosehill plantation."

"What *I* did at Rosehill plantation!—I, Hector Phelps!"

"Look here," pursued the skipper; "all depends on what sort of a chap the sheriff may be in Hopefield there. It'll be touch and go work with you once the bhoys hear you're caught. If the sheriff's a man respected, a man to whip wild cats afore breakfast, you'll have a chance to get off with imprisonment until the States Marshal can smuggle you out to Illinois or Iowa. If sheriff's a muff, you'll never see the inside of the jail, you won't. Keep quiet; don't deny anything; don't aggravate the bhoys by mock innocence, or you'll rile 'em past moderation. Now I've warned you."

And before I could expostulate, up came Sam, and resumed his gun and guard, the skipper slipping away and leaving me to my fate. What was I to do?—what to expect? There, right ahead, gleamed the few lights of the little town where, as it seemed, my destiny was so soon to be decided. The clash of steel and glass ended, and the passengers once more crowded the deck. In a few minutes the *Henry Clay* approached the quay of Hopefield, and I could see a dark mass of human forms, agitated to and fro by some common impulse, and uttering at intervals a low hoarse roar, that had a distressing resemblance to those uttered by wild beasts in a menagerie when feeding-time approaches.

I was perplexed to account for these signs of popular commotion, when the yellow Ebenezer Trail, of Troytown, Missouri, approached me, and, with a most malignant scowl, tapped me on the shoulder, and pointed to the bows of the steamer, where burned five lamps, three green and two red, arranged as a pyramid;—

"Which means," said, or rather hissed, the wronged Ebenezer, "that we've caught a snake more venomous than any rattler or copperhead on

the pararas; and hark! the bhoys are getting ready to welcome you as you deserve."

A long, loud yell, that Pawnee warriors might have envied, so savagely exultant was the ring of it, came on the breeze; and then the red smoky glare of pine knots and resinous torches, and of a flaming tar barrel, threw a glow of lurid crimson over the dusky forms whose tossing arms and wild gestures gave them the air of demons toiling in their congenial element. I confess that my heart sank as the steamer was steered in-shore, and when I heard the splash of the mooring ropes, and the grating of the plank that was thrust towards the wharf, I felt much as if I were on the scaffold, and resigning myself to the last attentions of the eminent Mr. Calcraft. The mob roared and leaped, and the passengers of the *Henry Clay* huzzaed responsively. Obviously my capture was regarded as a victory.

"Hurrah! hurrah! we've got him, the dratted thief! Hurrah! 'Biram's treed! 'Biram's treed! Chuck him over to us, misters!" Such were the cries of the crowd. "'Biram—Abiram!" again the recollection crossed me that I had been addressed by this name by the black steward. No doubt I was mistaken for another.

"Gentlemen," I cried, in despairing accents, "hear me. I am not the person you name. I am not Abiram."

"Yah! whoop! lying hound! We've got you, old 'possum! Yah! whoop!" yelled the populace.

The plank touched the quay. Colonel Tarleton grasped my left arm, Hiram Greenpole enclosed my right in his vice-like clutch, while two other persecutors impelled me from behind.

"Hurrah! huzza!" bawled the crowd, as, bare-headed and bound, I was pushed upon the plank, at the other end of which a confused medley of flaring torches, clenched fists, and angry faces awaited me. In the gangway stood Captain Willis, the wiry skipper.

"Gentlemen," screamed he, in the highest key of his shrill voice, "I bring you a queer bird for your cage yonder by Soapstone Creek. Off to jail with him! Where's the sheriff?"

"Here am I!" answered a deep voice; and a stout, resolute-looking man, in a farmer's garb of "butternut" coloured homespun, elbowed his way to the plank.

"A prisoner for you, sir, charged with arson, conspiracy, and other offences. Collar him well, I advise," cried Colonel Tarleton.

"I'm ready," said the sheriff; "give me a grip of him. Stand back, bhoys. Marshal, stand by me; and you, mister, you, constable there, bear a hand!"

"No, no," bawled the mob; "no law but Judge Lynch's law. Hang him up to the next tree—drown him—burn him, as he and his black devils burned white women and children—into the fire with old 'Biram—skin him—scalp him—huzza!"

"Gentlemen," roared Colonel Tarleton, "don't break the law. All worthy citizens help me to give up this man to the custody of the legal authorities. Sheriff, in the name of the United States and the State of Arkansas, do your duty!"

There was a regular fight, compared with which an election riot is child's play. I was hustled, beaten, bruised, trampled, overthrown, trodden to a jelly, dragged up again, fought for, tugged at, mercilessly pounded and pummelled. A great game of "pull devil, pull baker," took place at my expense; but at last, the sheriff being resolute, and Colonel Tarleton a really humane man in his way, the law triumphed, and I found myself, bruised, bloody, and with torn clothes, the inmate of a rude log-house, called by courtesy a prison. I never thought that I could have been so glad to see the inside of a jail; but we live and learn. My summary execution had only been delayed on the assurance of the sheriff that he would consent to my speedy trial, not before a regular court, but before the extra-legal tribunal of the "Regulators." The proposal to send me to Little Rock for examination before the State Court met with an indignant rejection, and I was told that on the morrow I must plead before the rough and ready jury of the "Regulators."

But on the morrow I was delirious, and tossing to and fro on my maize straw bed, in the throes of a dangerous fever. Ill usage, heat, anxiety, and the unhealthy climate had combined to bring on this disorder, so common in Missouri and Arkansas. I was kindly nursed by some free persons of colour, who had the courage to brave the popular odium in their charitable wish to comfort the desolate stranger. From my heart I thank them. But for them I should have died in that wretched place. Long I lay between life and death, burning hot and deadly chill alternately, and raving of Whirtle *v.* Wotherspoon, of Ebenezer Trail, and of the great cause I was to plead before the Regulators against Abiram, at the suit of Nailer and Clutchit. But before that court I never appeared. When I was strong enough to converse, the doctor kindly told me that I was a free man.

A letter had arrived from the real Simon Pure, the true Abiram Peters, the famous abolitionist emissary, for whom I had been unhappily mistaken. This Peters, a fanatical but crafty enthusiast, was obnoxious as having excited the negroes on many plantations to revolt, as having spirited away numberless slaves to Canada, and having been, in fact, a firebrand through the South. This Abiram had been the old passenger in wig and spectacles who had attracted my notice during his short trip in the *Henry Clay*. Carrying, as he did, his life in his hand, he had assumed the aspect and bearing of old age and infirmity to prevent recognition, and was himself not aware that within the hat he wore, under the lining, was written in full his detested name, Abiram Peters, the publication of which would, in the South, have been his death-warrant. This hat, which closely resembled mine, I had most unluckily mistaken for my own in the hurry of quitting

the cabin, Peters having by a similar blunder, appropriated *my* hat when he landed at Shawnee Town.

When my hat was blown off, and was caught by Hiram Greenpole, the lining was disturbed, and the name was descried. Hence arose the whole mistake. No definite charge being made, I was unable to justify myself, while all on board the *Henry Clay* firmly, and not unnaturally, believed me to be Abiram Peters in person. My fever probably saved me from the halter; and the real Abiram, seeing in the journals a full account of his own capture, and guessing how I had got into the scrape, wrote a letter from Pennsylvania that fully exonerated me. It was then discovered that Ebenezer Trail had never set eyes on the man to whom he charged the burning and massacre; that no person in Hopefield knew Peters by sight; and that in feature and complexion the abolition agent was wholly unlike me. Of course I was set free; nay, I was loaded with apologies and fair words, and my property was restored to me.

But already had October begun, and until the 15th I was too weak to travel. I crossed the Atlantic by the next steamer, took the mail train from Liverpool to London, and, after a few hours' repose, rushed to Westminster, put on my wig and gown, and hurried into court, to find—what?—to find the great case of Whirtle *v.* Wotherspoon drawing to a close, shamefully mismanaged by that idiot Prattles, of Pump Court, who filled my vacant place. The Chief Justice ruled dead against us; the jury followed his lordship's lead; the wretched Wotherspoon triumphed; and the faces of Nailer and Clutchit, as they shook their heads reproachfully at me, smote me to the heart. Shall I ever get another brief? At any rate, I shall never forget the manner in which I lost my first.

COMPIÈGNE.

Compiègne has of late years been rendered familiar to us by the annual love which the Emperor and Empress of the French display for that ancient palatial residence. Whenever they can escape from the imperial Tuileries or diplomatic St. Cloud, their Majesties turn a fond glance towards Compiègne. What Windsor is to English sovereigns Compiègne may be said to be to French sovereigns. It has kingly associations for many a century back; even the stately Fontainebleau, with its magnificent woods, its trim gardens, its placid lakes, holds not equal place in royal favour with its northern rival. Neither Louis Napoleon nor the graceful Eugenie can avoid admiring Fontainebleau. The grand court (*le cour des adieux*) of its palace—that architectural medley reared by Francis I.—has many a personal reminiscence for them; whilst the lofty, leafy avenues of its forest, its shadowed *carrefours*, its abrupt rocks, its winding paths, its brigand caverns, its deep dells, have an historical and legendary fascination.

It is, however, at Compiègne that the imperial group really ruralize, that they throw off the fetters of officialism, and, unbending, enjoy the beauties of nature, indulge in wholesome relaxation, and experience the invigorating pleasures of *la vie de campagne*. Riding and driving, walking and shooting, hunting and coursing, break the monotony of the hours at this *château de campagne* of kings and emperors. Here the second Bonaparte can gallop beneath the branches of trees up which Saint Louis the crusader may have climbed; for the forest and château have a history of their own, which looms back like their own vistas into the dim past, and gives them both character and grandeur. Even the Ville de Compiègne is not without an interest peculiar to itself; for it is one of the most ancient, if not one of the most picturesque towns of France. It served as a royal hunting-box to the Merovingian kings—those early Nimrods of the chase,—and sheltered even *la Pucelle*, the Maid of Orleans, the heroic and unfortunate Joan of Arc. The ruins of La Tour de la Pucelle still remain to remind us that it was once a bulwark to the saintly girl who, armed cap-à-pie, was destined by Heaven to drive the insolent English from the soil of France. There stands that tall monument to authenticate the fact, and we will still believe that the Maid of Orleans did, from that now desolate tower, once repel the perfidious foe under the gallant Talbot, though local historians and antiquaries have written folio volumes enough to fill a library upon the probability or improbability of that heroic feat. The bright sides of history are its illusions, the charm of topography is its associations; and if these are to be stripped from the one and the other, what have we left? Heartily, therefore, will we side with the popular sentiment, and take it

for granted that the tradition is true, since the last vestige of the ancient fortifications of Compiègne have been baptized with the name of that patriot Virgin; and, moreover, that not far off she was captured by the English. It requires, therefore, but a slight effort of fancy to imagine that the last glances of the captive were thrown up towards that rampart which sheltered the king whom she had conducted to Rheims, and that Compiègne was the last free home of the martial Maid. It was, too, the last of all those towns which she had triumphantly entered, won back from the invader. The Tour de la Pucelle stands in a damp, narrow, paved court. The Emperor of the French, it is said, intends to destroy the incongruous mass at its side, but has hitherto been thwarted in his plan by an obstinate proprietor who battles for his rights, and has persistently refused to accept any offers of gold for the purchase of his heritage. A few common houses are, in his sight, of greater value than was his birthright to the hungry Esau. The one, however, was famishing; the other is not.

But even the Tour de la Pucelle is somewhat forgotten as soon as we plunge into the deep glades and wander about the stately avenues of this venerable forest; and if the autumn sun has tinged the leaves with a rich golden brown, so much the better. The fall of the year is more suggestive, and better fitted for reflection, than any other season; it turns the mind more vividly to the past, and revives the *souvenirs* and associations which cluster around the lives of men and nations alike. In such a spot as this, where a wild silence reigns amidst the gloom of overhanging branches, and where Nature has spread a carpet of moss, lest human footstep should disturb her primeval repose,—in such a spot we find an appropriate resting-place in which to commence the survey of bygone ages, and evoke the memory of the aborigines who first woke the echoes in these dim glades. Who were they? Humble woodcutters, doubtless, mysterious Druids—a bold, independent, and haughty race. What religious solemnities, what national *fêtes*, what festal gatherings, may not these wondrous groves have seen? The shouts of the soldiers of a Cæsar have been heard here, making the wood ring again; and the rugged voice of the guttural Frank, grating harshly on the mellifluous accents of the Latin tongue. How many races, too, have left their fleeting impress here! The Normans, whose audacious incursions brought tears into the eyes of old Charlemagne, too feeble to resist them. They ascended the Oise, and the trees of this forest, round and smooth and lofty as a cathedral spire, fell beneath the hostile blows of their hatchets. With the timber thus hewn these sea-kings repaired their shattered barks, or built new ones for fresh incursions, abandoning to the waves the broken shells which had brought them triumphantly from the Cimbrian waters. Merovingians, Carlovingians, Capetians, kings and barons, bishops and abbés, have in their day enjoyed high festival in the leafy fastnesses of Compiègne. And what thoughts, what cruel designs, what audacious intrigues, mingled with what pious aspirations, have troubled the breasts of the revellers who have been

privileged to sport, and hunt, and gather pleasure in the very spots where we, after many ages, in our turn linger, and along those avenues which delight us now! How closely knit is the chain of events which links us to the past! This mighty forest, this impressive witness, has assisted, so to speak, at nearly all the great calamities, all the important acts, of French history. It saw the bishops who elected Eudes, Count de Paris, King of France. In its inextricable labyrinths was lost, according to a popular legend, the infant Philippe August, fortunately restored to the château by an obscure charcoal-burner. It saw the barons of Saint Louis and the hunting parties which assembled at the marriage of his brother Robert. It saw the States-General convoked by the dauphin, Charles V., after the battle of Poictiers. It witnessed the struggles of the Armagnacs and Burgundians, as well as the brave bands of the invincible English archers. It saw the Chevalier de St. Michel created by Francis I., and the *fêtes* offered to Charles V. It witnessed the amours of Henry II. and Diana of Poictiers; of Henry of Navarre, the warrior and lover of the Duchess of Beaufort. Marie de Medici, fleeing before Richelieu, sought shelter here; and here was held the Court of Anne of Austria and Christina of Sweden, as well as that of Louis XIV. It was here, too, that the unfortunate Marie Antoinette was received for the first time by the dauphin, afterwards Louis XVI., and that the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte welcomed his future wife, Marie Louise, on her arrival in France.

Why was Compiègne, with all its fatal reminiscences, selected for the meeting of the Emperor Napoleon and his young spouse? Why was she not received in Paris? Why did not the great captain go to Meaux, or Nancy, or Strasbourg, to welcome to the threshold of her new home the bride whom policy and ambition, not love, had incited him to demand? There was no wooing, there could be none. State and dynastic reasons alone impelled to the grand crime of divorcing Josephine; and a cold, calculating desire to provide an heir for the throne of the Bonapartes alone urged the chief of the Bonapartes to sue for the unloved and unloving hand of the least beautiful of German princesses. Love or beauty, tenderness or passion,—what had they to do with the ruthless warrior, the military monarch who aimed at universal sovereignty, and treated crowns as footballs, to be kicked aside if they dropped across his path? Wagram broke the power and pride of the Hapsburg—the ransom of Austrian autonomy was a kaiser's daughter.

And she, poor weeping thing, victim of diplomacy, child of a hard destiny, the Iphigenia of modern expediency,—what were her emotions as she stepped from her carriage to receive the caress of her father's vanquisher, her country's oppressor, her own absolute husband, lord, and master? What feelings had to be crushed before she could stoop to give her body—her heart she could not command—to the crowned despot whom her soul loathed, and at thought of whom her eyes wept scalding tears? Could all the beauties of Compiègne, the sycophantic homage of

an embroidered court, the flowers strewn upon her path, compensate her for the sacrifice she made in mating with an empurpled *parvenu*, to be sprinkled heraldically with the golden bees of a Corsican adventurer?

And when she retired to her boudoir or wandered through the evening glades of this ancient forest, did the shadow of that grand suffering woman, the divorced wife, never cross her path? Had she faith in the dispensing power of Popes and senators to salve her conscience?

"Josephine, my good Josephine, you know how I have loved you," said the imperial husband to his childless wife; "it is to you, to you alone, that I owe the few moments of happiness I have known in the world. Josephine, my destiny is more powerful than my will; my dearest affections must yield to the interests of France."

"Say no more," cried the despairing wife; "I expected this: I understand, and feel for you; but the stroke is not the less mortal."

Did those fearful words ever ring in the ears of the rising, nay, risen Empress, as she paced through the gilded apartments of her new home, and received the blandishments of her steel-hearted consort? He was kind, doubtless, in his caresses. "She is not beautiful," he acknowledged, "but she is the daughter of the Cæsars;" and respect from a man of such stern power may have had its soothing qualities. But in her heart of hearts did she, could she believe herself the real wife of a *divorcé*, even though an emperor? How she must have loathed those interviews at Malmaison between the ex-wedded lovers, whom "reasons of state" had separated! Did she ever look into the future, and wonder what would be the fruit of all this violation of natural feeling, this defiance of natural right, this disposition of divine justice? "That marriage," was the frank but damning confession of Napoleon himself, "was the cause of my destruction; in contracting it I placed my foot on an abyss covered over with flowers."

Bitterly indeed had both to rue the wooing of that day. The arrival of the Austrian bride at Compiègne was the signal for revelry and rejoicing, but not a few remembered the arrival of another Austrian bride, and with ominous forebodings thought of Marie Antoinette, the proud and beautiful queen of Louis XVI., who innocently hastened, if she did not actually bring about, the fall of the Bourbon dynasty. The sun of Marie Louise's destiny moved majestically onwards, till, within a short five years, the 18th of June dissolved the imperial union of Compiègne.

"And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
  Thy still imperial bride,
How bears her breast the torturing hour?
  Still clings she to thy side?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
  Thou throneless homicide?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem,
'Tis worth thy vanish'd diadem!"

But let us turn to another meeting at Compiègne,—not the meeting of

a crowned husband and his affianced, won rather than wooed; but of two eager statesmen, wedded together in a deep conspiracy against that Austria which had given to France two brides. The one wears an imperial star upon his breast, the other is clad in plain clothes; the one bears the features of a Bonaparte, the other may be a simple *bourgeois;* the one is the nephew of the "throneless homicide," the other Count Camille Cavour.

At that meeting, too, a political marriage, a *mariage de convenance*, is the subject of debate—and something more.

The ambition of the Bonapartes still aspires to grasp in wedlock the hand of a princess of royal blood. A "cousin" has to be provided for, and what better foundation for the throne of a *parvenu* than an alliance with an ancient sceptred house?

Savoy is selected, the time-crowned and honourable house of Savoy; Clotilde, the eldest daughter, still a child, is marked down in the imperial note-book as the likeliest flower to be plucked. And there are the two cool, calculating statesmen. Not a muscle of either face moves. Sternly they barter away the life and happiness, it may be, of a princely girl, as though they were exchanging a bundle of old clothes or a parcel of land that had no feeling and instinct. The bartered princess hears of the passionless traffic, and, in an access of terror and distraction, rushes to her chamber, and there, day and night, weeps as one forlorn. The *regal Galantuomo* soothes her, using the authority, with affectionate gentleness perhaps, of a father, but in vain; the statesman prates to her of expediency and patriotism, and her tears flow thicker and faster; the priest holds up to her the holiness of self-sacrifice, and enjoins her, by the faith she professes, to crush her natural feelings, and yield, as to the dictates of Heaven. Poor lamb! how was she to resist the pleadings of sire, councillor, and priest? In her bewilderment the lips repeated their assent, and the articles of alliance were signed.

And the terms?

On that same table at Compiègne lay a map, and across it the astute statesman and his imperial host bent, compasses in hand.

"*From the Alps to the Adriatic?*"

"Yes, from the Alps to the Adriatic."

"What does your Majesty demand as the price of your services to Italy?"

"Savoy, Nice, and Sardinia."

The statesman looked up into the cold grey eyes of the imperial speaker, and shook his head.

"Nothing less?"

"Impossible, your Majesty."

"Impossible?"

"Impossible!" replied the statesman, pausing on the word; "unless——" and the sentence remained unfinished.

"Unless——" echoed the throned diplomatist, waiting for the conclusion of the sentence.

"Unless your Majesty withdrew from Rome. Rome is everything to Italy," continued the statesman, emboldened by the confession he had made. "Rome is the centre, the pivot, the heart of Italy; and I know not what sacrifice the Italians might not be prepared to make to regain their ancient capital—at least, I would—"

"Not yet, not yet; I have need of Rome as well as the Italians."

"And of the *prestige* of freeing Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic."

"Perhaps! However, you know my price—Savoy, Nice, and Sardinia."

"And a king's daughter—"

"Well, well, we'll drop Sardinia, then, for the present; and when the first part of our programme is performed, we'll talk over the second."

And the Emperor and his guest rejoined the gay company of the palace, and conversed as lightly and pleasantly as though their private *tête-à-tête* had reference to no weightier matter than the shooting of pheasants or hunting the deer in the forest.

This faculty of making Compiègne serve the purposes of pleasure and diplomacy has given to the invitations to the Court, when there, a more than ordinary interest. Curiosity in the political world of Paris is piqued into a state of frenzy to ascertain who will be amongst the first batch of guests,—whether this ambassador or that; and from the disposition of the cards the grey-headed old quidnuncs draw the most auspicious or most ominous conclusions. Indeed, this passion for conjecture has been so happily hit off by a clever writer residing in France, *àpropos* of the invitations for the present season, that we cannot omit his remarks.

"There will be," he says, writing a few weeks since, "four series of guests; the first including all the Imperial Family. Then, of course, every list will be scanned to find out what ambassador is in favour, and who may be in the cool shade. The Cavalier Nigra, who has been the best abused man in Paris society for the last ten days, and who, it was asserted, must resign his post, will be watched eagerly. If he shoots pheasants with the Emperor, then it will be said that Italy and France are agreed, and that there will be 'war in the spring.' If, on the other hand, he should act charades with his imperial hostess—for he is a cavalier of catholic tastes, and quite as efficient in the *salon* as in the *chancellerie*,—then will Italy be about to be ruined, and the Pope, 'that pagan full of pride,' be stronger than ever. Again, many eyes will turn upon the representatives of Austria and Prussia, and, no doubt, equally sound conclusions will be drawn from their sayings and doings. For instance, if, as is their custom, the Austrian and Prussian legates shoot together at the same bird, all the rest of the party crying, 'Ware hen;' or if they both play the same game—I allude, of course, to the *petits jeux innocens* with which royalty delights to amuse its guests,—then we shall be sure that

they were mutually satisfied with their last slaughter, and with their little game in Denmark. Russia, too, will be at Compiègne, and from the recent civilities which have passed between the Czar and the Emperor, that Muscovite minister will doubtless be put into the very 'warmest' corner, so as to be able to shoot down trusting hares and harmless pheasants, just as they do at home in the *battues à la Mouravieff.* Then I suppose the English ambassador will be there, unless, indeed, he carries the present fashion of English policy to its logical consequence, in which case he will overnight talk a great deal of his shooting, back his bag against another's, and in the morning stay at home."

"There is nothing so charming," writes Madame de Sevigné, in one of her bright gossiping letters, "as the interior life of a Court;" and whatever may have been the truth of the remark in the days of the sprightly and witty writer, they are fully confirmed by *la vie du château de Compiègne.* It is the constant study of the imperial host and hostess of this woodland retreat to have a succession of entertainments for the "elegant extracts" of the "upper ten thousand" of Paris, whom they honour with cards of invitation. The sound of revelry commences early in the day, and lasts far into the sable night, startling even the drowsy ear of morning—

> "With masque and antique pageantry;
> Such sights as youthful poets dream
> On summer eve by haunted stream,"

driving, hunting, shooting, racing, feasting, acting, dancing, playing; and last, not least, where there is "store of ladies, whose bright eyes rain influence," dressing, yes, dressing,—dressing such as makes the fortunes of *modistes, couturières,* jewellers, and *coiffeurs* in a season. The invitations extend to seven or ten days, and each *dame* is expected to have a dress for the morning, a dress for the afternoon, and a dress for the evening, and never to wear the same dress twice. How the brain of the illustrator of "Le Follet" and "La Mode" must be taxed and wearied out in inventing new patterns to grace the beauty of *la haute volée* of Compiègne society! But so is it laid down in the rubric of imperial etiquette, and the faintest commands of majesty are law to those happy mortals who do *koutou* before the throne of Napoleonic grace.

In her *vie de campagne,* in her lightest amusements, however, we must say the graceful Eugenie carries with her the state and dignity of an empress. Though recreating herself, she is still every inch the queen. Who has not admired the finished picture of Winterhalter, in which Napoleon's wife sits supreme amid her *dames de la cour,* like Diana surrounded by her nymphs? There, loveliest amongst the lovely, she wears the crown of grace, but rather as the chiefest sister amongst sisters all equally fascinating. This happy group, transported to Compiègne, mimic the past, and revel in fancy costumes and ancient blazonry. The hours seem too short for the full triumph of pleasure. The morning devoted to the sports of the field—to

hunting, shooting, and occasionally racing,—the cavaliers are invariably accompanied by the ladies *à cheval*, or in lofty spacious waggonettes. A stately cavalcade winds through the wild wood for the purpose of "chasing the deer," or seeing an innocent pheasant knocked over; and great is the glee and delight of the noble and imperial troupe of lady sportsmen, for the bracing air, the pleasant glades, the exhilarating beauty of the scene, send a glow of health and beauty to their fair faces.

The out-of-doors sports ended, and the dinner—*à la grande vîtesse*, for the Emperor detests wasting time in eating and drinking—over, the diversions of the evening commence. Music, dancing, and acting charades usually consume the vesper hours; and gazing upon the *salons* illuminated with a hundred wax lights, and tinted a pale cream colour, one might "dream that he dwelt in marble halls." In all these festive amusements the Empress actively exerts herself, and does not disdain to accept a *rôle* in an operetta, assume a character in a *bal masqué*, or illustrate by her words and actions the mystery of a familiar enigma or well-known proverb. Pleasure indeed sits at the prow, whilst the refrain of the gay courtiers and delighted guests is, "Begone, dull care, I prithee away from me." Concerts and plays, by the best artistes of the French opera and the Paris stage, fill up the interval when the exertion of amusing one's self grows wearisome, and excitement must be gathered in a passive attitude. *Dulce est dissipere in loco;* agreeable is it to throw off the fetters of restraint, relax the brow of business, and breathe the air redolent of pastime. At Compiègne, statesmen and diplomatists, politicians, *littérateurs*, painters, and musicians, meet under the same hospitable roof, are welcomed with the same hospitable smile and grasp of the hand, and learn to join in the light revelries of the hour. Intrigue is doubtless not asleep, but if awake, he lies with his eyes half shut, and buried beneath a shower of roses. He moves about in silken fetters, and is compelled to wear the merry visage and adopt the amiable fashion of the hour. *'A la bonheur!* it is a delightful season, and well may the guests of Emperor and Empress make much of these few gala days. Merrily do the light-sandalled hours flit away, and it is but in keeping that they should "carol a rollicking roundelay." Who knows better than their imperial host the force of Béranger's chorus?

> "Gai, gai! serrons nos rangs,
> Espérance
> 'A la France!
> Gai, gai! serrons nos rangs;
> En avant, Gaulois et Francs!"

We must not, however, omit one of the finest features of the annual entertainments, the grand old baronial custom of the curée. It is a novelty in our day, and has been revived by the Emperor with great *éclat*. Always is it repeated when the Court sojourns in the ancient forest of Compiègne, and then the image of Herne the hunter starts up to our memory in the curious masque hunt performed in this Picardian *bosquet*.

It is a unique spectacle, and for that reason attracts innumerable visitors. Imagine, on a fine moonlight night, when the silver flood is pouring down upon wood and glen, and the quiet hours seem to be reposing in the slumber of a pallid twilight, the silence of the groves and deepest recesses of the forest awakened by the shouts of a hundred hunters, the baying of a hungry pack, the cries and laughter of an excited multitude, and the applause of pretty hands clapping their snowy palms together, to give vent to the merry enthusiasm of their little hearts. Imagine the huntsmen dressed as the foresters of old, in the days of Little John and the bold Robin Hood, and the ladies and the gentlemen wearing the gorgeous costume of the time of Louis XV.; imagine the hunted stag, breathless and dying, slaughtered before the panting hounds, and all this scene lit up by the flare of a thousand torches, and you will realize what a curée means in the imperial sense of the word. A cry has been raised against the sport as cruel, but is it more so than a stag-hunt in general? The one takes place by day, in the full blaze of the sun, the other by torchlight, amid the weird influences of a sweet moonlit forest, when all is vague, vast, fairy-like, and beautiful—*voilà toute la différence!*

It is not in an historical sense alone, or as a pleasure-ground for the Imperial Family of France, that the forest of Compiègne is interesting: it is one of the most diversified and picturesque of the vast woodlands of France; it contains beautiful reaches of water, flowing streams, gushing springs, meadows ever fresh and green, covers where the pheasant nestles, the rabbit burrows, and the hare seeks shelter; patches of park-land where the roebuck bounds and the stag rears his branching horns; it has delightful villages and little hamlets hidden in charming nooks;—in a word, it contains a combination of all those elements which should recommend it to the sportsman, the painter, and the pleasure-hunter. To the painter it constitutes a mine of unexplored wealth. What Fontainebleau has been, Compiègne may be, as a rich resource to the student of nature; pencil in hand, he would be arrested at every step by some fresh beauty, some charming *tableau*. At present, however, all these attractive qualities are unknown, or at least unappreciated. It may be that before long, owing to the partiality its imperial lord shows for Compiègne, it will attract the attention of others than mere courtiers, statesmen, and diplomatists, and that both the French and English galleries will soon be decorated with subjects taken from its wild and truly picturesque recesses.

HAROLD KING.

BARON REICHENBACH'S THEORY OF KISSING.

THE writer of this has long since discovered by experience that the surest way to perpetuate an imposition or a deceit is to affect to consider it wholly beneath argument or refutation. Regarded in the aggregate, there is a large amount of rough, popular justice in the world, and the popular voice insists that pretensions shall be refuted, not dogmatically condemned. With this principle of action the writer does not quarrel; though, in common with many others accustomed to elicit truths by experimental research, he sometimes feels, and acutely, the painfulness involved in that waste of time, occasioned by the performance of frequent demonstrations in a matter already brought to an issue. It would be impossible, even did I so desire, to conceal from my readers the fact that the present allusion to Baron Reichenbach and the so-called odic force, is in some way suggested by the presence and the operations of so-called supernatural or preternatural manifestors amongst us: and if it be demanded of me wherefore I return to this subject again, when the public are getting tired of it; when rivals to the Davenport Brothers, performing in open light, accomplish most of the results these persons accomplish in darkness, and Redmond, whom I have seen, more adroitly; when a north country editor has made plaint to a magistrate that he has been defrauded by the Brothers Davenport, they having received money under false pretences; when members of the first or initiatory audience of the Brothers Davenport, slinking back, are content to let those who pronounce the manifestations to be a sheer imposition, lodge a protest, and make no rejoinder; when on the fifteenth of last month (November) I myself *saw* the confederacy hissed off their stage, and not allowed to resume; when I *heard* them designated by the audience with the names of "Swindlers," "Rogues," and "Vagabonds," names which they have not dared to resent;—if in the presence of all these circumstances I once more approach the subject, the explanation is not difficult, and will appear in the next sentence.

There is no issue more feared by philosophers—under which designation we are to group all those who love knowledge and devote themselves to the task of investigating truth—than an indeterminate issue. Every human mind, seriously occupied in the contemplation of the higher objects and aspirations of human existence, yearns after some perfect and complete conviction as to the truth, or falsehood, of propositions that come upon the arena of its scrutiny. The true philosopher is never ashamed to own that he has been mistaken; inasmuch as opinions in regard to any subject, at any given epoch, must necessarily depend upon the evidence accumulated and available up to that epoch; and not being ashamed to own himself mistaken, the true philosopher may be always distinguished from the pretender to philosophy by the solicitude he manifests in submitting his proposition to any test that dissentients may consider desirable.

There may be persons who will interpret reasoned preliminaries of this sort as a proof of half-conviction. Dealing with a current form of mysticism, as I have already professed to do, why not (some over-enthusiastic champion of truth and reason may say) brand the *thing* as an imposition at once, and the *professors* of preternatural philosophy as rogues and vagabonds, as fortune-telling gipsies are branded as rogues and vagabonds? Simply, I reply, because experience has taught that there is no surer means of perpetuating a deceit than that of eliciting a sentiment of martyrdom on behalf of deceivers.

When the record of extraordinary manifestations first appeared in the newspapers, I will freely admit that I was stimulated by a certain feeling, the precise nature of which I need not expatiate upon here. That matters not;—enough to state that, without departing from any form of good breeding, I sent a polite note to the Brothers Davenport, soliciting an invitation to one of their *séances*, to the end that I, as a scientific person, might endeavour to satisfy myself as to the conditions and limitations under which the phenomena were manifested. This note, written on the officially-headed paper of a sister magazine, bespeaking an audience on the part of *St. James's*, and subsequently adverted to in a note signed by me, and published in the *Morning Post*, constituted a missive that no philosopher would have wished to evade, and no charlatan durst treat with contempt. Not the slightest notice has been taken of this missive; whereby the Brothers Davenport have put themselves in a situation exactly parallel to that in which a witness once convicted of felony has placed himself, when, asked a question relative to some unpleasant event of his past life, he declines to answer it. True, by the Brothers Davenport's own election, I have not had an opportunity of firing a charge of small shot at the reputed preternatural hand. I have not been enabled to strew the ground with iodide of nitrogen, which would have exploded beneath the lightest footfall; nor have I had the opportunity of grasping at any reputed phantom with hands clad in gloves internally studded with fish-hooks. That is their election, not mine; and by the result of it I am enabled to affirm of them as Professor Dumas affirmed of the atomic theory, viz.: "There may be atoms, or there may not be," said this great philosopher; "but in respect to this matter all I can say is, that if atoms really could be proved to exist, matter must behave exactly as it does now." The parallel statement is the following:—"The Brothers Davenport may be impostors, or they may not be impostors; but assuming them to be the former, they must behave exactly as they do now."

Enough of these individuals; let me pass on to the consideration of Baron Reichenbach's testimony in regard to what he believed to be a newly discovered physical force. The existence of such a new physical force he himself imagined to have discovered about 1845. What the baron may think about it now, or whether even the baron be alive, I do not know.

It is a circumstance, a fact, the explanation of which I willingly dele-

gate to those who especially study the mental characteristics of the age, that no form or phase of mysticism prevalent during the present century, in civilized portions of the world at least, has been completely divorced, by those who most fully believed, or still believe in it, from association with science. Probably this circumstance may be fairly regarded as an index of the appreciative hold science has taken upon the minds of individuals belonging to the present century; but whatever the explanation, the fact is undoubted. Thus, the phenomena of attraction, or presumed attraction, adverted to by Mesmer, and which since his time have been designated as "mesmerism," or "animal magnetism," were not—as their second designation implies—complacently referred to the category of things purely supernatural, inexplicable; but they were referred, with what justice remains to be seen, to the operation of one of the physical forces, *i. e.*, magnetism; or rather, perhaps it should be said, a modification of magnetism,—a species of this physical force appertaining to animal bodies. This modifying concession is one that will strike the philosopher, accustomed to physical inquiries, as being vague in its language, its form of expression. Undoubtedly this is so; and the modifying concession is only made in deference to those who have agreed to use it. Science is shocked at the very idea of a *sort* of physical force, a *modification* of physical force. Nature is so clear and sharply cut in all her primary divisions, that such words as "nearly," "a modification of," "a sort of," in reference to a physical force, imply the existence of an imperfection:—an indecisiveness such as there is no example of in the laws of nature. The operation of a law of nature differs from the result of moral operations in the circumstance of its absolute and utter perfection. The operation of a physical law of nature is never *nearly* perfect, but ever *quite* perfect: wherefore, returning to the point whence we started, it at once arouses the suspicion of a philosopher when he hears or reads of such an expression as a "modification of magnetism"—"a sort of magnetism." With this animadversion let the case pass. I am only at present interested in calling attention to the fact that, whether the alliance be natural or whether it be strained, whether founded on truth or the result of pure imagination, the fact nevertheless holds good, that mesmerists have not referred, or perhaps have not felt themselves justified in referring, their phenomena to the domains of the supernatural—repudiating science, experiment, induction, altogether,—but have feigned or proven, as the case may be, an alliance between the phenomena adverted to by them, and the ordinary phenomena of magnetism. This assumption of the agency of a physical force involves consequences that are not foreseen or understood by those persons unaccustomed to scientific modes of investigation, who nevertheless believe in the actual occurrence of the phenomena referred to. The first consequence is that, once received into the domains of science, once admitted to belong to the category of things amenable to law and open to investigation, the phenomena alleged must

stand amenable to any course of experiment, any severity of cross-examination, that the ingenuity of philosophers, bent upon investigating the subject, may suggest or devise. A knowledge or branch of knowledge once conceded as belonging to the category of things demonstrable by experiment, can lay no claim to the position of being accepted as a tenet of dogmatic faith. This is a matter in which no middle course can exist, as will be obvious to every candid mind that addresses itself to the question.

Whatever the explanation may be, the fact remains the same, viz., as as already remarked, that every form of modern mysticism professes to be based upon the testimony of experiment; and it seems to be a great point in the estimation of modern mystics to gain acquiescence in the postulate that a physical force or physical forces may yet remain to be discovered other than those already known. In what way the granting the existence of a physical force as yet unrecognized can promote, or can be assumed to promote, a belief in such manifestations as table-turning, spirit-rapping, rope knot delivery, and what we may call phantom fiddle-flying, it is not easy to understand; save and except on the sole assumption that the laws of such physical force have been studied and mastered, just as the laws of gravitation, electricity, and magnetism have been studied and mastered; that, moreover, the phenomena developed are reconcilable with such laws. In any other case the credence of one in the phenomena lately called "preternatural" would be no more advanced through the concession, for sake of argument, or even the *demonstration* of a new physical force, than it would through the concession, or even the demonstration, of sea-serpents. Nevertheless, inasmuch as the demonstration of a new physical force is considered to be so important a matter in relation to phenomena lately termed preternatural, I shall proceed to set forth an outline of experiments conducted not many years ago, by Baron Reichenbach, a somewhat distinguished chemist. By way of preliminary it should be remarked, that this one quality of good may be traced throughout all the investigations of the baron relative to the supposed newly discovered physical force—since his time called the odic force,—viz., that at the very beginning he resolved to take his stand as a man of science, detailing the records of scientific investigation, and repudiating every tincture of superstition. It follows, then, that—as Reichenbach would have been the first to own—the results witnessed and chronicled by him should be noticeable by all other investigators of adequate competence, and *working with instruments of adequate delicacy*. Let it be here observed, then, that the instruments our philosopher worked with, in order to demonstrate to his satisfaction the existence of the force since termed the "odic force," were certain hysterical and extremely sensitive young ladies. He operated upon *their* nervous systems just as the Italian Galvani operated upon the nervous systems of frogs; but whereas frogs are everywhere available, and one frog is as good for the purpose of experiment as another, it always

admits of being said, in regard to hysterical and extremely sensitive young ladies, that, in the event of phenomena recorded as *having* happened by Baron Reichenbach *not* happening in the experience of other philosophers, the young ladies operated upon in the latter case were not sufficiently sensitive to respond to the influences brought to bear upon them. I am not aware whether the baron commenced his physiological experiments in a suggestive state of mind; I am not aware, that is to say whether he had entertained a predisposition to the belief of mesmerism and animal magnetism. It would be desirable that the record of every investigation or discovery of importance should be accompanied by a statement as to the circumstances that suggested it. Philosophers who take highest rank in the honoured class to which they belong, are always careful to make this announcement; and a certain degree of doubt and faltering faith results—and inevitably must result—from the omission of this particular. What, for example, should have suggested to the preternatural philosophers Davenport the conditions of darkness, ligature, the peculiar clothes-press structure, the peculiar class of instruments, &c., &c.? I cannot inform the reader what the consideration was—what the suggestion, that induced Baron Reichenbach to commence trying experiments upon the nervous systems of Mesdemoiselles Reichel and Nowotny, Maix, Sturmann, and Atzmannsdörfer. Whatever they might have been, the baron came to the conclusion that, according to the testimony of five individuals—four delicate young ladies and a boy,—magnets—that is to say, steel magnets as ordinarily understood—evolved continuously from their poles a pale flickering light: one not perceptible, indeed, to ordinary eyes, but recognizable to the vision of those individuals whose organism was sufficiently delicate to become subject to the impression conveyed. The baron, after setting forth a detailed account of the experiments performed by him—using the nervous systems of the four young ladies and the boy,—comes to certain conclusions, and makes a certain summary, of which the following is an abstract. He writes that—

"Mademoiselle Reichel was, therefore, the fifth, and at the same time the clearest witness for the luminous appearances at the poles of magnets. The sixth was Mademoiselle Maria Atzmannsdörfer, aged 20, who had headache and spasms, and walked in her sleep. She looked well, and walked alone in the streets. She was highly sensitive, and saw the magnetic poles flaming vividly. She drew the appearance larger than Mademoiselle R., but in all other respects her descriptions were the same. The light dazzled her eyes by its brilliancy.

"The following were the general results obtained with the horseshoe magnet of nine elements, in regard to the magnetic light:—

"(*a*) Mademoiselle Nowotny, far advanced in her recovery, saw a kind of shining vapour, surrounded by and mixed with rays half to three quarters of an inch long, shining fitfully or shooting white with a play of colours.

"(*b*) Mademoiselle Maix, in the normal state, saw a white flame, a handbreadth in height.

"(*c*) Mademoiselle Sturmann, a flame as high as the length of a small hand, with play of colours.

"(*d*) The lad, a flame a hand high.

"(*e*) Mademoiselle Maix, while in a spasmodic condition, saw a general luminous appearance over the whole magnet, dazzling her eyes: largest and brightest at the poles.

"(*f*) Mademoiselle Reichel saw a flame, with play of colours, shooting out rays as large as the magnet—that is, about ten inches high; also side flames, as from each plate of the magnet, and a general weaker light over the whole surface at the junctions of the plates.

"(*g*) Lastly, Mademoiselle Atzmannsdörfer saw the same phenomena still more distinctly, and with such brilliancy as to painfully affect the eyes."

Here, then, in the results of these experiments, do we find the beginning of a series of very curious investigations, conducted with all the seeming fairness that characterizes the investigations of men of experimental science. Every now and then the baron, in the course of the thesis in which the results of his observations stand recorded, felt himself constrained, by the necessity of claiming his readers' acquiescence, to admit the postulate that, in matters of experiment, the result is all in all—the antecedent probability or improbability nothing. However well timed such an announcement may be in the interests of general readers, special readers—philosophers—will not need it. The result, however, is just what philosophers, who demur to the accuracy of the records communicated by Baron Reichenbach, have doubt about.

They require confirmation, to say the least. Never in the experience of any philosopher who has endeavoured to go over the same ground as Baron Reichenbach, is it even pretended that the results testified to by him have happened in their entirety; and for the most part, and to by far the majority of investigators, his chronicled results have not happened at all. So intimate is the connection between a suggestion and its issue; so delicate, and to the human individual so imperceptible, that the practice is generally most fallacious of putting faith in results acquired through the instrumentality of human perceptions, immediately referable to the judgment. By "immediately referable" is meant, not acquired through the unbiassed record of instruments. For example, physicists well know that the feeling—the sense of touch—can by no means be trusted to pronounce concerning temperatures, absolute, or even relative. When correct information as to this matter is needed, we use instruments—thermoscopes, thermometers, and pyrometers. Now the record set forth by Baron Reichenbach, so far as I have already adverted to it, deals wholly with the question of luminosity of magnets, on the evidence of his four hysterical young ladies and a delicate boy. Testimony of this sort, without imputing any dis-

honesty or desire to mislead to the witnesses, or perhaps I should rather say the instruments, is, as every investigator knows, fallacious in the extreme. The feminine temperament, however healthy and strong-minded is ill adapted to the purposes of philosophic investigation and unbiassed judgment thereon. It is too imaginative, too sensitive;—too ideal. Every medical man knows that if a male individual in whom a woman takes pride,—a philosopher, we will say, with all the glamour and mystery of his superior learning as shadowed forth to the fair one about him—if such an individual gets (for purposes of experiment) a delicate and impressionable young lady into a darkened room, she will generally see—or believe she sees—any possible thing he may wish her to see. Women are delicately nerved: they move to instincts deeper, and influences more ethereal, than our coarse natures can respond to; but they have not the faculty of induction; and Heaven forbid they should ever possess it! When a lady thinks she has a call to unravel a tangled skein of facts through experiment—believing it a duty—she makes a mistake. All this is no part of the duty of woman. I remember, when a boy, poring over a good-sized quarto, liberally illustrated with copper-plate engravings, and finished up with a ghost story at the end. It was called "The Whole Duty of Man." It never fell to my lot to read the whole duty of woman; wherefore, as according to my views it admits of being given in few words, I shall give it accordingly. The whole duty of woman, then, I humbly submit is this, *videlicet*:—That whilst unmarried she be always amiable, and that she look as pretty as she can: farther, that when married she add to these the crowning virtue of obedience to her lord. Love we need say nothing about, it being natural to the sex; and as for honour, it comes as the result of following the maxims just laid down. If the baron had testified to the issuing of a light from magnetic poles, by the evidence of his four young ladies and the sickly boy alone, then undoubtedly his testimony would be accorded far less ready credence—or rather, disposition towards credence—than one now tends to accord to it. He has furnished the particulars of certain indications concerning the light from magnets, as made known through physical instruments, mediately or immediately. As a mediate experiment, the following was tried. Let it be premised that a faint light admits of being concentrated by a convex lens, as most of us will have seen on different occasions. It occurred to the baron, then, that he might succeed in concentrating the magnetic light in such wise, by transmitting it through a lens, that being thrown upon a screen in a focus it might become to ordinary eyes recognizable. Trying the experiment, the result was a failure, so far as the evidence of his own or any ordinary eyes were concerned; but a success when the more delicate eyes of Mademoiselle Maix and his other experimental young ladies were called into operation. These sensitive individuals described the magnetic light concentrated into a focus, as retaining its primitive and normal image; and a remarkable fact was that, whereas the lens's focal length for ordinary wax taper light was only

12 inches, the light being 18 inches distant, the focal length of the same for magnetic light amounted to $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The immediate physical testimony recorded by the baron was more remarkable still, and it should be the more conclusive, inasmuch as whatever of uncertainty might belong to the indications of his four young ladies and the delicate boy was eliminated. The baron states that a metallic plate having been made sensitive by Daguerre's process, then placed in a box, the box enveloped in flannel, a double treatment whereby all ordinary light must necessarily have been excluded, still, after exposure during some hours to magnetic influence, the plate, being removed, was found to have a daguerreotype picture upon it.

I pause here to demur to the baron's logic. He affirms that no "*ordinary*" light can get through a deal box enclosed in a blanket. Granted. We will all of us admit that much, and I think a little more. Light, to have found its way through such an envelope, must have been *very* extraordinary. How could the baron have known that his extraordinary light *did* get in, except he had put one of his young ladies, or the puny boy, in the box to see it? Admitting the correctness of all he said about the development of a picture on the daguerreotype plate, the result only shows that the development was referable to some cause unexplained: not by any means that it was attributable to light. If I have paused to make this objection, it has not been through captiousness; indeed, the baron, as a scientific man, could not help admitting that, in matters of scientific debate, no possible objection founded on reason is ever regarded as emanating from a bad motive. *Quasi* scientific people—men and women who, having committed to memory a jargon of scientific terms, mingle them with cloudy idealisms spiced with Scotch metaphysics—do not seem to understand, and do not seem to have the faculty of being able to understand, that in matters of scientific investigation, there is no such principle recognized as concealment of a part of the truth for politeness' sake—*for peace and quietness' sake*. The assumption, not to say the proof, that such were done, would be hateful to a philosopher; who thenceforth would regard with loathing and contempt the individual who should so demean himself. But non-scientific people cannot be made to understand this. All that seems to them like a whale must be *very* like a whale in the testimony of everybody.

To return to the baron:—His experiments led him to conclude that the peculiar light which emanated from the poles of magnets revealed the existence of a force hitherto unrecognized; in which particular—even granting all his postulates and preliminaries—most philosophers would *not* feel called upon to agree with him. He proved, or rather his young ladies proved, that the light in question was a sort of flame resembling ordinary flame, in the respect that it could be deflected by a transverse current of air. This testimony, if borne out, should have surely given hope that a more intimate acquaintance by ordinary mortals with this extraordinary light would be possible. That the magnetic flame should be impressible by such a gross

material thing as atmospheric air, would seem to place it out of the category of *very* attenuated essences. In the course of time, Baron Reichenbach proved to his own satisfaction, that the light spoken of as emanating from magnets did not emanate exclusively from *them*. He satisfied himself that, though always accompanying magnetism, it was distinct from magnetism; and that it was in virtue of the operation of the force, indicated by the manifestation of the flame (he strenuously defended the hypothesis of a new force), that magnets produced certain effects on the human organism. What are the effects? or, rather, what effects did the baron claim on behalf of magnets? Certain very extraordinary ones; amongst others the following. He testified that Mdlle. Nowotny, one of his experimental young ladies, lying in bed, he no sooner applied the magnet to her hand than the latter was attracted; and so powerfully that, by passing the magnet towards the young lady's toes, she not only sat up, *but would have turned head over heels had he not desisted!* If this curious faculty of a magnet be proved by further experiment, then society will owe apologies not only to Dr. Petetin of Lyons, who affirmed that the human hand was affected by the magnet, but also to Mesmer, who maintained the same proposition. Here again, unfortunately, the experimenter who might wish to repeat the baron's experiments, and by the issue of their testimony satisfy himself, encounter a difficulty in finding the necessary bevy of sensitive young ladies. Reichenbach was soon led (as I have already stated) to infer the presence of the peculiar agency he believed he had revealed, in many other things than magnets; but we shall do well to exhaust the magnetic part of the subject before going to others. It would seem that the baron's mind was one singularly amenable to the turning of suggestions to account, by way of strengthening his hypotheses; accordingly, the singular custom a friend of his had of taking his first sleep at night lying north and south, then on waking turning heels where head had been, and thus enjoying his second nap in the reverse polar direction, set the baron speculating as to whether the earth's magnetism, or rather the something associated with the earth's magnetism, might not furnish the explanation of his friend's sleeping vagary. Wherefore, prompted by this thought, he caused his friend to reverse the polar direction of his bed in such manner that on lying down his friend's head should point due magnetic north. The result was, he tells us, that his friend thus newly circumstanced never woke till morning; whereby the suggested hypothesis was, to his mind, already half confirmed. Not to found a theory, however, on insufficient testimony, the baron again availed himself of his experimental young ladies, and I fear, from the record given, poor Mademoiselle Nowotny must have had very unrefreshing sleep. For some nights the baron seems to have been doing little else than turning about this poor young lady's bed, she being therein. No sooner would Mademoiselle fall into a quiet doze—lying magnetic north and south—than the philosopher would come and turn the bed about, watchful of consequences. We are gravely informed

that when Mademoiselle's heels were brought where her head had been —pointing to the magnetic north, that is to say—she experienced a disagreeable sensation; but the latter amounted to positive horror whenever her bed was caused to lie in the direction of east and west!

According to Reichenbach, his sensitive young ladies could at once and infallibly distinguish a glass of water over which a magnet had been passed, from another glass of water; but this class of experiments took him away from the domains of magnetism altogether. Pursuing this collateral path of investigation, his first chief discovery was that *the* force—call it what we will—existing in magnets, mingled with magnetism proper, existed pure and unmixed in crystalline bodies; manifesting itself in polar hues corresponding to the crystalline axes. His young ladies testified to the emanation of flame from the axes of crystals similarly as, according to them, it emanates from magnetic poles. The most extraordinary part of Reichenbach's statement is, that whereas the new force, from whatever source emanating, attracts the human hand, and, as we shall hereafter find, other parts of the human body, the attraction is not reciprocal; so that although a magnet—and not a heavy one—could be made to attract Mademoiselle Nowotny from a recumbent to a sitting position, and might have caused that young lady to turn head over heels; still, conversely, Mademoiselle Nowotny's hand manifested no attraction whatever upon the magnet! The baron next establishes a large generalization, by the consummation of which he brings himself *en rapport* with Mesmer, Perkins, and the whole tribe of animal magnetisers. It so had happened that Dr. Heygarth, about the commencement of this century, had referred the constitutional effects resulting from the use of Perkins's metallic tractors to imagination acting upon the system; and he based his hypothesis on what seemed to him the conclusive evidence, furnished by the use of bars not metallic, not therefore ostensibly endowed with the function of tractors. Reichenbach's next experiments were of the character to rescue, in his opinion, Mesmer and Perkins from the ridicule which the experimental demonstrations of Dr. Heygarth had involved them in. If, reasoned the baron to himself, it admits of proof that the human body is itself a source of this newly discovered force, and if it further admits of proof that the force can be transmitted through rods of materials such as the factitious tractors of Dr. Heygarth were made, then do Mesmer and Perkins stand absolved from the obloquy into which they had fallen. Forthwith this demonstration was made out to the baron's satisfaction. He believed that chemical action was the originative cause of the force when manifested by the human body; the chemical action of digestion and respiration, that is to say; and—generalizing still—he was ultimately led to conclude that such force accompanied the manifestation of chemical action, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever effected. I bespeak the reader's most serious attention now to my record of the baron's next investigation. He set himself to discover, by experiment, what parts of the human body evolved the new force most

strongly. Very potent were the hands, but not so potent as certain other parts, the lips for example; but not even these in the very highest degree. He thereupon—and mind me, I am not joking; only quoting soberly and seriously the baron's own record—the baron thereupon, I say, hints, he does not venture to do more, at a rational theory of kissing!

According to the testimony of his *sensitized* young ladies—to borrow a photographic term—the magnetic or crystalline fire was often perceptible to their eyes, coruscating on human lips—*the baron's lips?* They had previously borne testimony to the fact that the sensation of contact by this sort of fire, even when emanating from magnets or crystals, was to their organisms most agreeable; wherefore the baron shrewdly suspects that the recognizedly agreeable sensation of kissing may be due to a purely physical cause, viz., to this newly discovered force acting upon the lingual ramifications of the fifth pair of nerves, and thence conveyed by contact and transference to the sensorium! Once more, I am *not* joking. This is what the baron *does* say, and anybody who disbelieves my statement need only refer to the baron's own book, where the author may be seen to express himself just as I have put it. Although the odic force has been greedily laid hold of by spiritualists, table-turners, spirit-rappers, phantom fiddle-fliers, and other varieties of that sort of mystic people, it would be hard to determine why. The baron was assuredly no mysticist, or anything approaching one. A man who tries to reveal the holy mystery of kissing, and refer the operation to gross physical conditions, is anything but a spiritualist. The baron did not restrain himself to the task of destroying the mystery of kisses. He next addressed himself to the task of unravelling the mystery of ghosts! Most materialistic in his tendencies does Baron Reichenbach seem to be; so that I wonder how spiritualists can like to hold communion with him. According to the baron, churchyard ghosts, grave-hovering spirits, have no existence. Visions formerly referred to their presence are nothing else than flickering luminosities of magnetic flame, visible to no ordinary eyes, but plainly perceptible to the eyes of sensitive young ladies. This grand discovery of the baron, the finis that *coronavit* his *opus*, was again the result of a suggestion. At Colmar it would seem there once lived a certain blind poet, called Pfeffel. That blind poet had an amanuensis, whose name was "Billing," and, as befitted the amanuensis of a poet, this young man was endowed with a very delicate organization. Now it so happened that one day, as the poet and his amanuensis were walking side by side in the poet's garden, Billing manifested great unwillingness to step over a certain spot. On explanation being required of him, he confessed that he felt a repugnance to walk over a spot where human remains lay buried: that human remains were underneath he knew—so he explained—by the testimony of a flickering light which shone on the earth's surface. For a season Billing's words remained unheeded; at length, however, people, acting upon his advice, dug down until they arrived at a skeleton of a body that had been buried in quicklime. Owing to this

proximity of chemical materials, an action was set up; and as one result of this action, the flickering light Billing had seen upon the surface of the ground. The mouldering remains having been exhumed and scattered about, the concentrated light that was, changed into a diffused light, corresponding with places wherein the remains had been strewn. Profiting by this hint, Baron Reichenbach induced one of his sensitive young ladies to take a series of midnight rambles with him in graveyards and cemeteries; the object being to discover whether she could recognize flickering grave-lights comparable to such as the man Billing had seen in the poet Pfeffel's garden. She did so easily. Not every grave was illuminated to her eyes with this magnetic light, only certain graves,—those especially where corpses had recently been laid. Here then, in passing, do we find some little discrepancy between the testimony of the poet's sensitive amanuensis and the sensitive young lady, Mademoiselle Reichel. *His* ghost-light emanated from a dead body very far gone indeed, a mere skeleton, that had been deposited there at a time beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant; but Mademoiselle's corpse-candles burned over very recent corpses. The baron expresses some sort of regret at the necessity which compelled him, so to speak, acting in the interests of science, to apply the clairvoyant talents of Mademoiselle in such an unpleasant occupation as that of wandering through graveyards and cemeteries at dusk, in quest of what in future must only, for courtesy's sake, be called "ghosts."—He explains, however, that the occupation was not so dreadful as it sounds, or looks on paper; for the reason that his young lady had been accustomed to see those ghost-lights, those flickering corpse-candles, from the days of her babyhood. The baron, not to leave his vindication of Mesmer and Perkins, and all antecedent mesmerists and animal magnetisers, half accomplished, explains collaterally how it happened that patients sitting round a magnetic tub, as it had been called, each grasping such a conductor in his or her hand, should derive profit from the treatment. Such had been a practice of Mesmer; and the agency liberated had by him been referred to magnetism. Now Reichenbach showed, to his own satisfaction, that the results were altogether incompatible with the assumption of a magnetic origin; but that the tub in question, or rather the varied contents put into it, established a chemical action, from which in consequence came the new force the subject of his investigation.

In this short narrative I have endeavoured to give a fair and reasoned abstract of Reichenbach's labours in this walk of investigation. Here and there a certain element of the ridiculous will have made itself manifest; and readers may be excused for assuming that the writer has gone out of his way for the sake of a joke; in order to make a statement in the deductions of which he does not believe look ridiculous. The assumption would be incorrect. There is no matter of fact in this abstract placed in a more ridiculous light than that in which Baron Reichenbach has left it. What, then, are we to make of all this? What conclusion are we to arrive at in

regard to the baron? This is a matter in which I come under no obligation to express all that I believe, or even any part of it. Some sort of opinion for myself I have formed; and some sort of opinion every reader for himself will form. Sufficient to the end is every one's own private notions as to this matter. Regarding the testimony as a scientific monograph, to be investigated as other scientific monographs are, by the evidence of its own showing; the point which most strikes the scientific mind is the inconclusiveness of it, the non-necessity of the conclusion arrived at by the baron from the premises he started with, and the experiments on which he relies. Granting all the phenomena that he describes, granting the flickering lights; the attraction of hands without reciprocity; granting all his explanation of kissing, of the non-existence of churchyard ghosts; still it does not follow that he has revealed any new force; it may be only some function of a force already known. Lastly, it seems the greatest wonder of all how mystical people could ever have attached themselves so pertinaciously to the idea of Reichenbach's odic force in explanation of their own assumed phenomena.

A final word, and it refers to those extremely ingenious individuals, the Davenport confederacy. If wise, they will speedily retire from their present prominent position. A joke is a joke, but joking may become too practical. Their little mystery cannot last for ever; and although these very cautious gentlemen, keeping their company select, refuse me the opportunity I had longed for, of being present at a small *séance*, when, as a matter of experiment, I had resolved on throwing a little iodide of nitrogen over their floor, or of grasping their luminous hands in mine, through the intermediation of a pair of gloves studded with fish-hooks, or sending a charge of small shot at the apparition,—they may come to grief for all that. When the tale is told, the mystery revealed, if it be not competent for the law to punish them as rogues and vagabonds, making money by false pretences, then all I say is, there is another law for Irish witches and English fortune-tellers.*

J. SCOFFERN, M.B.

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* An anonymous letter, published in the *Morning Post*, states that I evidently believe the Davenport manifestations to be accomplished by electricity. Most assuredly I do *not* believe this, and never did.

"A LITTLE BOX FOR YOU, SIR!"

PRACTICAL joking has gone out of fashion in these latter days, or rather, I may say, since the Crimean campaign taught us that soldiering was not—

> "All gold lace and sash,
> And a great deal of dash;"

but that he who wore the gold lace must carry beneath it a sterling heart, and learn, perhaps practically, how that same gaudy sash is long enough and wide enough, slight as it seems, to carry a six-foot man. Practical joking was, I say, knocked out of our fellows during those damp nights in the trenches, and burning dust blinding mid-day suns in those hitherto scarcely known regions, now, alas! marked in letters of blood, but, thank God, crowned too by wreaths of laurel.

During the years of what civilians and croakers were wont to designate as "inglorious peace," preceding the April of 1854, such of us as were on home service had really very little to do but to kick our heels about and scatter our parents' cash, in the manner most calculated to amuse ourselves or suited to our individual inclinations. It was very good fun being a soldier, if you had plenty of money, impudence, and pluck, with a good amount of self-respect—sometimes called conceit; better still if you had a handle to your name or a handsome face to justify your conceit, and by not any means despicable was a good fortune; though, if the other two advantages were possessed, the last was always obtainable, heiresses being then, as now, open to the seductive influence of the god of war. Yet, with all this, life in country quarters became often a somewhat dull affair, and these present days of parade, rifle practice, and all sorts of "hard work," would have been actually welcomed, if only for the sake of change, and the break they would make in the monotony of barrack life. Some quarters were all well enough, no doubt,—such as lay in sporting districts, for instance. Then those fellows who had the money came out strong in pink or pointers (according to the season), and those who had no money came out still stronger, upon the chance of something turning up some day or other—some luck that would enable them to pay the shot, towards which the handsome allowance the British constitution considers her officers' lives and work worth, goes a very short way. But though a man might fish through the spring in Devonshire, shoot through the autumn in Yorkshire, and hunt through the winter in Northampton or Leicestershire, it didn't follow that he could always indulge in quarters so desirable: and when he was elsewhere, time had to be killed, and required a deal more killing, too. Thus it was that we fell into the way of what has since been much abused, and at last very justly put down—namely, practical joking.

Dozens of good stories are told and laughed over, some of them having

become almost standard anecdotes, bearing upon names whose very sound sends a thrill of pride to a true Englishman's heart; and I've seen a certain grim old warrior, who shall be nameless here, laugh till the tears ran down his wrinkled cheeks, as some contemporary and brother of the laurel wreath reminded him of the days of old.

Well, all this is a long preamble to the real pith of my story—the history of a practical joke in which I was a party, and though a passive, a particularly interested one. It fell out thus. I had grown tired of the line, and persuaded my uncle to purchase my company in a crack cavalry corps, in place of the marching regiment wherein I had attained my existing rank of lieutenant. The regiment into which my exchange was effected was quartered in a well-known cathedral city, surrounded by a first-rate sporting country, inhabited by hospitable landholders—who were as liberal with their coverts as their claret,—and, moreover, famed for the beauty of its gentle sex, the *ne plus ultra* of which lay under the walls of the venerable palace itself.

Kate Courtown was the bishop's only child—beautiful, accomplished, clever, and an heiress. Therefore it was quite a natural conclusion that we (I speak advisedly)—we, I say, were all in love with her; from the youngest cornet, who innocently told us he liked her best because she was something like his mother, to the brazen-faced old reprobate, our lieutenant-colonel, who actually grew virtuous for the six months we remained in the pleasant old city, and not only got inside the cathedral in time for service, but kept awake until the sermon began, when he took his revenge by snoring behind his red curtain, publicly reprimanding a newly joined sub. for the same delinquency,—adding, that if he did sleep, he ought to do so in a reverent way.

I believe most regiments have at least one lady-killer on their list—one, I mean *par excellence* the acknowledged Adonis. Ours was a certain Captain Hetherston, who rejoiced in the nickname of Box, owing to the efficient manner in which he came out as that well-known character in the jolly old comedy. Although a popular man with the mess, he was not individually a favourite. That was not anything particular, you may remark. But it was not jealousy; his good looks had nothing to do with the feeling. It was the "take all but give nothing" sort of way he had that did the mischief. None of us could have said we knew where he came from, or where the friends he talked so big about lived—how much *he* had to live upon, or where *it* came from. We saw him as he was,—an uncommonly handsome, well-dressed, and well-off fellow; but we saw, too, that he never spent a shilling he could screw out of another man, and sponged cleverly upon any of us for a seat in a cab, to a dinner or ball, a cigar or a drink; that he had always an excuse ready to meet any chance demand for a like civility; and what perhaps riled some of us most was that, upon the strength of a pretty little house in Bayswater, he kept clear of the little expensive peccadilloes which beset our paths, and kept his

divinity so quiet that a whisper stole among us, to the effect that the lady in Bayswater was a delusion.

He had affected indifference towards the palace beauty at first, and then had quietly concentrated his forces and taken up his position in a manner that would have done him infinite credit in the field of war as well as love. At first he made but little ground; but the summer came, bringing with it reviews, chance rides, and sketching parties, and now and then one of those field days for flirtation, garden dances.

The beauty looked amiable. The captain grew sentimental, talked of giving up smoking and the house in town. Our fellows began to prick up their ears, and the odds in his favour were freely offered. The match, from being the talk of the mess, of course crept out and got into the gossips' mouths in the town, and soon conjecture and scandal were at their height.

Meantime Box ate as many dinners as the bishop offered him, called regularly, paid court to the maiden aunts who superintended the housekeeping department, and took all the credit he could get.

Things were at this pass when a lieutenant from the —th Lancers exchanged into our corps,—not a prepossessing youth at first sight, very young and boyish-looking, but blessed with a quiet, unimpressible sort of temper, that seemed proof against all the sarcasms, inuendoes, and even insults, freely lavished under the cover of practical jokes.

He seemed to have got his first step very quickly, and though with all the makings of a fine soldier-like man, he was just at that period an overgrown, loose-limbed boy; with a propensity to blush when a woman spoke to him, and a quiet manner of getting out of the way if anything not altogether strictly decorous was going on or being canvassed. He was laughed at, of course, and many a trap laid to bring him to the test; but all to no effect. The laugh made no impression; he went on, quietly and consistently keeping his own course with a good-natured but perfectly firm indifference, and ere long, somehow, most of us began to have a respect for the young hand, and just enough modesty left to feel a little bit ashamed of the scenes he avoided.

Box seemed to have taken an antipathy to the new lieutenant since the beginning, and the consequence was a constant sparring and repetition of jokes perpetrated by the captain, who made a heavy wager he would make the regiment too hot to hold Vincent before the year was out. Vincent heard of it somehow, and only laughed in his quiet way, offering ten to one he would be in the corps longer than Box. Still, through all this affected carelessness, we who watched closest could see how the spirit rebelled, and how the boy's temper boiled under the persecutions of the captain, who divided his time pretty equally between tormenting Vincent and love-making,—so said the gossips at the palace.

The townsfolk were already deciding the settlements; young ladies were speculating who would be asked to be bridesmaids; and not a few ill-natured

remarks were being raked up as to flirtations, and, after the manner of our dear friends, not a little was hinted about the petty peccadilloes of the past.

September, with its turnip-fields and partridges ; October, with its red woods, pheasants, and long evenings, worked up the country hospitality to a pitch there was no withstanding. Dinner invitations flowed in galore. The messman's office was well-nigh a sinecure, and his pockets profiting accordingly. The engagement was not yet completed, but what October and the shooting season failed to accomplish, the hunting-field gave ample promise of fulfilling. The heiress was a first-rate horsewoman, and never missed a meet if she could find a lady to second her. Accordingly, Box took a trip to town and brought back a couple of hunters. Our fellows first opened their eyes and then their mouths; but nothing came of it save that Box said, with one of his *shut-you-up* laughs, "They cost me a cool hundred apiece, but I'll take three for the pair."

"The deuce you will!" muttered Vincent, and so the subject dropped, the captain taking to his pigskin kindly, riding well and straight when he did ride, but eschewing much following, except after Miss Courtown.

Vincent turned out a hunting man too, and soon showed us that, although we might get our laugh at him in the barracks or on parade, we had to play second fiddle with a vengeance at the covert side. There was no doubt about it, the fellow was a tiptop rider, and soon made himself a marked man in the field, both on account of his tact and judgment, and the quiet, gentleman-like way in which he did the business. The livery-stable keepers besieged him with offers of their best horses; he might have them for half-price—nay, I believe for nothing, if he'd only ride them to sell. Vincent had as much of it as he wanted, and when our fellows quizzed him for not buying a couple of beasts for himself, he said with a laugh, "I'm waiting to get Hetherston's when he's tired of them." Box heard the joke, and didn't like it; he was beginning to get a wee bit afraid of the quiet lieutenant; and, moreover, the heiress had noticed the new rider, and poor Box was as jealous as a modern Othello.

December came in, and Vincent gave no signs of wishing to alter his quarters; nay, he publicly stated he was very jolly, and that he'd not miss the February hunting for all the leaves in the service. The case was getting serious; so was the courting at the palace, Hetherston evidently watching an opportunity to make the grank check; the lady, to all appearance, willing to accept the mate.

Yet, anxious as the state of the matrimonial speculation may be supposed to render the captain, certain figures in a little Russian leather pocket-book began to become disagreeably prominent. The year was upon its last legs. Charley Vincent was showing no signs of tiring of the jokes perpetrated upon him; indeed, like the eels, he appeared not only to have got used to them, but there seemed a sort of pleasant excitement and uncertainty as to the next move which suited him; and Hetherston began to think he had been a little rash in booking so many figures, which,

when reckoned up (in case of the worst), came to a much larger sum than was convenient, to say nothing of being beaten—a humiliation the captain did not relish at any time.

A dinner party was to come off at the palace a few evenings before Christmas; all the big-wigs and county people were to be there; a select few of "ours"—Hetherston of course included—were invited, and we made up our minds—though upon what grounds Heaven only knows—that Box would pop the question that night. The lady was just in that tender dreamy state which betrays the awakened heart, and gives the lover courage to take the irrevocable step. The bishop looked the very pattern of a fatherly prelate, and had a mischievous, *know-all-about-it* sort of twinkle in his eyes, as, in pairing off his guests for the important ceremony of going down to be fed, he told Hetherston to take "My daughter." It was my luck to follow the couple,—and it spoilt my dinner, for I had been fool enough to take the odds against the match, and it was pretty evident I should lose.

"Take you a hundred to ten he'll do it to-night," whispered Harry Fulton as we streamed down-stairs, the happy couple being directly in front of us, and looking abominably foolish, as is the manner of people at such a crisis.

"Done," said I, involuntarily, and then mentally cursed my folly.

The dinner passed off as such dinners usually do; the soup was bad, fish good, joints ditto, all the other things horrible, saving the dessert, which, being fresh from dame Nature, cannot be easily spoilt. I had taken down a ponderous dame belonging to some one of the county families, who happily devoted her attention to the business before her, and, seeming to be under the impression that it is impossible to do two things well at once, left me to devote my time and fascinations upon an exceedingly pretty girl who sat on the other side of me, and whom, to my surprise, I discovered to be a sister of Vincent's, then upon a visit at the palace. Of course we had plenty to talk of, and, ere the dinner was over, I began to think Vincent one of the nicest fellows I knew, and I spoke of him quite affectionately, I assure you. The important business of eating was over, and the servants retiring, when a footman marched up the room, carrying a plain white deal box, which he deposited upon the ground behind the captain's chair, saying, in a distinct and emphatic voice,—

"A little box for you, sir!"

He then quietly made his exit, though not before I caught a glimpse of his face, which, in spite of powder and false whiskers, looked uncommonly like Vincent's, and made me hold my breath in anxiety to see the result, convinced that the joke, whatever it was, would be a clincher. Nor was I wrong; and amid the buzz of inquiry and polite curiosity that the advent of a deal box in the midst of a formal dinner party might be supposed to excite, a long, plaintive, and unmistakably infantine cry rose from the mysterious box.

Captain Hetherston started to his feet with an oath, and a face like a maniac. An attempt at decorum held the lookers on silent for an instant, then a perfect storm of laughter broke forth, under cover of which poor Box rushed from the room in a state of mind "better to be imagined than described," as the reporters say.

Truly Vincent had his revenge; there was no use telling the bishop the baby was the colour-sergeant's, and the whole thing a practical joke. Hetherston tried it once, but made no farther attempt. The story went the round of the county, got up to town, and into the morning paper, and the end was, that our all-accomplished Box, under plea of sudden business, got leave, during which he exchanged into the —th, then serving in India; and ere a year had passed over our heads Vincent had purchased his company, and was figuring off in the first sheet of the supplement to the *Times*, as having led to the hymeneal altar Kate Courtown, only daughter of the Very Rev. the Bishop of ——.

A SILENT PARTING.

UNDER the porch we linger;
  A Virginia creeper sheds
Its scarlet shower of glories
  Eddying over our heads.

The white frost hangs on the maple,
  Its crystals silver-bright;
The red leaves whirl and rustle
  Under our feet in the night.

O'er the yellow'd woods are gleaming
  The myriad stars of eve;
I look into thy soft brown eyes,
  Mine own, for a brief reprieve—

From the parting that *must* come,
  The farewell that *must* be spoken,
With a tender clinging of palm to palm,
  And a trustful faith unbroken.

Thou wouldest not I should stay,
  Yet thou canst not bid me go;
Neither a word of love can speak,—
  Well, it is ever so!

That when soul is enchain'd to soul,
  A sweet silence speaketh best,
Nor wanteth measure of words to tell
  The heart's unspeakable rest.

Upriseth the full-globed moon,
  And in thy dear face in the night
I can read—all that which I fain would know,—
  Good night, mine own, good night!

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

ALONG THE COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA,

FROM CAPE TOWN TO NATAL.

BY CAPTAIN A. W. DRAYSON, R.A.

SOME years ago we had an excellent opportunity of observing the coast from Cape Town to Natal. It is highly probable that other travellers who may have rounded the Cape have also seen the coast in these localities, but very few, we believe, have had much better opportunities of seeing it; for we were unfortunate enough to be twenty-two days between Algoa Bay and Natal, during which time we were scarcely ever far off from the shore, and on several occasions were quite close to it,—too close, in fact, for safety, considering the uncertainty of the soundings in those regions; for a rock might exist and yet remain long unknown, until it caused the destruction of some unfortunate vessel.

It was early morning when the steamer that was to convey us from Table Bay to Algoa Bay raised her anchor and quietly paddled out of the harbour. The outline of the Table Mountain was clear and distinct; no fog curtain spread its mantle over the summit, thus warning us of the coming south-easter, but all appearances were in favour of fine weather. In our opinion, there has always appeared something grand and imposing in the Table Mountain; its rich brown colour, steep sides, and unrivalled height giving to it a grand and masterly aspect. When the rich red tints, produced by the evening sun, spread from its base to its summit, it seems to glow like a furnace, and thus to reflect its heat and tone upon the town that lies at its base. When also the mass of solid-looking white clouds are gathered around its head, it seems mysterious in its covering, as it thus foretells the coming storm.

From Table Bay round to the Cape of Good Hope, which lies some thirty miles to the south of the former, the ground is rocky and mountainous, and a barrier is thus formed against the rolling torrents from the west and flowing current from the east, that will not be worn away during millions of years. Immediately eastward of the Cape is the broad-mouthed False Bay, in a nook of which is Simon's Bay, the favoured anchorage ground of our men-of-war. Near the opening of False Bay there are two groups of rocks, whose destructive powers have more than once been proved upon some ill-fated ships; they are termed the "Anvil" and the "Bellows," being appropriate names. We in our steamer were fully two miles from these two rocks, and yet we could distinctly hear the roar of the waters that fruitlessly dashed themselves against their tough sides. It was near this spot that, some years back, the *Birkenhead*, with troops on board, became a wreck, and it was there that many a gallant soldier fearlessly met his death. The calmness and undaunted courage of the crew and their passengers must be too fresh in the reader's memory to

need any description of the scene; but the spot is one which is desolate in the extreme, and on which a mariner in distress is not likely to readily obtain aid from his fellow-man.

Stretching out some fifteen miles to the south of the Cape of Good Hope, and about two degrees to the eastward of it, is Cape L'Agulhas, the southernmost point of Africa. This is a low sandy point of a most unattractive appearance, there being scarcely any high land until we reach some miles inland; round this cape the easterly current runs in full force. This current, or stream of water, varies occasionally in its speed, but it almost invariably flows from the eastward, and extends to about fifty miles off the coast. It is a serious obstacle to ships bound eastward, and it has a knack of causing a sea to break and foam in a very dangerous manner.

To the eastward of Cape L'Agulhas there is a small irregularity in the coast, dignified by the name of a bay; it is called Struys Bay, but it would afford no protection against any but a northerly wind, it being little more than an open roadstead. In this bay we dropped our anchor, whilst the captain discharged a portion of his cargo. Two or three desolate-looking huts were visible here and there on the shore, but so uninviting was the aspect of the land, that not one volunteer ventured to set his foot on *terra firma*. For our own part, we had soon discovered that amusement was to be obtained from the deck of the vessel, for upon dropping a baited hook deep into the water, we soon obtained a bite, and shortly after hauled on board a quaint-looking member of the finny tribe, of whose species and name we were ignorant. During several hours we had excellent sport amongst the fish resident in the waters of Struys Bay, crawfish even being amongst our trophies.

All along the coast from Cape Town to Natal we have found excellent fish, and they are usually so ravenous that the type of bait is of no very great consequence, one of their own kind cut into small pieces being as dainty a morsel as can be presented to them. Amongst the fish that are the best eating, we may mention one that attains to a very large size, termed the keel-back. It is not unlike a salmon in appearance and taste, and we have seen it caught upwards of forty pounds in weight. Another and a smaller fish is the "snook," a creature that is very handy with its teeth, and which must be treated to one or two hearty blows before it can be safely handled. The parrot-fish is another resident of these waters, which is a welcome visitor at the table, and few fish are more brilliant in colour when fresh caught, even our own highly tinted mackerel looking quite plain beside the gaudy parrot-fish. Our experience of the fish along these coasts and in other parts of the ocean leads us to entirely subscribe to the opinion that fishes of brilliant colours are rarely found far from the shore. Off the Natal rocks we have caught the before-mentioned parrot-fish, which is striped almost like a rainbow, except that the colours are as distinctly marked as are the streaks on a zebra. A large red fish has also

been our frequent capture in the same locality, whilst another gaudy member of the finny tribe was dazzling in the extreme. This last species was very similar to the "captain," which abounds on the coasts of Madagascar. It thus appears that Nature has a kind of tantalizing way about her; for as fish prey upon fish, it would follow that the most gaudy-coloured would be the most readily seen, and therefore captured by the finny monsters in search of food. But these easily seen fish exist in localities near shore, where weeds and rocks afford them an easy means of retreat. If the fish be not highly tinted, then, if it reside near the shore, its usual habit is to lie quietly on the mud or sand, and thus to escape detection: flounders, soles, &c., act in this way. The gaudy parrot-fish of the Cape, the polished silver-like moon-fish of Ascension, or the captain of Madagascar, would soon be seen and eaten by the voracious shark, were they to reside in the clear deep waters of the Atlantic or Pacific. If, then, a fish be given brilliant scales, he must also be induced to remain near a rocky shore, where he can easily find a retreat in time of danger.

Slightly to the eastward of Struys Bay lies St. Sebastian Bay; this is merely another open roadstead, even less protected than is the former. Into this bay the Breede river empties itself, a stream that waters the fertile valleys of the Swellendam district, a portion of the Cape colony that has long been famous for its breed of horses. From Cape L'Agulhas the land tends slightly to the north of east, and assumes a more rocky appearance.

Our anchor was again dropped in a bay called Mossel Bay, which means Mussel Bay, and here we again made a successful attack on the fish. The captain succeeded in obtaining from the shore a large barrel of real oysters, a sight to which we had long been a stranger. Alas for the selfishness of human nature! the skipper was very fond of oysters, and conveyed his treasure to his own cabin, in which we could occasionally hear the knife quietly gliding in between the shells, and thus laying open to his selfish jaws the most delicious of molluscs. Ever afterwards this captain was our mortal enemy, for not one oyster did he offer us, in spite of the hints that were frequently given on the subject. Drearily we stood, too, with a sympathizing fellow-passenger, at the stern of the vessel, whilst we occasionally caught a glimpse of a couple of shells cast from the captain's cabin, which plainly indicated what were the proceedings of the ogre beneath our feet.

At several places along the coast we saw the remnants of vessels. A few ribs elevated above the water showed us where some ship, unable to claw off the shore, had been wrecked. When the Cape Sea is really angry, it makes no mistake about it. It is certainly the roughest part of the whole ocean on which we have seen the force of the wind displayed. The waves have a sort of handy knack of mounting in high peaks, and rolling forward in huge surging masses, that we have not seen in other localities; and thus, where the anchoring ground is bad, a vessel has but little

chance of remaining long above water when both wind and waves are directed towards the shore. In Algoa Bay, the principal seaport of the eastern frontier, vessels are frequently driven on shore and wrecked; for although the anchorage is good, the bay is almost entirely exposed to a south-easter which sometimes favours these regions.

Just to the eastward of Mossel Bay there is a beautiful little harbour, termed the Nysna. The entrance to this bay is very narrow; but inside the shores spread out, and allow of a considerable expanse of water. The country in the immediate vicinity is densely wooded, and altogether it is one of the most beautiful spots along the coast. Lying as it does out of the regular beat of trading vessels, it is not very generally known; but in former times it would have been very snug head-quarters for a pirate or a slaver.

Six days after our departure from Table Bay we dropped anchor in Algoa Bay, and were favoured with a view of the town of Port Elizabeth, which is the seaport of this bay. We arrived shortly after the wreck of one of her Majesty's steamers on a rock dangerously situated near the entrance of the bay; but before we left these regions four more fine ships had been driven on shore during gales of wind, and became complete wrecks.

In many instances passengers arrive at Algoa Bay direct from England. To these the change in scene and customs must be very striking. On leaving England the last scene is probably a crowd of friends on the pier or wharf, all of whom differ but slightly from those whom we are accustomed to meet in society. Upon reaching Algoa Bay we see——but let us detail our own experiences.

Shortly after the anchor was dropped we were boarded by the port boat, and an exchange of news took place. Soon afterwards a large flat-bottomed barge came alongside our steamer, and into this a number of us managed to scramble. This barge was made fast to a long cable, by which it was hauled towards the shore; by this slow process we gradually approached the shore, during the passage experiencing one or two washes from a heavy wave that broke over us. When within about two hundred yards of the beach the barge grounded, the water being very shallow. How to accomplish the remaining distance was now the problem; but this was soon solved, for we were surrounded by about fifty stalwart Fingoe men, naked as was Adam before the trees sent forth their leaves. One of these broad-shouldered, dark-skinned sons of the south made signs to us by which we comprehended that "pickaback" was the position by which we were to reach the shore dry-footed. A blushing maiden from Cape Town and her more experienced mamma were each firmly grasped by two other Fingoes, and thus we reached the shore, the ladies appearing to have for the time being a great taste for astronomy, their examination of the sky being both searching and continued.

The next barge brought some more of the passengers, amongst which

there was a lady who decidedly refused to be carried by these statuesque figures, and resolutely jumped into the water, and waded on shore. This occurred before science had discovered the manifold advantages of steel hoops, and as starch alone was no match for salt water, the lady's appearance on landing was not dissimilar to that of the wooden figures, which were supplied to us in our youthful days, with the quadrupeds in Noah's ark. The amount of laughter which greeted her arrival under such conditions was far greater than if she had sensibly made use of the two-legged animals that were at her service; for so much are we the slaves of custom, that to have any scruples on this matter was considered ridiculous.

The town of Port Elizabeth was not when we saw it an imposing place, at least in appearance. There was a considerable amount of sand, and a seeming want of order and regularity in all connected with it. Amongst the "sights," the most prominent in our memory is that of a very tall, thin, long-legged young man, who rode a dreary-looking pony. This unfortunate animal was violently ridden all day long up and down the various streets; no matter where you went, this individual was sure to be met. Occasionally the poor little quadruped refused to travel either in the direction or at the rate that its rider wished; then a fierce flogging was commenced, and again the ill-assorted couple scampered through the sandy street. What could be the occupation of this person we were at a loss to discover.

Upon leaving Algoa Bay our means of conveyance was a small brigantine, which was not quite as commodious or as well supplied as a ship ought to be in order to be comfortable. We had scarcely been two hours on board before our nerves received a slight shock. We were running before the wind at the rate of some nine knots an hour, and when close to the Bird Islands, that are situated on the eastern side of the bay, we observed about half a mile ahead a slight "trouble" on the surface of the water, which we thought might have been caused by a whale. Immediately we called the mate's attention to the fact, who, after examining the locality during a few seconds, shouted hurriedly, "Port your helm! port, man, sharp!" And away lurched our little vessel at a considerable angle from its original course. We thus left the troubled water at some hundred yards distance; and it was well we did so, for as the seas broke we saw a mass of rock exposed, and which must have been only a few feet below the surface, in perfectly calm water. The fact of this rock being seen seemed rather to surprise our mate—a circumstance that did not increase our confidence in the powers on board. To be wrecked anywhere along this coast, and to be compelled to swim for one's life, or to be obliged to hold on to a spar, would be even less pleasant than would a similar proceeding near our own shores; for all along the Cape coast there is an abundance of sharks. During our voyage from Algoa Bay to Natal we on several occasions saw four or five of these monsters together, quietly making their way along, and they did not seem in the least

disturbed at the splash caused by the bullets which we discharged at them, and which struck the water in close proximity to the protruding dorsal fins.

Between Algoa Bay and Natal there is scarcely any very high land; the shore is sandy or rocky for a short distance inland, then there is a gentle rise for about a hundred feet or so, and the country stretches inland, undulating, but gradually rising. The whole of this coast district, however, is very fertile. The climate is particularly good, no local diseases, such as fever, &c., being known. From our inland experience we found that the soil was so productive that even the pips of oranges thrown on to the ground would, in a short time, produce moderate-sized trees. The people who now inhabit this portion of Southern Africa are the "Amakosa" Kaffirs, with which tribe we have been frequently at war. These are our nearest neighbours on the east of the colony of the Cape. Beyond these reside the Tambouki tribes; and farther eastwards are the Amaponda. The whole of this country is beautiful, having a park-like appearance, and being well supplied with water. The great drawback is that there is no seaport or navigable river, there being scarcely an inlet suitable for the protection of a large ship between Algoa and Natal Bays. The Bay of Natal is entered by means of a narrow channel, at the junction of which with the sea there is a shifting sand-bar. On the west of the entrance the land is steep, and rises about two hundred feet, at an angle of about sixty degrees. On the eastward the coast is low and sandy, a series of small sand-hills extending several miles up the coast. After sailing through the narrow channel a vessel finds more room inside the bay, which extends about four miles inland, and at high tide is more than a mile across. The extreme rise and fall of the tide is here not more than four or five feet, and as the shore, both of the bay and coast, consists of hard sand, there is no disagreeable exhibition of mud at low water. The soil in this district is very good, and the country admirably watered. Within a space of twenty miles there are four very good rivers, which, although not navigable, still roll down large quantities of water. These are the Umganie, to the eastward of the bay; the Umbilo and Um-slatazan, which flow into the harbour; and the Umlass, which flows into the sea to the westward.

The country produces, without much difficulty or trouble in cultivation, coffee, cotton, indigo, bananas, oranges, lemons, Indian corn, pumpkins, pine-apples, and many other fruits and vegetables. There was an abundance of timber, and cattle, fowls, and horses thrived very well; thus, in a small way, this district promises well for a colony.

The natives that resided here belonged principally to offshoots from the Zulu nation, which occupies the country about eighty miles to the eastward of Natal harbour. These people were quiet, honest, and, to a certain extent, industrious. The black man, from the paucity of his requirements, scarcely ever possesses the working power or will so strongly

as a white man. Still, we have found very industrious men amongst these people, especially when they saw before them a tangible inducement.

It is only within a comparatively few years that we have taken possession of this portion of the South African continent, and it already possesses a bishop, who has made no little disturbance in the world, a semi-independent government, and many wealthy landed proprietors and merchants, many of whom have made their money in the district.

The Bay of Natal is plentifully supplied with fish, and the country round possesses a fair sprinkling of game, which, however, rapidly disappears before the tide of emigration; but when the early settlers first came to this district some twenty-five years ago, elephants, buffaloes, and elands, with other large wild animals, swarmed in the forests and on the hills.

The distance along the coast from Cape Town to Natal is about twelve hundred miles, and, except in one or two places, this whole distance is so little known to the average reader, that we have ventured to give a slight sketch of its principal features.

PROTÊ:

A FOREGLIMPSE OF HEAVEN.

THE TRANSLATION OF AN OLD GREEK EPITAPH ON A LITTLE GIRL AGED EIGHT YEARS.

THOU art not dead, dear firstling of our flock, but gone to rest,
Living still a bright existence in the islands of the blest;
Walking through the fields elysian, in an atmosphere of joy,
Where the flowers never wither, and where bliss knows no alloy.
There no winter ever chills thee; summer's sun can never burn;
Sickness, thirst, and hunger vex not. Thou dost covet no return
To this our weary world; for thou art living in a land
Full in the constant splendour of a heaven close at hand!

REV. CHARLES MAURICE DAVIES, D.D.

THE WER-WOLF.

A KENTISH LEGEND OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

"Ye hallow'd bells, whose voices through the air
The awful summons of afflictions bear."
Honoria, on the Day of All Souls.

On the confines of that extensive forest track formerly spreading over so large a portion of that garden of England, the lovely county of Kent, a remnant of which "woody way" to this day is known as the Weald of Kent,* and where it stretched its almost impervious covert midway between Ashford and Canterbury during the prolonged reign of our second Henry, a family of Norman extraction, by name Hugues—or Wulfric, as they were commonly called by the Saxon inhabitants of that district—had, under protection of the ancient forest laws, furtively erected for themselves a lone and miserable habitation; and amidst these sylvan fastnesses, ostensibly following the occupation of wood-cutters, the wretched outcasts—for such, for some cause or other, they evidently were—had for many years maintained a secluded and precarious existence. Whether from rooted antipathy, actively cherished against all that usurping nation from which these woodmen derived their origin, or from recorded malpractices, they had been long looked upon by their superstitious Anglo-Saxon neighbours as belonging to the accursed race of wer-wolves, and, as such, churlishly refused work on the domains of the surrounding franklins or proprietors; so thoroughly was accredited the descent of the original lycanthropic stain transmitted from father to son through several generations. That the Hugues Wulfrics reckoned not a single friend among the adjacent huts and homesteads of serf or freedman was not to be wondered at, possessing, as they did, so formidable a reputation; for to them was invariably attributed even the misfortunes to which chance alone might seem to have given birth. Did midnight fire consume the grange; did the time-decayed barn, over-stored with an unusually abundant harvest, tumble into ruins; were the shocks of wheat laid prostrate over the fields by tempest; did the smut destroy the grain, or the cattle perish, decimated by murrain; a

* That silvan district, at the period to which our tale belongs, was an immense forest, desolate of inhabitants, and only occupied by wild swine and deer; and though it is now filled with towns and villages, and well peopled, the woods that remain sufficiently indicate its former extent. "And being at first," says Hasted, "neither peopled nor cultivated, and only filled with herds of deer and droves of swine, belonged wholly to the king, for there is no mention of it but in royal grants and donations. And it may be presumed that, when the weald was first made to belong to certain known owners, as well as the rest of the country, it was not then allotted into tenancies, nor manured like the rest of it; but only as men were contented to inhabit it, and by piecemeal to clear it of the wood and convert it into tillage."—*Hasted's Kent*, vol. i., p. 134.

child sink under some wasting malady, or a woman give premature birth to her offspring, it was ever the Hugues Wulfrics who were openly accused, eyed askant with mingled fear and detestation, the finger of young and old pointing them out with bitter execrations; in fine, they were almost as nearly classed *feræ naturæ* as their fabled prototype, and dealt with accordingly.*

Terrible indeed were the tales told of them round the glowing hearth at eventide, whilst spinning the flax or plucking the geese; equally affirmed, too, in broad daylight, whilst driving the cows to pasturage; and most circumstantially discussed on Sundays, between mass and vespers, by the gossipping groups collected within Ashford church parvis, with most seasonable admixture of anathema and devout crossings. Witchcraft, larceny, murder, and sacrilege, formed prominent features in the bloody and mysterious scenes of which the Hugues Wulfrics were the alleged actors. Sometimes they were ascribed to the father, at others to the mother; and even the daughter escaped not her share of vilification. Fain would they have attributed an atrocious disposition to the unweaned babe, so great, so universal was the horror in which was held that race of Cain! The churchyard of Ashford, and the carved stone cross, from whence diverged the several roads to London, Canterbury, and Ashford, standing midway between the two last-named places, served—so tradition avouched—as nocturnal haunts for the unhallowed deeds of the Wulfrics, who thither prowled by moonlight, it was said, to fatten on the freshly buried dead, or drain the blood of any living wight who might be rash enough to venture near those solitary spots. True it was that the wolves had, during some of the severe winters, emerged from their forest lairs, and entering the cemetery by a breach in its walls, goaded by famine, had actually disinterred the dead. True it was, also, that the Wolf's Cross, as the hinds commonly designated it, had been stained with gore on one occasion through the fall of a drunken mendicant, who chanced to fracture his skull against a pointed angle of its basement. But these accidents, as well as a multitude of others, were attributed to the guilty intervention of the Wulfrics, under their fiendish guise of wer-wolves.

These poor people, moreover, took no pains to exonerate themselves from a prejudice so monstrous. Full well aware of what calumny they were the victims, but alike conscious of their impotence to contradict it, they tacitly suffered its infliction, and fled all contact with those to whom they knew themselves repulsive. Shunning the highways, and never ven-

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* King Edgar is said to have been the first who attempted to rid England of its wolves; criminals even being pardoned by producing a stated number of these creatures' tongues. Some centuries after, they increased to such a degree as to become again the object of royal attention, and Edward I. appointed persons to extirpate this obnoxious race. It is one of the principal bearings in armory. Hugh, surnamed Lupus, the first Earl of Kent, bore for his crest a wolf's head.

turing to pass through the town of Ashford in open day, they pursued such labour as might occupy them within-doors or in unfrequented places. They appeared not at Canterbury market, never numbered themselves among the pilgrims at Becket's far-famed shrine, nor assisted at any sport, merry-making, hay-cutting, or harvest-home; the priest had interdicted them from all communion with the church—the ale-bibbers from the hostelry.

The rude hut which they inhabited was built of chalk and clay, with a thatch of straw, in which the high winds had made large rents; and its rotten door exhibited wide gaps, through which the wind had free ingress. As this wretched abode was situate at considerable distance from any other, if, perchance, any of the neighbouring serfs strayed within its precincts towards nightfall, their credulous fears made them shun near approach so soon as the vapours of the marsh were seen to blend their ghastly wreaths with the twilight. When that darkling time drew on which explains the diabolical sense of the old saying, "'tween dog and wolf," "'twixt hawk and buzzard," and the will-o'-the-wisps began to glimmer around the dwelling of the Wulfrics, they then patriarchally supped—whenever they had a supper,—and forthwith betook themselves to rest.

Sorrow, misery, and the putrid exhalations of the steeped hemp, from which they manufactured a rude and scanty attire, combined eventually to bring sickness and death into the bosom of this wretched family; who, in their utmost extremity, could hope for neither pity nor succour. The father was first attacked, and his corpse was scarce cold ere the mother rendered up her breath. Thus passed that fated couple to their account, unsolaced by the consolations of the confessor or the medicaments of the leech. Hugues Wulfric, their eldest son, himself dug their grave, laid their bodies within it, swathed with hempen shreds for graveclothes, and raised a few clods of earth over them, wherewith to mark their last resting-place. A hind, who chanced to see him fulfilling this pious duty in the dusk of the evening, timidly crossed himself, and fled as fast as his legs would carry him, fully believing that he had witnessed some infernal incantation. When the actual fact transpired, the neighbouring gossips congratulated one another upon the twofold mortality, which they looked upon as a tardy chastisement of Heaven. They spoke of ringing the joy bells, and offering masses of thanks for such a deed of grace.

It was All Souls' eve, and the wind howled along the bleak hill-side, whistling drearily through the naked branches of the forest trees, whose last leaves it had remorselessly stripped; the sun had sunk obscurely; a dense and chilling fog spread through the air like the mourning veil of the widowed, whose day of love hath early fled. No star shone in the heavy, murky sky. In that lone hut, through which death had so lately passed, the orphan survivors held their lonely vigil by the fitful blaze sent forth

from the reeking logs smouldering upon the hearth. Several days had elapsed since their lips had pressed for the last time the cold hands of their parents; several dreary nights had passed since the sad hour in which their last farewell had left them desolate on earth.

Poor lone ones!—both, too, in the flower of their youth—how sad, yet how serene did they appear amid their grief! But what sudden and mysterious terror is it that seems to overcome them? It is not, alas! the first time since they were left alone upon earth, that they have found themselves at this hour of the night by their deserted hearth, once enlivened by the cheerful tales of their mother. Full often have they wept over her memory, but never yet had their solitude proved so appalling; and, pallid as very spectres, they tremblingly gazed upon one another as the flickering ray from the wood-fire played over their features.

"Brother! heard you not that loud shriek which every echo of the forest repeated? It sounds to me as if the ground were ringing with the tread of some gigantic phantom, and whose breath seems to have shaken the door of our hut. The breath of the dead they say is icy cold. A mortal shivering has come over me."

"And I too, sister, thought I heard voices as it were at a distance, murmuring strange words. Tremble not thus! Am I not beside you?"

"Oh, brother, let us pray the holy Virgin, to the end that she may restrain the departed from haunting our dwelling."

"But perhaps our mother is amongst them. She comes, unshrived and unshrouded, to visit her forlorn ones—her well-beloved! For knowest thou not, sister, 'tis the eve on which the dead forsake their graves? Let us open the door, that our mother may enter and resume her wonted place by the hearthstone."

"Oh, brother, how gloomy is all without doors! how damp and cold the gusts sweep by! Hearest thou what groans the dead are uttering round our hut? Oh, close the door, in Heaven's name!"

"Take courage, sister; I have thrown upon the fire that holy branch, plucked as it flowered on last Palm Sunday, which thou knowest will drive away all evil spirits; and now our mother can enter alone."

"But how will she look, brother? They say the dead are horrible to gaze upon; that their hair has fallen away, their eyes become hollow, and that in walking their bones rattle hideously. Will our mother, then, be thus?"

"No: she will appear with the features we loved to behold; with the affectionate smile that welcomed us home from our perilous labours; with the voice which, in early youth, sought us when, belated, the closing night surprised us far from our dwelling."

The poor girl busied herself awhile in arranging a few platters of scanty fare upon the tottering board which served them for a table; and this last pious offering of filial love, as she deemed it, appeared accom-

plished only by the greatest and last effort, so enfeebled had her frame become.

"Let our dearly loved mother enter, then," she exclaimed, sinking exhausted upon the settle. "I have prepared her evening meal, that she may not be angry with me; and all is arranged as she was wont to have it. But what ails thee, my brother? for now thou tremblest as I did awhile agone."

"Seest thou not, sister, those pale and lurid lights which are rising at a distance across the marsh? They are the dead, coming to seat themselves before the repast prepared for them. Hark! List to the funeral tones of the All-hallowtide bells, as they come upon the gale, blended with their hollow voices. Listen! listen!"

"Brother, this horror grows insupportable. This, I feel, of a verity, will be my last night upon earth! And is there no word of hope to cheer me, mingling with those fearful sounds? Oh, brother! brother!"

"Hush, sister, hush! Seest thou now the ghastly lights which herald the dead athwart the horizon? Hearest thou the prolonged tolling of the bell? They come! they come!"

"Eternal repose to their ashes!" exclaimed the bereaved ones, sinking upon their knees, and bowing down their heads in the extremity of their terror and lamentation; and as they uttered the words, the door was at the same moment closed with violence, as though it had been slammed to by a vigorous hand. Hugues started to his feet, for the cracking of the timber which supported the roof seemed to announce the fall of the frail tenement; the fire was suddenly extinguished, and a plaintive groan mingled itself with the blast that whistled through the crevices of the door. On raising his sister, Hugues found that she too was no longer to be numbered among the living.

Hugues, on becoming the head of his family, composed of two sisters younger than himself, had seen them likewise descend into the grave in the space of a fortnight; and when he had laid the last within her parent earth, he hesitated whether he should not extend himself beside them, and share their peaceful slumber. It was not by tears and sobs that grief so profound as his manifested itself, but in a mute and sullen contemplation over the rude sepulture of his kindred and his own future loneliness. During three consecutive nights he wandered, pale and haggard, from his solitary hut, to prostrate himself and kneel by turns upon the funereal turf. For three days food had not passed his lips.

Winter had interrupted the labours of the woods and fields, and Hugues had presented himself in vain among the neighbouring farms to obtain a few days' employment to thresh grain, cut wood, or drive the plough; no one would employ him, from fear of drawing upon himself the fatality attached to all bearing the name of Wulfric. He met with brutal denials at all hands; and not only were these accompanied by

taunt and menace, but dogs were let loose upon him to rend his limbs; they deprived him even of the alms accorded to beggars by profession. In short, he found himself overwhelmed with scorn, insult, and injury.

Was he, then, to expire of inanition, or deliver himself from the tortures of hunger by suicide? He would have embraced that means, as a last and only consolation, had he not been retained earthward to struggle with his dark fate by a feeling of love. Yes, that abject being—forced, in very desperation against his better self, to abhor the human species in the abstract, and to feel a savage joy in waging war against it; that *pariah*, who scarce longer felt confidence in the Heaven which seemed an apathetic witness of his woes; that man, so isolated from those social relations which alone compensate us for the toils and troubles of life, without other stay than that afforded by his conscience, with no other fortune in prospect than the miserable existence and bitter death of his departed kin; worn to the bone by sorrow and privation, swelling with rage and resentment, he yet consented to live, to cling to life; for, strange to say, he loved! But for that heaven-sent ray gleaming across his thorny path, he would have gladly exchanged a pilgrimage so lone and wearisome for the peaceful slumber of the grave.

Hugues Wulfric would have been the finest youth in all that part of Kent, were it not that the outrages with which he had so unceasingly to contend, and the privations he was forced to undergo, had effaced the colour from his cheeks, and sunk his eyes deep in their orbits. His brows also were habitually contracted, and his glance oblique and fierce. Yet, despite that recklessness and anguish which clouded his features, one, incredulous of his alleged atrocities, could not have failed to admire the savage beauty of his head, cast in nature's noblest mould, crowned with a profusion of waving hair, and set upon shoulders whose robust and harmonious proportions were discoverable through the tattered attire investing them. With a carriage firm and majestic, his motions were not without a species of rustic grace, and the tone of his naturally soft voice accorded admirably with the purity in which he spoke his ancestral language—Norman French. In short, he differed so widely from people of his imputed condition, that one is constrained to believe that jealousy or prejudice must originally have been no stranger to the malicious persecution of which he was the object. The women alone ventured first to pity his forlorn condition, and next endeavoured to think of him in a more favourable light.

Branda, niece of Willieblud, the flesher of Ashford, had, among other of the town maidens, noticed Hugues with a not unfavouring eye, as she chanced to pass one day on horseback through a coppice near the outskirts of the town, into which the young man had been led by the eager chase of wild hog; and which animal, from the nature of the country, was, single-handed, exceedingly difficult of capture. The cold-hearted falsehoods which the malignant crones buzzed in her ears in no wise diminished the advantageous opinion she had conceived of this ill-treated and good-look-

ing wer-wolf. She sometimes, indeed, went so far as to turn considerably out of her way, in order to meet and exchange his cordial greeting; for Hugues, recognizing the attention of which he had now become the object, had, in his turn, at last summoned up courage to survey more leisurely the pretty Branda; and the result was that he found her the brightest and comeliest maiden that, in his hitherto restricted rambles out of the forest, his timorous gaze had ever encountered. His gratitude increased proportionably; and at the moment when his domestic bereavements came one after another to overwhelm him, he was actually on the eve of making Branda, on the first opportunity presenting itself, an avowal of the love he bore her.

It was chill winter—holy Christmas-tide; the distant toll of the curfew had long ceased, and all the inhabitants of Ashford were safely housed in their tenements for the night. Hugues—solitary, motionless, silent, his forehead grasped between his hands, his gaze dully fixed upon the decaying brands that feebly glimmered upon his hearth—heeded not the cutting north wind, whose sweeping gusts shook the crazy roof and whistled through the chinks of the door. He started not at the harsh cries of the herons fighting for prey in the marsh, nor at the monotonous croaking of the ravens perched over his smoke vent. He thought of his departed kindred, and imagined that his hour to rejoin them would soon be at hand; for the intense cold congealed the marrow of his bones, and fell hunger gnawed and twisted his entrails. Yet at intervals would a recollection of nascent love—of Branda—suddenly appease his else intolerable anguish, and cause a faint smile to gleam across his wan features.

"O blessed Virgin! grant that my sufferings may speedily cease!" murmured he, despairingly. "Oh, would I were a wer-wolf, as they call me! I could then requite them for all the foul wrong done me. True, I could not feed upon their flesh; I would not shed their blood; but I should be able to terrify and torment those who have wrought my parents' and sisters' death, who have persecuted our family even to extermination! Why have I not the power to change my nature into that of a wolf, if of a verity my ancestors possessed it, as they avouch? I should at least find carrion * to devour, and not die thus horribly of starvation. Branda is the only being in this world who cares for me; and that conviction alone reconciles me to life!"

Hugues gave free current to these gloomy reflections. The smouldering embers now gave but a feeble and vacillating light, faintly struggling with the surrounding gloom, and Hugues felt the horror of darkness coming strong upon him. Chilled with the ague fit one instant, and tormented the next by the fevered pulsation of his veins, he arose at last to seek some fuel, and threw upon the fire a heap of faggot chips, heath,

* Horse-flesh was an article of food among our Saxon forefathers in England.

and straw, which soon raised a clear and crackling flame. His stock of wood had become exhausted; and seeking wherewith to replenish his dying hearth-fire, whilst foraging under the rudely built oven, amongst a pile of rubbish placed there by his mother wherewith to bake bread,—handles of old tools, fractured joint-stools, and cracked platters,—he discovered a chest rudely bound with a dressed hide, and which he had never seen before. Rushing upon it as though he had found a treasure, he broke open the lid, strongly secured by an iron hasp.

This chest, which had evidently been long unopened, contained the complete disguise of a wer-wolf,—a dyed sheepskin, with gloves in the form of paws; a tail; a mask with an elongated muzzle, furnished with formidable rows of yellow horse-teeth.

Hugues started backwards, terrified at his discovery—so opportune that it seemed to him the work of sorcery. Then, on recovering from his surprise, he drew forth, one by one, the several pieces of this strange disguise, which had evidently seen some service, but from long neglect had become somewhat damaged. Then recurred confusedly to his mind the marvellous recitals made him by his grandfather, as he nursed him upon his knees during earliest childhood,—tales during the narration of which his mother wept silently, as he had laughed heartily. In his mind there was a mingled strife of feelings and purposes alike undefinable. He continued his examination of this criminal heritage, and by degrees his imagination grew bewildered with vague and extravagant projects.

Hunger and despair together hurried him on. He saw objects no longer save through an ensanguined prism. He felt his very teeth on edge with an avidity for biting. He experienced an inconceivable impulse to run. He set himself to howl, as though he had practised wer-wolfery all his life, and next began to invest himself completely with the guise and external attributes of his novel vocation. A more startling change could scarcely have been wrought in him had that horribly grotesque metamorphosis really been the effect of enchantment; aided too, as it was, by the fever which worked a temporary insanity in his frenzied brain.

Scarcely did he thus find himself travestied into a wer-wolf through the influence of his shaggy vesture, ere he darted forth from the hut, through the forest and into the open country—white with hoar-frost, and across which the bitter north-east wind swept—howling in a frightful manner, and traversing the meadows, fallows, plains, and marshes, like a phantom. But at that hour, and during such a season, not a single belated wayfarer was there to encounter Hugues, whom the keenness of the air and the excitation of his run had worked up to the highest pitch of extravagance and audacity. He howled the louder in proportion as his hunger waxed sharper.

Suddenly the heavy rumbling of an approaching vehicle arrested his attention. At first with indecision, next with a stolid fixity of purpose, he struggled with two suggestions counselling him at one and the same

moment—to flee and to advance. The carriage, or whatever it might be, continued rolling towards him. The night was not so obscure but that he was able to descry the tower of Ashford Church at a short distance off, and hard by which stood a pile of unhewn stone, destined either for the execution of some repair, or addition to the sacred edifice, into the deep shadow of which he ran furtively to crouch down, and so await the coming up of his prey.

It proved to be the covered cart of Willieblud, the Ashford flesher, who was wont twice a week to carry meat to Canterbury, and travelled by night in order that he might be among the first at market opening. Of this Hugues was fully aware, and the departure of the flesher naturally suggested to him the inference that his niece must be keeping house by herself—for our lusty flesher had been long a widower. For an instant he hesitated whether he should introduce himself, thus strangely accoutred, to the maiden—favourable as the opportunity seemed,—or whether he should first attack the uncle and seize upon his viands. Hunger, for the nonce, got the better of love; and the monotonous whistle with which the driver was, as usual, urging forward his sorry jade, warning him to be in readiness for his onset, he suddenly howled in a loud and unearthly tone, at the same moment that he rushed forwards and seized the horse by the bit.

"Willieblud, flesher!" growled Hugues, disguising his voice, and speaking to him in the *lingua Franca* of that period, "I hunger; throw me two pounds of meat if thou wouldst live and have me live."

"St. Winifred have mercy upon me!" cried the terrified flesher; "is it thou, Hugues Wulfric, of Weald Marsh, the born wer-wolf?"

"Thou sayest sooth; it is I," replied Hugues, who had the ready address to avail himself of the credulous superstition of Willieblud. "I would rather have raw beef than eat of thy flesh, plump as thou art. Throw me, therefore, what I crave, and forget not to be ready with a like portion each time thou settest out for Canterbury market; or, failing thereof, I'll tear thee limb from limb."

Hugues, to display his attributes of a wer-wolf before the gaze of the terrified flesher, had sprung upon the spokes of the wheel, and placed his fore-paw upon the edge of the cart, over which he made a semblance of snuffing with his false snout. Willieblud, who believed in wolves as devoutly as he did in his patron saint, had no sooner perceived this monstrous paw than, uttering a fervent invocation to the latter, he seized upon his daintiest joint of meat, let it fall to the ground, and whilst Hugues sprung eagerly down to pick it up, the flesher at the same instant dealt a sudden and sharp blow on his beast's flank, on which the latter set off at a sharp gallop without waiting for any reiterated invitation from the lash.

Hugues, satiated with a repast which had cost him far less trouble to procure than any he had long remembered, readily promised himself the renewal of an expedient the execution of which was at once so easy and

diverting; for, though smitten with the charms of the fair-haired Branda, he not the less found a malicious pleasure in augmenting the terror of her uncle Willieblud. The latter, for a long while, revealed not to living being the tale of his late encounter and strange compact with Hugues, but submitted unmurmuringly to the impost levied each time the wer-wolf crossed his path, without being very nice about either weight or quality of the meat. He no longer even waited to be asked for it;—anything rather than encounter that fiend-like form clinging to the side of his cart, or being brought into close contact with that hideous, misshapen paw, stretched forth, as it were, to strangle him,—that paw, too, which once had been a human hand. The flesher, moreover, had become moody and morose of late; he set out to market reluctantly, and seemed to dread the hour of departure as it drew nigh, and no longer beguiled the dulness of his nocturnal journey by whistling to his horse, or by trolling snatches of ballads, as he was wont formerly. Willieblud now invariably returned home in a gloomy and restless mood.

Branda, at a loss to conceive what had given rise to this new and permanent depression that had taken hold of her uncle's mind, after in vain exhausting conjecture, proceeded to interrogate, importune, and supplicate him by turns; until the unhappy flesher, no longer proof against such continuous appeals, at last disburdened himself of the load which he had at heart, by recounting the history of his nocturnal adventures with the wer-wolf.

The quick-witted Branda listened demurely and patiently to the entire story without offering either comment or query. At its close,—

"Hugues is no more a wer-wolf than thou art!" exclaimed she, hurt that such an injurious suspicion should be entertained against one for whom she had long felt something more than interest. "'Tis an idle tale, or some juggling device. I fear me thou must of a verity dream these sorceries, uncle Willieblud; for Hugues, of the Weald Marsh, or Wulfric, as the silly fools call him, is worth far more, I trow, than his reputation goes."

"Girl, it boots not saying me nay in this matter," replied Willieblud, pertinaciously urging the truth of his story. "The family of Hugues, as everybody knows, were wer-wolves born; and since they are all of late, by the blessing of Heaven, defunct, save one,—Hugues himself now, of a verity, inherits the wolf's paw."

"I tell thee, and will avouch it openly, uncle, that Hugues is of too gentle and seemly a nature to serve Satan, and turn himself into a wild beast, and that will I never believe until I have seen the same."

"Mass! and that thou shalt right speedily, if thou wilt but along with me. In very sooth, 'tis he. Besides, when he made confession of his name, did I not recognize his voice? and am I not ever bethinking me of his knavish paw, with which he grasps the cart shaft while he stays the horse? Girl, mark me, he is in league with the foul fiend."

Branda had to a certain degree imbibed the lycanthropic superstition in the abstract, as well as her uncle; saving, so far as it concerned the hitherto, as she believed, traduced being on whom her affections, as though in feminine perversity, had so strangely lighted. Her womanish curiosity, in this instance, less determined her resolution to accompany the flesher on his next journey, than the desire to exculpate her lover,—fully believing the strange tale of her kinsman's encounter with and spoliation by the latter to be the effect of some strange illusion, and of which to find Hugues guilty was the sole dread she experienced on mounting the rude vehicle laden with its customary viands.

It was just midnight when they started from Ashford, the hour alike dear to wer-wolves as to goblins of every other denomination. Hugues was punctual at the appointed spot. His howlings, as they drew nigh, though horrible enough, had still something human in them, and disconcerted not a little the confidence of Branda. Willieblud, however, trembled even more than she did, and sought for the wolf's portion; the latter raised himself upon his hind legs, and extended one of his fore-paws to receive the mulctuary dole as soon as the cart stopped at the heap of stones.

"Uncle, I shall swoon with affright," exclaimed Branda, clinging closely to the flesher, and tremblingly pulling the coverchief over her eyes; "loose rein and smite thy beast, or evil will surely betide us."

"Thou art not alone, gossip," cried Hugues, fearful of a snare; "if thou essay'st to play me false, certes thou'rt at once undone."

"Harm us not, friend Hugues, thou know'st I weigh not my pounds of meat with thee; I shall take heed to keep my troth. It is Branda, my niece, who goes with me to-night to buy wares at Canterbury."

"Branda with thee? By the mass 'tis she indeed, more buxom and rosy, too, than ever; come, pretty one, descend and tarry awhile, that I may have speech with thee."

"I conjure thee, good Hugues, terrify not so cruelly my poor wench, who is well-nigh dead already with fear; suffer us to hold our way, for we have far to go, and to-morrow is early market-day."

"Go thy ways then alone, Uncle Willeblud; 'tis thy niece I would have speech with, in all courtesy and honour; the which, if thou permittest not readily and of a good grace, I will rend thee both to death."

All in vain was it that Willieblud exhausted himself in prayers and lamentation, in hopes of softening the bloodthirsty wer-wolf, as he believed him to be,—refusing as the latter did every sort of compromise in avoidance of his demand, and at last replying only by horrible threats, which froze the hearts of both. Branda, although especially interested in the debate, neither stirred foot nor opened her mouth, so greatly had terror and surprise overwhelmed her. She kept her eyes fixed upon the wer-wolf, who peered at her likewise through his mask, and felt incapable of offering resistance, when she found herself forcibly dragged out of the cart, and

deposited, as it seemed to her, by an invisible power, beside the heap of stones. She swooned without uttering a single scream.

The flesher was no less dumbfounded at the turn the adventure had taken; and he too fell back among his meat, as though stricken by a blinding blow. He fancied that the wolf had swept his bushy tail violently across his eyes, and on recovering the use of his senses, found himself alone in the cart, which was rolling along joltingly at a rapid pace towards Canterbury. At first he listened, but in vain, for the wind to bring him either the shrieks of his niece, or the howlings of the wolf; but stop his beast he could not, which, panic-stricken, kept tearing on as though bewitched, or that she felt the spur of some fiend pricking her flanks.

Willieblud, however, reached his journey's end in safety, sold his meat, and returned to Ashford; reckoning full sure upon having to say a *miserere* for his niece, whose fate he had not ceased to bemoan during the whole way. But how great was his astonishment to find her safe at home, a little pale from her recent fright and want of sleep, but without even a scratch. Still more was he astonished to hear that the wer-wolf had done her no injury whatever; contenting himself, after she had recovered from her swoon, with conducting her back to their dwelling, and acting in every respect like a loyal suitor, rather than a sanguinary wer-wolf. Willieblud knew not what to think of it.

This nocturnal gallantry towards his niece had additionally irritated the burly Saxon against the wer-wolf; and although the fear of reprisals kept him from making a direct and public attack upon Hugues, he ruminated not the less upon taking some sure and secret revenge. But previous to putting his design into execution, it struck him that he could not do better than relate his misadventure to the ancient sacristan and parish gravedigger of St. Michael's—a worthy of profound sagacity in those matters, who being, moreover, endowed with a clerk-like erudition, was consulted as an oracle in *glamour* by all the old crones and lovelorn maidens throughout the township of Ashford and its vicinity.

"Slay a wer-wolf thou canst not," was the repeated rejoinder of the wiseacre to the earnest inquiries of the tormented flesher; "for his hide is proof against spear or arrow, though vulnerable to the edge of a cutting weapon of steel. I counsel thee to deal him a slight flesh wound, or cut him over the paw, in order to know of a surety whether it be Hugues or no. Thou'lt run no danger, save thou strikest him a blow from which blood flows not therefrom; for so soon as his skin is severed he taketh flight."

Resolving to follow implicitly the sacristan's advice, Willieblud that same evening determined to know with what sort of wer-wolf he had to do; and with that view hid his cleaver, newly sharpened for the occasion, under the meat in his cart; and held himself ready to make good use of it, as a preparatory step towards identifying Hugues as the audacious

spoliator of his meat, and eke his peace. The wolf-man on this occasion presented himself as usual, and anxiously inquired after Branda, which stimulated the flesher the more firmly to follow out his design.

"Here, wolf," said Willieblud, stooping over the cart as if to choose a piece of meat; "I give thee double portion to-night. Up with thy paw, take toll, and be mindful of my frank alms."

"In sooth I will remember thee, gossip," rejoined our wer-wolf; "but when shall the marriage be solemnized for certain 'twixt me and the pretty Branda?"

Hugues believing he had nothing to fear from the flesher, whose meats it was his wont so illicitly to appropriate to himself, and of whose fair niece he hoped also to take shortly lawful possession—both that he really loved her, and viewed his union with her as the surest means of replacing him within the pale of that sociality from which he had been so long and so unjustly exiled, could he but succeed in making intercession with the holy fathers of the church so far as to obtain a removal of their interdict,—Hugues, as usual, placed his expectant paw upon the edge of the cart; whereupon, instead of handing him his joint of beef or mutton, Willieblud raised his cleaver, and, at a single blow, lopped off the member laid there as fittingly for the purpose as though upon a block. Having dealt the blow, the flesher flung down his weapon and belaboured his beast; at the same time the maimed wer-wolf howled aloud with agony, and then disappeared like a phantom amongst the dark shades of the forest, in which, aided by the wind, his howls and moans were soon lost to the ear.

The flesher, on his return home next day, chuckling and laughing, deposited a gory cloth upon the table among the trenchers with which his niece was busied in preparation of their noontide meal, and which wrapper, on being unfolded, displayed to her terrified gaze a freshly severed human hand, enveloped in a wolfskin glove. Branda, intuitively guessing what had happened, shrieked aloud, shed a flood of tears, and then hurriedly threw her mantle around her, whilst her uncle was amusing himself by turning and twitching about the lopped hand with a ferocious delight, exclaiming, as he wiped up the blood which still flowed from it,—

"The sacristan said sooth; the wer-wolf hath his meed, I trow, at last. And now I wot of his nature, I fear no further his witchcraft."

Although the day was far advanced, Hugues lay writhing in torture upon his wretched couch, his habiliments drenched with gore, as was also the floor of his hut. His visage, of a ghastly pallor, expressed as much moral as physical suffering. Tears gushed at intervals from beneath his red and swollen eyelids, and he listened to every sound without doors with an increasing inquietude, painfully visible upon his distorted features. At last he distinguished footsteps rapidly approaching his dismal abode; the door was hastily flung open, and, to his surprise, a female knelt beside his couch, and with mingled sobs and imprecations sought tenderly for his mutilated wrist, which, rudely swathed in hempen wrappings, no longer

strove to conceal the absence of its hand, and from which a crimson stream still trickled. At so piteous a sight the tender-hearted maiden grew loud in her denunciations of the sanguinary flesher, and sympathetically mingled her lamentations with those of his victim.

These effusions of love and grief, however, were doomed to sudden interruption. Some one knocked at the shattered door of the wretched abode. Branda sprang to the loophole which served for a window, in order that she might see who the visitor might be that had dared to penetrate to the lair of a wer-wolf, and on recognizing him, raised her hands and eyes towards heaven in silent token of the extremity of her despair, while the knocking momentarily grew louder and louder.

"'Tis my uncle," she whispered, in faltering accents. "Ah! woe's me! how shall I escape hence without his seeing me?—whither hide? Oh, here, here, nigh to thee, Hugues, and we will die together;" and she crouched herself down in a dark recess behind his couch. "Should Willieblud raise his cleaver to slay thee, he shall first strike through thy Branda's body."

So saying, she hastily hid her pretty little form amongst a pile of undressed hemp, at the same time whispering Hugues to summon all his courage; who, poor fellow, scarce found strength enough to raise himself to a sitting posture, whilst his languid gaze vainly sought around for some weapon of defence.

"A good day to thee, Wulfric!" sneered Willieblud, as he stepped into the hut, holding in his hand a cloth folded and tied in a knot, which he flung down upon an old coffer standing beside the wounded man; "I come to proffer thee work, knowing that thou art no laggard at billhook and wattle. Wilt bind and stack me a faggot pile? Wilt do it, I say?"

"I am sick," replied Hugues, repressing the bitter wrath he felt at heart, and which, despite the physical suffering he was undergoing, flashed in his wild and haggard glances, "I am not in fitting trim for work."

"Sick, gossip—sick art thou, indeed? Or is it only a sloth fit? Come, come, what ails thee? Let us see where lieth the malady. Your hand, that I may feel how beateth thy pulse."

Hugues' pallid cheek reddened, and for an instant he hesitated whether he should resist a solicitation, the object of which he too readily comprehended; but in order to avoid exposing the tender-hearted damsel to her uncle's discovery, the maimed lover thrust forth his left hand from beneath the coverture, all imbrued with dried gore.

"Not that hand, Hugues; let's have the other—the right one. Body o' me, man, hast lost thy fist, and must I find it for thee?"

Hugues, whose flush of rage had alternately deepened and turned to a deathlike hue, replied not to this taunt, nor testified by the slightest gesture or movement that he was about to comply with a request as cruel in the nature of its preconcertion as the object of it was slenderly cloaked. Willieblud laughed with a loud, coarse laugh, and ground his great teeth

together in savage glee, maliciously revelling in the mental torture he saw clearly he was now inflicting upon the sufferer. He seemed disposed to use violence rather than allow himself to be baffled in the attainment of the decisive proof he aimed at. Already had he commenced untying the napkin, giving vent all the while to a string of pitiless taunts—one hand only displaying itself outside the coverture, and which Hugues, well-nigh senseless with anguish, thought not of withdrawing.

"Why tender me that hand?" continued his unrelenting persecutor, as he imagined himself on the eve of arriving at the conviction he so persistently sought for,—"that I should lop it off? Quick! quick! Master Wulfric, and do my bidding! I demand to see your right hand."

"Behold it then!" ejaculated a feigned voice, which belonged to no supernatural being, however it might seem appertaining to such; and Willieblud, to his utter confusion and dismay, saw a right hand, sound and unmutilated, extend itself towards him, as though in silent accusation. He started back, stammered out a cry for mercy, bent his knees for an instant, and then raising himself, palsied with terror, fled from the hut, which he firmly believed to be in the possession of the foul fiend. So great was his terror and consternation, that he left behind him the severed hand, which from that moment became a perpetual vision ever present before his bewildered mind, and which all the potent exorcisms of the sacristan, at whose hands he continually sought counsel and consolation, signally failed to dispel.

"Oh that hand! To whom, then, belongs that accursed hand?" groaned Willieblud, despondingly. "Is it really the fiend's, or that of some wer-wolf? Certain 'tis that Hugues is innocent, for did I not see both his hands? But wherefore was one all bloody? There's sorcery at the bottom of it, nathless!"

The next morning early, the first object that struck his sight on entering his stall was the severed hand that he had left the preceding night upon the coffer in the forest hut. It was stripped of its wolfskin glove, and lay all gaunt and livid among the flesher's viands. Such was his trepidation at the spectacle that he no longer dare touch the phantom hand, which now he verily believed to be enchanted; but, hoping to get rid of it at once and for ever, he had it flung into a well; and it was with no slight increase of perturbation that he found it shortly afterwards lying exposed upon his block in the vending booth. He next buried it in his garden, but still without being able to rid himself of the haunting apparition. It returned more livid and loathsome than ever to infect his shop, and augment the remorse which was unceasingly revived by the reproaches of his niece.

At length, flattering himself with the hope of escaping all further persecution from that fatal hand, it struck him that he would have it carried to the cemetery at Canterbury, and try whether solemn exorcism and sepulture in consecrated ground would bar effectually its return to

the air and light of day. This was duly done. But lo! on the following morning, to his horror and mortification, he perceived it nailed to his shutter. Disheartened thoroughly by these dumb though awful reproaches, which entirely robbed him of his peace, and impatient to annihilate all trace of an action with which Heaven itself seemed to upbraid him, he quitted Ashford one morning without bidding adieu even to his niece, and some days after was found drowned in the river Stour. They drew out his swollen and discoloured body, which had been discovered floating on the surface among the sedge, and it was only by piecemeal that they succeeded in tearing away from his death-contracted clutch the phantom hand, which, in his suicidal convulsions, he had retained rigidly grasped.

A year after this event Hugues Wulfric, although *minus* a hand, and therefore a confirmed wer-wolf, married the pretty Branda, his faithful leman, and sole heiress to the stock and chattels of her uncle, the late unhappy flesher of Ashford.*

S. M.

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* Lycanthropy—which the foregoing tale attempts to illustrate—is a superstition of very remote antiquity, and has long been involved in much obscurity. It pervaded Greece, Rome, and the Germanic nations, and in all probability came down to them from the Chaldeans and those nomadic people who had unceasingly to defend their flocks from the attacks of wolves. The terror that those ferocious beasts spread by prowling at night round the fold proved favourable to malefactors, who, assuming the guise of furious wolves, were the better enabled to perpetrate acts of theft or vengeance. Hence seems to have been derived a superstition which has prevailed through all ages and nations under different names, and surrounded by circumstances and features more or less strange. Lucian and Pliny, among the pagans, as well as the ghostly councils and the skilful leeches of the Middle Ages, busied themselves by turns with the lycanthropes, alike in cursing, excommunicating, and curing them. When Gervoise of Tilbury flourished (in the reigns of Henry II. and Richard I.), the extirpation of British wolves was very far from being complete, so that strong vestiges of this superstition were yet in our island. "We have frequently seen," he says, "men in England transformed into wolves for the space of a lunar month, and such people are called gerulphs (*garoux*) by the French, and wer-wolves by the English." Camden, in his notice of the county of Tipperary, says they have "a report of men turned every year into wolves," but adds that he accounts it fabulous.

Wer-wolf (*man-wolf*) is supposed to be an exact equivalent to the Greek word *lycanthropus*,—*were* being, in Anglo-Saxon, a man; whence some derive the *were-gild*, or composition money paid for homicide.

OLD SIGNS AND OLD SAWS.

I FORGET who it is that defines etymology as sending vagrant words back to their parish. A happy definition, but oftentimes easier said than done; for some words in daily use may be traced back, parish after parish, through half the countries of Europe, until they find their primeval home amongst the children of Shem. But there are some phrases whose home lies nearer, and though in their present disguise they seem to have lost sight of their parentage, a little examination will soon discover their real and often curious significance. Trench says "words are fossil history;" and just as fossils gather concretions of shells and wood and stone around them, whereby the fossil itself is often concealed, or but imperfectly known, so do words sometimes receive such strange additions, or suffer such curious mutilations, that their real history is obscured until the etymologist, removing these accumulations, reveals the hidden meaning that lies behind some peasant's proverb or some familiar inn sign. Thus in Dorsetshire and Somersetshire it is quite common to hear the country people say, "Please the pigs;" and I used to wonder much why the good pleasure of the swinish gentry was so often invoked; but this apparently stupid invocation carries us back to the time when the dark shadow of Popery covered the land, and when the *pyx* or chest containing the chalice and the crucifix were borne in front of every procession, and exhibited at almost every festival, and when the people looked to that chest, and in its unseen contents believed they had their tutelar divinity. The pyx to the peasantry of those days was as the Dii Penates to the old Romans, and hence the ejaculation, often most sincerely used, "Please the pyx," which after the Reformation—whether in mockery or corruption of sound, I know not—became the Dorsetshire meaningless exclamation of the present day, "Please the pigs!"

But my purpose is chiefly with *inn signs*, which are very amusing, not only from an etymological, but from an antiquarian and pictorial point of view. I remember at Shaftesbury there used to be, and there still may be, a public-house called the "Devil and Bag of Nails." Many years have passed since I saw the curious picture with which some rustic Pre-Raphaelite painter had endeavoured to illustrate this odd title, and I remember how once I was puzzled to know what connection there was between innocent ironmongery and sabbathless Satan. The origin of the phrase, however, is the "Devil and Bacchanals," a suitable sign for all who abuse Heaven's bounties into folly and revelry. Here it is appropriate to add, that the horned and hoofed figure ascribed to Satan by popular superstition is borrowed from the Greek shepherd god Pan, the author of *panic* terrors, the lustful, wrathful haunter of the woodland. This explains the meaning of another inn sign, "The Frying-*pan* and Bag of Nails," involving both a verbal and a pictorial change.

There is another sign I have seen in several places (there are two or three in Manchester),—"The Goat and Compasses." Here, again, appears strange incongruity. What has this hirsute animal, the Brighton donkey, to do with compasses, any more than the sheep or the cow? A little search into local history soon gives us the key to this enigma. In the old times, when for mutual defence, knights, and squires, and yeomen bold met after sundown, beneath the roof of some friendly hostelry, to arrange their plans or reckon up their forces, pledging each other to fidelity over the cup of sack, or warm spiced ale, they adopted for their motto that which made them ever strong; that which gave them the high distinction of fighting for—that they might hand down to us—those great principles of civil and religious liberty which lie at the root of the civilization of all the Germanic countries of Europe,—"God encompasseth us." This grand expression has been corrupted or travestied into the miserable absurdity perpetrated in "The Goat and Compasses;" but even this ludicrous inn sign has its use in recalling the days when at the point of the sword was purchased our British birthright, "freedom to worship God."

Take also another sign, common in many agricultural towns,—"The Pig and Whistle." Here, again, is an incongruity in the union of two most dissimilar things; for just as at first sight one wonders what Satan has to do with nails, or a goat with compasses, so here one is perplexed to find out what pigs have to do with whistles. But this phrase carries us back to the old drinking customs of England, when it was considered disgraceful to go to bed sober; and when royalty was so habitually inebriate, that to be "royally drunk" was a familiar phrase. Those were the days when the custom—handed down from Saxon times—of passing round the *wassail* cup prevailed. This large vessel was perforated with holes at equal distances, into each of which a close-fitting peg was inserted; and the cup being filled, each guest was bound to honour the fashion of the day by drinking down to the next peg, and to pass the jug on to his neighbour to do the same. On the Lord Mayor's day this custom is still preserved, and the "loving cup" passed round for all the guests to drink in due courtesy. Thus "peg and wassail" has been vulgarized into "pig and whistle." The *peg* tankard, still existing in many of our universities, was a popular drinking vessel, out of which has arisen the proverbial expression, "He is a peg too low," *i. e.*, he ought to take a little more ale to bring him up to the mark; so, too, a friend was pledged with the old "Waes hael." Sometimes the wassail cup was simply a bowl with ample space for floating toast and apples, as the old Christmas rhyme testifies,—

> "Wassail, wassail, all about the town,
> Our toast is white, our ale is brown;
> Our bowl is made of the maplin tree;
> We be good fellows all. I drink to thee."

The *swig*—spiced ale and toast—which accompanies the Welsh rarebit (corrupted into rabbit) is still presented in a bowl.

Some few years ago there was at the east end of London a remarkably striking sign-board suspended over the door of a second-class public-house. The board was divided into four partitions, in each of which was the figure of a man quaintly but suitably habited. The first was a *king* crowned, with a sceptre in his hand, and supposed to say the words inscribed over his head, "I rule over all." The second was a *priest*, all shaven and shorn, having over his head the words, "I pray for all." The third was a *soldier*, valiant and bold, saying, "I fight for all;" and in the fourth partition was a *husbandman* ploughing, and saying, "I labour for all." Some time since this house passed into other hands, and some Goth of a painter replaced these mottoes by another board and another sign, re-christening the house as "The Four Awls." As a pendant to this it may be added, that very recently, at Carshalton (Carew's Hall Town), in Surrey, there was an inn with the same remarkable sign, with a notable variation, better both in rhyme and reason than the one alluded to above. The fourth figure, a stout farmer of the John Bull stamp, had his hands significantly pressed on his pockets, and after the three legends, "I rule over all," "I pray for all," "I fight for all," came this,—"And I *pay* for all."

Then there was "The Swan with Two Necks,"—glory of Lad Lane in the old coaching days. No researches into ornithology would reveal such a

"Rara avis in terra"

as a two-necked swan; the simple fact being, that here we have another instance of the corruption of language through ignorance, though here it consists only of one letter. The swans on the river Thames are the property of the Crown, and are regularly looked after by a person whom we may call the swanherd. It was, and may be is, his duty to mark the age of the swans by making a nick in their bills, each nick signifying a year. Tradition says that a dead swan was once floated ashore at Richmond, having two nicks in his bill; and the person on whose ground the dead bird was found, after opening this hotel, gave it the name of "The Swan with Two *Nicks*." Such is the origin of this singular sign—suggestive more of Munchausen than of a City blunder.

But while some inn signs have an historical and antiquarian interest, others are simply droll and whimsical. Of the first class we may name the well-known "Bull and Mouth," being an undoubted corruption of the "Boulogne Mouth,"—carrying us back to the days when Napoleon's pet flotilla lay at Boulogne, arrayed in formidable but impotent menace for the invasion of England. Of the latter class we may name "We Three," which is still extant near Putney. Some inn with this sign is alluded to in Shakspere's "Twelfth Night," where the clown, on joining Sir Andrew and Sir Job, inquires, with a sly glance at each of the two knights, "Didst ever see the sign of 'We Three'?" In the inn sign referred to were only two persons, with big heads and remarkably wooden features,

so that the passer by inevitably felt himself included in the inscription, set to an old catch,—" We three loggerheads be."

Sometimes there is a kind of run on a particular sign in a particular place. Thus there used to be at Brentford, in front of the village green, three smart country inns, respectively named "The Old Hats," "The *Old* Old Hats," and "The *New* Old Hats." This sounds almost as apocryphal as the story of the rival shoemakers, one of whom, laying claim to superior honesty, inscribed over his shop, "Mens conscia recti;" on which his competing rival, determining not to be outdone, adopted this for his motto, "Men *and women's* conscia recti." But it is no fiction; the three sets of "old hats"—referring, doubtless, to the rustic song, "When my old hat was new"—were all conspicuous in my boyhood, and may be so now. There is a capital German story touching this local attachment to particular signs; we give it as we found it in a book. The "Grey Ass" had long been the pet inn of a village in Hesse Cassel. Once upon a time the Elector himself actually patronized the inn by dining and sleeping there. The host lost his prudence in his loyalty, and in an evil hour substituted the Elector's head, elaborately painted, for the original sign. A cunning rival thereupon adopted the discarded sign, and the new "Grey Ass" soon became as popular as the old one. Whereupon the first landlord, unwilling to displace his patron, but more unwilling to lose his custom, had painted beneath his Serene Highness's august features the explanatory words, "This is the original 'Grey Ass.'"

But perhaps while thus "taking my ease in mine inn," I may be trespassing on the patience of my readers. Some signs, purely ludicrous, I am unable to explain; such as "The Black Boy and Stomach-ache," or Dickens's "Pig and Tinder-box," or one near Cambridge, "The Sun and Whalebone." I hope I have broken ground on which others will travel; meantime, I have had my *inn*ings.

B.

WORKING IN THE DARK:

A Romance of the Black Coats.

BY PAUL FÉVAL,

AUTHOR OF "THE DUKE'S MOTTO," "BEL DEMONIO," ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

AT PARIS.

ANDRÉ rose.

"I came to learn where I should find my wife," said he, firmly and sadly. "I am not angry with you, Madeleine; appearances were against me."

"The address is inside, in my account-book; you will find the name of the street on the first page, the number on the last. The book is on the window-ledge. Good-bye, Monsieur Maynotte; . . . and if you have any money to spare, they say that the widow and children of M. Bancelle are begging their bread in Paris at this moment."

André moved slowly away, and the good woman went on digging her potatoes. As she worked on, she said to herself, "No, no; at one time I would never have believed that of him. And to think he should have so fallen! And how pale! . . . He looks as bad as she did! . . . Ill-got money never does any one good! . . . I would rather he should not return . . . nor she either . . . but the child has nothing to do in all that."

The brigadier and his gendarme had started on their search for the incendiary. André found the book on the window-shelf. He took it up under the pretext of showing to the little one the picture upon the cover. On the first page was written, "Rue de la Sourdière;" on the last, "No. 21."

André dashed away a tear that had fallen on his cheek as he kissed the little one, and started with his pack upon his shoulder. Two days later, about ten in the morning, at Paris, André, still more pale, and walking with difficulty, left the yard where the diligence had stopped, and inquired of the commissionaire at the corner his way to the Rue de la Sourdière.

It was a fine day towards the end of summer. Paris was transacting its morning business, and appeared like a busy hive. His head giddy with the unaccustomed roar of traffic, André walked up the Rue Saint-Honoré, according to the directions of the Auvergnat; he passed the church of Saint-Roch, the blue dial of which marked half-past ten, and at the end of a narrow, straight, and solitary street he read, "Rue de la Sourdière."

He stopped; an iron hand had seized his heart.

What could be this anguish which came upon him at the very moment when he was to recover his lost Julia?

There were then at Paris, and not far from this spot, certain quarters of pestilence, the haunts of infamy: there are still within Paris some horrible districts where misery shrouds crime. But certainly this Rue de la Sourdière, where I have never passed without a shudder, is neither infamous, nor exactly pestilent, nor miserable, nor criminal. It is simply terrible in its coldness, its desolation, its silence. It is like an oasis of death amidst the exuberant vitality which surrounds it. There are in this street some fine old broken-down hotels and gardens, where everything looks mouldy; the rays of the sun pass over it without ever touching the soil; and if at any time a stray vehicle rattles upon the paved roadway, which is a hundred years old, though it looks quite new, strange creatures, peering over melancholy-looking balconies, stare with truly Chinese astonishment at this unaccustomed life and motion. Once the vehicle has passed, the windows are closed; and they remain closed for a long time, as the spiders well know, for they confidently restore their damaged webs, disturbed upon an average every six months.

André had never been to Paris. This prodigious desolation is only adequately felt by Parisians. It was not, therefore, the aspect of this necropolis that made him shrink; but he did shrink. To restore his courage, calm was needed, it is true; but it should have been a cheerful calmness.

He turned back, and, with a sinking heart, plunged once more amid the noise and rattle of the Rue Saint-Honoré.

All his self-confidence had left him. His vague inquietude had thenceforward a name. It was presentiment. He felt growing within him a dread which was already madness, and felt above his head the menace of a terrible misfortune.

What misfortune? Had he not already been sufficiently bruised and wounded by cruel fortune? What had he to fear, and what new suffering could be added to his martyrdom?

As eleven o'clock sounded from the clock of Saint-Roch, he mechanically counted the strokes from the steps of the altar of the Virgin upon which he was kneeling. He had entered the church without knowing wherefore; he had passed along the nave, from the grand entrance to the vaulted niche, and he was there praying, and perhaps he scarcely knew that he was praying.

But there was an awakening; he joined his hands together, and his heart rose fervently towards his God. The prayer of children, the admirable prayer which is greater than man, the prayer containing these words, addressed to *our Father that is in heaven*,—"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," fell from his lips.

And when he had pronounced these words he no longer prayed,—he reflected.

This miraculous prayer does not admit of vengeance. It turns against

those who have the desire of revenge. Those who have this desire pronounce as they repeat it their own condemnation. Thus thought André as he knelt, covering his face with his hands.

André had within him something stronger even than vengeance; this was his love.

André had a fear—should we say a superstitious fear?—of this condemnation pronounced by his own lips against those who cherish hatred. His hatred was a just one, his vengeance was legitimate; but before God, the Author of this prayer, there is neither just hatred nor legitimate vengeance.

According to the law of God, pardon is a rigorous duty.

André was questioning himself. He had invoked Heaven for the law of like for like; he had said, "Have the same pity as I have." And what pity would he have had if he had met, upon the steps of the church, the man who had robbed him of his happiness?

What if the Black Coat, if Toulonnais l'Amitié—for he had but these fantastic denominations to designate the object of his hatred—had appeared before him, and a voice had cried in his ear, "That is he!"

There is perhaps no one amongst Christian believers—and André had brought with him from Corsica the foundation of a lively faith,—there is no one who has not once in his life parleyed with Providence, discussed, bargained, so to speak, and laid down his conditions. In Brittany, the simple pilgrims say to the good Saint Anne of Auray, "If you will do this, I will do that." It is a bargain. And why not? God, more clement than is our philosophy, does not find impiety in this simplicity of heart.

André Maynotte, profoundly absorbed in his meditation, docile to the commandment of his prayer, but pleading for his human right, was not impious. Jacob thus wrestled against the Lord.

His forehead moistened, his cheek grew pale, he saw nothing of what was passing around him. He was choosing, laboriously, painfully, between his hatred and his love.

The hope of revenging himself had already taken root in his heart; it was part of his life: to pardon seemed, at first, to him something impossible and impious. But his prayer cried to him, with the voice of a master, Cast away thy hate; God will restore thy love!

The church, which had previously been almost empty, was now beginning to fill. There was a great movement towards the sacristy, and the tapers over the altar were being lighted.

Of this André took no heed.

The fatigue of the preceding days weighed upon him. While he believed himself still in meditation, a veil was already floating over his thoughts.

His reflections were gradually making way for his dreams. He could see the charming head of Julia, whose smiling eyes were calling him to her. It was indeed his love. Between her and himself there was a dark gulf, which was his hate.

Thus became symbolized the law of his prayer. He implored pity;

his prayer remained implacable: "I will pardon thy offences as thou shalt pardon those who have offended against thee!"

A murmur filled the nave where the inquisitive crowd were pressing together. The tones of the organ began to peal through the church. All this, in André's dream, the hum of the crowd and the sounds of the organ, seemed one confused murmur, in which he heard perpetually repeated the sentence of his prayer.

And yet it was not Sunday, nor was it a day of feast or fasting. Why these lighted tapers?—this music?—this crowd? André could not have answered, nor did he care to know. Dreaming or thinking, he was struggling at once against his passion and against the commandment of his Maker.

At no great distance from him, between the sacristy and the calvary, in one of the aisles of the chapel of the Virgin, was standing a man, whose inquisitive glance was ever and anon directed towards the nave. It is long since we had the pleasure of meeting with M. Lecoq, the commercial traveller in iron safes, who made so handsome a present to our friend J. B. Schwartz; but we should, nevertheless, have immediately recognized his daring and frankly insolent physiognomy. His travelling dress was replaced by a very elegant walking costume, in which was still evident a certain "loudness" in the contrasts of colour. He was there evidently from curiosity, and he seemed to be watching for somebody's arrival.

From the spot where he stood he could see up the middle of the nave, and also the entrance to the sacristy, about which the assistants were now beginning to clear a path to the altar.

The doors of the sacristy were thrown open; a sort of procession passed; then suddenly there was a great movement amongst the crowd; a couple followed the priests—a bridal pair,—the bride dressed in white, with a head-dress of orange flowers; the bridegroom in evening dress. In spite of the imposing presence of the Swiss beadle, people got up upon the chairs. M. Lecoq could scarcely get one glimpse of the bride and bridegroom. This was enough, for his eye flashed and his lip curled with a singular smile.

The organ pealed loudly. It was a marriage, a grand marriage.

Paris, the full-grown child, may claim to be the capital of the world's intelligence, but it preserves all the curiosity of the village.

Paris goes to look at the bride;—Paris, which is said to be so full of business! It no longer gives a thought to the destinies of the universe when it catches sight of a dressed-up dog in the street; and, however interesting may be this spectacle, it will turn its eyes from the revolutionary weathercock if you direct its attention to a cartful of monkeys.

As soon as the affianced couple had taken up their position, the crowd fell back into the aisles, in order to get a better sight of them. M. Lecoq, whom we must not confound with the vulgar commonalty, kept his position, his countenance still retaining its peculiar smile. For a few moments he remained motionless, with his hands behind his back; and his large mouth

was just opened to yawn, when his eyes, which had been turned towards the empty chapel of the Virgin, fell upon André. He started, the colour came into his face, and by an instinctive movement he made a step to place himself in the shadow of a pillar.

Thence he threw towards André a rapid and cautious glance.

"By all the devils," muttered he, with profound astonishment, "it's he! there's no mistake; it's he! Here's an adventure!"

The precautions he took were quite superfluous, for André was immersed in his pre-occupations, and was paying no attention to what was passing around him. The result of the struggle which was taking place in his heart was no longer doubtful; his hate was strong and tenacious, because with it was blended a just desire for retribution; but his love engrossed his whole being: his love was certain to conquer.

Lost as he was in this ecstatic dream, which was not sleep, and from which nevertheless cold human reason seemed excluded, he suddenly returned to the thought of his presence at Paris, without external objects having had anything to do with this awakening. The object of his voyage, Julia, called him away, and dispelled all his remaining indecision. He joined his hands with impassioned fervour, and cried towards God,—

"I will forget him who has wrought me so much harm. I will not seek to know either his name or his face. I will not revenge myself. This I promise and swear, that I may regain my Julia, that she may still love me, and that we may be happy!"

He rose, his heart filled with an extraordinary calm. Whether it be thought puerile or not, the compact was concluded. All the inquietudes, all the anguish that had agitated André during his voyage and since his arrival at Paris, had disappeared. Literally, he had just purchased his happiness; and, if his nature be considered, he had paid a high price for it.

As he turned, after making the sign of the cross, he saw that the clock marked half-past twelve. He was surprised at the long space of time that had passed by, and was now only anxious to leave the church, and at length to make his way to Julia's house.

André directed his steps towards the great entrance from the Rue St. Honoré. For a moment he paused, astonished at the vast crowd which now thronged the aisles. M. Lecoq had moved round to the other side of the pillar, from behind which he eyed him with eager curiosity. His lips wore a scornful smile, which seemed to say, "We are going to have a fine comedy."

André was far indeed from thinking that he was observed, or that amid those crowded aisles an event was being witnessed which was of any interest to himself.

The people who were standing there were not praying, they were talking; but André at first made his way through the crowd without paying any attention to the various sallies that were passing to and fro around him. The first thing he heard was the expression,—

"I tell you *she* has got no money, Monsieur Jonas; she hasn't brought him a brass farthing."

This was pronounced in a tone of vigorous affirmation, by a big, red-faced woman, who was arguing against the views of a thin, pale-faced man. The fat woman added, whilst André was endeavouring to squeeze himself past her rotundity,—

"And sprung from nothing, that's certain! Neither parents nor family. Lessons on the guitar in the pride-and-poverty style! that tells everything!"

M. Jonas, the thin man, who occupied one of the millinery shops which abound in the quarter Saint-Roch, answered,—

"Quiet and well-behaved, I must say that for her. He used to drop in at our place just to make inquiries. She might have gained any amount, just dressing to please the men, and holding up her head a little."

Madame Contant, the fat woman, shrugged her shoulders.

"Just to hide her game," muttered she. "For a pretty woman, that's always the best plan. But as for virtue in a woman who has neither got property nor a business! I'm not such a fool as to believe that."

André managed to pass by Madame Contant, who said, sharply,—

"People shouldn't push like that in a church. And there's more than one, I'll be bound," added she, "who goes there to look after the ladies."

"Or to get at their pockets," chimed in M. Jonas.

"She is splendid!" declared a young shopman, standing on tiptoe to get a peep at the bride.

A serious-looking and respectably dressed man, who spoke in a highly moral tone, observed,—

"In business it's always a good thing to marry a very pretty woman."

André had not yet turned his head in the direction of the nave. The meaning of all the idle talk about him was lost in his pre-occupation. He had with difficulty made his way for a few yards through the crowd.

Two phrases, which were exchanged in front of him, caused him to start.

To his right some one said,—

"He is a man worth four hundred thousand francs!"

To his left,—

"So you do not know M. Schwartz?"

Schwartzes are plentiful enough, and the figure—four hundred thousand—may often recur in the conversation of two financiers. Nevertheless, André paused to look at his right and left-hand neighbours. The name struck him in two places: the figure recalled to him an hour of terrible anguish; the name and the figure united transported his mind to Caen, and recommenced his martyrdom.

His right-hand neighbour was unknown to him, as was also the man upon his left. Before he had recovered from the shock a third voice said behind him,—

"The Alsatian had fixed his mind upon it! If the beautiful Giovanna had refused him, he would have blown out his brains!"

A cloud passed before André's eyes.

Julia's name also was Giovanna. The name of Julia, his wife, which he had bid her to resume, was Giovanna-Maria Reni.

Should we say that it was a fear or a suspicion? What a coincidence! André gave the laugh of a child to whom we might be telling some absurd story.

And yet he turned his eyes towards the nave, seized for the first time with the desire to see what was passing. A large pillar interposed between him and the altar at which the betrothed couple were kneeling.

Schwartz! four hundred thousand francs! the exact sum that was contained in the Bancelle safe.

There was a silence amidst the crowd. The priest was pronouncing his allocution.

Schwartz! the man had said Schwartz! Schwartz was also the name of the man he had entrusted with his letters at Jersey.

"They were already corresponding when he made the voyage to Jersey," resumed the last speaker.

André stared at him with a stupefied gaze.

"Hush! hush! Silence! silence!" was repeated amongst the crowd; "he has just said Yes."

André did not hear this *yes* of the bridegroom; but, on the other hand, another voice, so low that it did not reach those about him, violently struck his ear. His head bent down as though a crushing weight had suddenly fallen upon him. For a moment his glaring eyes were turned upon the people who surrounded him, then he furiously rushed forward to reach a partition-rail in front, between two pillars.

There he could see better.

As he pushed the men and women who barred his road to right and to left with irresistible violence, André, with bloodshot eyes and whitened lips, kept repeating,—

"It is not she! You lie! you lie!"

Paris has a great fear of epileptic fits; nevertheless it willingly forms a crowd to witness them. It seems to look upon them as a comedy, performed gratis, and in addition to the national *fêtes*. A circle was at once made round André, formed of a single row of bodies, above which was seen a quadruple row of heads.

It was observed that he was foaming at the mouth. The Swiss beadle at once marched up, in a measured processional step, for the purpose of restoring order. Madame Contant said to M. Jonas,—

"Last year, at the Tivoli ball, a mad Englishman in that state bit three persons—two milliners and a *grisette*."

But long before the Swiss had made his way through the crowd, André had reached the partition-rail. His hands seized the bars as he threw a

piercing glance, full of anguish and hope, towards the altar rails behind which the newly married couple were kneeling.

He saw only the man, who was indeed J. B. Schwartz. A groan escaped from his breast. The priest was between him and the woman.

He repeated again,—

"It is not she!"

All this took place in a second. The priest, having changed his position, no longer hid the bride, whose face, melancholy but marvellously beautiful beneath her wreath of orange blossoms, suddenly met André's gaze.

His two hands let go their hold. The cry of a broken heart was stifled within his throat, and he fell as though struck with lightning.

CHAPTER XVI.

MISS FANCHETTE.

At this cry, Julia Maynotte, Giovanna-Maria Reni, or Madame Schwartz, for this was thenceforth her name, raised her head and looked towards the spot whence the sound proceeded. There was a deep but tranquil sadness in the glance of her large eyes. She was as beautiful as formerly, more beautiful.

The bridegroom, J. B. Schwartz—for this was indeed the poor Alsatian referred to in the first pages of our narrative, who possessed four hundred thousand francs, and was taking this marvellous creature for his wife,—J. B. Schwartz first threw a rapid and jealous glance upon his wife, and then an anxious one towards the railing in the body of the church.

J. B. Schwartz was little altered; his features had preserved their sharp and pinched expression; he had acquired, however, a little more colour and substance. His wife and himself saw nothing beyond a stir and the movement of heads. André was, in fact, lying senseless upon the pavement. The bride again bent her charming head over her prayer-book, and J. B. Schwartz, thinking that some ordinary accident might have happened, resumed the dignified look required of him by circumstances.

It was a grand wedding; nothing was wanting to the magnificence of the ceremony. All the tapers were lighted, the priests wore their most gorgeous robes, the organ was sounding its loudest tones. The nave, however, contained but few assistants, and these had little family resemblance to the bridegroom. A Schwartz, when he becomes a man worth four hundred thousand francs, is certainly never in want of relations, nor of friends either; but these friends and relations are of a peculiar kind. As for the lovely bride, she had no supporters or bridesmaids. Her name of Giovanna-Maria Reni sufficiently indicated that she was a stranger. In short, for a Schwartz, our pinched Alsatian had ventured upon an alliance which was lamentably romantic. He might have married into a commer-

cial family, with half a million at least. In fact, this was remarked in the church.

The ceremony quietly continued, whilst the Swiss, aided by several obliging persons, was raising André from the ground and bearing him into the sacristy. M. Lecoq was following a few steps behind, and seemed in earnest consultation with his own thoughts. He had witnessed his anticipated comedy culminating in something like tragedy at the very first scene. What did he now want, and what thoughts were now at work beneath that brazen forehead?

The greater portion of those who had followed from curiosity stopped at the door of the sacristy. M. Lecoq crossed the threshold. In the whole church—where there were, nevertheless, many commercial notabilities and people of some position—you could not have found a physiognomy more self-confident than his. M. Lecoq—his bearing lofty, his face open and calm—moved aside with a mild gesture the people who barred his passage. He entered and went straight towards the group which surrounded the sick man. Amidst this group, composed of the most humble functionaries of the sacristy, the expressions of opinion were various.

"It's drink!" said one.

"It's the falling-sickness!" said another.

"Sometimes," began a charitable bystander, "want will . . . ."

But the Swiss, clement and sentimental, as a tall warrior should be, observed,—

"On the occasion of a marriage, heartache may often have something to do with it."

M. Lecoq touched his arm and said,—

"Allow me!"

They made way, for this was an order. M. Lecoq took André's wrist and felt his pulse.

"It's a doctor!" was whispered.

"No, my friends," replied M. Lecoq, with a kindly smile, "I am not a doctor." He drew out his purse and placed a piece of silver in the hand of the Swiss. "This unfortunate young man is a relation of mine," he added. "A terrible ailment! A carriage, if you please, and immediately."

One of the attendants belonging to the sacristy was about to start off to obey. M. Lecoq added,—

"My house is close by me, Gaillon; you can take one of the wedding carriages, it will be back before the conclusion of the ceremony."

During the man's absence M. Lecoq gave some well-timed details relative to "the terrible malady," and assured his popularity. Incidentally he let fall his name and his position of partner in the firm of Berthier and Co., celebrated, principally, for the manufacture of burglar-proof safes.

When the carriage arrived, they all helped to carry to it André, who was still senseless. M. Lecoq had declared that all ordinary means of

reviving him would be useless, but that he had at his house a medicament which would at once restore him. He paid and thanked them and departed.

A few minutes afterwards André was lying, still dressed, on the bed of M. Lecoq, in a large room furnished with a certain elegance, but in great disorder. This M. Lecoq had some characteristics of the artist. A great variety of pipes and a great deal of dust were to be found in his apartment. If he possessed a special medicament for the syncopes of his pretended cousin, he certainly was in no hurry to make use of it. A more pressing business engaged him; he was taking an inventory of the contents of André's pockets—a poor inventory! All that André possessed in the world was the passport in the name of Antoine, and an old purse containing three pieces of gold. These were perhaps sufficient for M. Lecoq. At the sight of the passport he smiled pensively and fell into a deep reverie. Cuvier might thus have smiled in reconstructing the whole of an antediluvian skeleton by the aid of a few fragments of petrified bones. For ten minutes at least M. Lecoq was immersed in his reflections, then he took his hat and went out, saying aloud to himself,—

"We must consult the general father."

André looked like a corpse upon the bed. But was the general father, then, a doctor? So much the better if the general father was a doctor, for the syncope of André had already lasted for more than half an hour.

M. Lecoq, walking at a good pace, like a healthy young fellow as he was, but without running, reached a fine mansion in the Rue Therèse, which had somewhat the appearance of an hotel. The Rue Therèse is a little corner of the faubourg Saint-Germain, enclosed in that hybrid quarter, so rich and so poor, which is termed the Butte-des-Moulins. M. Lecoq entered this house, everything about which was wonderfully clean and neat, as if he was in the habit of frequenting it. He took no notice of the direction—"Speak to the *concierge;*"—he left upon his right a flight of stone steps, leading to a massive entrance, and opened a small door adjoining the back staircase. A valet, venerably mildewed, and whose appearance was almost monkish, received him gravely and said,—

"The colonel is breakfasting, Monsieur Toulonnais." The general's father was a colonel. M. Lecoq mounted the staircase.

In this house there was no sound. The air had a close and musty odour. On the landing of the first story was a little corridor which led to the front staircase, which was broad and ornamented with handsome iron balusters. M. Lecoq entered this corridor; the valet, who looked like a lay brother, had not followed him. His hand was on the handle of the only door, of which the threshold was furnished with a mat, when a curious kind of projectile, thrown from the story above, described a parabola in the air and struck his hat with a blow that knocked it to a distance of several yards; at the same time an outrageous burst of laughter startled the silence.

"Fanchette! you mad imp!" cried M. Lecoq, angrily, "you shall be punished for that."

A second burst of laughter was heard. The head of a child, pale and terribly intelligent, appeared behind the arabesqued iron balusters, surrounded with a mass of black hair.

"I don't care a pin for you, L'Amitié," exclaimed a clear voice, *piquante* as the point of a penknife; "if you tease me, grandpapa will send you away."

The projectile was a large *bouquet* of faded flowers, rendered heavy by the water with which it was saturated. M. Lecoq was afraid of the child, for he blew her a kiss. The child must have been between ten and twelve years old. She was small but beautifully formed, and her pinafore of grey cloth, stained all over with red, already showed the outline, in miniature, of an exquisite figure. Her features also were those of a girl of sixteen at least; they were delicate, graceful, and expressive. But what struck one most was the reckless audacity depicted in the two disproportionately large and brilliant eyes which lit up the paleness of this strange face. To the kiss he had sent her, Fanchette answered by a provoking gesture.

"I have another *bouquet*," said she, "mind yourself when you go out."

She disappeared. M. Lecoq pushed open the door. A thin and spare old man, whose parchment complexion would have rejoiced the heart of an amateur of old ivory carvings, was seated alone in a very large dining-room. He was dipping, with a certain amount of sensuality, some thin fingers of brown bread in an egg. There was nothing besides on the table, which was covered with an oil-cloth.

"Good morning, colonel," said M. Lecoq, on entering.

"Is my beautiful niece married?" inquired the old man, instead of answering his salute.

"Yes, that business is ended," replied M. Lecoq.

The colonel nodded his head as a sign of satisfaction.

"A very nice young man!" muttered he, "and we have him fast, eh, L'Amitié?"

"There's something fresh," said M. Lecoq. "Have you finished your breakfast?"

The old man pushed away his egg-cup.

"I have handed in my resignation," replied he, assuming an air of distrust. "If it's on business, address yourself to the office."

M. Lecoq placed before him on the table the passport made out in the name of Antoine (Jean).

"Bah!" exclaimed the colonel, with profound astonishment. Then, after a silence, "Is that fool Lambert resuscitated?"

"Not he, *patron*, but André Maynotte, the armorer of Sartène, the man of the armlet, the husband of your niece, who has just espoused J. B. Schwartz in second marriage."

The old man arose, full of inquietude. He was very tall, and his withered limbs were encased in a suit of complete black.

"The man who was shut up in the prison of Caen," quietly continued M. Lecoq, "in the very cell of which you once sawed through the bars, he who must have received the last confidences of Lambert, he who knows all!"

"All?" repeated the colonel, whose form again became bent.

He smiled. His features were so aquiline as to appear hooked; his forehead narrow, but high; his skull strongly developed at the back. His mouth, deformed through the absence of teeth, showed that senile line which resembles a cicatrice. His eyelids almost entirely covered his eyes, which were still full of lively intelligence. Old soldiers are generally easy to recognize. There was in him nothing that could explain this title of colonel.

"I have been fifty-two years in business," said he, with dignity, "without counting the affairs in Italy in the good time. Justice has only once tried to quarrel with me, and even then she put her foot in it! The bars may have been filed through by any one—all this is childishness."

"Lambert knew all the machinery," said M. Lecoq, in a low voice.

The old man's eyelids were now closed completely.

"All the machinery has already been sold to the judges more than once," replied he. "The judges won't believe in it. The code is a tool of which they think they possess the monopoly. And after all, if this man disturbs us, he is already dead once."

This was said with some impatience.

"Have I understood you?" inquired M. Lecoq, after a silence. "You said, 'The man is already dead once.'"

"Who would trouble themselves about his disappearance? The decease of André Maynotte took place at Dives, and the papers registered it at the time."

"And there is a great difference, is there not, *patron*, between committing a murder and allowing nature to take its course? If nobody meddles in his business, this Maynotte is in his last sleep,—I'll answer for that."

The colonel began to pace the room with a hasty step.

"Schwartz is of the stuff with which great financiers are made," thought he aloud: "he is now my relative; he must have nothing to trouble him."

Then, suddenly stopping in front of M. Lecoq, he added,—

"Where is this Maynotte?"

"At my place."

"Sleeping? You said that, I think?"

"No; insensible."

"By what chance?"

In few words M. Lecoq described the scene at Saint-Roch. The

colonel took from the back of a chair a jacket of quilted silk, which he handed to Lecoq; the latter passed his arms through the sleeves.

"Schwartz must have nothing to trouble him again," repeated the old man. "I am more careful of those whom I hold without their knowing it, than of those who are with me. We hold Schwartz; he will be a great financier. I am keeping him for my last affair."

M. Lecoq, who was behind him, following like a *valet de chambre*, smiled quietly.

"Then you will enter upon another affair, *patron?*" murmured he.

"Did I say that?" growled the colonel, impatiently. "Let us go and look after your dead man."

As they proceeded towards the door, a slight sound was heard in the passage outside; M. Lecoq opened the door—the staircase was empty. In the vestibule, the old valet, with the air of a lay brother, came with his master's large-brimmed hat and his goloshes. In the yard there was now a coachman, who was throwing a pailful of water through the wheels of a handsome carriage. The tramp of horses was heard in the stables. The colonel and M. Lecoq went out on foot. Besides his goloshes, the colonel had an umbrella. About a minute after they had passed through the *porte-cochère*, a little whirlwind passed through the yard and dashed after them.

"Fanchette! Miss Fanchette!" cried the *concierge*.

The answer was,—

"I am taking grandpapa his eye-shade."

And, in fact, the laughing and rattling whirlwind was running after the colonel, waving a large shade of green silk, but at the turning from the Rue Therèse the whirlwind stopped. It is certain that an eye-shade, an umbrella, and goloshes, add to the respect which is due to old age. The colonel was well known in the quarter; the shopkeepers touched their caps to him as he passed. Miss Fanchette had put on a serious expression and followed at a distance, her eyes bent upon the ground. To the questioning glances of the shopkeepers she replied, modestly,—

"I am taking grandpapa his eye-shade."

The room of M. Lecoq was as he had left it; he had taken his key with him. A second half-hour had passed. André Maynotte, stretched upon the bed, had not moved. The colonel felt his pulse.

"He's a fine fellow!" muttered he; "the day I sold him that armlet in a lot of old iron, he said, 'With two weeks' work I will make it worth a thousand crowns.' . . . Poor devil!"

He let go André's arm, which fell like an inanimate thing, and said, with the childish smile of old age,—

"That was done in good style, that affair of the armlet! carefully got up, and well carried out, eh, L'Amitié?"

"There's no one to match you, *patron!*" replied M. Lecoq, with conviction. Then, in his turn feeling the pulse of André, "Do you think he'll get over it?"

"Not if he's left alone," returned the colonel, coldly.

There was a silence.

"How much time do you give him?" further inquired M. Lecoq.

The old man consulted a ponderous watch, which probably dated from the time of Louis XVI.

"The doctor called upon me this morning," said he, slowly, "and he takes his time about curing my asthma, the dear man! After he left me he took a post-chaise for Fontainebleau, whither M. Villèle had called him for his hooping-cough. . . . You will go to his house, L'Amitié; you will inquire for him. Make plenty of fuss, and even scandal. You will wait until he returns; then bring him here in all haste."

"It will be too late," murmured M. Lecoq, who had lost a little of his brilliant colour.

"Alas, yes!" quietly answered the colonel. "Now let us go."

"But," objected M. Lecoq, "the death will have to be registered."

"Well, you will have the doctor."

"But if the authorities . . ."

The colonel smiled pleasantly.

"When I am no longer here, my poor children, how will you manage?" said he. "You will stick in the mud at every step. Here you are in a pretty fix, eh, L'Amitié? Console yourself. Once more, I'll answer for everything; it will be my last affair."

Thus was decided the fate of André Maynotte.

They left the bedside, the colonel leaning on the arm of M. Lecoq. Suddenly the latter stopped, the colour left his cheeks, and he said,—

"Listen!"

A chair appeared to have been knocked over in the antechamber.

The long eyelids of the colonel twinkled as he exclaimed aloud, in an accent of charitable emotion,—

"Fetch the doctor, my good fellow, and at once! Heaven grant that it may yet be time!"

This was for listeners. M. Lecoq anxiously called out,—

"Who is there?"

A burst of laughter was the answer,—the same shrill laughter which we have already heard on the staircase at the Rue Therèse. Lecoq frowned; the colonel drew back a pace, and remained in open-mouthed astonishment.

The same name had sprung to their lips,—

"Fanchette!"

The door of the antechamber suddenly opened. The little girl was on the threshold, her eye bold and inquisitive, her head high, and expressive of playful impudence. Her glance was thrown rapidly round the room.

"Good papa," said she, with a singular mixture of sweetness and mockery, "it's the green eye-shade I have brought for you."

Then bounding into the room, she said, archly,—

"I have never seen anybody dead. . . . Dear papa, please show me the dead man, will you?"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LAST AFFAIR OF THE COLONEL.

The colonel was one of those men who are surprised at nothing. He had in his life braved all dangers, excepting, perhaps, those which are met upon the road to glory. Amongst an association of men coldly and wholly resolute, he was regarded with reason as the most resolute of all. This *sang-froid* had placed him at the head of a mysterious clan who lived by warfare, and who lived well.

But no one is perfect, says the proverb. This conqueror, whose hidden power held in check the police under the Restoration,—this legitimate successor of the great Coësre, of the King of Thunes, of the archduke of the slang fraternity, and of all the Pharaohs, who, since Clapin Trouille-fou, have governed the fantastic kingdom of Bohemia,—this sovereign, we say, this Pope of the religion of pillage, which has existed from the beginning, and which will exist till the beginning of the end,—this demi-god, strong in himself and in the immense association whose power was his, became weak as a child in presence of Miss Fanchette, a little girl of ten, to whom he was grandfather.

He turned towards M. Lecoq, and seeing him pale with fear and anger, he smiled with triumph.

"Eh, L'Amitié?" murmured he. "What a demon! Are there two like her in Paris?"

M. Lecoq shrugged his shoulders.

Fanchette looked from one to the other. Her large bold eyes shone strangely amid the paleness of her face.

"You stand aside," said she to Lecoq, "and let me see the dead man."

"You must not do so," began our commercial traveller.

"I will do so!" interrupted she.

And her little form was drawn up so stiffly, that the grandfather smiled with pride.

"What a demon!" repeated he.

"Stand aside!" for the second time commanded Miss Fanchette.

As Lecoq was in no hurry to obey, the child's eyes flashed, and her voice trembled as she said,—

"Grandfather is the master, and you—you are only the valet, L'Amitié. Stand aside, I say!"

At the same time she moved him aside with the gesture of a queen, and passed by.

Lecoq made a movement to retain her, but the colonel joined his hands, saying, with the *naïve* admiration of grandfathers,—

"Where will she lead us? Ah, what a demon! what a demon!"

The little woman was already in contemplation before death.

From her first look it might have been thought that the sight of the dead awakened within her some recollection. She considered him for some time in silence, but without any apparent emotion beyond surprise.

"It's funny!" said she at length. Then, explaining her thought, "It looks like those who sleep."

"Have you done, Fanchette?" inquired the colonel.

"No!" answered she. "Tell me, is he not then sleeping?"

"Yes, indeed, my darling," said the old man, whose voice was grave, in spite of himself; "only he will never wake again."

"Ah!" exclaimed she, "never again!"

Her head bent down upon her breast, about her forehead and in her eyes there were thoughts beyond her age, but her words were those of a child.

Involuntarily the two spectators of this scene followed upon her countenance the progress of her impressions.

"He was quite young," resumed she. "I think he must have been very handsome."

In this no symptom of sensibility was shown; it was simply an opinion she expressed. And yet the character of her physiognomy was changing. Her regard, less reckless, was expressive of vague reverie.

"Yes, yes," said the colonel, "the poor devil was a tolerably good-looking fellow."

She turned herself towards him; then she continued her examination.

"Let us go," insinuated M. Lecoq.

"Not yet," said she. "I did not imagine that death was like this."

"What sense she has for her age!" said the grandfather, with admiration.

"There are some white hairs amongst his black," resumed the little girl, with astonishment. "Do young people sometimes have grey hairs?"

"When they have had much sorrow . . ." began the colonel.

"Ah!" cried she, raising her head with a sudden impulse of anger. "Then some one has caused him much sorrow?"

"Come! come! my treasure," commanded the old man; "you have looked at him enough."

"No," replied Fanchette, firmly. "I have heard them say that people died of sorrow."

"What is all that to you?" objected M. Lecoq, who was getting more and more out of temper.

The enormous eyes of the child were fixed upon him.

"It is you who have caused him sorrow!" said she, in a low voice, and with a strange accent of menace.

Embarrassment began to be depicted on the countenance of the colonel.

Fanchette again turned her eyes towards the dead.

"I am sorry I came," murmured she, in a trembling voice. "I have never been so sad in my life."

"That's why you should leave at once!" exclaimed her two companions simultaneously.

"No . . . I don't wish to go . . . something keeps me . . . Are you quite sure, papa, that he could not be awakened?"

"What an idea!" exclaimed M. Lecoq.

And the old man answered, more calmly,—

"Quite certain, my little girl."

Fanchette sighed.

"If I were to try," thought she, aloud, "by hurting him very much —very much indeed?"

"You can't hurt a stone!" said M. Lecoq.

The little girl threw upon him a look of intense dislike, and inquired of her grandfather,—

"Is it true that dead people are like stone?"

"Just the same," replied the old man.

Fanchette took hold of André's arm. The contact gave her a shiver. Still she murmured,—

"No, it is not just the same! Stone is colder and harder."

A slight colour had come to her cheeks. She raised André's arm two or three times; the third time it escaped from her, and fell inertly on the coverlet. She shrank back several steps. Lecoq had just whispered in the colonel's ear,—

"If he were to awaken! . . ."

The colonel, the man whom you now see, had in his time moved mountains. In the gloomy kingdom where he reigned there is no favour, and nepotism is unknown. Each villain is estimated at his true value, and we shall some day know what was the true value of the BLACK COAT —this bandit disguised as a good citizen.

However this might be, and whatever he might do, the colonel was quite incapable of taking little Fanchette away against her will.

Thus it is in this world. Things which are microscopic are fitted against the most immense, and often gain the battle. The imperceptible straw causes the heavy anvil to burst in twain, and some vile insect of the deep will pierce the cuirass of a man-of-war, against which the cannon is ineffectual.

In the moral order of things who can deny that it is the same? The largest dramas are pinned together by the smallest chances, and royal tragedies have turned upon the pivot of some childish action.

As soon as Fanchette left the bedside, M. Lecoq and the colonel caught hold of her, saying,—

"This is the consequence of touching dead people!"

They led her towards the door. Fanchette let them do so without saying a word. The long lashes of her eyes veiled the troubled expression of her countenance. No one would have guessed what reflections were passing in that little head, which had never until then had a thought save of mischief or caprice.

When at a few steps from the threshold she stopped, and pushed away the hand of M. Lecoq.

"Go away!" exclaimed she; "I detest you!"

And springing up to the colonel's neck, she cried,—

"Dear papa, good papa, I am sure that by beating him he might be awakened!"

"My dear little mad girl!" stammered the old man, moved by this caress.

For a kiss from her the colonel would have committed any extravagance.

She drew herself up to her full height, showing the bold and graceful outline of her little figure.

"I will just try!" declared she.

Lecoq and the colonel both made a movement to retain her, but she slipped through their hands like an eel. When they rejoined her by the bedside her whim was already satisfied. Once and again, with inconceivable violence, her little stiffened hand had convulsively struck the dead man upon the face.

The colonel arrived just in time to receive her in his arms, where she fell half fainting.

Upon the livid cheek of André Maynotte two blue marks were seen, showing twice over where the little fingers of Fanchette had struck.

She fixed her large saddened eyes upon these marks. The blood for a moment came into her face, only to leave it paler than before. Her tears were flowing plentifully, whilst her breast heaved with spasmodic sobs.

"I have hurt him! You see!" cried she, in a broken voice,—"you see, I have hurt him!"

Her two companions remained mute with astonishment. M. Lecoq caught hold of the colonel's arm. An imperceptible contraction had agitated the lips of André Maynotte.

It was time to bring this scene to a close. M. Lecoq took up Fanchette in his arms and sprang towards the door. From instinct Fanchette would have resisted, but she was powerless from emotion. M. Lecoq said to her,—

"You may detest me as much as you like, little girl, but I will not allow you to make yourself ill!"

The colonel approved, shaking his venerable white head. All this was plausible, and nothing in this paternal violence aroused Fanchette's mistrust. M. Lecoq had already reached the door when he felt her start, and the two hands of the child, who had regained her precocious energy, fastened on to the doorpost.

"He moves!" cried she, already mad with joy; "he moves! he is no longer dead! I knew very well I should wake him!"

M. Lecoq turned. He set down Fanchette somewhat roughly upon the floor, and folded his arms as he looked towards the colonel.

"Here's a pretty job!" said he.

André was now beginning to move upon the bed. The two marks left by Fanchette's fingers were now depicted in white upon his cheek, to which the blood was slowly returning. The colonel threw towards M. Lecoq a glance which was worth many long phrases; then calling to his docile physiognomy an air of profound satisfaction, he exclaimed,—

"A doctor, L'Amitié, immediately! Childhood often has these inspirations! Our little Fanchette has worked a miracle!"

Fanchette laughed and cried.

"Is he going to speak?" asked she.

Then, in her wild triumph, she repeated,—

"Oh, I knew very well! I knew very well!"

Suddenly, off she started like an arrow.

"Follow her!" commanded the colonel.

"Let her go to the devil!" growled Lecoq. "Where is all this going to lead us?"

The eyes of André Maynotte were struggling to open. The colonel put his finger to his lip, and approached the bed. If André could then have raised his eyelids, he would have seen an apostle standing by his bed. But this comedy would have been premature. André was to be longer than this in awakening.

"L'Amitié," said the colonel, in a cold and imperious tone, when he had ascertained André's condition, "things have here become beyond your competence. The business becomes difficult, and consequently concerns myself. It will be my last affair. I will humour my little Fanchette; what a treasure she is! On reflection, L'Amitié, this man might some day be useful to us. If M. Schwartz was to gain too many millions, and if he grew too powerful . . . ."

"Has he spoken yet?" cried Fanchette, who bounded, quite red with running, into the middle of the room.

The colonel was leaning over the bed as though occupied in tending the sick man. Fanchette sprang to his neck.

"I have sent for a doctor," said she, "no matter which, and I've been to get a carriage."

"What a child!" exclaimed the grandfather.

"And why a carriage?" sharply inquired M. Lecoq.

"Because he belongs to me," replied Fanchette, in a peremptory tone; "because, without me, he would still be dead; because I love him . . . as much as I detest you,—do you hear, L'Amitié? . . . because he is coming home with us, is he not, papa? and I mean to give him all I can to amuse him."

"Everything is taking place for the best," said M. Lecoq, with a sneering laugh.

And the colonel exclaimed, with admiration,—

"There are not two children like her in the universe."

André Maynotte was transported to the hotel in the Rue Therèse, and tended by the celebrated doctor who was treating M. de Villèle. Fanchette watched over him for three days like a grown-up person. During these three days she left off playing, and did not once abuse M. Lecoq.

It was only on the evening of the third day that André Maynotte recovered his speech. He had been in serious danger of death. By the head of his bed was seated an old man of austere and patriarchal physiognomy. On the knees of the old man was leaning the pale face of a child, strangely beautiful amidst a forest of bushy hair, with its curiously large eyes fixed upon André.

The latter endeavoured to speak. The child placed her small hand upon his mouth, and said,—

"Not yet."

The doctor came to see him. He was going to the Tuileries, and wore his crosses. André thought he was dreaming.

He was dreaming, in fact, for the consciousness of his sorrow was not in him. A veil was upon his memory.

The following morning André wept. They were obliged to take Fanchette away, for she wept louder than he did. The old man with the patriarchal air said to him, with the utmost simplicity,—

"My son, you are here among good people. It is three times twenty-four hours since we took you, fainting, from the church of Saint-Roch. We have acted to the best of our ability."

André was two weeks before he could rise. His host inspired him with a gratitude mingled with veneration, and the light-hearted Fanchette often made him smile. Fanchette and he had long interviews together; there seemed to be some mutual recollection between them; but Fanchette, in spite of her age, knew how to keep a secret.

During his stay at the hotel in the Rue Saint-Therèse, André did not once see M. Lecoq. The latter called every morning and evening, but he was received in the colonel's private room.

Many things remained still vague in André's mind, for it had been like a blow with a club that had struck his head and his heart. At times his passion for retribution again awakened within him. It seemed then to seek for something hidden beneath the calm expressed in the venerable countenance of his host.

At the end of a month he spoke of his departure.

"I thank you," he said to the old man, "for your generous and noble hospitality. You have not asked who I am."

"I know," interrupted the colonel, with his benevolent smile. André's eyes fell.

The colonel resumed gently,—

"Your wife is not guilty; she was deceived."

"Who told you so?"

"Herself. I am a friend and connection of her family. I helped in bringing about the marriage. It was thought you were dead. And perhaps it would have been better for her if it had been so."

"It is true," interrupted André. "It would have been better."

The colonel offered him his hand.

"Listen, Monsieur Maynotte," resumed he; "I am a very old man. A fatality has stricken you; you belong to the law, but the life and the honour of Madame Schwartz are in your hands."

"Madame Schwartz!" repeated André, with a low moan.

"That is in future her name. And it is this name alone which shields her from the law, which holds you both."

"This man—M. Schwartz, does he know . . . ?" said André painfully, in a low tone.

"No," replied the old man. "He must never know."

"And she . . . in regard to me . . . has she been told?"

The colonel again answered, but in an accent which expressed his painful sympathy,—

"No."

Then he added,—

"What purpose would it serve? What is done is done."

"Is she happy?" stammered André, in a voice full of tears.

"Yes," replied the old man, solemnly.

The night was falling when André made up his little parcel. Fanchette threw herself upon his neck and said,—

"My dear friend, would you like me to go with you?"

As he repulsed her, smiling, she added,—

"I shall be rich, very rich, and beautiful too, when I am big. Don't marry; I will be your wife, and we will revenge ourselves upon our enemies."

Her large eyes were sparkling beneath her tears.

At nine o'clock that evening André left the house without her knowing it. He had accepted a small sum from his host by way of loan.

M. Lecoq and the colonel, from behind the blinds of the private room of the latter, were watching him across the yard.

André bought a poniard knife, and made his way to the Place Louvois, where the newly married couple lived. He had previously made some inquiries. The Place Louvois was then encumbered with the

materials intended for the expiatory monument to the Duc de Berry. The legs of André were sinking under him; he sat down upon a large stone in front of the house of J. B. Schwartz.

And he waited. He had no idea of murder, of this we feel certain, and yet an instinct of vengeance had led him to purchase the knife.

He had left the house in the Rue Therèse with the intention of taking the evening diligence to Caen, but other thoughts now occupied his mind.

He waited. A dull, heavy pain had numbed his heart.

He knew the story on which the Schwartzes lived. His eyes remained fixed upon the windows of the second floor, where no light was visible.

The Schwartzes! the name now belonged to two—the man and the woman. People used to say the Maynottes.

It was a fine night. Towards midnight a man and a woman turned the angle of the Rue Richelieu. They were both young, and had a certain elegance which is not often found in Paris on foot at night-time.

A pain struck André's heart. He clutched the handle of his poniard knife.

The young woman spoke. André let go the knife to join his two trembling hands.

He tried to rise, but remained as though made of stone.

The couple passed without seeing André. Julia was talking as of old; so had she spoken when she and André, a loving couple too, traversed the Place des Acacias on their return home. It was the same voice, soft and penetrating; perhaps they were also the same words.

The *porte-cochère* opened, and closed again. André was alone.

He fell upon his knees, moaning with rage and anguish, "Julia! Julia!"

As though in answer to his cry of agony, the windows of the second floor were lit up. A graceful shadow was thrown upon the muslin curtain. Julia's bonnet had been thrown off, the massy tresses had fallen about her neck.

Then another shadow was seen, and the muslin grouped the two silhouettes in a long kiss.

The hands of André were tearing his breast.

When the light was extinguished a groan escaped him, a groan which shaped itself into the name of Julia.

For a moment the hope struck him that he might then die. He sank down, and remained with his face upon the ground, like a corpse.

In the early morning a charitable passer by shook him with his foot to awaken him, muttering as he left,—

"Drunk, of course! To think that a man should thus degrade himself!"

André left the Place Louvois without turning to look upon the accursed house.

His first steps were staggering, then he gathered up his strength, and

no one could then take him for a drunken man. He took the direction of the Rue Saint-Honoré; the doors of the church of Saint-Roch were being opened; he was the first to cross the threshold.

He entered the same aisle through which, one month previously, he had reached the chapel of the Virgin. As he passed by the great altar, he started as he recognized the place where he had seen the two, but he did not stop.

He paused only at the place whence he had previously addressed himself to God.

He fixed his eyes upon the crucifix, and said within himself,—

"Men have struck me while innocent; God has crushed me in the hour when I fulfilled His law of pardon. What remains of my heart belongs to the child without a mother, but what remains of my strength belongs to vengeance. I no longer hope, I no longer believe. The child shall be rich through me; through me the assassin of my peace shall be punished. I swear it."

André left Paris that day.

Two days after, at dusk, a man entered the dwelling of Madeleine, the nurse, and took away the child of Julia Maynotte.

André crossed the Channel at the close of the same week, and made his way to London, the city of freedom. There he was quite sure he would not be molested.

André thought that in London a skilful workman might make a fortune. To accomplish the project which thenceforth was the object of his life, money was needed. André began to work earnestly.

At the end of the month he had obtained the position of foreman in one of the first workshops in the vicinity of the Strand. All was going on well. One day, as he crossed the street, he thought he recognized, behind the closed windows of a carriage, the venerable head of the colonel and the large sparkling eyes of Miss Fanchette.

The day after, as he returned to his home, a constable arrested him on his own doorstep.

A robbery had, on the previous night, been committed at the shop of the gunsmith in the Strand, his employer. In reply to his protestations of innocence, the inspector said laughingly,—

"I'd give a guinea to know something about you Black Coats; and especially about that affair of yours at Caen over there. You were recommended to us, my man, by a rich French gentleman, who carries the influence of the foreign office in his pocket, and we've heard of your talent."

Search having been made at the humble lodging of André, four pairs of pistols, of the most expensive description, were found between the mattresses of his bed.

The colonel had concluded his last affair.

"You're a clever scoundrel!" said the inspector of police. "Before you're transported or hung, you'll perhaps have time to tell us the history of the steel armlet!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE "EAGLE OF MEAUX, NO. 2."

BEHIND the cathedral of Saint-Denis, the great feature which constitutes the whole physiognomy of the plain, the tumultuous clouds were massing together to form that bed of gold, purple, and emerald, into which declines our setting sun. This gorgeous brocade gave to the sky towards the south-east a strange and false glare, the bold splendour of which framed the profiles of Montmartre. In the distance Paris was already enveloped in a milky vapour, above which towered the dome of the Pantheon.

Northwards the landscape is flat and marshy, with long avenues of melancholy-looking elms. Here and there, amid the sere and yellow leaves of autumn, was seen a village spire; here and there the black smoke from the chimney of a factory floated in the air. Thus appeared our scene; to the right, the mournful dulness of the chalk hills of Noisy; to the left, the avenue of Aubervilliers; and between them, as far as the eye could reach, the dark line of the forest of Bondy closing the horizon.

It was the last Sunday in the month of September of the year 1842. The day was hot, but the two banks of the Canal de l'Ourcq, wetted by a recent shower, were shining in the oblique rays of the sun. The north-west wind carried towards the heights of Romainville the insidious perfumes from Pantin; and the station of Bondy, without quite enjoying the open air of the country, was consequeutly half removed from the deleterious influence of Paris.

I have said the station of Bondy, not because there was then a railroad in these quarters, but because, from La Villette to Meaux, the traffic of *bateaux-poste* passenger boats drawn by horses had just been organized, exciting the most exaggerated hopes on the two banks of the Ourcq Canal, which seriously aspired to become a great river. Of all the industrial enterprises that we have seen flourishing and falling during the last twenty years, this was the most delightful; only it came rather late, and the terrible competition of steam-power nipped it in the bud; this is why the Ourcq Canal has remained a navigable water of less importance than the Danube.

Six o'clock p.m. was heavily striking from the clock turret of Bondy; the *Eagle of Meaux, No.* 2, was being drawn between the grassy banks of the canal, at fifty paces from the fiery steeds harnessed to its prow. On the banks were very many persons, attracted by curiosity, to see it pass; but, alas! its deck was almost deserted. The *captain,* clothed in a gallant and warlike uniform, had thrice, with sadness, counted his passengers. His thoughts were not *couleur de rose,* nor must one be surprised that his pre-occupation prevented him from answering one of the travellers who had inquired at what distance they then were from the *château* of Boisrenaud.

This traveller was not, it must be admitted, of an imposing presence, or elegant in his attire. He might perhaps have attracted the attention of an observer; but the faculty of observation is not usually very strongly developed in the captains of vessels travelling up and down the canal. He was a man of about thirty, of medium height, spare in the upper portion of his body, but possessing an admirable pair of calves, of which he appeared somewhat ostentatiously proud. His mild physiognomy was mainly expressive of placid self-satisfaction. In spite of the heat he wore a paletot of sealskin, of a light shade, shabby at the elbows, and considerably too small for him; a black stock, so high and stiff that his somewhat flabby cheeks hung down on each side of it; an invisible shirt; and black trousers falling into a pair of list slippers. On his head, covered with light-coloured hair, was perched an old grey hat, which shadowed the smile of his long and flat features. He held himself erect, and smiled discreetly to the ladies.

For there were some ladies,—amongst others a very beautiful young girl, who looked ill, and whose mien was timid and proud. She had just put down her black lace veil, owing to the obtrusive attentions of two young snobs belonging to the rising generation of Pantin. She was reading, or perhaps thinking whilst pretending to read, under her veil; her toilet, of extreme simplicity, was not far from indicating poverty, and yet everything about her, from her little feet to her taper fingers, betrayed, in spite of the shabbiness of her attire, such a *cachet* of distinction, that a Parisian lovelace would have hesitated to address her; the provincial Don Juan alone, hardened to contempt, exhibits his impudence at random.

Her light-blue eyes, fringed with dark lashes which contrasted with the rich brightness of her auburn hair, were half raised when our traveller with the old grey hat mentioned the *château* of Boisrenaud, and on her lashes something was glistening which looked like tears.

"Conductor," repeated the grey hat, again addressing the daring navigator, upon whom depended the destinies of the *Eagle of Meaux, No. 2*, "I have had the advantage of inquiring whether we are still very far from the château of M. Schwartz!"

I think it was Bossuet, the Eagle of Meaux, No. 1, who first translated into French the astonishment of the Roman poet, when admiring the triple brass with which was invested the soul of the first inventor of navigation. M. Pattu, the captain, accustomed to look calmly upon the tempests of the Ourcq Canal, was wounded to the quick by this expression—Conductor.

"Whom do you think you are speaking to, man?" answered he, haughtily.

The grey hat answered, with that courteous dignity with which the refined man of honour commences a quarrel,—

"I am not proud, but I insist upon the expletive 'Monsieur' before my name of Similor, having paid ready money for my place here at the office!"

The captain shrugged his shoulders, turned his back, and lit a cigar previously to recommencing his walk up and down the deck. M. Similor followed him; he raised his grey hat, showing a forehead upon which his hair seemed to be glued by the weight of a handkerchief which, deserting a pocket already too full, or too full of holes, had taken refuge in the fixture above—a habit of the savage or the soldier, originating in the double fact that the savage has no one to salute, and that the soldier salutes without uncovering.

"Conductor," said M. Similor, this time with an exaggerated politeness, "though more specially versed in the Terpsichorean art, we have also in our leisure moments cultivated the art of fence; we offer you therefore a thrashing, inasmuch as we are dissatisfied with your gross behaviour towards an artist like ourselves."

The first movement of the captain was a quick gesture, which showed that he was not deficient in courage. He was vigorous and well-formed. The consciousness of the high position he occupied on board the *Eagle of Meaux, No.* 2, alone restrained him.

"Fellow," replied he, lowering his voice, "my passengers are beginning to open their eyes; let us have no scandal. You have sought to degrade an officer to the rank of conductor; this requires explanation at a proper time and place. You will find me, alternately, every other day, at Meaux or at Paris, at the seat of the administration: or in the evening at the hotel of the 'Swan with the Cross,' at Meaux; and in Paris, at the *estaminet* behind the Galiotte on the Boulevard du Temple."

"Very good, conductor, we quite understand!" gravely said Similor, replacing his hat upon his head. "You shall have your account paid promptly with four per cent. interest!"

"It will be daylight to-morrow!" muttered the captain, in reply to this last menace.

These simple words appeared to produce a wonderful effect upon M. Similor; he grew pale, and then the blood rushed to his cheeks; the aggravating expression of his countenance was replaced by astonishment mingled with terror, and his eyes, bordered with colourless lashes, began to work as though he was suffering from the effects of a sunstroke. He tried to speak, but in vain; he attempted to follow the captain, but his list slippers were riveted to the deck. He was thunderstruck.

Every one may have read those interesting stories, in which there are words which constitute a talisman. Great revolutions have been accomplished by the aid of certain cabalistic expressions, serving to rally together conspirators who were unknown to each other. Such means are very ancient, but the conspirators of our era have not employed their intelligence in inventing new contrivances. In the century of the electric telegraph, our nocturnal fraternities sometimes borrow their programme from the antique mysteries of Isis.

It was a very simple sentence which had made M. Similor turn pale

and then red,—*It will be daylight to-morrow!* With us, at all times, conspiracies are being carried on. In 1842 there were a great many conspiracies, and the month of May had seen some barricades. These words were somewhat similar to those, insignificant in appearance, but terrible in their hidden meaning, which sometimes sound louder than the tocsin in the hour of struggle.

M. Similor in his tattered attire, the captain Patu in his livery, had not the appearance of men interested in politics, but in these matters we should not trust to appearances.

"He is in it!" was the first thought of the man with the grey hat, who added to himself with a shudder, "To think one should not be able to take a step in Paris without tumbling across some one who is in it!"

M. Similor had been a dancing-master at the Barrière d'Italie; he had neither chosen his pupils amongst princes nor amongst bankers; his customers were from the regiment or the workshop—he had not made his fortune. Gifted with an ambitious spirit, Similor had laid aside his art in order to give his attention to business. It would be at present impossible exactly to define what Similor understood by "business," but certain it is that his anticipations were great, and that he aimed at unlimited credit at the Restaurant du Gran Vainqueur, with three hundred francs to pay his rent with, and pocket-money to frequent the balcony of the Théâtre Montparnasse. Such aspirations may lead anywhere, and we can no longer be answerable for Similor.

The most profound mystery enveloped his birth; his name resembled a nickname—he cherished a secret hope of rendering it famous. But in what manner? The memoirs of the period are mute upon this point; we can only say that he belonged, by his talents, to that realistic school so elevated in art; but which, beyond the sphere of art, distributes return checks at the theatre, or for an optional and modest salary complaisantly lowers the steps of the carriages. He was not an idle man, for sometimes he would hand to the passers by the prospectus of an eating-house; and sometimes he would, at night-time, tear down from the walls of Paris the old placards of the theatres. He had been known also to watch for Englishmen in the yard of the diligences, in order to show them their way about Paris. Gradually, however, he had withdrawn from this laborious existence. A mystery was growing around him; he was still working, but at what? Another secret! A profound secret, even for Eschalot.

Such was the name of the faithful and devoted friend who was now affording him an asylum—for Similor had sold even his bed in order to shine in the world. Eschalot, naturally more steady than himself, had at least some social position; he kept a *general agency*, on the sixth floor of a house in the Square of St. Martin, and was making, but in vain, every effort to obtain respectability. For several days past, Eschalot had had some suspicions in regard to Similor. The latter was continually absent-

ing himself for long periods of time, and leaving Saladin to the care of his friend. Eventually we shall know who this Saladin was. When Similor was questioned, his answers, skilfully evasive, showed only that immense interests were dependent upon his discretion.

"I am in it!" he used to say, with an emphasis which increased the feverish curiosity of Eschalot; and when pressed, he added mysteriously, "I have sworn that I would cut off my tongue sooner than reveal the secret!"

In the middle of a group of passengers, small tradesmen from Meaux, and country people belonging to the villages upon the way, a well-dressed personage held the thread of the conversation, which had turned upon this château of Boisrenaud. This personage, small, but gifted with a majestic countenance, which was further embellished by a pair of gold spectacles, was talking with that happy abundance of expression which is acquired at the bar, listening to himself in a variety of elegant attitudes, and walking about with his shoes creaking at every step, like a halfpenny rabbit.

"It happens that I am just going to dine at the château," said he; "the baron and myself are old friends, and I am in the habit of giving him my Sunday evenings. He has not always rolled in riches, the good man."

"They say that he filched his first hundred thousand francs from the devil!" interrupted a native of Vaujours, jealous at once of the baron's millions and of the familiar eloquence of the well-dressed passenger.

"They say this and that," replied the latter.

"This what and that what?" inquired sharply the native.

"This and that, Monsieur, I repeat. There is a curious fact which sometimes astonishes the vulgar. I have myself had the honour of belonging to deliberative assemblies. With a thousand francs, understand, with a thousand pieces of twenty sous, M. Schwartz gained at Paris, in fifteen months, four hundred thousand francs."

"Absurd!" said the native, flatly.

"Allow me . . . if you are acquainted with the art of handling figures . . . ."

"I am acquainted with honest commerce!"

"Allow me! You are speaking to an ancient deputy—M. Cotentin de la Lourdeville—and you are speaking of a capitalist who now possesses more than twenty millions—"

"On paper!" said the native, insolently.

"More than twenty millions of francs sterling, as secure as the towers of Notre Dame. Will you allow me to explain?"

"The gain of four hundred thousands for one in fifteen months?"

"It's as simple as A B C. Only take the trouble to listen."

M. Cotentin de la Lourdeville took a step, and creaked his shoes. An attentive audience surrounded him.

"To make a fortune at Paris," resumed he, "this and that—and

then that, are necessary. In 1825—I remember the date, because in that epoch I pleaded in the Maynotte affair, and I should have gained the day if it had not been that the accused was a simpleton of the first water,—in 1825 M. Schwartz arrived at Paris with a thousand francs. Do you know the market-place of the *Halles?* I suppose you know the *Halles?* This is only an oratorical form. M. Schwartz had his idea. In the Rue de la Ferronnerie he took a room at eighty francs *per annum*. You follow me? There was at the *Halles* an old Schwartz, who lent out money by the week. Our M. Schwartz also lent out his money in sums of five francs.

"What a speculation, gentlemen, if it was only understood! But one must hold tightly, and look after both seed and harvest! Five francs lent on Monday,—six francs returned on Sunday. There's the element. M. Schwartz converted his garret into an office. Here let us avail ourselves of a few figures. His thousand francs, lent out even to the last *sou*, became, at the permissive legal rate of interest, one thousand four hundred francs on the first Sunday; the second Sunday, his thousand four hundred francs had grown to one thousand four huudred and forty francs; the third, he had one thousand seven hundred and twenty-eight francs; the fourth, two thousand and seventy-three francs and a half. . . . Do you allow that? Yes. There is no doubting the figures. We will neglect, if you please, the seventy-three francs and a half, for expenses, losses, &c. The principle is this: capital doubled in twenty-eight days. Well, in round numbers, say a month. . . . I would rather concede this and that than be taxed with exaggeration. Do you follow me? Four thousand francs at the end of the second month, is it not? eight thousand francs the third, sixteen thousand the fourth, thirty-two thousand the fifth, sixty-four thousand the sixth, one hundred and twenty-eight thousand the seventh, two hundred and fifty-six thousand the eighth, five hundred and twelve thousand francs the ninth. . . . You will observe that we have already passed the mark."

The native was going to protest.

"Allow me!" cried Cotentin de la Lourdeville. "At the fifteenth month, by following this geometrical progression, we shall obtain thirty-two millions seven hundred and sixty-eight thousand francs, which is an agreeable result. I anticipate your objections; nay, I approve them. We must not reckon without our host. There is this and that. Besides, beyond a certain figure, it would be difficult to find, in the environs of the Halles, two or three millions of people to borrow five francs a week. This is the rock upon which we at length split. And thus, after fifteen months, M. Schwartz, when he got married, had as yet but four hundred thousand francs, that is to say the eighty-second part of what he would have had according to our calculation. And yet many people would accuse him of having found something that was not lost, in order to make up this amount."

Whilst the audience in general had been laughing or wondering, Similor had been eagerly following these revelations. For a long time he had been seeking the means of thus rapidly making money. He was just going politely to address M. Cotentin de la Lourdeville, in order to ask him where the first thousand francs were to be obtained, when a singular kind of equipage, travelling at a trot along the bank of the canal, suddenly attracted the attention of the passengers. It was a kind of basket, mounted upon two small wheels, and drawn by an old mastiff.

The automaton belonging to this car was a stout fellow with a light tawny beard, whose costume resembled that of a commissionaire.

In the twinkling of an eye all the passengers were at the side of the boat, looking, and repeating,—

"Three Pegs! There goes Three Pegs in his carriage!"

"Three Pegs, the cripple of the yard of Plat d'Etain!"

"It's Sunday: he is going to dine with his banker!"

"It's Sunday: he is going to sup with his sweetheart!"

"The Baron Schwartz . . ."

"The Countess Corona . . ."

"Good day, Three Pegs!"

"Hie there! beggar!"

Thus exclaimed the shopwomen from the Sevran and the rising generation of Vert-Galant. Similor alone, we say it to his praise, raised his old grey hat, and said, courteously,—

"I salute you, Monsieur Mathieu!"

"Good day to you!"

Monsieur Mathieu, or Three Pegs, whichever we choose to call him, did not even turn his head.

Only when the boat had passed him did his contemptuous glance scan the deck. The sight of the beautiful young girl in her pensive sadness softened the expression of his features, and he smiled.

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ONLY A CLOD

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CHAPTER XVII.

SOMETHING LIKE FRIENDSHIP.

MAUDE HILLARY did not rise very early after that New Year's entertainment at the Cedars; painful emotions, troubles, doubts, and perplexities, that had been unknown to her through all her previous lifetime, had crowded suddenly upon her within the last few weeks, and it was scarcely strange if she well-nigh fainted under the burden. She slept for some hours on that first night of the year,—slept the feverish, heavy slumber that waits upon trouble of mind and exhaustion of body. The winter sun shone with a chill brightness between the rose-coloured draperies of her window when she awoke from a painful dream to a dim sense of actual trouble, that was still more painful. She remembered the scene of the previous night, her own desperate appeal for help, Francis Tredethlyn's avowal, and Julia's indignation. She remembered all this with a burning sense of shame, and with a tender and pitying regret for Julia's wrongs.

"And he did not love her!" she thought, "when I fancied they were so happy and united, so much what lovers ought to be; it was all false after all, and he had deceived her. But why? What motive could he have for doing her so great a wrong?"

Miss Hillary pondered upon this mystery while she dressed,—unaided this morning, for she did not care to endure her maid's sympathetic remarks upon her pale face and heavy eyes; unaided, for how soon that pretty Twickenham paradise, with all its dependencies, might pass away from her, unsubstantial as the fairy palace in which Princess Balroubadour floated away to Africa. Maude put on her plainest morning dress and

went straight to Julia's room, intending to make her peace with that young lady, at any cost of self-humiliation. No base thought of Julia's obligations, no remembrance of the favours that had been heaped upon the Irish girl in that hospitable habitation, had any place in Maude Hillary's mind. She thought of her friend as tenderly as she might have thought of an only sister, and she remembered nothing except the great wrong that had been done to Julia by the defection of her lover. The breach between them was not to be narrowed. When Maude entered her friend's bedroom, she only found an empty and desolate-looking apartment, in which open wardrobes and drawers, and a dressing-table cleared of all its pretty frivolities, bore witness to the angry Julia's departure.

Miss Hillary's maid came running along the corridor, while her mistress stood amazed in Miss Desmond's deserted chamber.

"Oh, Miss," cried the girl, "to think as you should get up and dress yourself without a bit of help, while I've been waiting and listening for the bell these last two hours! Miss Desmond, she have gone, Miss, above an hour ago, and have took all her boxes in a fly to the station, but wouldn't have none of the servants to go with her; and oh, Miss, she looked as white as that toilet cover."

This was all Maude could hear of her sometime friend's abrupt departure from that pleasant dwelling-place in which she had enjoyed such a luxurious home. This was all that the servants could tell their young mistress about the splendid Julia; but in the study, where the scene of the previous night had been enacted, Maude found a letter directed to herself, in Miss Desmond's handwriting. It was a very brief missive; almost such a one as an English Elizabeth, or a Russian Catherine, might have written.

"For your father's hospitality," wrote Miss Desmond, "I shall always remain grateful, and shall be sorry to hear of any evil that may befall him. The debt I owe to *you* I shall also know how to remember, and shall wait the time and opportunity for its repayment.—J. D."

Maude sat for some time musing sorrowfully upon this oracular epistle. She was not in any wise terrified by her friend's threats; she was only sorry for Julia's disappointment.

"She must have loved Francis Tredethlyn very dearly," Miss Hillary thought, sorrowfully, "or she would never feel his conduct so deeply. And yet I have often fancied that she spoke of him coldly, almost contemptuously."

Poor Maude Hillary's lessons in the mysteries of every-day life had only just begun; she had yet to learn that there are other disappointments than those which wait upon true love, other pains and sorrows than those which have their root in the heart, and that there are such things as marrying and giving in marriage for the love of thirty thousand a year.

She spent a weary day in the pleasant drawing-room, where the red glow of a great fire illuminated as much prettiness in the way of china, and Parian,

and bronze, and ormolu, and enamel, as would have stocked a *bric-à-brac* shop in Wardour Street. She spent a tiresome day, that seemed interminably long, lying on a low sofa near the fire, thinking of her father's troubles and Julia's desertion. She thought also of that cruel scene, in which she had seemed to play so contemptible a part. What bitter humiliation it was to look back upon, now that the mad impulse of the moment, the desperate courage that had made her snatch at *any* chance of help for her father, had altogether passed away! How mean and pitiful the whole business seemed now to her calmer judgment, looked upon in the cold light of common sense! A borrower, a beggar almost, a miserable suppliant to her friend's affianced husband. What wonder that Francis Tredethlyn had basely taken advantage of that false position, to avow a passion whose least expression was an insult to her on the lips of Julia Desmond's lover? And then what wasted humiliation, what unnecessary shame; for had not she turned upon him and upbraided him in the next moment, forgetful of her father's desperate need!

Such thoughts as these were scarcely pleasant company all through that brief January day, which seemed so long to Maude Hillary. The slow hours crept on, and she still lay tossing restlessly on the sofa, which offered all that upholstery can offer for the consolation of a troubled mind. A servant brought lamps, and crept from window to window, drawing the curtains as stealthily as a burglar would have cut a square out of the iron door of Mr. Hillary's plate-room. The first dinner-bell rang out in the old-fashioned cupola upon the roof, and informed all Twickenham that it was time for the people at the Cedars to array themselves for the evening meal: but Maude still lay upon the sofa, hiding her flushed face in the pillows, and trying to quiet the throbbing in her burning head. What did it matter? The poor inexperienced girl broke down all at once in her social comedy. She could act the wearisome play no longer; she wanted to give up all her share in this world, and to go to bed and lie there quietly until she died. All the common business of life seemed unutterably loathsome to her,—the dressing and dining, the simpering small-talk, the finery of a grand house no longer honestly maintained. Oh that it could all be swept away like the vision engendered out of some troubled slumber; giving place to a suburban cottage and a life of decent toil!

"I have seen girls—well-bred, good-looking girls, trudging in the muddy London streets, with music portfolios in their arms, while I have been out shopping in my carriage," she thought. "Oh, if I could only be like one of these, and work for papa, and see him happy, smiling at me across our little table as I gave him his dinner, and not brooding as he does now, hour after hour, hour after hour, in this grand drawing-room, with the same settled look of trouble on his face."

It was not only of late that Maude had watched her father anxiously and sadly. Very often during the year just past, and even in the year preceding that, the girl had been alarmed by Lionel Hillary's moody

looks and long gloomy reveries, out of which it was his wont to rouse himself in a mechanical kind of way when strangers were present. But the merchant always gave the same explanation of his sombre looks. Those headaches, those constitutional headaches, which came upon him constantly through the fatigue and worry of business—those terrible headaches made an excuse for everything, and Maude's fears about her father related solely to his health. How should she understand the dismal diagnosis of commercial disease? How should she imagine that there was any limit to the fairy purse of Fortunatus, any chance of a blight in Aladdin's orchard of jewelled fruits?

The second dinner-bell rang, and there was no sign of the merchant's return. It had been a common thing lately for Lionel Hillary to keep his cook in a fever of vexation over the hot plates and furnaces, where the viands for the diurnal banquet simmered and frizzled in their copper receptacles. Maude felt no special alarm about her father. Why should he hurry home to lengthen the long evening of brooding thought and care? Why should she wish him home; when, out of all the depth of her love and devotion, she could not conjure one word of comfort wherewith to greet him?

She was thinking this, when the door was opened suddenly by an eager hand, and Mr. Hillary came into the room.

His daughter rose from the sofa, startled by the suddenness of his entrance. It is a small action, that of opening a door and entering a room; but there was as great a change in Mr. Hillary's performance of it as if twenty years had suddenly been lifted from his life.

"My darling!" he cried, taking his daughter in his arms, "it is you whom I have to thank. It was your doing, was it not?"

"What, papa?"

"The money—the twenty thousand pounds."

"Twenty thousand pounds!"

She thought the burning pain in her head had engendered some sudden delirium. She could not believe that this was her father's face, lighted by a hopeful smile, such as she had not seen upon it during the last three years.

"What twenty thousand pounds, papa?"

"The sum that has been placed to my credit to-day, anonymously. The bank people refused to tell me the name of my benefactor. I look to you, Maude, to solve the mystery. There is only one man whom I know of, rich enough to advance such a sum of money—young enough to do it in so Utopian a manner. There is only one man, Maude, and his name is Francis Tredethlyn. Tell me, my dear, have I guessed rightly?"

"You have, papa. Yes, I am sure you have. Poor fellow! and I was so angry with him last night. It was very good of him to do this, papa."

"Good of him!" cried the merchant,—"good of him to lend twenty

thousand pounds, without a halfpenny worth of security! Upon my word, Maude, it *is* good; and I can assure you it's a kind of goodness that is very uncommon in the City."

CHAPTER XVIII.

POOR FRANCIS.

FROM the second day of the new year things went pleasantly enough in the Twickenham household. How could Maude do otherwise than rejoice in the salvation of her father's honour—to say nothing of his commercial prosperity,—even though that salvation had been obtained by a great humiliation upon her own part? She would have borne that humiliation very willingly, and would have freely acknowledged her obligation to Francis Tredethlyn, could she have seen Julia Desmond reconciled to her lover. But the separation between these two, which had arisen out of the scene on New Year's night, was a perpetual reproach to Maude Hillary.

She was not able to be quite happy, therefore, even though such a terrible burden had been lifted from her,—even though she saw the dark cloud swept away from her father's face. Her girlish frivolity had departed from her for ever on that terrible night in her father's study at Brighton; and there was a womanly softness, a pensive tenderness in her manner now, that made her even more bewitching than of old. Her affection for her father—always the ruling passion of her simple mind—had been intensified by that fiery ordeal through which she had so lately passed; and there was something very beautiful in the union which now existed between the father and daughter. Mr. Hillary had been surprised into confidences that made a new tie between himself and his child. He could never again entirely withhold his secrets from that tender friend and consoler. He could never again think of her as a beautiful, frivolous creature, only intended to wear expensive dresses and float about in graceful attitudes amongst the costly *bric-à-brac* of a fashionable drawing-room. He had learned to trust his child, and poor Maude applied herself diligently to the study of the customs and dealings common in that mysterious region known to her as the City. She tried to understand her father's position—for she was tormented by a feverish anxiety as to the repayment of Francis Tredethlyn's twenty thousand pounds; but the complications of an Australian merchant's trade, as affected by wars and rumours of wars, by alterations in the rate of discount and the price of Consols, were a little beyond Miss Hillary's comprehension, and she was fain to give up the attempt in despair, and to accept any statement which her father cared to make to her respecting the altered aspect of his affairs.

There was less company at the Cedars than usual during the bleak early months of the year. Mr. Hillary worked very sedulously in

the City during this time, and did not care to fill his house with frivolous young idlers or ponderous City-bred matrons and their fashionably-educated daughters. The recklessness engendered by the contemplation of inevitable ruin had given place to the careful dealing of a man who has a difficult but not impossible task allotted to him. You can scarcely expect the daughters of King Danaus to labour very arduously in the filling of those buckets which they *know* will not hold water; but if the buckets are only thin at the bottom, and *may* possibly carry their contents safely to the well, it is worth while to work conscientiously.

Francis Tredethlyn's twenty thousand pounds had done wonders for Lionel Hillary; but the dry-rot had been for a long time at work in that stately ship of which the merchant was captain, and the successful navigation of the vessel, amidst all the rocks and shoals and tempests of the commercial ocean, was by no means an easy duty.

But Mr. Hillary was sanguine, and his daughter saw the new hopefulness and brightness of his face, and was very nearly happy. She was not quite happy, for Harcourt Lowther's letters grew more despondent and complaining by every mail. He reproached Maude Hillary for her prosperity and her indifference; she must be indifferent, he argued, or she would have succeeded ere this in obtaining her father's consent to her marriage with the penniless officer. "There are girls who will go through fire and water for the man they love," he wrote, in an epistle that was half filled with fierce reproaches. "I have seen the power of a woman's devotion; but then *that* woman was only a poor simple creature, and not the daughter of a millionaire. I cannot believe that you could fail to influence your father, if you really cared to do so. If you loved me, Maude, this business would have been settled long ago."

Did she love him? That was a question which she had never set herself to answer. Had they not engaged themselves to each other in the prettiest and most sentimental fashion, like a modern Master of Ravenswood and Lucy Ashton? Maude took the fact of her love for granted. All the sweetest and tenderest dreams of her life were mingled with the memory of Harcourt Lowther. He was so superior to all the other men who had paid her their homage; and it may be that his contemptuous bearing towards those other men had been a part of the fascination of his manner. He had affected that modern Edgar Ravenswood tone—that elegant Timon of Athens-ism—which is so intensely charming in the eyes of a very young woman, however spurious it may be. And with all this, he had been so devoted, so delightfully exacting, so deliciously jealous! Maude looked back to the one sentimental period of her life, and saw Harcourt Lowther's image radiant in all the light of her own youthful fancies. So the worshipper in a village chapel sees some poor painted wooden figure of a saint, glorified by the glitter of tapers, the brightness of flowers and draperies and decorations. How was she to separate the lamps and the flowers about the shrine from the image which they

adorned? How was she to discover the paltry nature of that clay out of which the graceful figure was fashioned? Harcourt Lowther represented to her all that was brightest and best in her early girlhood; and sitting alone, through long and thoughtful hours, in the empty rooms at the Cedars, Maude Hillary brooded very sadly upon the only love story of her life.

She had ventured to speak of Harcourt to her father once since the beginning of the year; but her timid pleading had been met by a cruel repulse.

"Understand me at once and for ever, Maude," Lionel Hillary said, sternly; "such a marriage as that can never be. If you were the great heiress people think you, I might gratify this whim, as I have gratified other fancies, foolish and extravagant in their way. But the road I am now treading is by no means too secure under my feet, and I cannot afford to see my only child the wife of a penniless adventurer. I want to see you happy, Maude, but not after a sentimental girl's notion of happiness. I know what all those pretty theories about a suburban cottage and poverty come to when they are put into practice. I have seen the slipshod maid of all work, and the miserable dinners, and the Kidderminster carpets, and stale bread and rank butter, that belong to love in a cottage. And more than this, Maude, I know that Harcourt Lowther is the very last man to ally himself to a dowerless wife."

"Ah, how little you know him!" Maude murmured, softly. She thought she knew her lover so well herself, and fancied him the most generous and devoted of men because he had given her a few half-guinea bouquets, purchased on credit from a confiding florist. "Ah, dear papa, how little you know him! He is always reproaching me with my fortune, and lamenting the gulf it has made between us. Let me tell him of your difficulties, let me tell him that I am no longer a millionaire's daughter, that I am free to marry the man I love. Ah, let me tell him—"

"Not a word, Maude," answered Lionel Hillary,—"not a word to that man, if you have any love or respect for your father. Remember that I have trusted you with secrets that a man seldom confides to his daughter."

"And your confidence shall be sacred, papa," Miss Hillary replied, submissively. And thus ended her intercession in favour of Harcourt Lowther.

She was fain to be contented, however, remembering the great trouble which had been so near her, and which a merciful hand had lifted away. She was fain to remember, shudderingly, the feverish horror of that night at Brighton, and to think gratefully of Francis Tredethlyn, to whom she owed her father's rescue. She was grateful to him; but she could not put entirely away from her the sense of shame left by that scene in the study, and Julia Desmond's passionate reproaches. She could not forget that it was for her sake Francis Tredethlyn had helped her father, and that the burden of a great obligation must rest upon her shoulders until

that loan of twenty thousand pounds was repaid. Poor Maude's unbusiness-like mind entirely ignored any such thing as interest for Mr. Tredethlyn's money. She only thought of the loan itself, and the question of its repayment was perpetually in her mind. Had she not been the suppliant, at whose suit the money had been lent? and was she not in a manner the actual debtor?

Things were much better in the City, her father told her; but upon two or three occasions when she had ventured to hint her anxiety respecting the early repayment of Francis Tredethlyn's money, the merchant's answers had filled her mind with vague disquietude. There was an indifference in Mr. Hillary's manner that alarmed Maude's keen sense of right and honour.

"Tredethlyn is too well off to want his money in any desperate hurry, my dear," he said; "he is not likely to become a very pressing creditor."

The hedgerows about Isleworth and Twickenham were green with their earliest buds before Francis Tredethlyn came again to the Cedars. Mr. Hillary had called upon the young man at his hotel several times before he succeeded in seeing him, and had only with great difficulty wrung from him an admission of the fact that he was the anonymous lender of the twenty thousand pounds that had saved the merchant from ruin and disgrace.

"My dear Tredethlyn, why should you insist upon any disguise?" Mr. Hillary said; with a pleasant ease that not every man could have maintained in such a position as that in which the merchant found himself with regard to this simple-minded, country-bred Crœsus. "Is it not enough to have been the most generous of men, without trying to carry generosity to the verge of Quixotism? How can I doubt the identity of my preserver? I know that Maude betrayed my necessities to you, under the excitement of those unfortunate theatricals, and I know that loans of twenty thousand pounds do *not* drop from the skies. My dear fellow, I am most heartily thankful to you for what you have done. It was a very noble thing to do, an action that any man might be proud of doing. If I had ever doubted your having good blood in your veins, your conduct in this one matter would have settled my doubts. But I never did doubt it, my dear Tredethlyn. I have recognized you from the first as a gentleman; not by the right of an accidental thirty thousand a year, scraped out of all manner of commercial gutters by a miserly uncle; but by virtue of some of the best blood in the West of England."

And then Mr. Hillary stretched out both his hands, and shook those of Francis Tredethlyn in his vigorous grasp; and altogether the interview could scarcely have been more entirely satisfactory had the merchant written a cheque for the twenty thousand pounds on the spot. Indeed, to Francis, any immediate repayment of that money would have been a grievous mortification. Was it not delightful to him to remember that he

had been of service to *her* father? Was not the money advanced to the merchant a kind of link between Maude and the man who loved her so dearly and so hopelessly,—only a very sordid, earthy link; but better than none?

"I offended her very much that night," Francis thought; "but perhaps she will forgive me, and remember me kindly, when she thinks that I have been useful to her father." But when Mr. Hillary begged Francis to renew his visits to Twickenham, the young man resisted those friendly invitations as obstinately as if the Cedars had been the most obnoxious place upon earth. He could not muster up courage to encounter Maude Hillary after that scene in the little study. What if he had offended too deeply for forgiveness? What if she slew him with a frozen glance from her lovely eyes? Again and again in his lonely rides, emboldened by the dusky twilight of the early spring evenings, he had ventured to haunt the neighbourhood of the old brick-built mansion by the river; but he could not bring himself to go any nearer to the shrine of his divinity, and he made all manner of lame excuses in answer to Mr. Hillary's cordial invitations.

He was only a clod; only an uneducated rustic, newly cast upon a strange world, open to all the pleasant snares which are laid for the simple-minded possessor of thirty thousand a year. Heaven only knows the perils and temptations into which some young men would have fallen under similar circumstances. It is something in Francis Tredethlyn's favour that his worst mistake was to fall desperately in love with Maude Hillary, and wear his horse's shoes out in disconsolate rides about the twilit lanes and roads in the neighbourhood of her dwelling-place.

And in the meantime Messrs. Kursdale and Scardon were supposed to be busily employed in their search for the missing girl, who might or might not have any right to another name than that of Susan Tredethlyn. Very little came of the lawyers' endeavours. Several advertisements had been inserted in the *Times;* but it is to be feared that the lost and missing advertised for in those columns are too often wanderers in a weary region, far removed from that comfortable sphere of life in which the morning papers are punctually delivered to enliven the breakfast-table. No reply came to any of those mysteriously-worded appeals to Francis Tredethlyn's cousin which were concocted by the young man and his legal advisers; and the image of the friendless girl grew paler and fainter day by day in the mind of Maude Hillary's adorer.

At last Fortune—who will generally do anything in the world for us, if we have patience enough to await her own time for doing it—brought about the result which Francis Tredethlyn had so obstinately avoided, yet so fondly desired. Lounging against the rails one brilliant April day at the corner opposite Apsley House, Francis saw Maude Hillary's carriage drive into the Park.

Yes, there she was, with her sunny hair framed in spring blossoms

and white aërophane. The young man seemed to behold the vision of an angel in a Parisian bonnet, and half wondered if the folds of her white burnous were not a pair of downy pinions floating away from her divine shoulders. He grew very red and uncomfortable, and in another moment would have yielded to the impulse that prompted him to seek refuge in flight; but before he could do so the carriage was close to the rails, Maude Hillary had recognized him, and had told the coachman to stop.

She was not offended with him then; she forgave him, and thought of him kindly. His heart swelled with a rapture that was almost overpowering. Ah! *this* was love. How different from that placid sense of affection with which he had regarded his cousin Susy! how much more delicious! how infinitely more painful!

"I have wanted so much to see you, Mr. Tredethlyn," Maude said, after shaking hands with her bewildered adorer; "why have you never been to Twickenham?"

"I—I—don't like—I thought you were angry with me," stammered Francis, very awkwardly. Ah, how sad it is that the presence of those we love best, and in whose eyes we would most desire to appear at an advantage, should entail upon us the annihilation of anything like ease or grace of manner! Mr. Tredethlyn felt himself becoming purple and apoplectic under the influence of that seraphic creature, whose image had filled his mind unceasingly for the last six months.

"Angry with you!" exclaimed Maude; "how should I be otherwise than grateful to you, when I remember how good you have been to papa? Believe me, Mr. Tredethlyn, I am not too proud to own the extent of our obligation. I thank you most sincerely. You can never know how grateful I am for the service you have rendered my dear father."

She bent her head, and the spring flowers in her bonnet were very near him as she said this in a low, earnest voice. But in the next moment the memory of that uncomfortable scene in the study flashed back upon her, and she felt that she must always be more or less in a false position with regard to Francis Tredethlyn. She made a little effort to set herself right before she parted from him.

"You have seen Julia; you and she are reconciled, I hope, Mr. Tredethlyn?"

"No; indeed, I have never heard from her since—since I left the Cedars. Your papa told me that she——Oh, Miss Hillary, I think it was better that we should part. I don't think that we had either of us ever really cared for each other. It was better that it should end as it did."

"But I would give so much to find Julia, to hear where she is."

Francis Tredethlyn shook his head hopelessly. He had a vague idea that he had not done his very uttermost in his search for his cousin Susan, and he recoiled with terror from the idea of having to engage in a hunt for Miss Desmond.

"Good-bye, Mr. Tredethlyn, I hope that all will come right after all;

and I hope that you will believe I am grateful for your goodness to my father."

She held out her hand, and the Cornishman took it in his own with almost as reverential a touch as if it had been some relic handed to him from an altar. The carriage drove off immediately after this, and Francis saw that seraphic bonnet with the spring blossoms melt away and lose itself among mundane bonnets. He lingered at the rails till the carriage came back again, and still lingered after that, thinking that Miss Hillary's equipage would again return to Hyde Park Corner; but after out-watching all the loungers by the rails, and seeing the last of the carriages leaving the Ladies' Mile, he was fain to go home, resigned to the obvious fact that Maude Hillary had left the park by the Kensington gates on her homeward route.

He went home, but not disconsolate. Had he not seen and spoken with that divinity before whom he was the simplest worshipper who ever bowed before any earthly shrine? Was he not assured of her forgiveness?—nay, even of her gratitude? Her gratitude—Maude Hillary's gratitude, in exchange for that vile dross which he had ever held so lightly. Money was indeed good for something, if it could buy the rapture of that little interview across the park rail, in which Francis had played so very poor a part. He went home, and carried Maude Hillary's image with him, and walked up and down his big sitting-room in the Covent Garden Hotel, smoking a cigar and thinking of the woman he loved: he thought of her quite as hopelessly as ever *Claude Melnotte* could have thought of *Pauline* before *Beauseant's* diabolical suggestions had prompted him to his treacherous wooing. He thought of her as innocently as a schoolboy thinks of the stage fairy queen in a Christmas pantomime, and no ambitious or selfish dream had any abode in his mind; only when a brief note reached him from Lionel Hillary, renewing the old unceremonious invitation to the Cedars, poor Francis could no longer resist the voice of the charmer, but was fain to pack his portmanteau and drive down to the merchant's office, whence Mr. Hillary was to convey him in the mail phaeton to Twickenham. She was not angry with him, and he might bask in the sunshine of her presence! For a little while he might enjoy the dangerous delight, and then the officer to whom she was betrothed would come back to claim her, and there would be a wedding at the old church by the Thames; and he, Francis, would see his divinity radiant in bridal robes and crowned with orange flowers before he departed for ever into the outer darkness where she was not.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. HILLARY SPEAKS HIS MIND.

After that meeting in Hyde Park, Francis Tredethlyn came very often to the Cedars, so often as to engender a vague uneasiness in Miss Hillary's

mind. She knew that he loved her. If that sudden declaration in the study had never occurred to reveal the fact, Maude must have been something less than a woman had she been blind to a devotion that was made manifest by every look and tone of her adorer. She knew that he loved her, and that he had done battle with his love in order that she might be happily ignorant of the pangs that tormented his simple heart. The highly educated girl was able to read the innermost secrets of that honest uncultivated mind, and was fain to pity Francis Tredethlyn's wasted suffering. Alas! had she not indeed traded upon his devotion, and obtained her father's safety at the expense of her own honour?

Such thoughts as these tormented Miss Hillary perpetually now that Francis spent so much of his life at Twickenham. She perceived with inexpressible pain that her father encouraged the young man's visits,—her father, who could not surely shut his eyes to the real state of the Cornishman's feelings; yet who knew of her engagement to Harcourt Lowther. She did not know that Julia Desmond had taken good care to inform Francis of that engagement, and that the young man came knowingly to his delicious torture. She did not know this, and all that womanly compassion which was natural to her, that pitying tenderness which showed itself in the injudicious relief of bare-faced tramps and vagabonds about the Twickenham lanes, and the pampering of troublesome pet dogs and canary birds—all her womanly pity, I say, was aroused by the thought that she was loved, and loved in vain, by an honest and generous heart.

Thus it came to pass that she could no longer endure the course which events were taking, and she determined upon speaking to her father. They had dined alone one bright June evening: they were not often thus together now, for Mr. Hillary had fallen into his old habit of bringing visitors from London, and the ponderous matrons and croquet-playing young ladies inflicted a good deal of their company upon Maude. They had dined alone, and Miss Hillary seized the opportunity of speaking to her father upon that one subject which had so long occupied her thoughts.

"Mr. Tredethlyn comes here very often, papa," she said, breaking ground very gently.

Lionel Hillary filled his glass, retiring as it were behind the claret jug, from which comfortable shelter he replied to his daughter's remark,—

"Often?—yes—I suppose he does spend a good deal of his time here. I am glad that he should do so; he is an excellent young man, a noble-hearted young fellow—the best friend I have in the world."

Mr. Hillary was a long time filling that one glass of claret, and his face was quite hidden by the crystal jug.

"Yes, papa, he is very good; but do you think it is quite right—quite wise to invite him so often?"

"Right?—wise?" cried Mr. Hillary; "what, in the name of all that's

absurd, can you mean by talking of the right or wisdom of an invitation to dinner? The young man likes to come here, and I like the young man, and like to see him here. That is about all that can be said upon the subject."

Maude was silent for some moments. It was very difficult to discuss this question with her father, but she had grown familiar with difficulties within the past few months, and was no longer the frivolous girl who had known no loftier causes of anxiety than the uncertain health of her Skye terriers. She returned to the charge presently.

"Dear papa, I am sorry to worry you about this business," she said, gently, "but there are such peculiar circumstances in our acquaintance with Mr. Tredethlyn: we are under so deep an obligation to him, and—"

"And on that account we ought to shut our doors in his face, I suppose!" exclaimed Mr. Hillary, with some show of impatience. "My dear Maude, what mare's-nest have you lighted upon?"

"It is so difficult for me to explain myself, papa, you can never imagine how difficult. But I think you ought to understand what I mean. When Julia was here, Mr. Tredethlyn's visits were quite natural, and I was always glad to see him; but it was my application to him for the loan of that money which resulted in the breaking of Julia's engagement. I cannot forget that night, papa; nothing but desperation would have prompted me to appeal to Francis Tredethlyn, and now that we are under this great obligation to him, I feel that we are bound to him by a kind of duty. We have, at least, no right to deceive him."

"Deceive him! Who does deceive him?"

"Willingly, no one. But he may deceive himself, papa. You force me to speak very plainly. Upon the night on which I appealed to him for that loan he told me that he loved me, even though he was then engaged to Julia. There was something in his manner that convinced me of his sincerity, though I was shocked at the want of honour involved in such a declaration. But now that his engagement to Julia has been broken off, indirectly through my agency, he may think it likely that—"

"He may think it likely that you would be wise enough to accept one of the best fellows that ever lived, for your husband. Is that what you mean, Maude?"

"Papa!"

"Oh, my dear, I have no doubt you think me a cruel father, because I venture to make such a suggestion. But surely, Maude, you cannot have been blind to this young man's devotion. From the very first it has been obvious to any one gifted with the smallest power of perception. Julia Desmond contrived, by her consummate artifice, to inveigle the poor fellow into a false position; but in spite even of that foolish engagement, he has been devoted to you, Maude, from the first. I have seen it, and have counted, Heaven knows how fully, upon a marriage between you and him."

"You have done this, papa, and yet you knew all about Harcourt," exclaimed Maude, reproachfully.

"I knew that you were a foolishly sentimental girl, ready to believe in any yellow-whiskered young Admirable Crichton, who could make pretty speeches, and criticize the newest Italian opera, or Tennyson's last poem. But I knew something more than this, Maude; I knew the state of my own affairs, and that my only hope for you lay in a wealthy marriage."

"And you thought that I would marry for money—you could think so meanly of me, papa!"

"I thought that you were a sensible, high-spirited girl; and that when you came to know the desperation of the case, you would show yourself of the true metal—as you did that night at Brighton; as you did when you asked Tredethlyn for the loan that saved me from ruin."

Lionel Hillary stretched out his hand as he spoke, and grasped that of his daughter. In the next minute she was by his side, bending over him and caressing him. Only lately it had begun to dawn dimly upon Maude Hillary, that perhaps this father, whom she loved so dearly, was not the noblest and most honourable of men: but if any such knowledge had come to her, it had only intensified the tenderness with which, from her earliest childhood, she had regarded that indulgent father. The experience of sorrow had transformed and exalted her nature: and she was able to look upon Lionel Hillary's weaknesses with pitying regret, rather than with any feeling of contempt or indignation.

"Dear papa," she said, very gravely, "you and I love each other so dearly, that there should be no possibility of any misunderstanding between us. I can never marry Mr. Tredethlyn; I know that he is good and generous-minded and simple-hearted; I feel the extent of our obligation to him, but I can never be his wife. It is for this reason that I am fearful lest any false impression may arise in his mind. Pray, dear papa, take this into consideration, and do not let him come here so often—at any rate, not until you have been able to repay him his money, not until the burden of this great obligation has been removed from us."

Lionel Hillary laughed aloud.

"Not until the money has been paid! I'm afraid, in that case, Tredethlyn will stop away from this house for a long time to come."

"A long time, papa! But you told me you would be able to repay the twenty thousand pounds," said Maude, turning very pale.

"And I dare say I shall be able to pay the money some day. Such a loan as that is not repaid in a few months, Maude. How should you understand these matters? The twenty thousand pounds went to fill a yawning gulf in my business, and it would be about as easy for me to get the same amount of money back out of that gulf as it would for a single diver to bring up the treasures of a sunken argosy."

Maude sighed wearily. It seemed as if a kind of net had been woven

round her, and that she suddenly found herself in the centre of it, unable to move.

"Papa," she cried, "you don't mean that Mr. Tredethlyn's money is lost?"

"Lost! No, child; but it may be a very long time before I shall be able to pay him. If you were not so foolish as to throw away one of the noblest hearts in Christendom—to say nothing of the fortune that goes along with it—there would be very little need for me to worry myself about this money."

"Oh, I understand, papa. If I were Mr. Tredethlyn's wife, you would not be obliged to pay the twenty thousand pounds," said Maude, very slowly.

"I should not be tormented about it as I am now. Say no more, my dear; you don't understand these things, and you drive me very nearly mad with your questions about my affairs."

"Forgive me, papa. No, I don't understand—I can't understand all at once; it seems so strange to me."

She bent her head and kissed her father on the forehead, and then went quietly out of the room; leaving him alone in the still summer twilight, with a belated wasp buzzing feebly amongst the fruit and flowers on the table. Maude went to her own room, and sitting there in the dusk, shed some of the bitterest tears that had ever fallen from her eyes. The discovery of her father's views with regard to her had humiliated her to the very dust. The idea that Francis Tredethlyn's loan would never be repaid was torture to her keen sense of honour; torture which was rendered still more poignant by the recollection of her own part in the transaction. Would he ever be paid? Would that money, for the loan of which—and never more than the loan—she had supplicated her friend's betrothed husband, would that money ever be returned to the generous young man who had so freely lent it? Her father had said that it would in due course; but there was something in his manner that had neutralized the effect of his words. To Maude Hillary's mind this debt was a very sacred one, a debt which *must* be repaid, and for which she herself was responsible. Twenty thousand pounds!—all the faculties of her brain seemed to swim in a great sea of confusion as she thought of that terrible sum—twenty thousand pounds, which she was bound to see duly paid; and she was no longer an heiress, to whom money was dross. She was a penniless, helpless girl; worse off than other penniless girls, by reason of her inexperience of poverty.

She thought of Harcourt Lowther; and his image seemed to shine upon her across a wilderness of troubles; a bright and pleasant thing to look at, but with no promise of help, no inspiration of hope, no pledge of comfort in its brightness.

"Perhaps papa is right after all," she thought, "and Harcourt would scarcely care to burden himself with a penniless wife."

She was ashamed of this brief treason against her lover, almost as soon as the thought had shaped itself; only in her despair it seemed to her as if there could be no security of any happiness upon this earth.

"I will tell Francis Tredethlyn the truth about myself," she thought; "he shall not be deceived as to anything in which I am concerned. He shall know of my engagement to Harcourt."

Maude did not go down-stairs again that night, nor did Mr. Hillary send for her, as it was his wont to do when she was long away from him. It may be that he scarcely cared to encounter his daughter after that conversation in the dining-room, which had been far from pleasant to him. He was not a father of Mr. Capulet's class, who could order his daughter to marry the County Paris at a few days' notice, or, in the event of her refusal, bid her rot in the streets of Verona. But from the very first he had been bent upon bringing about a union between Francis and Maude, and he brooded moodily over the girl's resolute rejection of any such alliance.

"And what would become of her if I were to die to-morrow?" he thought; "and what is to become of my business if I fail to secure a rich partner?"

CHAPTER XX.

AN EXPLANATION.

FRANCIS TREDETHLYN, now so frequent a visitor at the Cedars, happened to present himself there upon the day after that on which Maude had come to an understanding with her father. The young man rode down to Twickenham in the afternoon, and found Miss Hillary occupied with two croquet-playing young ladies and a croquet-playing young gentleman, whose manners and opinions were of the same insipidly flaxen hue as their hair and eyebrows.

There was a tired look in Maude's face that afternoon, which was very perceptible to Francis Tredethlyn, although quite invisible to the neutral-tinted croquet players. Her eyes wandered away sometimes from the balls and mallets, and fixed themselves, with a sad, dreamy look, upon the sunlit river or the distant woodland. Francis saw this, and that faithful Cornish heart grew heavy in sympathy with Miss Hillary's unknown trouble. There must be a little of the Newfoundland dog in the nature of a man who can love hopelessly; a little of that superhuman fidelity, a little of that canine endurance which has inspired so many odious comparisons to the disparagement of the inferior animal called man. Francis Tredethlyn's eyes followed Miss Hillary with a dog-like patience all this afternoon, during which he established himself in the estimation of the flaxen-haired droppers in as one of the vilest of croquet players and worst mannered of men. But the croquet players departed after taking tea out of a very ugly Queen Anne teapot and some old Sèvres cups and saucers,

which had been bought for Miss Hillary, at the sale of a defunct collector's goods and chattels, at Messrs. Christie and Manson's. Francis stayed to dinner, and dined alone with Maude and her father, and found very little to say for himself. He was distracted by the sight of Maude's pale face and sadly thoughtful eyes. How changed she was from the bright and sparkling creature whom he remembered a few months ago in that house! How changed! What was the secret trouble which had worked that transformation? What could it be except Miss Hillary's sorrow for the circumstances that divided her from her distant lover? There could be no other cause for her unhappiness, since her father's commercial difficulties had been smoothed by that twenty thousand pounds so freely advanced to him; and it never occurred to Francis that Maude Hillary could possibly give herself any uneasiness about that money, so lightly parted from by him; nor could he think that any new trouble threatened the merchant's peace, for Mr. Hillary was specially gay and pleasant this evening.

After dinner Maude strolled out into the garden, and down to that delicious terrace by the river, where the big stone vases of geraniums looked dark and grim in the twilight. She walked slowly up and down the long esplanade with a filmy lace handkerchief tied coquettishly over her head, and her long muslin dress sweeping and rustling after her like the draperies of a fashionably attired ghost. Francis Tredethlyn furtively watched that white-robed figure in the shadowy distance as he sat at the dinner-table with Mr. Hillary, and would fain have left his glass, filled with the merchant's rarest Burgundy, for a stroll by the quiet river. Perhaps Mr. Hillary perceived this, for he presently gave the young man his release.

"Since you don't drink your wine, you may as well go for a stroll in the garden, Tredethlyn," he said, good-naturedly. "I see Maude yonder, and she'll be better company for you than I am."

Francis was by no means slow to take this hint. But once outside the dining-room windows, he went very slowly to the terrace on which Maude was walking. He walked in and out among the flower-beds, making a faint pretence of admiring nature in this twilight aspect. He stopped to caress one of Maude's Skye terriers. The animals were very fond of him now that he had learned to avoid that trampling on their toes which had been one of the earlier manifestations of his devotion to Miss Hillary. He loitered here and there on every possible pretext, and at last approached the fair deity in the muslin dress with very much the air of a schoolboy, who presents himself in that awful audience-chamber wherein a grim pedagogue is wont to pronounce terrible judgments upon youthful offenders.

He did not know that Miss Hillary had been expecting him all this time; and that her special purpose was to bring him to her side upon that solitary terrace walk, where she could talk to him freely without fear of eavesdroppers. He did not know that he was quite as much expected as

the schoolboy who has been summoned to the parlour, and was to receive a sentence as terrible.

Maude welcomed him very graciously, and for a little while they strolled side by side, talking of the summer's night, and the flowers, and Skye terriers, and canary birds, and other subjects equally commonplace and harmless. Then they came to a stop, mechanically, as it is in the nature of people to do when they walk by the side of a river, and looked over the stone balustrade into the still water. And then a death-like silence came down upon them; and Maude Hillary felt that the time had come in which she must utter whatever she had it in her mind to say. It was difficult to begin; but then all her duties of late had been difficult; and upon her knees the night before, in the midst of tearful prayers and meditations, she had resolved that there should be no more sailing under false colours as regarded this young man.

"Dear Mr. Tredethlyn," she began at last, "you have been so good to my father, so good to me—for to serve him is to render a double service to me,—you have been so kind and generous a friend, that I have grown to think of you and trust you almost as I might if you had been my brother."

Poor Francis listened to this exordium with a very despondent air. Inexperienced as he was in the ways of the world, he was wise enough to know that there was nothing hopeful in such an address as this. When a young lady tells a gentleman that she can regard him as a brother, it is the plainest possible declaration that he can never be anything else. In this case it seemed an uncalled-for act of cruelty, for the Cornishman had never deluded himself by any false hope.

"I think of you almost as if you were my brother," Maude went on, with heartless repetition of the obnoxious word; "and I cannot help thinking, dear Mr. Tredethlyn, that you are scarcely employing your life as wisely or as well as you might. I don't think you were ever intended to be an idle man; and, again, with such a fortune as yours, a man has scarcely the right to be idle. There are so many people who may be benefited by a rich man's active life. Oh, forgive me, if I seem to lecture you. You will laugh at me perhaps, and think I want to set myself up as a strong-minded woman, a political economist, or something of that kind. But I only venture to speak to you because I think you waste so much of your time down here, playing billiards with the empty-headed young men who haunt this place, and lounging in the drawing-room to hear the frivolous talk of half a dozen idle women, myself among the number."

She spoke lightly, but she was not the less earnest in her intention she was only travelling gradually round to the point she wanted to reach.

"But I am so happy here," cried Francis Tredethlyn. "Ah, if you knew how I have tried to stop away—if you could only know what happiness it is to me to come—"

Maude Hillary interrupted him hastily.

"Yes, I know it is a pleasant life in its way," she said; "very pleasant and very useless. It is a little new to you perhaps, and seems pleasanter to you on that account. But if you knew what dreary work it is to look back at a long summer season of operas, and concerts, and horticultural meetings, and boat-races, and not to be able to remember one action worthy of being recorded in all that time! I am getting very tired of my present life, Mr. Tredethlyn. It has ceased to be pleasant to me ever since I have known of papa's difficulties. It is altogether unsuited to me; for I am engaged to marry a poor man, who would bitterly feel the burden of an expensive wife."

The bolt was launched, and Miss Hillary expected to see some evidence that it had gone home to its mark. But Francis Tredethlyn made no sign. There was just a little pause, and then he said, very quietly,—

"Yes, I know that you are to marry a poor man; but with such a wife a man could scarcely remain poor. I suppose it's only an ignorant, foolish notion, but I can't help thinking that for the sake of the woman he loves, any man could cut his way to fortune. I can always believe in those knights of the olden time, who used to put a badge in their helmets, and then ride off to the wars to do all sorts of miraculous things; and I fancy it must be the same now-a-days, somehow; and that a man who loves truly, and is truly loved again, can achieve anything."

Maude was inexpressibly relieved by this speech.

"You know of my engagement, then?" she said.

"Yes, I have known it for a very long time."

"Ah, of course, Julia told you?"

"Yes, it was Miss Desmond who told me."

"She had a perfect right to do so; there was no reason for any secrecy in the matter. I am very glad that you have known of it. You are so kind a friend that I should not like you to be ignorant of anything nearly relating to my father or myself."

"It is very good of you to call me a friend," Francis answered. It seemed to him as if some angelic creature was stooping from her own proper sphere to place herself for a brief interval by his side. "It is very good of you to take any interest in my welfare; and I feel that you are right. The life I lead is utterly idle and useless; but it shall be so no longer. Your father has very generously offered me a grand opportunity of turning both my time and money to account."

"My father? But how?"

"He has offered me a partnership in his own house."

"A partnership?—a partnership in his difficulties—his liabilities?" cried Maude, in a tone of horror.

"Those difficulties were only temporary. The thirty thousand I advanced have wiped out all liabilities, and your father's business stands on a firmer basis than ever."

"*Thirty* thousand! You have lent papa thirty thousand pounds?"

"I have not lent it, my dear Miss Hillary. I have only invested it in your father's business. There is no obligation in the matter, believe me; or if there is, it is all on my side. I get a higher rate of interest for my money than I should get elsewhere."

He stopped suddenly, for Maude had burst into a passion of sobs.

"Oh, how could he do it? How could he?" she cried. "How could papa take so mean an advantage of your generosity? I love him so dearly, that it almost kills me to think that he should be base or dishonourable. I thought the twenty thousand pounds would soon be paid, and instead of that he has borrowed more money of you."

"My dear Miss Hillary, pray, pray do not distress yourself. Believe me you misunderstand this business altogether. It is not a loan. It is only an equitable and friendly arrangement, quite as advantageous to me as to your father. Upon my word of honour you do Mr. Hillary a cruel wrong when you imagine otherwise."

Maude dried her tears, and listened to the voice of her consoler. She was so anxious to think well of her father, that she must have been something more than an ignorant, inexperienced girl, if she shut her ears to Francis Tredethlyn's arguments.

Those arguments were very convincing, very specious. Maude ought, perhaps, to have perceived that they were not the original ideas of Mr. Tredethlyn. She ought, perhaps, to have discovered the parrot-like nature of his discourse respecting all the grand prospects of the house of Hillary and Co.; but she wanted to think well of her father, and Francis Tredethlyn urged her to that conclusion. She listened to his discourse as eagerly as if he had been the most eloquent of living creatures. She felt a kind of tender friendship for him as he talked to her; never before had he seemed so nearly on a level with herself. She wanted to believe in his wisdom; she wanted to respect his sense and judgment, because he was the defender of her father, that beloved father against whom her own conscience had so lately arisen, a stern and pitiless judge.

The quiet river rippled under the summer moonlight before Maude and her companion left the terrace; so much had Francis found to say about the house of Hillary and Co., and the wonderful advantages that must come to him from a partnership in that great firm. Surely his enthusiasm must have arisen from some vague idea that even that commercial alliance would be some kind of link between Miss Hillary and himself. He talked very freely to-night, for Maude's confidence had set him at his ease; and in almost every word he uttered he naïvely revealed some new depth in his devoted love.

Late that night, when the Cornishman had gone away, Maude stood at her open window, looking out at the river, and thinking of all that Francis Tredethlyn had said to her.

"Harcourt Lowther never loved me as this man loves me," she

thought, sadly. "Ah, what a pity that there should be so much wasted love and devotion in the world!"

And then the thought of Francis Tredethlyn's thirty thousand pounds arose in her mind,—a terrible obligation, a heavy burden of debt; a debt that was perhaps never to be cancelled.

CHAPTER XXI.

HARCOURT LOWTHER'S WELCOME.

WITHIN a month from that night on which the merchant's daughter and Francis Tredethlyn had lingered so long together on the terrace up the river, Maude Hillary sat at her desk in the little study, trying to begin the most difficult letter she had ever had occasion to write.

The letter was to be addressed to Harcourt Lowther, and the three words, "My dear Harcourt," were already written on the rose-tinted foreign note-paper; but beyond those preliminary words Maude found it very difficult to proceed.

That which she had to tell the distant soldier, sorely tried by inglorious idleness in a penal settlement, and inclined to resent every stroke of ill fortune, was by no means a pleasant thing to tell. She had to announce to him that the promise she had made long ago in the twilight by the river had been deliberately broken. She had to tell him that she was the plighted wife of another man; and she was not free to reveal to him any one of the strange circumstances that had pressed so cruelly upon her, pushing her, little by little, into this renunciation of her first and only love.

It was only a very commonplace letter that Miss Hillary could write to her discarded lover. She could only tell the old, common story, and put in the hackneyed pleas, so often heard in the court of Cupid:—her father's wishes; her desire to secure his happiness rather than her own; and then a wild, womanly prayer for pity; an entreaty that her lover would believe in the existence of stronger reasons—higher motives—the nature of which she was not free to reveal. And last of all, after many pages of passionate supplication for pardon, with not a little violation of the nicer laws propounded by Lindley Murray and his successors,—at the very last there came one page blotted with tears, earnest yet incoherent, in which Miss Hillary implored Mr. Lowther to forget her, and to seek happiness with a happier woman. Never had she loved him so dearly as while she wrote that last page, in which she resigned him for ever. Surely Queen Guinevere's diamonds must have sparkled their very brightest just in that one angry moment in which she flung them into the river.

Yes, it had come to this. Maude Hillary, like a modern Iphigenia, had sacrificed herself for the benefit of her father. The burden of that debt which had been incurred by her agency had weighed too heavily upon her girlish breast. Somehow or other Francis Tredethlyn must be

paid; and since he loved her so devotedly, so foolishly—since he held her as the brightest treasure to be won by aspiring man—it was surely better that he should take this poor recompence than go altogether unrewarded. It may be that Maude Hillary would under no circumstances deliberately have broken faith with her betrothed lover. But these grand crises, upon which the fate of a lifetime may depend, are apt to come very suddenly upon us. The great flood-tide of fate arises, and carries away the weak creatures afloat on its resistless waters. A moment of hesitation—a few faltering words—half doubtful, half imploring, and the thing is done.

It had all happened on the day on which Francis Tredethlyn accepted Mr. Hillary's magnanimous offer, and allowed himself to be created a sleeping partner in the Australian house. It was only natural that on such a day Francis should dine at the Cedars; and it was only natural that Lionel Hillary should make a little speech about the young man, telling his daughter of the generosity of this noble-minded Cornishman, who had been something more than a son to him—a friend, a benefactor, a preserver. What praise could be loud enough for a man who would lend thirty thousand pounds without security? And then this noble-minded Cornishman, whose heart was like a great lump of tinder—only wanting the feeblest spark to kindle it into a blaze,—burst out into a passionate declaration of his love. What was his fortune but so much dirt, which he was only too glad to fling under the feet of Miss Hillary? Would he not go out into the world to-morrow penniless, barefoot, a beggar, if by so doing he could add to her happiness? He asked a few such questions as these; and then cried out suddenly that he was a despicable wretch, and that he was ashamed of himself for saying all this, when he knew that Miss Hillary's heart was given to another man. He would go, he said; she should never again be tormented by him. She should not be annoyed by so much as the mention of his name. After which passionate speech Mr. Tredethlyn grasped the merchant's hand, and then made a rush towards the door. He would fain have suited the action to the word; he wanted to go away that moment, and hide himself for ever from Maude Hillary. But before he could reach the door Maude was by his side, with her hands clasped about his arm, her face looking upward at his, and drowned with tears.

"How good you are!" she cried. "Don't go away; we cannot part from you like this. You have been so good to my father. Ah, how can we ever recompense so much devotion! If my esteem—my gratitude—can make you happy, they are yours,—they have long been yours. I renounce every other thought, every other duty. I can have no duty higher than this."

The last words were almost stifled on her lips, for Francis Tredethlyn caught her to his breast as passionately as in that last scene of the "Lady of Lyons."

"Maude, my love—my angel—you will renounce, for my sake—you

—you—will be my own—my wife!" he gasped, incoherently. "No—no, I cannot accept such a sacrifice—I am not so mean, so selfish, as to—"

But Mr. Hillary, hovering over his daughter and the generous-minded young Cornishman, would not allow Francis to finish this sentence.

"My dear boy!" he exclaimed,—"my darling Maude! nothing upon earth could give me greater pleasure than this, because I know that it is for your mutual happiness. What joy can be deeper or purer than that of a father who knows that his child has won for herself the devoted affection of a good man?"

"And the thirty thousand pounds will be sunk for ever and ever in the firm of Hillary and Co.," the merchant may have thought at the close of that enthusiastic address.

Thus it was that Maude Hillary arrived at the very point towards which fate and her father had been pushing her for the last twelve months. After that passionate impulse of self-sacrifice had passed away, a dull, dead feeling of pain took possession of her breast. Alone in the quiet of her own pretty rooms; alone through the long sunny July mornings with her books, and Berlin wool work, and piano, she had only too much time to consider the step she had taken; she had only too much time to think of her broken vows, her scattered hopes. And she did think of these things,—with cruel remorse and self-upbraiding, with bitter and unavailing regret.

And now Francis Tredethlyn appeared to her all at once in a new light. Alas! he was no longer the noble-hearted friend to whom she could appeal for help in the day of trouble. He was no longer the humble adorer, kneeling on the lowest step of the altar, remote and submissive. He was her affianced husband, and he had a right to her society. He had a right to attend her in her walks and rides, to linger near the piano when she sang, to hold perpetual skeins of Berlin wool during those tedious morning visits which he made now and again to the Cedars. All these privileges were his by right; and other people gave place when he approached Miss Hillary, and watched to see her face brighten as he drew near her. It was not that Francis himself was in any way altered. His adoration of his bright divinity was no less humble than of old—even now when he knew that the goddess was to descend from her pedestal and exchange her starry crown for the orange blossoms of an earthly bride. He was in no way changed; the distance between himself and Maude Hillary was as wide as ever. He could see it before him—a palpable gulf, across which he beheld her, a strange creature, in a strange land,—a creature who might hold out her hand to him once in a way across the impassable abyss, but who could never draw him near her. Alas for Francis Tredethlyn's loveless betrothal! that dreary distance was growing wider every day now that Iphigenia knew the hour of sacrifice was drawing near.

It had been one thing to think of Mr. Tredethlyn as a friend—a dear and devoted friend, worthy to be regarded with an almost sisterly affection.

It was another thing to contemplate him as a future husband. All his ignorance, his homely ways of speaking and thinking, his little awkwardnesses and stupidities, his vacillating temperament in the matter of spoons and forks at those elaborate Russian dinners,—all these things pained Maude Hillary now as cruelly as they had galled Miss Desmond's proud spirit some six months before. And then to the faint shivering pain of disgust was joined all the bitterness of contrast. Never had Harcourt Lowther's image seemed so near to this wayward girl as it seemed now, when she was the promised wife of another man, and tried most honestly to shut the memory of her old lover completely out of her mind. Never had he been so near to her. His graces of manner, his accomplishments, the light touch of his pointed fingers on the piano, the deep organ tone that he alone amongst amateurs could draw out of a flute, the free outlines of his pencil, the transparency of his water-colour sketches, the graphic humour of his pen-and-ink caricatures; the airy wit, which never verged upon the borders of vulgarity; the fervid eloquence, which never degenerated into rant; the trenchant satire, which never sank to the vile level of personal spite: she thought of her discarded lover; and all the showy attributes that had won her girlish love arose before her in cruel contrast with the deficiencies of Francis Tredethlyn.

Yet all this time she was very kind to her betrothed husband. It was not in her to be scornfully indifferent to the man whom she regarded as her father's friend and benefactor. She was not a woman to sacrifice herself with an ill grace. The silent warfare went on within her breast. She struggled and suffered, but she had always the same kind, cold smile, the same gentle words for the man whom she had promised to marry.

And in the mean time the hands went steadily round upon all the clock dials, and the inevitable hour drew very near. Busy milliners and dressmakers, bootmakers and outfitters, came backwards and forwards from Wigmore Street to the Cedars, and were busy and glad. Mr. Hillary's credit was unlimited, and it was almost as if a princess of the blood royal had been about to marry. Francis Tredethlyn bought the lease of a big, black-looking house in a new neighbourhood near Hyde Park; and there were negotiations pending for the purchase of an estate within a few miles of Windsor.

August was melting into September. Already there were bright glimpses of red and yellow here and there among the sombre green of the woodlands. The wedding was to take place very early in October: the guests were bidden, the dresses of the bridesmaids were chosen, and in the still evening Iphigenia walked alone on the terrace. She was very seldom alone at this hour, but to-night her father had taken Francis Tredethlyn to a club dinner, given by a bachelor stockbroker of some eminence in Mr. Hillary's circle. To-night Maude was alone; and leaning upon the broad balustrade, with her elbow resting amongst the thick ivy that

crept along the stone, she looked down at the still water—the dark, melancholy water—and thought of her past life.

It seemed so far away from her now, left so entirely behind—all that frivolous past. She seemed to have grown out of herself since the knowledge of her father's troubles had come upon her; and looking backwards she saw a careless and happy creature, who bore no relationship to this thoughtful woman, before whom all the future seemed a blank and dreary country, unillumined by one glimpse of sunshine.

She turned away from the water presently, and walked slowly up and down the long terrace. There seemed to be a melancholy influence in the evening stillness, the dusky shadow lying upon every object, the distant peal of bells floating across the river from some church where the ringers were practising; even the voices of passing boatmen and the low monotonous plash of oars took a pensive tone, in unison with the hour and Maude Hillary's sad, remorseful thoughts.

She was near the end of the terrace, close to that ivy-grown old summerhouse which had sheltered the patched and powdered beauties of King George the Second's Court, when she was startled by the sound of a chain grating against stonework, and rapid steps on the flight of stairs leading from the terrace to the river. The young men who came to the Cedars were very fond of making the journey by water; so there was nothing strange in the sound of a step on the river stair. Maude turned to meet the intruder with a sense of weariness and vexation. He would not be likely to stay long, whoever he was; but the prospect of even ten minutes' idle conventional discourse jarred upon her present frame of mind.

She turned to meet the unwelcome visitor with a languid sigh, and saw a man hurrying towards her in the twilight; a man in whose figure and dress there was a careless grace, an indefinable air of distinction, which, in Maude Hillary's eyes, stamped him as different from all the rest of the world.

He came hurrying towards her. In a moment he was close to her, holding out his arms, eager to take her to his breast. But she recoiled from him, deadly white, and with her hands extended, motioning him back.

"Don't touch me," she cried; "don't come near me. Ah, you don't know—you cannot have had my letter."

"What letter?" cried Mr. Lowther, staring almost fiercely at the shrinking girl. These sort of things so rapidly make themselves understood. Harcourt Lowther saw at once that something was wrong. "What letter?"

"My last; the letter in which I told you that——Ah, how you will hate and despise me! But if you could know all, Harcourt, as you never can, you might excuse—you might forgive—"

A torrent of sobs broke the sentence.

"Oh, I think I understand," said Harcourt Lowther, very quietly. "You have thrown me over, Miss Hillary."

She held out her clasped hands towards him with an imploring gesture; and then in broken sentences, in half-finished phrases, that were rendered incoherent by her sobs, she recapitulated something of her letter of explanation. Mr. Lowther's face had blanched before this, and his lower lip quivered now and then with a little spasmodic action; but he listened very quietly to all Maude had to say.

"I ought never to have expected anything else," he answered, when she had finished her piteous attempt to explain and justify her conduct without revealing her father's commercial secrets. "I don't know that I ever *did* expect anything else," he went on, very deliberately. "What has a penniless younger son to do among the children of Mammon? How can the earthen pot hope to sail down the stream with the big brazen vessels, and escape wreck and ruin? Don't let there be any scene between us, Miss Hillary; I hate all domestic tragedy, and I think if my heart were breaking—and men's hearts *have* been known to break—I could take things quietly. You have grown tired of our long and apparently hopeless engagement, and you have promised to marry somebody else. It is all perfectly natural. May I know the name of my fortunate rival?"

"His name is Tredethlyn—Francis Tredethlyn."

"A Cornishman," added Harcourt Lowther,—"a fellow who has lately come into a great fortune?"

"Yes. You know him, then?"

"Intimately. I congratulate you on your choice, Miss Hillary. Francis Tredethlyn is a most excellent fellow. I have reason to speak well of him, for he was my servant for a year and a half out yonder in Van Diemen's Land."

"Your servant?"

"Yes. He was really the best of fellows; and in the art of brushing a coat or cleaning a pair of riding boots was positively unrivalled."

NEVER WAKE!

The glad lark springs from his low-built nest,
  With a glorious burst of matin song;
The voice of herds, uprisen from rest,
  Is borne the yellow leas along;
The flowers that fleck the meadow sod
  From their light leaves the night-dew shake;
But they who sleep *beneath* the clod—
    They do not wake!

The *city* wakes! With new-breathed life
  Its struggling thousands wend their way
To wage the hard incessant strife,
  That waxeth fiercer day by day:
They pass by many a sacred spot,
  Where weary men their slumber take,
Whom labour's call arouseth not—
    Who do not wake!

The Sabbath chimes ring out again;
  They float o'er all the peaceful land,
And woo to consecrated fane
  Full many a calm and bright-faced band:
The tenants of the quiet clay
  Heed not the sweet appeals they make;
No need have they to rise and pray,—
    So do not wake!

They will not quit their lowly place
  To look upon a bridal show;
Nor when, with slow and mournful pace,
  Men, rapt in dismal robes of woe,
Bring some white corpse to share their rest,
  Will they their darksome house forsake
To give a greeting to their guest,—
    They will not wake!

Nor summer sun nor winter snow
  Is aught to them, nor spring's fresh breath:
The brook may sing, the breeze may blow,
  But cold the ear and cheek of death;

Green leaves may dance on each branching arm,
And flowers run wild i' the woodland brake,
But the dead stir not; there is no charm
That they should wake!

Time travels on, and earth sweeps round,
Yet there seemeth no ebb of human woe,
And heart-sick men *above* the ground
Envy the rest of those *below!*
(Where dreams come not, nor strife is known,
Nor eyes that weep, nor hearts that ache;)
And long to slumber under the stone—
And never wake!

JAMES T. MILNE.

NEW YEAR IN PARIS.

At New Year's tide the interesting capital of France becomes doubly interesting; but the main point is that the weather remains fine, for the little trading world in the stalls along the Boulevards are utterly dependent on the caprices of the barometer. Many thousands of poor people earnestly implore sunshine and a clear sky for the last two December weeks, for the weather question is with them a question of existence and daily bread. What is the shouting and yelling of all the small dealers and sellers other than a constant variation of the prayer for daily bread?

Should the weather prove fine, however, all Paris assumes a cheerful, merry look, and the now old, but also ever new Boulevards, from the Madeleine to the Bastille, up and down, and down and up, are from morn till night covered by a heaving crowd, such as only a great city can assemble. Owing to the uninterrupted rows of booths, the broad hollows are entirely cut off from the carriage-way, and form a continuous bazaar full of movement and noise, tinsel and light; for the scene is most animated and pleasing in the evening. On one side are the splendid, glistening shops and magazines, extravagantly illuminated, and displaying a dazzling show; on the other side, the small tent-like stalls, no less gracefully and brilliantly arranged, and lit up by candles and lamps, lanterns, coloured glass globes, &c.; and above all the dark sky, with the silver crescent of the moon in the west. The finest sight of all probably is a backward glance from the Porte St. Denis, or the Boulevard du Temple, at this heaving chaos of lights, and flames, and people, and rolling carriages, which incessantly moves up and down, and every moment grows larger.

At the Château d'Eau an electric light suddenly flashes forth from a lofty scaffolding. The houses seem all at once to be standing in sunshine; for a quarter of a mile you can see the ladies and gentlemen looking down from all the balconies, and can recognize your friends at your leisure. The horses, when they enter the broad, dazzling stream of light, shy and rear, and the gas-lights become dim and yellow, like imitation diamonds laid by the side of brilliants. For some time past the good people of Paris have been promised that the great squares and boulevards should be regularly lit up by electric batteries, but up to the present the prospect has not been realized, although the repeated experiments have turned out famously. Any one who has lived any time in Paris will remember how the building of the Hôtel du Louvre was carried on day and night without interruption by means of the electric light, which attracted thousands of spectators. To my knowledge, this was the only instance in which the light was turned to a practical use, for it has been restricted to interesting but useless experiments.

But this is not the time for idle speculations. A splendid carriage is passing us at this very moment; the coachman, wrapped in fur, looks like

a bear, though a tamed one; the three-cornered hat or the powdered wig almost reminds us of old Fritz; the two footmen behind are in a similar dress. Through the plate-glass windows we see a couple of merry children; and further back, on the soft, red velvet cushions, a lovely lady, with white waving ostrich feathers in her bonnet, just as our grandmothers wore, but now the very latest novelty, for with the fashions the old frequently becomes new. The splendid carriage is pulled up in front of a brilliantly lighted palatial building on the Boulevard des Capucians. Is the lady going to pay an evening visit to a princess? or is there a grand party up-stairs given by one of the kings of the Parisian Bourse? Nothing of the sort; the fine house, with its façade of twelve windows, with its twelve stories and gilded balconies, is merely the toy-shop of the Brothers Giroux, well known and highly respected in Paris and the provinces. The prices certainly agree with this reputation; everything that comes from Giroux is twice as dear as any other shop, though not a whit better. The name, which has become fashionable, must also be paid for.

Instead of following the countess up the steps into the shop, let us hurry on and await her return to her palace. The lady resides in the Faubourg St. Germain, and the Hôtel G—— is frequently cited as a model of elegance, luxury, and good taste. The antechamber is converted into a hothouse, full of exotics and flowers, with their peculiar tropical perfume; the huge hall is dimly lighted and slightly heated, but the sleepy footmen, lounging on the sofas, are an ugly addition to the pleasant picture. Behind heavy dark velvet curtains, richly ornamented with gold fringe tassels, the folding-doors stand wide open, and we reach the saloon through a second antechamber. The walls are lined with blue satin, of which the duchess might very fairly wear a dress, with broad bands of gold at top and bottom. The clocks, candelabra, and vases on the mantelpiece are made of the onyx lately discovered in Algeria, and which is consequently dearer than the finest bronze; the fire-irons are made of heavy, beautifully chased silver; the gilt *fauteuils*, chairs, and sofas, are also covered with blue satin, and on the soft carpet footsteps are inaudible. The chandelier is a perfect miracle of art,—a pink, flashing crystal globe, supported by flying angels; on the console tables there are also tall lamps of antique shape, whose bright light is tempered by screens of fine silk; while there are costly Sèvres vases and hundreds of other rarities on the *étagères*.

We hear the carriage come up, and the two children rush on with loud laughter, throw their sable pelisses on one chair, their hats and gloves on another, and then run back to meet their mother, who comes in followed by several footmen carrying parcels and boxes. On all the packages is pompously displayed, in sky-blue letters, the name of Giroux, with the requisite titles and addresses. The children hastened to undo one of the boxes, in which lay, on a soft bed of wadding and silk, a polichinell, but a unique one, such as could only be met with in Paris and at Giroux's;

and even there it was regarded as a *ne plus ultrà*. The duchess had paid five hundred francs for it—five hundred francs for a toy!

It was certainly handsome; the bells and other metal ornaments were all of gold, and artistically designed; the tambourine in its hand was equally costly, and set with small pearls; hence the 500 francs could be easily accounted for; in fact, the price was very moderate. Still, the duchess had considered the amount too great, a thing which rarely occurs with her purchases, on which the shopman at once showed her cheaper polichinells, which only cost 250 or even 200 francs. Only! But her Grace wished to make a New Year's present to her little niece, Countess Marie, and so the dearest was bought. But her own two children considered the polichinell so charming and irresistible, that they would not part with it, and passionately declared that they would not accept any other present if it were sent away. Hence the duchess gave way, and the absurd thing remained in the possession of the children, which compelled their mother to buy another present for her little niece, who must not be forgotten.

"What on earth is the meaning of all this?" I hear the reader ask. I am going to tell you.

At the corner of the Rue Hauteville and the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle there stood every evening a poor woman, a beggar in the literal sense of the term, dressed in rags, with a child of six months on her arm, half starved: a picture of the most utter misery and destitution. As my road home from the café led me past her, I regularly gave her two sous, *l'obole des pauvres*. She thanked me with a gentle *Merci*, and looked round timidly for the police, who might arrest her at any moment. The child continually cried. The beggar stood just opposite the great Restaurant Plaisant, where there are often such gay scenes, that the popping of champagne corks, and laughter of the guests, can be heard from the streets. Such suppers are dear;—besides polichinells, there are many things in Paris that cost a deal of money. At times, too, a gentleman, on leaving, would throw her a coin. One evening she was standing there again, but alone, and more wretched-looking than ever. I asked after her child: it had died on the previous night. With a voice and a look which I shall never forget, she added, "Of weakness and hunger; for how could I suckle the poor thing, as I had nothing to eat myself?" Of a truth, at that moment, I should not have cared to be Rothschild; for a fearful responsibility is attached to wealth.

As I walked home I thought of the polichinell that cost 500 francs. Half that sum would probably have rendered that poor woman happy, and saved her child from starvation; and with the other 250 francs the duchess (Heaven forgive me the irony!) could still have bought a very presentable polichinell. This beggar loved her child with as pure a maternal affection as the duchess did hers. And who can say which of the two women is most valued by God?

Some few days after, as I turned the corner of the Rue Vivienne, I met an old friend who held out to me a dainty packet, tied with pink ribbon, fragrant of vanille, and with the inscription in golden letters on the satin paper, "*Marquis, Passage des Panoramas.*" This little packet at once dispelled the last of my philosophic reflections about the beggar, and restored me to the actual world,—the Christmas and New Year's joys, which the Parisians include in the single word, "*les étrennes.*" This word, to write learnedly—which I can cheaply do with the "Dictionnaire de l'Académie" at my side—is derived from the Latin. Under the first Roman kings the name of *strenna*, or *stronna*, was given to the boughs plucked each new year in a grove dedicated to the goddess Strenna, and carried in great state to the King's palace. The first Tarquin is said, by a special decree, to have established this rite for ever. So, at least, my "Dictionnaire de l'Académie" informs me, which is my highest authority in French philology and etymology. The Roman kings have long passed away, and so have the Roman emperors too, and thousands of years have faded out since the first New Year's gifts; but the latter have remained to us, at least in most southern and Catholic countries, among which France holds the front rank, and Paris the apex. As I fancy, though, few foreigners will suspect that the innocent little word *étrennes* causes thousands of Parisians fear and headaches, and that thousands watch the approach of the new year with a beating heart, even if they do not execrate it. The reason for this will be found in the great abuse which is carried on with New Year's presents, and which during the last ten years has assumed such proportions, that people are regularly terrified by it. But, on the other hand, so great is the respect for fashion and its image-worship, that no one dares to express his real opinion, for fear of attracting the sneers of critics and malicious people. The latter are perfectly of the same opinion; they, too, sigh and lament in secret, but are very careful not to let any one overhear them. Balzac, after all, was perfectly right in saying, "*La vie humaine n'est qu'une grande comédie.*"

This hour of suffering begins eight days before the new year, and lasts till the first week in January. The postmaster leads the dance. He hands us, with a pleasant wish, an almanack for the new year, and we give him the two or five franc piece, according to the number of letters and papers he has brought us during the past twelve months. We do so gladly, for we like the postman to come. The same with the water-carrier, and the wood and coal dealer: but with this difference, that water, wood, and coals are very expensive things in Paris: and we have laid out no small sum for them during the last twelve months. The scavenger and lamp-lighter also appear with the requisite bow, and we must not forget them.

But all this is mere skirmishing, and of slight importance; the heavy batteries are drawn up in the rear, and will advance presently. Purveyors of every description—first baker, butcher, and grocer, the fruit and vegetable woman, the fish-fag (in Paris a great dame, frequently with

gold chain and diamond earrings, and called Dame de la Halle), bootmaker and tailor, even hatter and glovemaker,—everybody, in short, with whom we have had any dealings during the year, all appear,—of course, not in person, but represented by their apprentices, porters, errand-boys, and clerks. They bow politely; for they are polite, one and all, and have plenty of the neatest compliments in stock; and we reply to their polite greeting, while adding to it the inevitable two or five franc piece. This duty, by right, only falls to the householders, the well-to-do fathers of families and officials; but, in fact, every one who wears anything of a decent coat is laid under contribution. But the sufferings are far from being at an end with this. A drummer deputation from the National Guard appears, with military earnestness and bright red cheeks and noses, which latter circumstances we charitably ascribe to the cutting easterly wind. They offer poetical congratulations, and leave behind a neatly printed paper full of wishes and hopes for the new year. To this deputation you give, in addition to money, a few glasses of liquor, no matter of what description, for they drink anything, and still have a long distance to go.

This deputation even waits on the Emperor, though in a manner slightly different, and probably unique in its way. On New Year's morn, between nine and ten o'clock, a regular army of drummers assemble in the inner court of the Tuileries, at least 1,500 of them, with all their drum-majors. They form an immense semicircle; and I have no doubt but on this day many a private dons the leathern apron in order to make up the tale. In the mean while some hundred thousand spectators have assembled on the Place de Caroussel. All is still silent, and you can distinctly hear the palace clock strike; suddenly, at a signal, the awful din commences, like a very earthquake, for the ground itself shakes with the uproar. I need hardly dwell on the effect produced on the ears of the audience.* By this time the Emperor has come out on to the balcony in his general's uniform. He waves his feathered hat in greeting, and his son stands by his side in a Zouave uniform. The little fellow must grow accustomed to all these strange sights betimes. The Empress, too, makes her appearance with a suite of ladies and gentlemen. The 3,000 drumsticks are in constant movement, as if each individual performer wished to crack his parchment. Suddenly all is over after a *pas de charge*, and the ensuing shouts are like a bird's twittering after a lion's roar. In the remote quarters of Paris, or only away from the Tuileries, there is heard at the same hour a dull roar, like the sound of a distant thunderstorm; and many, who do not remember what it really is at the moment,

* Only once did the writer hear a greater drum concert,—in 1845, when our Queen went up the Rhine, and the late King of Prussia disturbed her morning dreams by the tattoo of 4,000 drums, collected from all parts of his kingdom. But that was only once in a way.

run to their neighbours to ask what the matter can be. But the true Frenchman is glad at it, and gives us a nod of satisfaction; for noise, after all, is the main point in the world, or at least in France, and the greater the row is, the better.

I had hoped by this diversion to escape from the remaining New Year's wishes. But no! there is another tap at the door, but this time gentle and modest: two Sisters of Mercy silently hold out their box; they beg for the poor who on this day have neither bread nor firing, and yet would like to eat and be warm on New Year's day. O ye good, I am almost inclined to say holy women, I only wish I could fill your hands and pockets with gold! How I love you, and how easy it seems to me, despite of M. Rénan, to believe in the miraculous deeds of Him whose humble disciples can perform such miracles of charity and self-denial!

The good Sisters have scarce left the house when fresh visitors arrive. If I am not greatly mistaken, these people called some days ago to offer their compliments and receive their present. Moreover, they belong to a calling which no one likes to name, and which, though extremely useful from a sanitary point of view, is anything but fragrant—the exact reverse of Durand, who, I may remark parenthetically, is now the first perfumer in Paris. Of course there are mutual explanations, accompanied by protests on my side against this repeated, even though well-meant compliment. But it comes out that the men who congratulated me a few days back in the name of the same cleansing trade, and to whom I gave largely, as they were the first I had seen, did not belong to the trade at all, but were simply rogues, who abused my credulity. In the mean while the men are still waiting, and abusing the scamps. In order to get rid of the claimants, who do not smell precisely of rose-water, I feel in my rapidly emptying pocket, but at the same time clutch my hat and stick in order to get out and escape fresh visitors. Of course the idea occurs to me that those rogues are not the only ones who may have tried their tricks on, and hence there may be fresh appeals, from which flight is the sole resource. Poor Ulysses—

"Incidit in Scyllam cupiens velare Charybdin,"

or in English, out of the frying-pan into the fire; for now matters begin to grow really ugly.

As I said, I fled abroad; but I had unfortunately reckoned without the host, which may be here taken literally, for I had not thought of the landlords. I quickly went into my café to drink my chocolate, took up the nearest paper, and thought of nothing, as is so often the case with the readers of Parisian journals. But when the chocolate was brought me I saw it all; on the tray lay a magnificent orange, a neat box of bonbons, and a famous cigar, tied up with a tricolour ribbon. The waiter smiled over it all, and I—for what else could I do?—smiled too, put the orange into my pocket as I left, and laid in its place the traditional five-franc piece; but this time with more ill temper than I had yet felt, for in the opinion of everybody

the New Year's gift in the Parisian cafés is an abuse and a perfect robbery. Two words in explanation. A plain cup of coffee costs eight sous in all the decent houses, and you can only enter such for the sake of the newspapers, to meet your friends, and for other substantial reasons. Those eight sous pay for the trifle you consume thrice or four times over; but people put up with it partly because the price is everywhere the same, and also because the comforts are great. But it is the custom to give the waiter, each time, a fee of two sous, which causes the cup of coffee to cost half a franc. A daily visit to a café is, however, a social necessity for many Parisians, and entails on them an outlay of nearly 200 francs a year. As twenty per cent. of the amount has been paid for attendance, the New Year's compliments of the waiters are an impertinence, as every one sees, though no one is willing to make an exception. In large cafés like the Rotonde, the Café Riche, the Café de la Régence, &c., the *pour-boire* amounts to as much as 100 francs a day; nor does the owner of the café pay his waiters, who divide the fees monthly, and earn a handsome sum, even though there be fifteen or twenty of them. Witty Alphonse Karr once wrote a biting philippic against the New Year's oranges and cigars, in which he demanded of the coffee-house keeper a present for having been a daily guest for twelve months. But the evil was not removed by this, and who knows whether Karr did not give his five francs too? It is just the same with the restaurants; there too is a daily fee, and also the New Year's contribution, except that a bundle of toothpicks is substituted for the cigar. And we do not recommend anybody to attempt opposition; he would expose himself to great unpleasantness, and infallibly succumb in the unequal contest. The politeness of the waiters would be changed into the exact opposite, and the joke ascribed to Alphonse Karr might easily be verified, that two waiters attempted to poison a guest out of revenge because he smoked the New Year's cigar to his coffee, and on going away only left two sous for it.

The barber and hairdresser has also conspired against society on this day, and any man who has not the courage to shave himself, but has daily recourse to the barber, had better not attempt to forget the tricolour box. And yet, whenever a man has his hair cut or is shaved, he gives the usual *pour-boire;* but the first artists of this description, such as Lespe, in the Rue Vivienne, who calls himself on his cards and bottles, "*professeur d'art capillaire,*" present us at New Year, on a silver salver, a small almanack, which is worth about two sous. I have gained nothing, then, by my flight from home. Wherever I turn the same smiling face greets me, in the shape of a waiter or other menial, and a man must really be Rothschild himself to satisfy all the demands. Even from the little booths on the Boulevards I am incessantly addressed, "Etrennez-moi donc, mon cher Monsieur," contrary to all the rules of the French Grammar, which does not recognize such a verb. But all sorts of liberties are taken in Paris at the New Year. A friend of mine positively had his pocket

picked by a *gamin*, solely that the latter might hand it back to him and ask for his *étrennes*. Hence in these days nothing can surprise us. Let me jump into this passing omnibus, partly to escape from this dangerous atmosphere, partly to see how things appear at the Bastille and the St. Antoine district. A fresh Scylla! the conductor presents me with the guide to all the Paris omnibus lines, and I can only ransom myself with sundry francs. Had I hired a *fiacre* I should have fared no better. The Parisian cabmen are entirely metamorphosed at the New Year; they are only peacefully drunk, they have no insults for their fare, whom they address as *bourgeois* or *mon maître*—no curses and lashes for the poor horse, which they merely urge into a trot by shouting, "Allons, ma blonde." It is incomprehensible, incredible, but the paradox really exists—a polite drive, which is probably the greatest victory of the Parisian *Jour de l'An*.

On the Bastille square and in all the districts around there was a terrible uproar, for snow had fallen, and everybody in a decent coat and hat was being attacked. Hence nought was left me but to return home in order to dress for the necessary New Year's visits. In the gateway I came across the porter, whom I had sought in vain in his lodge when I went out. At that hour he was probably paying his complimentary visits to the distinguished families on the lower floors; he does not come up to my regions, but prefers laying wait below. The Parisian porter is, next to the house-owner, indubitably the first and most important personage in the whole house, and, like the *fiacre* men, a sworn foe of politeness. But he regularly alters his behaviour a week before the new year; his countenance becomes mild and pleasant on New Year's eve, even gentle and affectionate, and on the 1st of January he is as attentive and polite as a groom of the chambers. But woe to the lodger who allows himself to be deceived by this, and neglects his offering! As Schiller says, in the "Song of the Bell,"—

> "Gefährlich ist's den Leu zu wecken,
> Verderblich ist den Tiger's Zahn,
> Jedoch der schrecklichste der Schrecken,"

is the vengeance of the Parisian porter. That certainly does not rhyme, and the glorious strophe is mutilated, but the sense is quite true. A thick book might be written about the Parisian porter, and the joys and sorrows of the lodger, and yet the subject would not be exhausted, because it is inexhaustible. For my part I did not hesitate long, but felt in my pocket, and gave the Cerberus, who had become gentle as a lamb and drew back his claws, a half louis d'or. With these ten francs I purchased peace and rest for the coming year. The punctual delivery of all letters, newspapers, parcels, &c., as well as the exact performance of all oral commissions; his discretion, if I did not wish to be at home for certain persons; the speedy opening of the street doors, if I returned home after midnight, and a multitude of other agreeable things, among which not

the least was the greasy smile of the porter's wife. All this felicity for ten francs; and yet there are people who assert that living is so expensive in Paris!

While dressing I suddenly felt a dreadful weight on my mind. No New Year's visits can possibly be paid in Paris without offering a present to the lady of the house and her children—if she have any—and you find children everywhere in Paris on New Year's day. The usual present—for not everybody is in a position to give brilliant bracelets or polichinells at five hundred francs—consists of bonbons and other pastrycook's wares—in themselves most innocent things;—and innocent, too, as regards price, it might be supposed; but fashion wills it that these sweets should only be purchased at certain renowned magazines, if you do not wish to be taken for a barbarian just arrived from Iceland or Lapland. I now remembered the triumphant glance of the friend I had met at the corner of the Rue Vivienne, and who held out to me the elegant packet on which I read "Marquis, Passage des Panoramas." The Maison Marquis is one of those renowned magazines, of which there are only three or four for each season, although the same articles may be purchased in a hundred similar shops for one-third of the price. But whenever did fashion trouble itself about logic and sound common sense? Thus, for some years past, the chocolate-maker marquis has been celebrated for his *marrons glacés*. They are certainly very nice and tempting, but just as good may be bought at any pastrycook's. A pound of them costs everywhere else from one and a half to two francs. At Marquis's, however, who naturally takes advantage of the folly of the fashionable world, especially as capricious fashion might dethrone him to-morrow, the pound costs five and six francs, and you have to wait half an hour or longer before you can reach the counter, for the crowd is so great. For several years Boissin has been the head shop for liqueur bonbons, Gorcache for burnt almonds, and things of that sort. On pretty boxes, which cost an absurd sum too, the celebrated name is, of course, displayed with all the titles, such as "Purveyor to the Imperial Court," "Patented Inventor," &c., in such staring letters that a half-blind man could read them plainly. In this way a man can easily manage to spend a couple of louis d'or, where two five-franc pieces would have been sufficient; but when possessed of bonbons bearing one of those renowned names, he can at once rap confidently at any door, and not even be repulsed from the Tuileries. Still, the satirical side of this, in itself, so comical picture is not wanting; but I must implore my readers not to tell that I have betrayed the secret. A terrible abuse is carried on with these great names, or, to speak more correctly, with the articles sold in the aforesaid magazines. In the great mansions, where such boxes, each more splendid than the other, are left for the mistress by hundreds, they nearly all fall, sooner or later, into the hands of the lady's-maid and other servants. The lady of the house certainly receives them with a gracious smile, or even with a word of thanks, but lays them on

one side directly, and troubles herself no further about them. She would have too much to do in examining these trifles. The boxes are emptied in the antechamber and servants' hall, and the boxes themselves (that is the chief point) are sold under the rose. There are plenty of purchasers, for this is a very profitable branch of trade; and there are several such establishments in the Faubourg du Temple, the head-quarters of the second-hand dealers. We go there next New Year, buy for a trifle a violet or satin box, with the name of the still fashionable firm upon it, have it filled at some cheap pastrycook's, wrap it up in note-paper, and hand it to the lady, for whom we care as little as she does for us, but whom propriety orders that we should congratulate at the New Year, because her husband or brother protects us, or has promised us his protection, or some other misery of that sort. I say "us," but that is a mere *façon de parler*, and I must request my readers to believe that I am not guilty of such manœuvres. There is a very piquant story of a bonbon-box, which in this way reached the same hands thrice; but unfortunately I dare not repeat it, as it concerns a most exalted lady.

Among other plagues I may mention as connected with the New Year, is that of a countryman, who has not received his remittances most unaccountably, and requests a loan, and unfortunately I possess neither the courage nor talent to behave like the celebrated Börm, who, whenever a suspicious visitor of this nature arrived, always took the wind out of his sails by begging him (the visitor) to lend him a hundred francs for a few days.

Of our Christmas joys, I need hardly say the Parisians have no idea. Grown-up persons have certainly, as in other Catholic countries, the midnight mass, to which the Parisians only go in order to have a greater claim for holding what is called the *réveillon* after mass, punch parties, wild orgies, and even worse. Many, too, do not even go to mass, but begin the *réveillon* as early as ten o'clock. But that pious feeling which urges us to collect all the members of the family round the Christmas board is unknown to the French, and the description I have given of a New Year's day in Paris shows how poor a substitute they possess.

LASCELLES WRAXALL, BART.

THE BROKEN WALL.

"DON'T read me any more just now, Dick. I can't bear it, just at present!"

And the colonel rose hurriedly from his chair and walked to the open window, through which came in tuneful bursts the strains of the Austrian band in the gardens beyond. For a time Colonel Ashton stood quite still, with his back to me, listening to the distant music, while the thin blue smoke curled listlessly upwards from his cigar. At last, after an interval of perhaps ten minutes, my friend turned round, and said, with something of a forced laugh,—

"Excuse me, Fletcher, for interrupting you. I dare say you are surprised to see me evince so much agitation without apparent cause; but the account of the fatal flood at Sheffield had awakened slumbering recollections of what was really one of the darkest episodes of my life, and——But I see your curiosity is aroused, and I will, if you like, tell you the story."

And after a brief pause the colonel proceeded with the following narrative, which I have endeavoured to give, as far as possible, in his own words:—

"Fifteen years ago, the regiment of native infantry in which I then held the rank of captain was stationed in the midst of some of the grandest and most romantic scenery in Central India. The situation of the town, indeed—in the widest part of a rocky valley that separated two lofty mountain chains—was excessively picturesque; and as the height above the sea-level was very considerable, the atmosphere was by far less stifling and malaria-laden than that of the sultry plains below. I shall never forget my first glimpse of that charming spot, seen from the crest of the pass which our long column of troops, with its almost interminable train of baggage and camp followers, had been painfully scaling for hours. Indeed, that widening valley—with its chain of miniature lakes or tanks, almost carpeted by broad-leaved aquatic plants, and fringed by noble old peepul trees; the luxuriant groves from which the white town, with its mosques and temples, and the palace of the Rajah on a knoll of rising ground, gleamed forth like a pearl in its setting—was like an actual view of Eden. And above it rose the serrated mountain peaks, as if keeping watch and ward over so much loveliness. The words, 'How beautiful!' involuntarily broke from the lips of all of us Europeans, as one by one we came in sight of our destined station; and none of us, I am sure, dreamed of what a fearful scene of desolation and ruin that smiling valley would present before another year had come round.

"Many Indian cities and villages are fair enough to look upon from a distance, but disenchantment begins when the traveller plunges into the midst of the squalid misery of the bazaar. But in this case there was

really not much to complain of. I do not mean, of course, that the condition of the streets inhabited by the lower class of natives was such as would have satisfied an English Board of Health; but, compared with the crowded station which we had lately quitted, the place was delightful. The people were tolerably prosperous, had been better governed than is commonly the case under the sway of the vassal princes of India, and on all sides we saw signs of industry and content. There were many good houses in the town; about its outskirts were scattered several pretty bungalows, with garden and compound, enclosed in mighty hedges of the thorn and prickly pear, and these were to be tenanted by ourselves, as they had been by several successive parties of officers before us. Even the cottages of the ryots were superior to the average of the miserable hovels commonly seen in the protected states; the women and children seemed to have no lack of silver bangles and nose-rings; and on feast-days there was only too great a profusion of fireworks, barbarous music, and noisy merry-making.

"Much of this abundance was caused by the facilities for irrigation that existed, and which were partly due to the nature of the lofty valley, lying as it did at the foot of very high crags, and receiving a far larger proportion of the annual rainfall than is the case among the sandy levels of the hot country beneath it. But even these advantages of position would have availed little, but for the fact that the former rulers of the land had, with wonderful pains and care, constructed a chain of artificial tanks or lakelets for the purpose of husbanding the water from the hills; thanks to which, the supply was perennial, and while other districts were parched with drought, the upland rice-fields were as green as emeralds. All this sounds very tiresome and uninteresting in your ears, Fletcher, I dare say; but without this preliminary explanation you could not understand the melancholy history that I am about to relate.

"The prettiest dwelling among those appropriated to our use was, by common consent, Harcourt's bungalow. Harcourt was our major; and as the colonel was in Europe on sick leave, he commanded the battalion. He was my very dear friend, had fought by my side in the Sikh campaigns, and had done me many a kindness and many a good turn since the day when he was junior captain of the regiment, and I his subaltern. That I was sincerely attached to Philip Harcourt I need hardly say. But he was, indeed, popular with us all, and respected as well as liked by every member of the corps, from the colonel to the Eurasian drummer-boys. The major was not only an excellent officer, but a man of unusual accomplishments, an artist, a botanist, and so forth; and by far the best informed and most talented of us all. He had been married for some years, but his pretty young wife was in delicate health, and she and the children had latterly resided in Europe. Such separations are common enough, as I dare say you are aware, with those who fear to expose their dear ones to the risks of climate and epidemics; but Harcourt was of a most affec-

tionate nature, and the division from those whom he loved had been bitter to him. The major's chief cause of satisfaction, when we got the route for the hills, was, that his wife and children could now safely come out from England to rejoin him.

"I have said that Harcourt's dwelling was by much the prettiest and most commodious of the officers' houses. It was, indeed, a handsome structure of wood and chunam, with broad and shady verandahs, and standing in a large garden, enclosed by a tall milkthorn hedge, whose spikes kept out marauders, whether biped or quadruped, better than a wall could have done. It was built on the brink of a deep and wide nullah, at the bottom of which flowed a small stream of water; while the banks were covered with feathery bamboos and dwarf areca palms. The house was lower down the valley than the site of the town near which our barracks were placed; while the cantonments of a force of the Rajah's irregular troops were still nearer to the bazaar or native quarter of the little city. The barracks, like the palace of the Rajah, were on rising ground, and the houses of most of the officers were built on the slopes of a spur that projected from the mountain-side; but Harcourt was thought lucky in living in a more retired spot, where he could hardly be disturbed by the infernal noises which the natives contrive to elicit from their tamtams and cowhorn trumpets, on the occasion of a Hindoo or Mohammedan festival.

"There was something touching, to my fancy, in Harcourt's impatience and restlessness, as the happy day approached that was to reunite him and those he loved so dearly. He had computed the time necessary, in his judgment, for the land part of the journey, and had told off the hours like a schoolboy looking forward to Christmas. He was almost absurdly anxious lest the house, which he had furnished well, and indeed luxuriously, should not appear sufficiently comfortable to the eyes of those who were fresh from Europe; and he had taken pains to fill the garden with such English flowers as could be kept alive under the hot Indian sun.

"Just about that time we all had some annoyances to contend with. A number of our servants—not only the coolies, natives of the district, who swept our floors and filled our water-jars, but some of the most valuable of our personal attendants—suddenly deserted us, returning to their villages abruptly, and preferring in some instances to forfeit their wages rather than remain. Also we discovered that sinister rumours of some impending evil were afloat, both in the bazaars and the barracks; and from hut to hut a whisper spread among our Sepoys and noncommissioned officers that some great calamity was about to occur. Perhaps in no country do false reports spread so rapidly, or produce such bad effects, as in India, and of this Major Harcourt was so well aware, that on the report reaching his ears that a fakir had been prowling lately about the lines, and that he was the author of the sinister predictions abroad, orders were issued for the man's arrest. The order was obeyed, and I was present in

the adjutant's office when the fakir was brought in, in charge of a file of high-caste soldiers, who seemed excessively afraid of their prisoner.

"At the first glance there seemed to be nothing particular in the appearance of this fellow, who was the fac-simile of many of those crazy impostors, half beggar, half madman, whom we had seen in different parts of India. He was a Hindoo devotee, however, not a Mohammedan one, and his hideous face was frightfully smeared with yellow ochre, as well as with the clay and ashes that had been plentifully sprinkled on his shaggy head. His long hair hung down in matted elf-locks; he wore no clothing but a cummerbund of dirty cotton, and his person evinced the usual signs of neglect and squalor which with these fanatics imply peculiar sanctity. Round his neck hung a bundle of charms, scraps of bone and metal, that clattered as he walked; and over his brawny shoulders were slung by a cord his little brass drinking-cup and the calabash in which he collected alms. So far he resembled scores of his order, whose wild figures I had seen at fairs and religious festivals. But never in my life before had I encountered the gaze of an eye so malignant and piercing as that of the fakir, and I shuddered involuntarily as I met its evil glitter, as if it had been that of a deadly serpent.

"Harcourt interrogated the man with much severity, and threatened him with heavy punishment if he should venture again to tamper with the Honourable Company's troops, but the menace was received with an air of sovereign contempt; and the man, stretching out his long bare arm with a gesture that impressed us in spite of our better reason, broke into a rhapsody of mingled invective and prediction. Much of what he said was couched in a mystic jargon unintelligible to us, and perhaps to any save the initiated; but it was evident from what we could catch that the wanderer was reiterating, with savage earnestness, his prognostics of coming woe. Evil was coming, he said, upon the land for the sins of those who dwelt there, and that speedily; and there should be a day ere long when the dead should lie unburied, for lack of living hands to build the funeral pyre of the Hindoo, or dig the grave of the Moslem; when rich and poor should perish together, and when the carrion crow and the eagle should come down from the crags to feast on the flesh of the proud Feringhee warriors, and to tear the delicate limbs of their wives and of their golden-haired children. How all these direful things were to come about the enthusiast disdained to say; but at this point Harcourt lost all patience, and, angrily interrupting the man's oration, ordered him out of the lines, with the promise of a sound flogging if he showed his face there again—Siva, Hunaymun, and all other Brahminical deities notwithstanding.

"I have never forgotten the peculiar look of cold triumphant malice with which the fakir heard this sentence, but he made no verbal answer, walking away between his guards with the dignity of a prophet. Whether he were a mere artful impostor, or a genuine fanatic, or, what is more

probable, a cross between the two, we could none of us tell; but I will answer for it, that for a minute or two we all looked rather uncomfortable. However, we went to billiards, tiffin, and our various afternoon occupations of duty or recreation, and soon forgot the fakir.

"That evening, as I was sipping some newly imported claret in Harcourt's bungalow, Mrs. Harcourt and the children arrived, very tired, after a most fatiguing journey by dâk over the mountains. The rains had set in unusually early in some of the hill districts, and in places the bearers had had hard work to keep their feet as they made their way along the flooded road, seamed by a thousand little rivulets. However, that was over now, and the husband and wife, the father and children, were safe in one another's company. Safe! well, so at least common sense and experience seemed to say; but I own that—as two or three of us, having left the major's house in the confusion of the arrival, unwilling as we were to trespass on those first sacred moments of family affection, walked together to our quarters—my own heart was heavy. Do what I would, the fakir's hideous face seemed to rise up before me through the shadows of the night, and his boding voice seemed again to sound in my ears. The weather, too, which had been lovely, was undergoing a change; the pure blue sky was overcast, and filmy clouds began to obscure the glorious Indian moon that had turned the white walls of the dwellings we passed on our outward way into enchanted pavilions of silver. By the time we got home it was very dark, and in two hours the rains set in.

"You have never been in India, Fletcher, and therefore I cannot hope to make you realize all that is conveyed to the ear of an Anglo-Indian by that word—the rains. Any description of mine would be so poor and tame in comparison with that mighty phenomenon of nature, the setting in of the wet season in a tropical country, that I shall attempt none. Suffice it that there was the usual rush and roar of the falling water, the bubbling and seething of tiny torrents that burst from every crack and fissure of the rocks; that the sky was black as ink, and that the moist wind that now blew through the window-screens was so surcharged with damp as to rust all iron and steel, and to mildew such clothes as were not carefully stowed away in airtight cases. For some days drill was impossible, and the details of our military duties were anything but agreeable, but at length the rains appeared to abate. The district in which we were, more favoured with occasional showers than those thirsty regions that depend wholly on the monsoons, was also one in which the force and duration of the latter were less excessive than in some other parts of the country. Accordingly, though rains were still heavy and frequent, there were lulls in the storm during which the sun shone out brightly enough.

"In one of these pauses of the elemental war Harcourt's orderly brought me a message from the major, requesting me to ride up the valley and satisfy myself as to the condition of the highest or principal tank, the dam of which had been reported to be in need of repair, while the water was at

an unusually high level. The report as to the insecure state of the dam came from a Swiss engineer in the Rajah's service, one of those 'adventurers' on whom the company's servants have always looked with dislike and suspicion. In this case there was room for some suspicion that the informant wished Harcourt to use his influence with the prince concerning the repairs of the great tank, in order that the worthy Swiss might gain profit and credit by conducting the works, rather than from any imperative need for their commencement. However, the major begged that I would inspect the dam myself, and, if I should see fit, formally report upon its present state. I willingly ordered round my horse, and, with a syce, an active fellow, running swiftly beside my bridle rein, rode up the valley.

"The great tank—a phrase which very inaccurately describes a piece of water many acres in extent—occupied a species of terrace or natural plateau, some miles above the town; while below it was a chain of lesser artificial lakes, all of which were fed by the overflow of the water from the upper one. The tanks in India, as you may have heard, are sometimes of great antiquity, and their construction is reckoned among the good works of the most beneficent of rulers. This particular reservoir was known as the 'tank of the kings,' and was very ancient. Probably it had been old long before the Mohammedan conquest; and I feel pretty sure that for centuries it had been left without repairs of any sort. But the wall which spanned the rocky valley, and by its solid strength kept back the waters accumulated above, was certainly a structure of Titanic dimensions. As I drew near, and for the first time gained a near view of the gigantic rampart towering aloft like the wall of some huge fortress, I felt as if dwarfed in the presence of such a prodigy of human handiwork. It was almost painful to think of the infinite toil required, among a people so destitute of machinery and mechanical skill as the Hindoos, to rear such a mass of masonry as that which frowned above me. I knew with what slow industry the poor natives must have laboured at their prince's bidding, since every ponderous stone, every load of chunam, every basketful of clay, must have been carried up on the shoulders of men and women, and by their hands adjusted in its place.

"The 'tank of the kings' stood in a lonely situation, no building being near it except a ruined Brahmin temple, long deserted, whose roofless walls were to be seen through the thousand stems of a banian grove at a short distance. The banks were overgrown with reeds and bushes, from amid which some water-fowl rose with clanging wings and shrill note, and its surface was draped here and there by great beds of the lily and the lotus. A pretty scene it was, but just then my attention was given to the fearful height to which the foam-streaked mass of turbid water had attained, and to certain ghastly cracks and branching fissures that seamed the barrier-wall. The streams were unusually full, and the waters rushed over their pebbly bed with a sullen sound, like that of the waves breaking on the sea-beach. I did my best to execute the duty assigned to me, but

it was no easy matter. Dismounting, I walked along the ridge of the dam, now slippery with spray, and covered with dank green weeds and long grass, that partially hid the cracks in the cemented masonry. In many places little threads of water came slowly oozing through the rifts, and trickling down the outward face of the rampart. But the dam itself was on so colossal a scale, with its broad platform on which a regiment of cavalry might have ridden in order of column, and yet left room to spare, that it seemed almost unconquerable even by time and decay.

"'What do you think of it, Motee?' said I, turning in perplexity to my horsekeeper as he stood beside me, holding the bridle of the Arab, which, with its small intelligent head bent down, and its soft dark eyes looking placidly at my proceedings, seemed also to be pondering on the state of the reservoir.

"'If the sahib permits the humblest of his servants to speak,' answered Motee, readily, 'Motee Rao would submit that the "tank of the kings" is very ancient indeed. It was formed by holy monarchs beloved of Brahma, and they say that the blessed Mahâdi himself drank of its waters during one of his avatars here upon this earth. What did so well for our fathers may surely do as well for us. The wall is very strong; but for the help of magic and the giants who dwelt in Deccan in those days, it could never—'

"'Very well, Motee Rao,' answered I, laughing, 'I see you are a conservative at heart, and disposed to let sleeping dogs lie. I dare say you are right, and I do not myself believe there is any damage beyond what a score or so of coolies, with a few baskets of tempered clay and burnt lime, can set to rights in two days' labour. Hold the stirrup a moment—so.—And now, Deersfoot, hey for home again.'

"That evening I was engaged to take a quiet dinner at Harcourt's house down the valley. How well I remember that meal, and almost every word, however trivial, every circumstance, however insignificant, during the repast! I had not seen much of Mrs. Harcourt before that day. The major had been absent from the regiment, filling some lucrative civil appointment during the first two or three years of his married life, and his wife was almost a stranger to her husband's brother officers. She was a little delicate creature, with glossy light brown hair, and the soft rose pink of England still on her cheeks; and she was rather timid and retiring, but her fondness for, and her pride in Philip Harcourt were something beautiful to see. I could understand Harcourt's deep affection for her, mingled as it was with a feeling of protecting patronage for the gentle young creature who clung so trustingly to his strong arm. At dessert the children were brought in under guard of their dark-skinned ayahs, and two prettier little darlings never roused a bachelor's envy. Philip, the eldest, had his father's manly boldness of look, and was a fine frank little fellow; while Beatrice had such a face as we rarely see out of a picture, a sweet little face, white and pink like a South Sea shell, with her mother's blue

eyes and a profusion of golden curls. Two charming childrent hey were; but I do not know why it was that the instant I saw them a dull feeling of pain benumbed my heart, and the raving prophecy of the fakir recurred with terrible distinctness to my recollection. However, I shook off the unwelcome impression, and all went merrily and pleasantly on, and ours was a happy evening.

"'What in the world was that, Ashton? don't you hear it?' cried the major, starting up uneasily and turning to the window. But the noise of the torrent below, now swollen to unusual dimensions by the rains, was so loud and continuous that it was not for some time that I could distinguish the deep sound of a large drum beating the alarm.

"'That is no drum of ours; it must belong to the Rajah's troops. Something is wrong up yonder!' exclaimed Harcourt, hastily buckling on his sword.

"Before I had time to answer, the curtain in the doorway was hurriedly pulled aside, and Waddilove, one of our ensigns, came quickly in.

"'I beg Mrs. Harcourt's pardon for intruding,' he said, eagerly, 'but, major, there's an awful panic among the niggers yonder; they say the dam is giving way up at the "tank of the kings," and the end of the world is coming, or something of the sort, for I can't make out half their gibberish. The Rajah has sent down to beg you'll turn out the men. He has ordered the drum to be beaten to call his own sword-and-matchlock fellows into cantonments; but, as usual, none of the natives can do anything but bellow and shout, and there's water a foot deep in the bazaar already, I assure you.'

"A painful scene ensued, for Mrs. Harcourt clung to her husband and begged him not to leave her, while the children cried, and the native servants, who are as timid and excitable as children, set up a piteous howling all about the verandahs and corridors, and gave themselves up for lost. But Harcourt, by mingled firmness and kindness, succeeded in soothing the frightened household, and, gently disengaging himself from his wife's arms, told her to look hopefully forward to his return, and assured her that the danger was much exaggerated. The ensign was sent back to the lines, to give instructions to the commanding officer for turning out the men with a supply of such tools as could be got.

"'In such a case as this, Brahmins themselves must not object to put their sacred hands to the spade and trowel; but still press as many coolies as you can. Send to the Rajah and ask for labourers, and push the fatigue parties up the valley as fast as possible. Ashton and I will gallop on and reconnoitre the damage.'

"No sooner said than done. Our horses were soon saddled, and off we went, avoiding the town and taking the nearest way towards the hills. As we spurred on we could hear the deep booming noise of the native drum still going on, while screams, yells, and a confused hubbub of many voices came floating on the wind. The streams were very full, and we

could see that the lower lakes had overflowed their banks, while our horses splashed fetlock deep through pools of water as we sped up the rocky road. Presently the gigantic rampart of the 'tank of the kings' loomed above us, white and majestic in the flickering moonlight. I saw with dismay that the cracks, which I had seen that very day, had widened into gaping gashes, through which the water spirted in fifty rills. I reined up my horse.

"'Harcourt, this looks serious,' said I.

"An eldritch laugh, that froze my very blood, seemed to be the answer to my words, and from among the thorny shrubs that fringed the foot of the rampart started up a hideous figure, waving its naked arms above its head like a sorcerer weaving spells. The moonlight, struggling through the clouds, showed us the frightful ochre-besmeared countenance, the tangled locks and glittering eyes, of the fakir. Those eyes were shining now with the glare of manifest insanity, and his voice was like the snarl of a hungry tiger as he cried aloud,—

"'All—all—all! Siva the Destroyer will not spare one! not the blaspheming Mussulman, not the cold-hearted Hindoo, not the thrice vile Feringhee. All shall perish, from the Rajah on his musnud to the coolie on his straw,—man, and woman, and child,—all of the impious.'

"And thus he continued to rave, but I had something else to think of than his wild denunciations; for at that moment I distinctly saw the massive wall shake and quiver like a living thing in pain, and the rifts in the dam widen and deepen, and, in a few seconds more, with a roar like thunder, a large portion of the barrier gave way, and out through the chasm leaped the white waves, bursting forth with the force and fury of a cataract. By instinct we wheeled our horses round and headed for the town.

"'Ride, Harcourt, ride for your life! death is behind us!' I shouted, hoarsely, as I dashed the spurs into the sides of my gallant horse. And down the valley we went with breakneck speed, our steeds flying rather than galloping, while by their terrified snorting and mad bounds it was evident that they, too, were well aware how imminent was the peril. A fearful race it was, and for a fearful stake. Some strange fascination caused me twice or thrice to look back over my shoulder at the dread pursuing enemy. On it came, rolling furiously forward, swift as a mill-race, a wall of water, flecked with foam, crossing the valley, surging up the hill-sides, and sending its hoarse, boding roar before it, like the cry of some monster rushing on its prey. In that awful moment our lives depended on the speed and sureness of foot of our steeds, and yet we had no time to pick our way as we dashed over rough and smooth under the pale moonbeams. The brave little Arabs strained every nerve and sinew, and though there were many fearful stumbles that threatened to prove fatal—since a fall would have been death,—they kept their feet like cats. The angry flood gained upon us, but the town was near, and into the streets we rushed, the water following at our very heels. The barracks

were built, as I have said, on sloping ground, and we reined up our reeking horses on the summit of the ascent, and looked back. The moon had broken from the clouds, and we saw a fearful spectacle.

"In the bazaar below the streets were crowded with a dense mass of people—men, women, and children, many of whom were laden with bundles, chests, or piles of household gear and other property, which they were in the act of trying to save when the flood broke in upon them. The shrieks, the cries, the tossing arms of these poor drowning wretches, as the raging inundation swept them from their foothold or tore them from the beams and doorposts to which they clung in their despair, were such as to realize the ghastliest visions of the day of judgment. The wretched hovels went down like a child's house of cards before the rush of the flood, the frail walls of bamboo and sun-dried mud yielding in an instant, and roof after roof fell crashing in, adding to the disaster. Even the well-built houses of the merchants and other rich natives proved unfit to stem the fury of the torrent, which dashed against their walls like the sea beating against a cliff; and the whole surface of the frothing water was covered with floating wreck and ruin, with broken timbers and thatch, uptorn trees, and the corpses of young and old, whirled to and fro like dead leaves on a mountain brook. And still the great drum beat on with its sullen, booming roar, but the babel of shrieks and agonized cries well-nigh drowned its ominous sound. In the barrack square the regiment was forming, without arms, but ready to execute the orders which Harcourt, the first surprise over, now gave with cool decision. Detachments were sent out, furnished with poles, ladders, and ropes, with instructions to give every assistance to the miserable inhabitants. Messengers were despatched to the Rajah, requesting that he would issue orders for the co-operation of his own soldiers in this work of mercy, and a guard was posted to prevent the pillage which so often occurs among Oriental nations in any time of calamity and confusion. In the midst of all this, one of Harcourt's servants, dripping-wet, ghastly with terror, and without his turban, came running and caught his master's stirrup-leather, looking up at him with eager eyes.

"'Sahib! sahib!' sobbed the man, 'your house is surrounded by the flood, and—I do not dare to speak it—Azrael, the angel of death, is busy there! I only have escaped.'

"Harcourt reeled in his saddle, as if he had received a death-wound, and struck his forehead impatiently.

"'Fool that I was! but I thought them safe! I will save them yet, or we will die together!' he cried, in despairing accents. 'Ashton! Forster! Bradley! for the love of heaven, don't desert me now, gentlemen. Quick! quick!' And the major drove his spurs into his horse's flanks and dashed through the barrack gate, followed by myself and two other officers who chanced to be mounted; but, fast as we rode, we could not prevent Harcourt from outstripping us. The flood had now made a clear breach through the town, levelling the huts in its track as effectually

as could have been done by artillery, and the whole lower part of the valley resembled an angry sea of boiling yellow waves, covered with *débris* of every kind. Our horses went floundering along with difficulty, for in the shallowest places the water was knee-deep. With no slight toil we reached the mound of earth, within pistol-shot of the pretty cottage, where Harcourt had been forced to rein up his horse. Even there the water surged nearly up to the girths, while one glance at the house, and another at the white, despairing face of the fond husband and father, revealed the full horror of the situation.

"The nullah, choked with the rush of the water, had overflowed its banks, and the flood had invaded the garden, and was beating against the walls of the house, which shook beneath the weight of the torrent, while through the doors the inundation poured its turbid billows. At a window, in the centre of a group of terrified servants, their bronzed faces blanched by fear, we saw Mrs. Harcourt, with her children clinging to her; and though her voice was lost in the splashing of the flood and the crash of the trees that fell, one by one, as the water sapped their foundations in the treacherous soil, it was evident, from her beseeching face and outstretched hands, that she was calling on her husband for succour in that awful moment. But between us and her was a barrier that none could cross,—thirty yards of eddying water sweeping madly past, with a force that none could stem. All that man could do was done by Harcourt. Twice, thrice, did he spur his frightened horse into the flood, only to be beaten back; for to reach the house either by swimming or wading was impossible. The third attempt at rescue nearly sealed my poor friend's own fate, for his exhausted horse lost its footing, and was swept away to perish in the waters, while it was only by great exertion that Forster and I were able to drag the rider clear of the struggling brute. As it was, he was bruised and faint, and I had to support him as we led him back to the mound. A cry of irrepressible horror from Bradley made me look round.

"The house had vanished! Where it had stood nothing was to be seen but a waste of tossing yellow waves, amidst which stood some portion of the tall milkthorn hedge of the garden. But of dwelling and inmates there was no trace left. All had been swallowed up by the hungry flood, and it was not till several days later that the bodies were found, disfigured and hardly to be recognized, and were tenderly laid in the earth.

"From that day I do not think Harcourt ever smiled. He was not one to shirk his work in the world on the plea of a sorrow greater than he could bear, and to the last he did his duty manfully and well. The Company had no braver or better officer. But his happiness on earth was gone, and for ever, and I am sure that the bullet which ended his life—he was killed in the mutiny, poor fellow—was welcome to him as rest to the weary.

"Well, Fletcher, shall we go over to the kursaal, and try our luck against M. Benazet? Or what do you say to a drive down the Lichtenthal before dinner? My tale is told."

THE ADVENTURES OF A QUEEN'S MESSENGER.

NO. VIII.—THE TRIALS OF A RUSSIAN JOURNEY.

But very few years have elapsed since a journey to the City of the Czar—which title is a corruption of Cæsar, used by Ivan II., of Russia, about the year 1579—was by no means an undertaking of pleasure, by whichever route the traveller elected to perform his journey,—either by the more direct one through Königsburg, over the frontier from Prussia, or by way of Warsaw. Whether amid the snows and intense cold of winter, or during the equally intense heats of summer; or even the still more repulsive rainy and muddy season of spring, when the great thaw commences, and the broad rivers are opened; go when or how one might, the journey was one of much fatigue, utterly devoid of interest, and not free from danger.

Thus few wanderers from our fatherland were met with by the wayside; very few ventured so far away from home, save those on duty or business intent; with here and there a stray tourist, more earnest than his fellow-men in the desire to visit foreign lands, and better prepared with the means of encountering considerable expense for the very moderate comforts to be met with on the journey. True that at this period there were steam-vessels, as there are now, from Hull, and from Stettin to Cronstadt, during the summer months. But the Baltic, even in midsummer-time, is very rarely a placid lake, on which to trust a stomach given to the horrors of sea-sickness.

Meanwhile, the comfort of a journey, as connected with the conveyance of despatches, is by no means a question that ever enters the heads of those who send them; and better that it never should do so into those who convey them. The Queen's messenger must utterly denounce such minor considerations as bodily comfort, or even bodily safety; and with a stout heart, easy digestion, good spirits, and courteous manner, he may defy the worst weather, and laugh to scorn the trials and perils of even a Russian journey.

Fancy, or rather picture, to yourselves, "ye gentlemen who live at home at ease," a start from London during the second week in January. I speak of the days when railways existed as far as the Russian frontier only, or rather to Königsburg, in Prussia, as well as from Berlin to Warsaw; from either of which places, whichever the route the traveller might select to Schoff, within ten hours of St. Petersburg, there was only the choice between a sledge and post-horses, or a weary, distressing lapse of days and nights in a heavy post diligence, the rumbling, and jolting, and foul smells of which were horrible to contemplate.

During the heat of summer, without shade, roadside hotels, or the interests of fine scenery or historical associations, I am not certain that the sufferings and fatigues of the traveller were not greater than even in winter; and let my readers remember that when I say there are no roadside

hotels in Russia, I only assert that which is literally the fact. True, there are posthouses, kept up by the Government; for the most part wretched abodes, without tree, or shrub, or garden to enliven them; standing desolate, surrounded by mile on mile of white snow and unbroken landscape; or in the centre of a burning, shadeless plain; or amid melting snow, mud, and misery. In these posthouses little was there to be obtained save warmth, which, in midwinter, I must admit, is a luxury. Beyond it, a "zomava," or Russian urn of boiling water, rum, sugar, and tea, was about all the traveller could count upon obtaining. Thus, woe to him who was not provided with creature comforts, or the necessaries of existence! He might starve by the wayside; or arrive at his destination weak in nerve and spirits, and reduced to a suitable weight to ride for the Derby or Leger.

The railroad, however, which is now opened all the way from Petersburg to Berlin, as well as from Petersburg to Warsaw, has naturally changed all this; and he who recollects these Northern journeys of the past is alone capable of forming any just estimate of the comparative comfort of the present journey, deplorably uninteresting though it still is, and far more injurious to health than on wheels.

Still, as regards St. Petersburg, or Petersburg without the Saint, it is in many respects a grand city, watered by a noble river, the Neva. Let me, however, in the words of a royal messenger, first speak of the past. I will not go back very many years, for in simple adventures like these, read over a blazing fire in a comfortable arm-chair, or under a shady lime tree, with the additional solace of a first-rate Havannah, the shell of the nut should be easy to crack.

It was on a bitter night in early spring-time that I first left the capital of Queen Victoria for that of the Czar of all the Russias. My journey to Berlin is briefly told; and although that portion of it as far as Cologne is greatly affected by my countrymen, I do not hesitate to assert that it has scarcely more to interest than the onward route to the Russian capital.

Ofttimes a rough and sickening passage from Dover to Calais or Ostend; an unpardonable and unexplainable delay of three or four hours at Lille, in an inconvenient and uncomfortable buffet, or station; a nauseous cup of liquid mistermed coffee; and then onwards, still with incessant uncalled-for delays, with little means of supporting nature, at least of satisfying a traveller's appetite, and not ten miles of interesting country till you reach Cologne at 4 p.m., having left London at 8 p.m. on the previous night—a journey which might easily be performed in twelve or fourteen hours.

To do only justice to the present proprietor of the railway station at that perfumed-water manufacturing and cathedral-inspecting city, he has, by means of a good *table d'hôte,* served promptly on the arrival of the train, and by comfort above-stairs, converted that which was heretofore a

high-priced eating and smoking room, with a sanded floor below-stairs, into a convenient and civilized region, where the traveller can snatch three hours' repose, and satisfy his hunger.

I must freely confess that three hours has ever appeared to me a very nearly adequate period in which to perambulate the much-vaunted city. True, the cathedral is magnificent, and will be still more so if ever completed. This is the great point of interest to the British tourist. The next is the purchase of a bottle of eau de Cologne—a very difficult purchase to decide on without knowledge of the special establishment at which it should be made, inasmuch as there are almost twoscore shops in the city, the proprietors of which are all supposed to be—and, indeed, suppose themselves to be, each and every one, the original and absolute Jean Marina Farina. Moreover, every concocter of eau de Cologne—and it is a very simple concoction, which can be made by any old housewife—appears to have received the first prize from and at every exhibition in Europe and the East. Indeed, I know it to be a fact, that on the face of one shop there are no less than a dozen gilded signs or medals, the owner of which, being questioned as to his celebrity and success, quietly shrugged his shoulders, and said, "*Ma foi!* what law is there to prevent my putting up whatever sign I like?" So having purchased your eau de Cologne, and admired the cathedral, pass on your way in happy ignorance of the rest of the city.

From Cologne to Berlin, twelve hours; having neither time nor inclination to halt at Dusseldorff, Hanover, Magdeburg, or Minden, take my advice, and sleep if you can to Potsdam; you will have lost nothing by the way. Then wake up, rub your eyes, take a look at the palace, and Sans Souci; and, as you glide on, prepare yourself to enter Berlin, where I crave permission to halt a few hours.

Berlin, if one of the handsomest, is nevertheless, to the stranger, one of the dullest cities in Europe. The why, it is difficult precisely to explain, save that the population walk about before dinner—and the hour for that gastronomic indulgence among Germans is generally an early one,—as if killing the minutes till that precious period arrives; and then, having satisfied their appetites to repletion, for the benefit of digestion they smoke or drone away their existence in a semi-doze, till the season of bedtime arrives, and they can fully indulge in slumber. However, to do them only justice, they are early risers—too early for those who like to enjoy a matutinal snooze without being disturbed. I speak more particularly of the respectable and middle classes, who, for the most part, satisfy their appetites at *table d'hôtes*, which are innumerable in the city. How the lower class fare I scarcely dare to say. In winter-time, I imagine, sour-krout—cabbage and fat bacon—forms the *pièce de résistance*, varied in summer by veal, stewed prunes, and cucumbers. Among the higher classes there is little or no hospitality, according to the English acceptation of the term. I do not say there is no kindness,

or intellectual association, or passing courtesy (cheap enough); but there is no wholesome, large-hearted hospitality. People may receive all but the latter, and yet starve physically, as from *ennui*.

During very frequent visits to Berlin I have received cards from counts, and barons, and chevaliers, and squires of high and low degree, enough to build the biggest house that infants ever delighted in upsetting; but as yet I have never discovered whether the *beau monde*, who winter in the capital of the King by the grace of God, if not by the voice of his people, keep male or female culinary artists, when or how they dine. Bismarck never asked me to dinner—not even to smoke a pipe with him, so I have never had the opportunity of refusing his polite invitation. Indeed, the foreigner who can honestly assert, even after a longer residence in the Prussian capital than has ever fallen to my lot, that he is practically acquainted with the aristocratic society of that city—being an aristocrat himself,—and can fully demonstrate the same, must be a man of no common genius.

I well know, to the cost of my digestion, how the world dine at German hotels at 3 p.m., for twenty groschen, or about two shillings a head, hochheimer of course not included, nor coffee, nor chasse, nor bad cigars; and I also know, however good the food is of its kind, that no English stomach can stand it, and survive for a month; and I have always wondered why Holloway the antibilious, or Cockle the illustrious, have not established wholesale agents north of the Rhine. The precepts of Banting are certainly very little followed in this region. But dining at a *table d'hôte*, and dining in a pleasant private house, with agreeable society, combining crinolines and courtesies, neat ankles, truffles, and iced champagne, are luxuries wide apart; and I must confess, after the duties, pleasures, or fatigues of a well-spent day, it is agreeable—vastly pleasant, in fact—to sit at the latter board; while it is destructive alike to health, time, and digestion, to submit to the discomfort of the former, where more than once I have endured the ordeal of sitting between two Germans, neither of whom uttered a word through the whole repast, and who ere it was ended smoked their cigarettes in my face, without the common courtesy of soliciting my approval.

By St. Hubert, the only man I know, in these modern days, at Berlin, who understands the word hospitality and practises it, is her gracious Majesty's representative, and his salary should be doubled. In fact, I quite agree with the noble lord who boldly asserted that the kernel of diplomacy was discovered in a good cook, and pleasant society around a well-regulated table.

Of the city of Berlin I have little more to say. When you have walked along the Linden Strasse, and looked on the truly magnificent equestrian statue of Peter the Great; strolled in the Tier-garden (ancient deer forest), and lingered for an hour, weather permitting, in Kroll's Garden; driven over to Charlottenburg—a pleasant drive, where your

interest is lost in the place itself, from the wretched manner in which, as a royal palace, it is kept up; railed it to Potsdam and Sans Souci; and, if you are a lover of the ceramic art, which I confess to be, visited various shops, mistermed curiosity-shops—principally kept by Jews, with whom it is impossible to deal, from their exorbitant demands, though a keen connoisseur may sometimes catch them napping—for there are occasions when they ask ten pounds for an article not worth ten thalers, and at others ten thalers for an article worth ten pounds,—you have, in my humble opinion, exhausted the delights of this Prussian capital, and may proceed, as I did, to Petersburg.

One word ere I start, however, with reference to the hotels at Berlin; of which, to speak only in justice, there are several very good. Perhaps the two best, for the passing traveller, are the Hôtels d'Angleterre and Russie, situated on the river Spey, at the end of the Linden, and certainly in one of the best situations in the city. I prefer the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Nothing can exceed its cleanness, or the courtesy and attention of all parties, from master to porter. The food is good, the *table d'hôte* much frequented; and an Englishman may enjoy his matutinal fare—tea, toast, eggs, or cutlets—with the *Times* newspaper daily; while the charges are by no means unreasonable, though extras, as far as possible, in all German hotels should be avoided. And now for the far North.

At the period to which I more particularly allude, the railway from Berlin was open to Königsburg, and thence was unfinished to Schoff, within a few hours of the northern capital. Arrived, therefore, at Königsburg, there was no alternative but that of wheeling it, weather permitting, or sledging, if there was sufficient snow. Now the first time that it was my duty to perform this of course very agreeable journey, it was, as I have said, early spring-time; just, in fact, at the very period when the weather was intensely cold, yet not to say precisely frosty. In fact, it would be somewhat difficult to say what it was, except indeed vastly disagreeable. True, I had a comfortable carriage, and, as far as Kovno, on the Niemen, —that historical river—Prussian and Polish post-horses rattled me along through mud and mire well-nigh as fast as the present railways,—quite as fast as those which travel through our pleasant, indeed, charming Devonia, where nature's loveliness, combined with the softest of climates, goes far to compensate for the more than German slowness of the inhabitants. From Kovno to Schoff the travelling became, as it were, purely Russian. Railways were only in the distance. Sotoragnas and post-houses, serfish postillions, with their small but hardy little horses, were in full force; and, save that I know not of a mile of country throughout the route above named which calls forth the slightest interest or excitement from him who may be compelled to travel it, as far as the road is considered, it is by no means bad going. Arrived at Kovno, or I should say on the left bank of the river Niemen, the plot thickens. In midsummer

you rattle over a bridge of boats, in midwinter you glide over a road of ice; but in spring-time, ere the river is clear of ice, or at the time when the hoary monarch, King Winter, is contemplating abdication, you come to a dead halt, and find yourself all at once in a den of thieves—that is, sitting in your carriage, which is instantly surrounded by two-score dirty-bearded, rascally Jews, all prepared to take your money, if not your life. Reason comes to your aid. You must halt where you are, or submit alike to their impositions and accept their help. There is no alternative. If you want to get across that celebrated river, make your bargain, the best you can—generally a bad one,—and resign yourself to your fate calmly, while they pocket your roubles ere they aid your safe transit to Kovno. I recollect a very amusing story, having reference to a gentleman, amiable in all the phases of life, but physically an admirable subject for Banting, who arrived in a heavy travelling carriage one dark night on the bank of the river I have named, having made, as he justly observed, a liberal bargain—to cross the river with his carriage for about fifty roubles, or near ten pounds. He calmly wrapped his furs around him, and watched the proceedings of his carriage and luggage being placed on the floating ice. This done, he moved forward with the intent of getting therein, when a group of these dirty-bearded German rogues, rushing at him, exclaimed, "No, no, *mein herr;* we bargained to take your carriage across, but not to take you in it. The ice will bear the carriage, but we question whether it would bear you;" and so another outlay was demanded. But at all times the question is one difficult to settle. Snow there was still on the ground,—sufficient, indeed, on most parts of the road to travel by sledge; while on others perhaps, here and there, for a few versts the highway was quite open; in fact, in some parts so broken that a sledge must either stick fast or be dragged to pieces. In my difficulties I applied to the postmaster, a dirty, besotted, bearded, bullying Jew, whose only object in life was that of converting one rouble into two, extracting at the same time as many as possibly could be extracted, honestly or dishonestly, from the pocket of one who he knew must get forward at all hazards and at any outlay.

Shrugging his shoulders, and addressing me in a few words of impossible French and worse German, ending by an harangue in Polish, as incomprehensible as Arabic, he next appealed to one traveller who had just arrived from Petersburg, who declared that the road was sufficiently open for wheels, while another asserted they were in a perfect state for sledging. Then the landlord or postmaster insisted on the necessity of having my wheels greased, and two new linch-pins being supplied to the axles, which process, after considerable delay, was performed by a surly blacksmith, in whose pocket doubtless might have been found those which he had extracted; and then the glass of one of my lamps, which doubtless had been purposely smashed, required replacing; and at last, after disbursing a sufficient number of roubles to keep the whole mass of vaga-

bonds in clover for a month, I had no alternative but that of starting as the shades of night approached, in a sledge—that is to say, my carriage placed on a sledge, the wheels being attached with ropes on the top of it, in case of their being required. Recollect this was my first Russian journey. Heaven knows at the time I almost wished it might be my last.

It was well perhaps that I should be thus early initiated into the pleasures of a Russian winter, or early spring, perhaps the worst season of the year. On my life, I do verily believe the good people of England—as they sit over a blazing coal fire, reading the *Times*, or the *Telegraph*, which is cheaper, ere they are spun across the country in a comfortable first-class carriage from Putney or Richmond to their club, and home to dinner; or sally forth for a day's shooting or a pleasant walk, having suggested to dear Harriet or Mary to put on a thick pair of Balmorals,—I do believe that these good people imagine that a royal messenger travels with a courier and a cook, journeys through Europe in a palanquin, or saunters down the Rhine in bright autumn-time, in happy association with bright eyes and auburn locks, shaded by the neatest of hats and the most graceful of feathers. They would judge differently had they been compelled to travel on such a night as was before me; but I was tolerably accustomed to rough it, so, gathering my fur cloak around me, I lighted my Havannah, and made up my mind for the worst.

I had been recommended by a Russian prince—a real Prince (for there are many whose lineage it would be difficult to trace), a true nobleman in position, as well as in character and mind—to try cold water to keep the blood warm. "A glass of cold water," said he, "taken in your carriage while changing horses, is, believe me, far better than hot tea imbibed in the stifling atmosphere of a posthouse. Do not leave your carriage or throw off your furs, but take a glass of cold water, eat a biscuit, and smoke as much as you like." I confess to not having followed his advice; it may be, that unpleasant night, as a bottle of sherry had frozen in the pocket of my carriage, I thought it just possible that a glass of water might freeze in my inward man; so I stuck to tea and a dash of brandy, and thus got through the dark and dreary hours of the first night. But as the sun was sinking on that of the second, the weather suddenly changed, and with the thermometer I own my courage fell: hundreds of dreary versts were still before me ere I could again reach the welcome railway; and the snow, beginning to fall lightly at first, soon came down in bucketfuls, while the wind howled like so many demons.

Vastly agreeable, said I to myself, as I wrapped my fur cloak closer and closer around me, and imbibed a mouthful of my half-frozen sherry. And this is the pleasant journey I was supposed to be taking to the City of the Czar. By St. Hubert, I scarcely recollect whether it was my friend Brown, or Jones, who had congratulated me on the delights of my office! I only wish one or the other had been in my sledge, and I enjoying a cutlet *à la soubise* at the "Rag."

When apprised that I was starting for Russia, one friend had exclaimed, "Lucky dog! I only wish I was going with you or for you;" while another, after a friendly greeting, assured me that there was no position in the world he coveted like that of a royal messenger. And so is it now, and one endeavours to believe it, as Johnny This, or Freddy That, accosts you at Newmarket or in Piccadilly with, "Where do you come from?" "I arrived this morning from Constantinople." "From Constantinople! Any tobacco, eh?" Or, "Why, it seems only yesterday that you had just arrived from Madrid; those were the best olives I ever tasted—bring me some more, that's a good fellow. And don't forget the stamps. Anything on the Derby?" And thus we part, I to perform the enviable duties of a physical telegram, he to perform his arduous duties in Downing Street or elsewhere, read the morning papers amidst red tape and official envelopes, knowing about as much of foreign travel, practically, as those pleasure tourists who while away a month of autumnal holidays on the beaten tracks of Continental sight-seers, or the far wiser ramblers who seek to know something of our own lovely isle, amid flower-bedecked snug English cottages by the wayside, or clean and comfortable roadside inns. No, the comforts of home, whether simple or luxurious, are only fully appreciated by those, believe me, who really travel.

By travel, I by no means imply taking a pleasant autumnal trip, or even a trip up the Nile or to Jerusalem, selecting your own time and weather, with a courier or servant who speaks all the languages in Europe, makes your coffee ere you rise in the morning, poaches your eggs or mends your pantaloons, with half Fortnum and Mason's stock of potted meats, marmalades, and sauces to fall back upon when the native commissariat fails. When I speak of travelling, I am thinking of the traveller who leaves the beaten track, or whose duties oblige him at all hours and during all seasons, for several days and nights, to endure a cramped sledge or carriage, without room to stretch his legs, with a cricked neck when he awakes from a fevered slumber, with his feet half frozen or transformed into burning coals, according to the weather; who must get up after a brief night's rest by the light of a dip, with the thermometer below freezing-point; or who has to cross the Gulf of Lyons, or that of Genoa, in a steamer, on a dark winter's night with half a gale of north-east in his teeth.

However, as I have said, the snow came down by bushels, a sort of last snowstorm of the season, a farewell to winter, by no means agreeable, but to be endured; and as such I did my best to endure it, watching the fast receding daylight as regretfully as the last glimpse of a loved one. In this pleasant position I had accomplished about two-thirds of a long stage of twenty-two versts, and my gallant little horses were beginning to show signs of fatigue; and I was consoling myself in the knowledge at least that I should soon change them, when bang we all went into a

snow-drift, and stuck fast; neither the whip and voice of my driver, nor the thick stick he tore from a neighbouring rail, and with which he began to belabour the poor animals till I jumped from the carriage and prevented his further brutality, availed aught. There we were fast, high and dry—that is to say, deep and wet. There was nothing to be done, but patiently to hope that the little horses would recover their strength and wind; but, alas! far from it: the longer we remained, the thicker fell the snow, and the firmer the horses and carriage were embedded in it. I really began to feel I should perish that night, and I was about to suggest to the poor driver our only hope, viz., that he should come into the carriage and share my last drop of sherry and the remainder of my tobacco, when, O joyful sight! two small country sledges hove in view, travelling the same way as ourselves. Not a moment did I lose, but at once plunged into a wild species of pantomime, one hand filled with silver roubles, the other demonstrating our position; and, to do the drivers only justice, they lost no time in attaching their two fresh horses to mine, and thus dragged us free from the drift. And I really cannot say who were the more pleased,—I, as I rattled over the four last versts of the stage, or my deliverers, as they pocketed the roubles.

ART-AMUSEMENTS FOR LADIES.

It is curious to observe how frequently art-amusements for ladies—artistic prettinesses, as they may be termed—spring up. They do not belong to high art properly so called; neither, on the other hand, do they enter into the domain of useful art. The objects or articles produced may, it is true, be made to subserve this or that useful purpose; but the chief pleasure derivable by the lady artist is due to the fact that she "did them herself;" there has been some skill, taste, or industry displayed, of which she feels a little proud. Ladies in easy circumstances are those only who can indulge in such pleasant labours to any great extent; but a little time and taste will enable others to share the amusement in a smaller degree; and in a few of these arts the sterner sex may even take a little dip. The colour manufacturers, or dealers in drawing materials, introduce many of these fanciful pursuits, and sell the necessary materials for practising them.

Most of the fascinations here adverted to have a rise and fall in public favour; but some live longer than others. *Potichomanie*—rather a clumsy name, as it appears to us—is literally a mania for *potiches*, the French designation for Chinese and Japanese vases; but, more soberly, it is the art of imitating such vases. It is a pretty art when moderately indulged in, but is sometimes carried to an extent unsuitable alike to the purpose in view and to the materials employed. Although used to imitate every kind of porcelain and coloured earthenware, it is better fitted for large vases than for articles of smaller dimensions. There are two varieties of the art—potichomanie on wood and on glass; the latter of which professes to look down with some contempt on the former. In the first-named variety, a vase or other article is fashioned in wood, and painted with wash-colour; an Oriental pattern printed upon cloth is cut with scissors into proper form, and pasted upon the wash; and the wash and the pattern or device are finally secured by varnish. The result, however, is seldom satisfactory; the varnish cracks, the appearance is coarse and commonplace, and the delicate enamel-like surface of porcelain is not even faintly imitated. A better form of the art is that which involves the use of a vase or other article made of glass, more or less expensive than one of wood, according to circumstances. The colour-makers, who supply the necessary materials, prepare designs or ornaments printed in colours, tubes of moist colours for grounding or foundation tints, bottles of varnish and gum, others of essence of turpentine, brushes and pencils of various kinds, and fine sharp-pointed scissors. The designs depend for their excellence on the skill of the draughtsman and colourist, and on an appreciation of the direct object in view; seeing that some are intended to imitate the fantastic ornamentation which we see on Chinese and Japanese vases, some the peculiar decorations of Dresden porcelain, some the landscapes and natural objects of Sèvres porcelain;

while all the well-known ground tints of *rose de Pompadour, rose du Berri, bleu céleste, Sèvres green*, &c., must be imitated in the colour-printing of the designs. As to the crystal vessels which are to be decorated, the lady artist has only to please her own taste in selection—chimney ornaments, table ornaments, toilet ornaments, or the like. Everything being at hand, one or more printed sheets are cut up, in such way as to isolate all the portions which are conjointly to make up the device. Taste in selection, and care in cutting, are necessary. Most of the coloured prints are prepared with a transparent adhesive composition on the surface, and the wetting of this composition suffices to attach the pieces to the glass; but where this is not the case, liquid gum is employed. The separated pieces are stuck to the *inside* of the glass, in order that the outside may retain its glossy surface. Every little piece must be made to adhere closely to the glass, and be pressed down carefully upon it by means of a cloth or leather dabber. If the mouth of the vessel be too small to admit the hand, the ingenuity of the potichomanist will be somewhat taxed, but not hopelessly. When all the several sectional bits of paper ornament have been thus applied in their proper places, the whole interior of the vessel receives a coating of unalterable varnish or melted gum, to assist in fixing the paper to the glass, and to prevent the coloured composition subsequently applied from getting under any of the edges of the paper. This coloured composition is intended to imitate the ground tint or general colour of the species of porcelain selected. The colours require to be well prepared, and mixed with varnish or with essence of turpentine, according to the tint needed. The colour is applied either with a brush, as in ordinary painting, or else by pouring it into the vase, making it flow all over the interior, and pouring away the surplus. It generally requires a repetition of this process to render the tint clear and equable; and, indeed, this is the most critical feature in the art; for unless a near approach can be made to an imitation of the wonderful regularity of ground tint in good porcelain, the potichomanist had better modestly retire from the art altogether. Such, in a few words, are the leading features in a tasteful amusement, which a colour-maker once enthusiastically asserted would "ere long secure a place among decorate arts; it will develop its resources in the embellishment of our apartments and furniture; and we shall see potichomanian artists both honoured and praised." What is the difference between honour and praise we need not stop to inquire. The prediction itself has not yet been fulfilled; but the art is a pretty art nevertheless.

Another of these tasteful employments is known by the name of *Diaphanie*. It is a mode of imitating stained glass, "easily performed at small cost," as the sellers of the apparatus assure us. The glass itself is real; the colours and the mode of colouring are the only new things in the art. The materials necessary comprise designs, a roller, some transferring varnish, washable varnish, clearing liquid, and a few brushes. As stained glass is generally a mediæval or antiquated sort of product in regard to

the device or design, so does this new diaphanie follow in the same track. The colour-makers have caused sheets of designs to be drawn and lithographed in great number and variety; representing such subjects as "The Crucifixion," "The Nativity," "The Madonna," "The Infant Saviour," "Adoration of the Magi," "Four Evangelists," "Christ and the Centurion," "Offering of the Shepherds," "Christ blessing Little Children," "The Holy Family," "The Resurrection," "Christ in the Temple," "The Last Supper," "St. Peter and St. Paul," "Elizabeth and Mary," "The Descent from the Cross," &c.; together with a multitude of miscellaneous designs, comprising "Charity," "The Four Seasons," "The Boar Hunt," "Peace and War," "St. George of England," "The Months of the Year," "Knights in Armour;" and such ornamental accessories as groundings, borders, flower groups, coats of arms, medallions, shields, scrolls, wheel patterns, renaissance devices, and designs to imitate lace, floral, and geometrical patterns for engraved glass. All these are printed in colours. In addition, there are coloured sheets of blue, green, orange, yellow, sepia, and crimson; and tinfoil for leadwork. Thus the lady artist can provide herself with designs suitable for church, hall, conservatory, or staircase windows. Common sheet glass, flat and free from specks, is good enough for the purpose. The philosophy of the whole process is, to transfer the colours from the paper to the glass; and all the arrangements are made subservient to this end. There is in most cases a good deal of cutting out necessary, in order that the coloured ground, the main subject, and the subordinate ornaments may all fall into their proper places. This is effected partly in accordance with definite instructions laid down, and partly according to the taste of the artist. When ready for use, the glass, well cleaned, is laid down upon a soft cloth; the paper is damped on the back with sponge and cold water; and the face or coloured surface is quickly coated with a layer of transfer varnish prepared for the purpose, by means of a flat camel-hair brush. The paper is then applied face downwards upon the glass, and pressed with a roller from the centre towards the edges, in such a manner as to press out the superfluous varnish and any air-bubbles. The back of the paper is kept well damped during the pressing. The paper is then left until perfectly dry, which takes from one to three days to complete. It will at once be inferred that the colours used in printing the designs, and the transfer varnish applied by the brush, have a special relation to each other; insomuch that the colours are not only transferred to the glass, but are cemented to it by the varnish. By wetting the paper again, and rubbing it with a cloth or with the hand, the paper may be wholly removed from the glass, leaving the colours and varnish behind. The paper thus got rid of, the glass receives a thin coating of clearing liquid, and also one or two of washable varnish, applied with flat camel-hair brushes. If any of the colours are not rich enough, or if any scratches or blemishes appear, the glass requires to be painted at those spots with special

colours mixed with copal varnish. Another variety of this artistic amusement may be simply called *Glass-painting*, without any transfer process. The same colours are used, liquefied with copal varnish, and diluted with spirits of turpentine. The pigments are manufactured as a fine dry powder, but are brought to a liquid state by the solvents already named. In the first place, the drawing or design to be copied is laid down flat with the face uppermost; the glass, well cleaned, is placed upon it; and the outline of the design, as seen through the glass, is traced upon its surface, with a very fine sable pencil dipped in ivory-black and varnish, or with a pen dipped in moist ivory-black. Then the design is removed, and placed in some position where it can easily be copied from, in reference to tints, light and shade, &c. A sheet of white paper is placed beneath the glass while the painting is in progress, to show the effect more clearly. A modification of this process constitutes *Transparent water-colour painting*, especially suitable for the preparation of camera or magic lantern slides. The chief difference here is, that the painting is done in water colours instead of varnish colours: it is serviceable for small or intricate designs, as being susceptible of more finish and delicacy. The outline is traced with a pen dipped in liquid colour and ox-gall, and is fixed with a little thin mastic varnish; after which the painting is effected in water colour, secured by a kind of enamel varnish. Diaphanie, we thus see, leads to a greater variety of results than potichomanie.

Another member of this curious artistic family is *Décalcomanie*,—a mode of decorating the panels of rooms, chair coverings, cloth, linen, silks, metals, and indeed almost all kinds of solid or opaque surfaces. It is effected by means of transferring. There must be, as in all these fancy arts, a storehouse of little aids for facilitating the work,—designs printed on paper, bottles of cement varnish, finishing varnish and detergent liquid, a roller, a few camel-hair pencils or brushes, a piece of cloth or leather, a sponge, an ivory knife, a pair of pincers, and a pair of scissors,—all of which can be obtained in convenient boxes made for the purpose. The designs are printed on paper so prepared, that after the coloured surface has been cemented down upon wood, cloth, metal, &c., by means of varnish, the colours become transferred from the one surface to the other. The art is, in principle, diaphanie applied to an opaque instead of a transparent substance, with certain changes in plan and procedure depending on this difference. There are two kinds or classes of designs prepared and sold for this purpose: one, intended to appear like ordinary pictures, is for applying to light-coloured surfaces, such as white wood, china, paper, &c.; the other, intended to present a kind of lustre or metallic hue, is for application to dark grounds, such as rosewood, japanned ware, brown or black woven fabrics, &c. The designs may be chosen *ad libitum;* flowers, birds, figures, landscapes, imitations of Sèvres porcelain, Chinese and other vase patterns, imitations of beautifully veined woods, arabesque or renaissance ornaments, — anything is available, pro-

vided it is properly printed in colours; although in this, as in other things, good taste will produce wonders out of very slight materials. We may now watch the lady artist at her work. Let us say that a white earthenware or porcelain plate is to have a picture transferred to it. The selected design is cut with scissors nearly to the proper size and shape, and is well coated with varnish by means of a sable-hair pencil, every portion of the design receiving its due quota. The paper is not made use of immediately, but is allowed to remain a minute or two, until the varnish becomes slightly tacky to the fingers. The paper is then laid face downward upon the plate in its proper position; a piece of cloth or leather, damp, but not actually wet, is laid upon it, and is pressed or rubbed down carefully, either with a roller or an ivory knife. The back of the paper is next moistened, and allowed to remain for a minute or two; by which time the paper itself is removed from the plate, leaving the colours of the device behind, as well as the varnish. This removal is effected either by the fingers only, or with the aid of pincers. The porcelain or earthenware plate, with the design thus transferred to its surface, is next washed carefully with water and a camel-hair brush, to remove spots and irregularities. When finally dried, a coat of varnish secures the whole work, and the fair artist has a pictorial dinner-plate at her disposal. If, instead of a hard surface of porcelain or earthenware, the transfer is made to a surface of silk or other soft material, the process is slightly modified. The silk is laid down on a piece of clean paper, the picture laid upon it face downwards, and the damping and pressing effected. Or else, as a more effective method in some cases, the face of the picture is coated with varnish, and the back is floated on the surface of warm water in a flat vessel; in the course of a few minutes the picture is carefully lifted up, the superfluous moisture is absorbed by application of a sponge, the wet varnished surface is laid down on the silk, and in a very short time the paper may be pulled away, leaving the colour and the varnish behind it. A learned professor of this art tells his lady pupils that "white biscuit china vases are very ornamental articles to work upon; and glass potiche vases, being coloured in the inside white, green, blue, or any other colour, make very handsome ornaments when decorated. Also tea and coffee services of white earthenware or china; white wood articles, such as screens, card-cases, and boxes; straw dinner-mats, pieces of silk or cloth, slippers, hand-screens, sofa cushions, scent-bags, ribbons, articles in ivory or wood; indeed, it is difficult to say what ornamental article may not be thus decorated, from the panel of a room to the tiny articles upon the dressing-table. If you can paint in oil or water colours, sometimes the finished work may, by a few judicious touches with the appropriate colours, be improved; but it is never absolutely necessary unless the work has been inexpertly performed." He is so enthusiastic in the matter, that he would have "every lady her own house decorator."

It will thus be seen that none of these three artistic amusements with Frenchified names—potichomanie, diaphanie, and décalcomanie—makes any pretension to high art; but that, in the mode of using colour and pattern, taste is nevertheless indispensable to the production of good results.

Another of these prettinesses is Paper-work, one form of which is *Paper Flower-making*. There is not, in principle, any great difference between the imitating of natural flowers in paper, and the imitation by means of cambric and other materials; the differences are rather in detail and manipulation. In the first place, working tools are of course needed. Some of the dealers in papeterie, or fancy stationery, sell sheets of paper of all the necessary hues, goffered or crimped to imitate in some degree the surfaces of leaves and other natural objects; they also sell ready-made buds and small fruits, such as are well known in the artificial flowers worn by ladies; and thus the amateur paper flower maker has much of her work ready done to her hand. Nippers and pincers are necessary to aid in giving form to the petals. An instrument called the ball-tool is used for moulding the centre of the petal into a hollow form, varying in size according as it is to fashion such small petals as those of the rosebud, poppy, or carnation; or larger kinds, such as the cactus or dahlia. A dexterous lady worker would, however, have little difficulty in applying to this purpose some of the many knickknacks which belong to her workbox. The process of making a paper flower is virtually four-fold,—cutting the petals out of sheets of properly coloured paper, goffering them, joining or placing them together, and mounting the petals and buds on a stalk. Let us watch the fair artist making an imitative poppy. The paper, of the proper colour, is first cut into circular pieces, nine in number, all equal in size, and with certain notches at the edges to imitate those in the petal of this flower. This done, each circular piece receives a kind of goffering or puckering; the forefinger is laid on the middle, the edges are drawn up, and the paper is pressed closely around the finger. They are afterwards unrolled for use, still retaining some of the form thus given to them. Then comes the building up of the flower. Each petal is threaded in the centre on a fine wire, to the end of which is attached the heart of the poppy; the petals are superposed one upon another, and fixed with gum-arabic. As to the heart, buds, leaves, stamens, pistils, and calyx, the lady amateur has much of her trouble taken off her hands; for these can be procured at what are called Berlin repositories. The wire has next to be so covered as to imitate a stem. A sheet of paper with the proper tint of green is cut into strips a little less than a quarter of an inch in width; these are twisted round the wire with the thumb and finger of the left hand, the other end of each strip being held in the right. A thick stem is imitated by wrapping a little cotton wool under the green paper. The buds, leaves, and flowers are usually mounted on small stalks springing out of larger ones; and

the junction of the two kinds, aided by a little silk or narrow ribbon, requires some tact, as does that of the buds and leaves to the stems. How the cunning artificer regulates her proceedings according to the forms and colours of the natural objects placed before her—how that the half-blown petals require the pieces of paper to be rolled up more tightly; that the goffering for the bell-flower should give the appearance of concavity; that the dahlia requires some of the petals to be goffered in the reverse direction; that the delicate tints of the lily may be better imitated; that the petals of the heart's-ease and some other flowers require a little tinting with water colours—all these are among the delicate minutiæ of this pretty art.

Not quite so dry and pleasant in the manifestation, but more durable in the results, is ornamental *Leather-work*, which has been brought within the reach of lady amateurs. The term leather-work *sounds* like boots and shoes, saddles and harness, portmanteaus and straps, buckets and pipes; but there is, nevertheless, a delicate side to the matter. As an art-amusement, the chief application is to imitate old oak carving. The art originated in a very old custom of covering valuable carvings with close-fitting leather, as a means of preserving them from injury; such covering, if carefully removed, would retain the form which the carving had given to it. The actual modern process was suggested by a study of the beautiful carved furniture found so profusely in Holland and Belgium. Madame Emilie de Condé, who seems to be the leading authority in this new art, says:—"One great advantage in this work is, that a lady may decorate her apartments in a pleasing and elegant style, at a very small expense; a common deal frame being all that is necessary for the foundation. Any article of furniture may be made or decorated." The lady leather-worker is bidden to provide herself with oak-stain, liquid asphaltum, prepared stiffening, amber and other dark colours, liquid glue, copal varnish, and a few other articles, all of which are procurable of the colour-makers. The leather employed is basil, or sheepskin, of well-selected quality and medium thickness. Let us suppose the artist to be decorating a picture-frame with leather ornaments. A flat deal frame is made, of the proper size and proportions. This is coated well with oak-stain, and allowed to dry. Then, to produce an imitation of natural foliage, the artist procures a few natural leaves of the desired kind, and a few pieces of cardboard. A leaf being placed on a piece of cardboard, its outline is traced with a pencil, and the cardboard cut accordingly with scissors. Rose-leaves, oak-leaves, ivy-leaves, and vine-leaves are suitable for this purpose, as being graceful in form and prickly at the edges, which look better than smooth-edged leaves. With a pen dipped in common ink, the fibres and markings of the leaves are copied on the cardboard. The leather, cut into pieces a little larger than the leaves, is well soaked in cold water, partially dried on a cloth, and stretched out flat on a table. A cardboard leaf being laid upon each bit of leather, with the ink-marked

face downwards, the outline is marked, and the leather cut in conformity with it. The ink transfer shows the lines where the leather is to be indented by a bodkin or similar blunt instrument. The leather is then pinched up into the form which best imitates the natural leaf, the indentations constituting the fibrous delicate markings. Then a stem is needed. Our fair artist cuts a piece of leather into long strips, wets them thoroughly, rolls each round a piece of copper wire, and leaves it to dry. Her taste and botanical skill assist her in determining how best to combine these stems with the leaves. Flowers—such as the rose, tulip, fuchsia, hyacinth, jasmine, camellia, chrysanthemum, &c.—may be imitated as well as leaves, though not so easily. Let us obey Madame de Condé's instructions, and make a leather rose:—"Cut a round of leather as large as a farthing, then one the size of a halfpenny, then another the size of a penny, and so on, until you have five. Bore a hole through them all. Take a piece of wire, and pass it through; then make another hole close by, and pass the other end of the wire through it. Then twist the wire firmly at the back; and holding the group by the twisted wire in your left hand, finish the rose into form with your right—beginning with the smallest round, which is of course uppermost, and then the others in succession." And now for a leather tulip:—"Cover a piece of wire with a strip of leather; then cut out the tulip, and fold it round; mark the lines strongly, and turn back the outer edge. When dry, paint with asphaltum the lines; and when that is partly dry, dip your brush in spirits of turpentine, and shade or soften it down." And, lastly, a leather fuchsia:—"Cut a piece of leather into very fine strips; attach them to a piece of wire; then put the fuchsias [fuchsia petals] round it, and let the stamens and petals fall loosely. Sometimes it will be desirable to sew the sides of the fuchsias with a needle and thread." How the fair worker fixes her leathern leaves, stems, and flowers to her oak-stained picture-frame, basket, bracket, table, or other object, may be understood without much difficulty. There is another variety of the art, depending on a process of moulding on hard surfaces, instead of copying soft objects like leaves and flowers. A few modelling or moulding tools are necessary for this kind of leather-work: one pointed, to force the leather into corners; one rounded at the point, and one chisel-shaped. A carved or other model is used to furnish the pattern. The leather, well softened in water, is placed upon the model, and forced into the corners and crevices by means of tools. When dry, it assumes permanently the form given to it by the model. Painting and varnishing, done in a variety of ways, finish the work. Sometimes minuter details are thrown in by means of pen-and-ink markings, asphaltum colouring, and shading by means of turpentine.

Yet another of these art-amusements will we notice—*Hair-work*, in such of its forms as relate to hair bracelets, lockets, brooches, earrings, finger-rings, and such like trinkets. Some lady artists apply it to imitative

feathers and flowers, and, by a departure from good taste, to portraits and landscapes. At the International Exhibition in 1862 there were portraits and landscapes in hair-work, exhibited by Frau (or Fraulein) Henrietta Lange, of Altona—very curious and ingenious, but not at all beautiful, seeing that the material and the processes are unsuited for imitating real pictures. When the work is applied to articles merely of a decorative character, very pleasing results are often produced. To obtain a supply of hair, rather singular plans are adopted. There are regular hair harvests in France; peasant women cultivate their tresses on purpose to sell them to dealers, who sell again to large merchants in Paris; and these latter supply the peruke-makers and hair-workers. English dealers mostly buy the shining black hair of the south of France, rather than the lighter tints from Germany; although the latter at one time ruled the market. The home supply here is very limited; for Englishwomen, however poor, would in most cases scorn to part with their tresses for money; it is only the miscellaneous cuttings collected by the hair-dresser that are available; and these are not sufficient for the finest work—hence the importation. The making of hair ornaments is managed somewhat as follows:—Small portions of silky hair are tied at one end, washed with soda and warm water, and gently dried with a cloth. When dry, the hair is combed out straight, and drawn between two brushes, to remove short and irregular portions. The hair is then assorted into lengths, in order to equalize those which are to form one strand or plait. A number of plummets are then prepared, each consisting of a leaden ball about an ounce weight, tied to a yard of thin twine or strong thread. The hair being separated into small portions, each of these is tied to the end of one of the threads; and the other ends of all the strands are united by means of thread and lac-gum. To make use of the strands thus prepared, there is needed a kind of table made for the purpose, analogous in use to the cushion employed by lacemakers. The interlacing of the hair is effected upon it. The cluster of strands is attached to a small hook in such a way that they may be spread out smooth upon a paper diagram or pattern placed on the table; the markings on this pattern are made in ink, and the strands are arranged in conformity with them. A small piece of cane or wire, in the centre of the table, serves as a nucleus around which the work is done. The work itself is a kind of plaiting, which may be varied in a considerable number of ways. The number of hairs in each strand, the number of strands, and the length of each hair, depend on the particular kind of ornament to be made. There are certain figures and letters on the table-top and diagram, to assist in arranging the strands, and the manipulations bear a good deal of resemblance to those of pillow-lace making. For some kinds of ornament, such as lockets and brooches, many additional bits of apparatus are needed; but the main dexterity here is shown in causing the hair, by means of curling-irons, to assume those graceful curves which it is always more or less prone to take. Some of the articles

thus made may be finished by the fair fingers of the lady herself, through the aid of silken and other adornments; while others require the services of the hair-jeweller, who sets the twisted or curled hair in a framework of gold or other metal, to form a bracelet, locket, brooch, &c.

It must be admitted that these six varieties of what we have termed art-amusements form rather a pretty family. We might dive into an almost endless series of arts in which a lady amateur may follow at an humble distance the professional men to whom their practice is a source of livelihood—such as sculpturesque modelling, oil painting, water-colour painting, velvet painting, etching, painting and drawing of many different kinds, illuminating, &c.; but those are not the arts here adverted to. Potichomanie, Diaphanie, Décalcomanie, Paper-work, Leather-work, and Hair-work, form a separate group, which, if we mistake not, many families would like to know something about. Womenfolk who have their living to earn will find time for none of them; but ladies to whom fortune has been more good-natured will be none the worse for adding some of these arts to their daily employments. To embroider slippers for favourite clergymen may be a very nice pastime, a sort of genteel piety very comforting to the conscience; but even this tires in time.

GEORGE DODD.

THE LAST HOURS OF LOUIS THE ELEVENTH.

"Waugh! waugh! who is this strong God that pulls me down?"

Dying Exclamation of Clovis, King of France.

It is true that every death is the final scene of a solemn tragedy, though that death be a peasant's, the bed a heath; but it is also true that some of those scenes, although the grand lesson of mortality is taught by all alike, are infinitely more impressive, illustrate the supreme warning with a more startling commentary, a more vivid illustration, than the daily deaths of thousands of ordinary men and women.

Take, for example, the death witnessed on the last day of August, 1483, in a spacious apartment, hung with leather, stamped with fantastic golden devices, of a fortified castle on the banks of the Loire, at no great distance from Tours. The dying man writhing with torture upon a state bed is Louis the Eleventh of France, whose general character has been traced with sufficient accuracy by Sir Walter Scott in "Quentin Durward." The pitiless King, who had played with human lives as if no more precious than those of the beasts that perish, to whom a decree of instant death upon the slightest suspicion, sometimes from mere caprice, had been little more than a pastime,—now that his own hour had come, was shrieking for help to be saved from death, furiously threatening his attendants with death themselves if they did not relieve his agony—drag him back from the terrible tomb! Few of those who have read the narrative—*not* that penned by Philip de Comines, the historian, and perhaps the only worthy man who really esteemed Louis the Eleventh—but must still, as the fearful scene surges up from the depths of memory, distinctly hear those shrieks, entreaties, threatenings, through all the roar and tumult of intervening centuries.

Present in the death-chamber were the King's physician, Jacques Courtier; Oliver le Dain, commonly called Oliver the Devil, his Majesty's barber; Philip de Comines, the historian of his age; Francis de Paul, a monk and pilgrim not long arrived from the Holy Land, since beatified, and the bearer of a rich reliquary, the touch of which Louis, in his agonizing despair, tries to hope will bring back health and strength. The sixth and sadly silent observant person present was Jean Burnet, a priest belonging to the church of Notre Dame de Cléry, and generally resident at the castle palace. In a corner of the apartment lay a white hound, which had been gored by a wild boar a few days previously. The King, a skilled hunter, had been fond of the hound, and yet when Jacques Courtier told him the animal would recover, Louis fiercely resented the intelligence as an injury and insult to himself. Why should a dog, for whose preservation no lavishly paid-for prayers went up to heaven, for which relics possessed no healing virtue, have life, and not he—an anointed king? Twice anointed, indeed; for when some years before he had been in great danger,

Louis had sent for the *ampoulle*, at Rheims, and had the sacred balm, the portion which had not been used at his coronation, poured upon his head. His Majesty was unquestionably a believer in the solemn verities of the Christian religion, though its teachings in no wise influenced his actions. The names of Christ, of the holy Virgin, of numerous saints, were for ever on his lips, their leaden images in his hat; but the examples of their lives he never for a moment dreamt of imitating in the most distant degree. A liberal benefactor of churches, too, but only in pursuance of his plan, suggested by a perversion of the sacred injunction to lay up treasures in heaven—a working for wages, in fact, making an immeasurably profitable investment of the gold of earth, to be repaid by the joys of heaven. And yet it would seem that his Majesty must have had fearful forebodings that his offerings had not been accepted, or he would scarcely have trembled with such horror when summoned to receive his reward.

On a pillow, within easy reach of the King's hand, lay a silver whistle. With that his Majesty could summon his guards stationed on the top landing of the winding, narrow stone stairs leading to the chamber, every turning of which was commanded by their arquebuses. Louis the Eleventh had but to sound that whistle, and in one minute, had the command issued from his lips, every man in that chamber would have been a corpse. He had committed atrocities equal to, if not surpassing that, which might not perhaps be possible. All there knew this, and it may have been this knowledge that had so blanched the cheeks of Oliver the Devil, and of Jacques Courtier, the physician. Philip de Comines could scarcely have apprehended danger from any delirious access of rage on the part of the furious monarch, nor could the priest of St. Cléry; and as to Francis de Paul, he, from what is known of him, would have disdained the danger, if by his presence there he might help to save a sinful soul.

Francis de Paul is kneeling by the King's bed, praying aloud that his Majesty's malady be healed, but above all supplicating for his soul's health. Louis, I should state, had been struck for the second time by apoplexy; but it was not that attack which was thrusting, primarily thrusting him into the grave. It did so in a secondary sense only, by having weakened his power to bear up against the internal disease which was killing him with torture. The King has not, it seems, unbounded confidence in the success of the monk's prayers. The relics have not been tried as yet, for his anxious, glaring glance is fixed upon the physician's countenance, whilst that functionary feels the royal patient's pulse. Hark! Breaking in upon the monk's prayers you hear the chantings of the priests in the King's chapel, where they swell to a louder strain than usual. You hear more than that: a scream of agony, more than once repeated, finds a faint echo in that chamber. Those screams are wrung from Philip Gaultier, an obscure individual, suspected of being concerned in some absurd plot against the life of Louis; and they are torturing the wretched man to make him confess who were his accomplices. The probability is, that to

be relieved of that maddening agony he will give the names of men utterly innocent of the "plot," if there was one. Those piteous screams do not arrest for a moment the attention of Louis the Eleventh. They are old familiar cries. Perhaps he doesn't hear them, nor does he apparently Francis de Paul's prayers. His eyes continue fixed upon the face of the physician, who having satisfied himself of the state of the King's pulse, retires softly to the foot of the bed, without uttering a syllable. Then the countenance of the King fell, and over his white, wasted features the shadow of an unutterable despair visibly deepened.

The physician is about to speak. "Stop! stop!" cried Louis, in shrill, screaming tones, in part due to the intense agony he was suffering—"stop! If you, Courtier, will relieve me of this agony—if you will save my life—save my life, if only for a few months—nay, weeks,—I swear by the holy saints to double your salary. Where you have now twenty thousand livres you shall have forty thousand."

The physician replies only by a look and a sardonic smile. Within an hour, as he well knows, Louis the Eleventh will be as poor as the most miserable beggar that ever died.

The physician's look and smile threw the King into a transport of rage. "Ha!" he shouted, rage lending him momentary strength—"ha! traitors! fools! I am not so ill as you pretend to believe. It is the closeness of this room which weakens, stifles me. Let my horse be saddled, I will ride out—ride out at once;" and he actually got out of bed, and bade Oliver the Devil help him to dress. The wounded hound, amazed by its master's voice, and seeing him, ran feebly towards Louis, and was at his feet when the King fell back, fainting, upon the bed, into which he was immediately helped. "It was the dog—the dog," feebly murmured Louis, whilst big drops of agony and fear stood upon his clammy forehead. "The dog threw me down; I could else have gone out, I am sure I could."

Francis de Paul had continued praying aloud,—not ceasing for the incident just related; he knowing, as well as the physician, that, unless the relics worked a miracle, Louis the Eleventh would pass to his account ere another hour chimed from the palace belfry. Despairing of medical, the King, as a last hope, sought spiritual help. "The reliquary, holy Francis! the reliquary! Miracles have been worked ere now by sainted relics, and—quick! quick!" Francis de Paul rose from his knees, took the reliquary in his reverend hands, and approached the King.

"One moment! one moment! If by virtue of these holy relics my life is preserved, I solemnly promise to endow the church to which you belong more richly than any other in France."

The monk smiled a sad, compassionate smile; and on his knees presented the relics to be touched by the King, he himself praying fervently in silence the while.

There was no help in the relics. The King screamed in a more than

usually severe paroxysm of pain. When it had partially subsided, Louis beckoned Philip de Comines to approach. "Bend down your ear close to my mouth," he feebly whispered. "This illness may, I say *may*, terminate fatally. That is not likely—but possible. Should Courtier tell you that it *must* so terminate, tell me yourself, in a whisper. Say only, 'You must compose—tranquillize yourself.' Nothing more. I shall understand, and will devote what days and nights may remain to me in prayer to the saints. Enough!"

Whilst this incident was passing, Courtier was talking, *sotto voce*, to Oliver le Dain, or the Devil. Oliver had been encouraged by Louis for many years to treat the monarch, when alone, with great freedom,—to tell him disagreeable truths. Oliver the Devil imagined he might, without danger to himself, exercise the same privilege now.

Gliding with his customary cat-like steps to the head of the bed, he "loudly, rudely," says Philip de Comines,—"not gently, soothingly, as a mighty monarch in his last agony should be spoken with,—loudly, rudely said, 'It is time this farce were finished. You will not live half an hour. The holy Francis de Paul and his relics cannot prolong your life a moment. Prepare, then, to die as a King of France ought.'"

The royal barber's words acted as a galvanic shock might have done upon the moribund. Louis rose on end in the bed, his haggard face, his darkening eyes aflame with rage. "Audacious traitor!" he screamed, "dare you so speak to me? But whether I live or die, I am master here whilst I do live; and your life, Oliver the Devil, is, with all others, in my hand. I swear to you by my soul's salvation, as I hope for heaven, I will not be the first in this room that shall die. That I swear, invoking all the saints to bear witness to my oath. Oliver le Dain, you shall precede your master to the tomb."

Louis snatched the silver whistle, and was putting it to his lips, when Francis de Paul interposed, "In the name of God, King Louis, before whom you must shortly appear, do not at this supreme moment stain your soul with murder. Put down that whistle, for the sake of your own eternal welfare."

The King hesitated, still eyeing Oliver the Devil with ferocious hate. That person said nothing; but the cold sweat which covered his face, and no doubt the whole surface of his body; his trembling knees, which knocked against each other, showed that he felt the imminence of the peril he had rashly drawn upon himself.

"Oliver the Devil is a villain, an assassin, a poisoner, guilty of a thousand crimes," gasped Louis. "It will be a meritorious act to end that wicked life."

"It will be a murder, without excuse."

"God will absolve me! You, holy father, will absolve me!"

"That I will not, dare not do. O King of France, descendant of Saint Louis, put away these bloody thoughts. Fix your eyes, your

thoughts, upon this image of Him by whose passion and sacrifice you can only be saved from eternal perdition."

Louis seemed to be most affected by the declaration of Saint Francis de Paul, that he would not—dared not give him absolution if he took the life of Oliver le Dain; and the monarch directed his inquiring gaze to Jean Brunot, the priest of Notre Dame de Cléry. The absolution of one priest, he no doubt argued, must be as efficacious as another. There was no encouragement in Brunot's answering glance. He continued praying, as could be seen by the motion of his lips.

"But my oath—my oath—just uttered!" resumed Louis, in rancorous but feeble tones. He was loth to loose his murderous clutch of Oliver le Dain. "My oath! Have I not sworn by my soul's salvation that I will not be the first in this room that shall die? Shall I appear before the judgment-seat—if I *must* so soon appear there——But it is not—cannot—*shall* not be true! You are all combined to cheat, to terrify, madden me! Shall I—should I appear before the dreadful judgment-seat with an unfulfilled oath upon my conscience?"

"I can absolve you from that. God will absolve you. It is a fearful crime to fulfil a wicked vow, especially when warned not to do so by the Church; and the Church through me warns you. O son of the sainted Louis, lose not your own soul for the gratification of a miserable craving for vengeance."

Louis the Eleventh was startled—awed. Still, the orthodoxy of even Francis de Paul might be at fault. That hideous oath which he had uttered but a few minutes since, might he not in the unseen world have to make a terrible expiation for its non-fulfilment?

At that moment the hound gave a faint howl, caused, no doubt, by pain. A sparkling light gleamed in the eyes of the dying King. "Ah, my oath was, that I would not be the first in this room to die. I remember the words clearly. I did not say the first *man*. Oliver, kill the dog."

Oliver obeyed with alacrity; he killed the dog, which expired with a loud howl.

King Louis the Eleventh rapidly sank after this; his failing brain, revealed by the childish comments that he made, gave unmistakable token that the end was very near. He tried to talk of governmental policy, to send instructions to his son through Philip de Comines; but every topic slipped from his mental grasp. He commanded that the slain hound should have a monument; declared that he had always intended to build fourteen churches in honour of the Virgin Mary—seven for the Seven Dolours, seven for the Seven Joys, of the Mother of Christ,—would do so—it should be his first work were his life spared.

The darkness grew thicker, the icy hand of death colder. The King went on muttering prayers by habit, of whose purport his mind must have lost all perception: and thus, with the prayers of Francis de Paul, the chantings

of the priests in the distant chapel; the screams of poor Gaultier, which had not yet ceased, though now but faintly heard, the soul of Louis passed to its account.

And yet it cannot be denied that Louis the Eleventh was a great, sternly wise monarch. His remedies for the disorders of the times were the gibbet, the sword, the rack; but they *were* successful remedies to a great extent. France, as a nation, owes him much; and, what should recommend him to a certain party in this country, he was pre-eminently a "peace" man. The secret, deadly mine for him,—not the gallant, open assault. One thing, too, is certain. He laid the basis for the union of the provinces of France, only finally consummated when they were fused in the flaming crucible of the great Revolution.

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VOLTAIRE AND THE FAIR SEX

BY DR. MICHELSEN.

In reading the curious incidents in the life of many of the celebrated French women of the *ancien régime*, of the period of powder and cosmetics, of light manners, coquettish learning, and frivolous *amours*, we fancy we read some legendary tales of a different human race, of different manners, customs, morals, and religion. The names of a Madame du Deffand, Châtelet, Maintenon, Ninon, Lecouvreur, and scores more of female celebrities, present to our mind a kaleidoscope of unbridled passion and cool reflection, of fickleness and constancy, of free-thinking and bigotry,—in short, a picture that at once charms and terrifies us by its contrasting colours of depraved taste and devoted affections. And yet, despite the unsettled condition of society of that pre-revolutionary period, there breathes in the impure but romantic life of most of them a strain of poetical effusion of surpassing feeling and elegance, which commands our admiration if not our sympathies. One of the wild flowers of those bygone times was Madame de Châtelet-Lemont, celebrated for her profound erudition, and not less notorious for her intimacy and intrigues with Voltaire, whose Parisian life we are about to sketch.

The Marquis de Breteuil had given a splendid *souper en garçon*, on the 25th September, 1725, to his friends and acquaintances, after which the gay company sat round the table in various groups, discussing wine, *amours*, and the topics of the day, in that easy gossiping style when the tongue is unrestrained by female presence, and the heated brain outruns all prudence and discretion. The Marquis was a bachelor, and now in his sixtieth year. Rumour said that in his earlier years he was for some time the favoured adorer of Ninon de l'Enclos, and had since not found a woman worthy to occupy his heart in a more legitimate way. Neither had he for many years past found time to act the part of a suitor; he was continually so occupied in the affairs of his old and new friends, as to leave him no leisure to think seriously about himself. Breteuil was by turns counsellor, assistant, *confidant*, father, brother, and son, just as the occasion required him to be; and he was in return deeply beloved by each and all for his rare fidelity, discretion, disinterestedness, and sincerity. It was rather difficult to make his acquaintance, but he having once opened his house to a man, the latter was sure that heart and purse were equally open to him. A recommendation to Breteuil's acquaintance was a distinguished quality or eccentricity, extreme beauty or ugliness,—a characteristic, in short, that was uncommon and curious. The guests to the *soupers* of Breteuil (which were of the most luxurious description) consisted, therefore, of an interesting mixture of persons of all sorts of virtues and vices, of genius and folly, of manly beauty and brutish ugliness. There were assembled, in short, the most repulsive and attractive elements, by which

contrasting means conversation never for a moment flagged. "There is no need of women," Breteuil used to say, "to enjoy life; but my male guests must be as particular in their toilet as if they expected to meet elegant women at my table. Therein lies the secret of a refined entertainment; while an assembly composed of friends and foes, of men of different tastes and pursuits, supplies food for piquant conversation and amusement."

We left the company, seated in various groups, at their wines and gossip. The Marquis himself was drinking and conversing, with old Fontenelle at his side, when, touching their glasses, they drank to the health of the fairest of the fair (Ninon). Though the toast was given rather in a whisper, it did not escape the eyes of Aimé Gouverné, a young man of striking manly beauty.

"In whose honour was the toast given?" inquired he.

"In honour of one who was once dearly beloved by myself and my friend here—Ninon de l'Enclos," was the reply.

"Oh, pray tell the incident to Arouet Voltaire here," asked Guignon, the king of violins, a little man, who seemed to be enveloped in lace and velvet; "pray tell it him: he might perhaps compose some fine verses on the subject."

"Arouet has forsworn poetry since the death of our great Louis; he knows that verses are a passport to the Bastile, where people do not fare so sumptuously as in the Hôtel Breteuil.—Don't you think so, Voltaire?" asked Geliotte, the favourite composer of satirical *chansons*.

"Not all verses can procure a reputation for the poet, as easily as those malignant ones on the late King," replied the Abbé Laborde, smilingly; "and I am sure," continued he, "that many young poets would willingly and with pleasure become lodgers in the Bastile, only to earn such laurels as did our friend Arouet."

"I hope you will not suppose for a moment that I could not have acquired a reputation without the Bastile," cried Voltaire, in a shrill voice. "I invite you all here present, ten years hence, to a princely dinner at the Hôtel Voltaire, when I hope each and all of you will deem it an honour to dine with your humble servant."

"And I will then give a banquet into the bargain," said the handsome Gouverné, "to which I shall also invite a score of my living beauties, and I think our friend Voltaire might then not be unwilling to exchange his hard-earned reputation for my fair gallery."

"And what is to hinder me from exhibiting there, in addition, also my gallery of beauties?" asked Voltaire, impetuously.

"Because, with all your talents and cleverness, you lack one natural gift—*luck with the fair sex*," replied Gouverné.

"And who told you that? You fancy, because I am not an Apollo like yourself, women dislike me. Don't deceive yourself, friend Aimé. Should your handsome face happen to lose only for one single day its good

looks, I would then be too generous to offer you a wager which I now contemplate; which is, that despite your acknowledged beauty and my insignificant appearance—"

"A wager? What of it, Voltaire?" exclaimed the company.

"Well, gentlemen," said Voltaire, "plain, ay, ugly Arouet offers to supplant handsome Gouverné with many of his most charming *amantes*, and more especially with the one on whose constancy he mostly relies, and to whose fidelity he is fairly entitled."

"Take care, Gouverné," whispered Le Duc, a musician, whose violin was nicknamed *the nightingale;* "take care, I say; Voltaire is capable of anything."

"That little monkey, indeed!" replied the other, contemptuously. "I accept the bet without hesitation. In what quarter is your bold attempt to be made, Voltaire?"

"Give us, pray, first, a nomenclature of your most favourite ladies."

"Well, let me think: there is, first of all, the queen of my heart, the charming niece of our host, De Châtelet; next, the elegant Marchioness du Deffand; then the little actress, Goussin; and then the pretty dancer, Petit Pas; next the handsome—"

"Stop," cried Voltaire, "I become giddy. One question more. Do you include in the challenge your own legitimate wife?"

Gouverné startled. "Who told you that I am married?"

"The handsome Gouverné is too well known to be able to conceal any action of his from the inquisitive world, not even such a *bagatelle* as marriage," was the mocking reply. "Nor is it less known that the lady who has the honour of bearing your name is lodged in the plebeian quarter of the town, and that you are not over-anxious to procure her any social amusement. You leave her too often alone, while the Rue de Bourgogne is no quarter for a young woman fond of life and pleasure."

"Certainly not, but it is quite suitable for my little bigoted Margaret. The 'Sisters of the Heart of Christ' have stuffed into her little provincial head so much piety and queer notions of religion, that I don't know how to manage her. I have introduced her to the Marquise du Deffand, but I can do no more for her. It is almost a pity that she loves me so very much."

"How very foolish indeed to love a Gouverné!" interrupted Breteuil. "When you told me last year of your marriage, you omitted to tell me whether that provincial girl—whom, by-the-bye, you married for her money, of which you were rather deficient—was pretty or not. If she is plain, it were difficult to reform you, there being much room for it."

"To reform me," replied Gouverné, "with the manners of a wife born and bred in the province, with the eyes of a nun, and shyness of a child! Absurd! She is certainly not plain, but not a match for me, Aimé Gouverné. And I therefore consent that Margaret should be

included in the proposed wager, though I candidly tell you that even an angel would not succeed in the attempt to rival me in that quarter."

"Some poor devil is sometimes more fortunate than even an angel in such matters of gallantry," cried the abbé.

"The wager, then, I suppose, is fully accepted," said Voltaire. "You are thus all witnesses that the challenge is fair and honest, and here is my hand, Gouverné."

They both shook hands.

"And now," said Voltaire, "what time do you allow me for proofs of my success?"

"A whole year!"

"Nonsense! six months are more than sufficient for my purpose; but you must pledge your word of honour not to dodge my steps," a pledge which Gouverné, after some hesitation, distinctly gave.

"And now for the stake," rejoined Voltaire. "If I win, you must yield to me all your past claims to any of the fair ones who shall please me best; and if I lose, I will treat you to a most splendid banquet."

"And a poem in my favour, in the bargain."

"Agreed! On the 15th of March, 1726, we shall celebrate your or my defeat!"

* * * * *

About two months after the date of our narrative, there were sitting, on a cold rainy evening, round a fireplace in a snug apartment, three young ladies of rank, engaged in sprightly conversation. The small but splendidly furnished *salon* belonged to the eldest of the three, to the Marquise du Deffand, who numbered about thirty-two summers, and who was generally called the "queen of saloons," owing to her elegant figure, vivacity of manners, and great powers of conversation. She was by no means handsome; but no one thought of that the moment she began to talk and smile, and she was continually surrounded by a group of adorers, to the utter neglect of the handsomest of her sex. She possessed, in short, that gift of fascination, which inspired all who approached her with unspeakable delight and admiration. The Marquise had true friends and adorers in all circles of society; but she knew the art how to convert an adorer or lover into a friend without giving offence to his feelings. And so it happened to the young and handsome Gouverné, whom she had dismissed from her heart after a short flirtation, and who still fancied himself the favourite of that dangerous woman, who had ceased to entertain the least spark of affection for him. She hardly ever courted the society of her own sex; she wanted a life of continued excitement, which "could only be got," she used to say, "by intercourse with men." "Whenever I wish to rest or pray, or when I am indisposed, the society of my sex is welcome, but at no other time," she was heard to assert laughingly.

On the above-named evening it was evident she expected some other visitor besides those already present; she looked neither fatigued, nor dis-

posed to pray, nor inclined to be unwell, but quite the contrary; she was facetious, exceedingly fastidious in her toilet, and seemed, in fact, bent on some new mischief or conquest. The young lady who sat next to her had just finished reading aloud a manuscript of her own, and was in the act of folding it up carefully. Her handsome face and sparkling eyes bore the expression of proud joy when she said,—

"I am glad you like the small mathematical essay, and that you think I may venture to show it to our young teacher. Ah! should he reject it! I tremble at the thought!"

"Even then you ought to persevere in your scientific labour, my dear De Châtelet, and rest contented with the praise of your old teacher, M. Clairvant," replied Deffand.

"You are, despite your youth, an *esprit fort*, and in the best way of becoming a celebrity. These scientific labours prevent you, dear friend, from dwelling too much on the dulness of your matrimonial life; they make you forget that you are now only nineteen years old, and have consequently claims to those pleasures of life for which your much older partner has no longer any taste."

"You are wrong there, dear Marquise. M. Duchatel takes me almost too often into society; my life is far from being solitary!"

"But he loves you and watches all your steps with such jealous eyes, that I could a hundred times prefer the solitude of a convent life, or the imprisonment of our little Gouverné, to the liberty as granted to you by your husband. Better to walk about in the nun's cell unfettered, than bear chains in the midst of society, the clinking of which is jarring in my ears and those of other people," rejoined the Deffand.

"You are the happiest creature of all of us," sighed the third lady, the most charming of the three, hardly out of her teens, and not counting above seventeen summers. "You are not only beloved, dear Marquise, by everybody, but are even allowed to love in return whomsoever you like. You are adored wherever you appear; and the Marquis, your husband, seems even to exult in your conquests. How delightful it must be to love and be beloved!" added she, with a deep sigh.

"Dear Margaret," smiled the Marquise, "nobody, and least of all M. Gouverné, would hinder you from loving and being beloved. You must only be induced to leave off that grey convent-dress of yours, and allow me to dress and introduce you into high society. The rest will follow by itself."

"I don't think I am fit for a lady of the world. I would rather study and learn much, to become an *esprit fort* like Madame de Châtelet."

"Charming simpleton! A woman is far more happy to be a *cœur faible* than an *esprit fort*. The latter frequently neglects her toilet," said jocosely the Marquise, looking pointedly at the Châtelet, and arranging more smoothly the dress of the young authoress.

"Do you think that Voltaire notices such triflings?" asked anxiously the latter.

"Nothing escapes his eagle eyes."

"Yes, I know that too well," rejoined Margaret; "he smiled so mockingly when he met us once in the garden of Versailles, that I shall never forget it. I never felt so sad as at that moment. I never felt myself so plain and awkward as on that day, when he walked with us and talked to you only, though he behaved politely enough also towards me."

"Well, I hope you have overcome the pangs of that satyric smile of Arouet, and are now pretty reconciled to it, as I have no doubt that you are yourself aware that, despite your horrid dress and girlish bashfulness, he finds you neither plain nor silly!"

"Do you really think so, dear Marquise?" asked Margaret, with the innocent joy of a child when informed of a Christmas present. The two others laughed outright at the *naïve* display of pleasure, but said nothing.

"Where do you expect your husband to be this evening, my dear?" asked Châtelet.

"I think at the opera, to see the Camargo dance; after that he will take supper with her at Lecouvreur's."

"It must be a great misfortune to have a husband at once handsome and stupid," sighed the Marquise, arranging her brooch before the looking-glass.

"But I am far from unhappy; on the contrary, I feel very happy," exclaimed Margaret.

"Very true," laughed Châtelet, "but it is not your husband that makes you so happy."

"Yes, certainly, it is my female friends, who have pity on my isolation."

"Not to omit our evening readings and lessons at Voltaire's," added the Marquise, looking slily at Margaret.

"Yes, you are right! These evenings are indeed the joys of my life, and I would not neglect one of them for all the feasts of the Parisian winter season."

"Poor child, you know not as yet what a Parisian feast is, or you would be less moderate in your enthusiasm for other amusement. Your beautiful eyes, little nun, have not as yet strayed beyond the walls of your conjugal convent. To-morrow will be the grand ball at the theatre, and I will take you there."

"No! I don't feel inclined to dance; indeed, I have promised the good pious sisters never to dance."

"There he is at last!" exclaimed Châtelet, rising hastily.

The doors opened, and there stood at the threshold the small, insignificant figure of young Voltaire.

Margaret was right; those reading and gossiping evenings with Voltaire were indeed charming. It was the Deffand who had suggested the

plan of thus monopolizing the spirited society of Voltaire during the evenings of the winter season. The distinguished parts of the young poet charmed equally all the three ladies : it was Margaret more especially who fell into the meshes of that seductive and designing wit. Her eyes hung as if spell-bound on his lips when he spoke or read, not a word of his escaped her; and she well remembered the observation which the Marquise made to her in the park of Versailles, when first she saw Voltaire coming towards them :—

"Don't fear or abhor that ugly face of his, my dear; he is so witty, ingenious, and spirited, that you have only to listen to him for five minutes, and you will fancy him the handsomest man in the world."

On the 13th of March, 1726, there was a grand *bal masqué* at the theatre, which was attended by the *élite* of the *beau monde*. The handsome and all-admired Aimé Gouverné, who was naturally amongst them, was puzzled to know who that charming figure could be who, so richly adorned and elegantly dressed, was walking the whole evening arm-in-arm with Voltaire; it was surely not any of his old friends, whom he could easily recognize by gait, walk, or dress. No, she was a stranger to him; and yet how mockingly she seemed to look at him, and laugh under her mask whenever she passed by him! How was it possible, thought he, that such a bewitching creature could nail herself so firmly to the arm of that little malicious ape, that abominable Arouet?

In the evening of the 15th March, 1726, Aimé Gouverné received by hand the following note :—

"SIR,—I fear you are about to lose your bet. I enclose a few *billets-doux* from some fair hands. Please, moreover, to station yourself in about an hour's time at the grand portal of Notre Dame, to witness a little adventure, an elopement. At that moment it may do you good to learn the name of that third and mostly beloved female friend, who is pleased to love a little ugly ape, in preference to the Apollo, the handsome Gouverné.

"VOLTAIRE."

Gouverné perused with compressed lips the scented notes. One contained a graceful definition of love, and concluded with a passionate avowal. The name Emilie betrayed the writer. The *esprit fort* was also the *cœur faible*. The second note, though not signed, Gouverné had no difficulty in guessing was in the neat handwriting of Deffand. It was a piquant poem—a mixture of charming roguishness and deep earnest; it was, in fact, a spirited declaration of love.

With a heart full of galling revenge, Gouverné stood an hour later at the appointed spot, waiting for the scene his hated rival had prepared for him; nor was he long in waiting. A carriage approached, and halted at the spot. A servant, with lamp in hand, alighted, and revealed to Gouverné at the carriage window the satyric face of Voltaire, who nodded to him to approach. Lifting his hat the latter said, "Will you please

to turn to the right side of the carriage, that you may declare in the presence of my lovely companion that I have won my bet?"

Gouverné obeyed mechanically. At the sight of his own wife Gouverné gave a shriek of despair, but ere he had even time to draw his sword the carriage had disappeared, leaving him to his unpleasant reflections.

The bet was lost, but the promised banquet was never given; both Gouverné and Voltaire had left Paris for different places. It was only after the lapse of some years that Gouverné returned to Paris with his now charming Margaret, who no longer led the life of a convent. She appeared at all parties in Paris, always accompanied by her husband; she was then the admired of all admirers, and considered the *belle* of many seasons. Her toilet was always magnificent, and as tasty as that of the Deffand, with whom she continued to live on the best terms of confidence and friendship. But where was Voltaire? He was then for the second time confined to the Bastile for abduction of married women, whence he was, after many years, released and banished the country, to protect Parisian women from his seductive proximity; though from abroad he kept up an uninterrupted correspondence with his female friends at Paris. It was to Margaret he addressed that famous epistle, "Les Tus et les Vous;" and it was Margaret, in particular, who scrupulously kept him in memory. She kissed every evening, when at her devotions, a small miniature portrait of him, which was fastened on a golden chain round her neck. She wrote him long letters, especially during his imprisonment, though she led, upon the whole, the life of a fashionable Parisian lady of that period.

When the bloom of her beauty had faded she strove hard to become an *esprit fort;* but, failing in the task, she became a *dévote, très-dévote.*

The Deffand wrote to the exiled lover the most spirited letters, and subsequently, after losing her sight, it was her companion, the famous Julie Lepinasse, who wrote from her dictation the effusions of her heart, and who also read to her Voltaire's replies. Margaret frequently visited the Marquise, and it was always a kind of holiday for the two to talk over the olden times, and those evenings which young Arouet used to devote to reading and rational conversation with the three ladies, and whose reputation had now become European.

As for Madame de Châtelet, she had followed Voltaire into his exile, though not immediately on his banishment, and devoted to him—with a few interruptions—the whole of her life. At the castle of Citney, and under the protection of one of the most indulgent and indolent of husbands, she watched over her friend and his labours with zealous care, and rendered herself almost indispensable to his existence by her wit, humour, and vivacity. For twenty years long she kept him in the bondage of love and attachment,—for twenty years long he was in her mind the sublimest man in the world.

Soon after, the young poet, St. Lambert, appeared on the literary stage, when De Châtelet laid her now matronly heart (of forty-four years) at his feet. He was handsome in person and graceful in poetry—witness his "Vers de Société,"—and his favour with the fair sex was boundless. Despite his bitter jealousy, Voltaire addressed to him the following :—

"Saint Lambert, ce n'est que pour toi
Que ces belles fleurs sont écloses,
C'est ta main qui cueille les roses,
Et les épines sont pour moi."

(For thee, Lambert, the flowers now bloom,
While neglect and contempt is my doom;
The roses are for thee,
And the prickles for me.)

Margaret had now become an old woman, but still kissed the little portrait of young Arouet—which had never left her bosom—every day previously to her evening prayers.

After a long absence the celebrated poet reappeared at Paris, and the affection of Margaret of yore, having revived with youthful ardour, she longed to see him again. At her solicitation she met him at the gardens of Versailles, where she first saw him some fifty years back. Poor Voltaire! poor Margaret! Aimé Gouverné, who had secreted himself in the garden to witness the meeting, was revenged to his heart's delight. What an interview! "The half-blown rose had become a faded witch," said Voltaire to his friends, in describing the meeting. "I have just returned," added he, with horror, "from the other bank of Cocytus!" As for himself, Margaret, on the day after the meeting, sent him back his portrait, with the words, "*No resemblance any more, my friend!*"

HOW I GOT MY CORK LEGS.

I WILL say at once, at starting, that I, William Norton, being a mere youth at the time, lost my real legs for love,—not my love though, but another person's, which of course made the thing much more exasperating. This is the story I have to tell:—

I was always an unlucky boy, singularly so. I have never had my planet ruled; but there can be no question that at my birth Neptune, Venus, Mars, must have been in most malignant conjunction. How else could it have come to pass that I, born and bred in such an inland place as Reading, Berkshire, should take it into my head, when but about fourteen years old, to run off to sea, simply because Jane——But I must begin at the beginning, or I shall never pay this story cleverly out.

I was an orphan at an early age, and, I have no doubt, one of the most mischievous urchins in Reading. That, at least, was my much-enduring uncle's religious conviction. I was that venerable man's ward; but his guardianship, by express provision of my father's will, would cease and determine on the day I attained the ripe age of eighteen, on which auspicious anniversary, five thousand pounds, invested in Consols, would be absolutely at my mercy.

Surely it could not be so very audacious on the part of a promising and remarkably precocious youth, with such a splendid fortune assured to him, to fall in love with the rector's lovely daughter. She was lovely, I will never deny that, cruelly as she——But I won't stop just now at that.—Not, I say, so very audacious a thing for a precocious lad, so circumstanced, and finding himself alone with the dazzling damsel in her papa's garden, to drop down on his knees, vehemently declare he had lost his heart quite by surprise that morning looking in her eyes; and that his hand, with a *douceur* of five thousand pounds, might be hers about that time four years, if she would deign to accept the same. Didn't the charming hussy laugh! and didn't I get in a moment red-hot! Talk of spontaneous combustion! I think I must have been "dazed," as we say in Berkshire; for I was still dolefully kneeling—she merrily laughing—when the rector's stately lady sailed into sight. That majestic apparition had the effect of a treble dose of *sal volatile*. Up I sprang, was off, damaging, in my hasty flight, one or two of the rector's splendid rhododendrons, leaped the hedge like a deer, and reached home in a violent state of perspiration and perturbation.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, I blurted out a request for a loan of twenty pounds. My excellent relative was twenty fathom deep in his newspaper when those astounding words fell upon his incredulous ears. He quite evidently doubted them or my sanity, as, dropping his paper with one hand and removing his spectacles with the other, he glared at me in speechless surprise.

I was prepared for that, and, daring young hypocrite that I was, hastened to observe that I was desirous of presenting twenty pounds to the Reading branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, of which the venerable rector was chairman. The British and Foreign Bible Society was my uncle's pet institution, to which—and very commendable in him—he subscribed largely. He was instantaneously mollified, and a hope evidently dawned upon him, for the first time, that I might not turn out such an utter reprobate after all. Still the sum staggered him, but I explained that, knowing I could well afford to give twenty pounds in aid of so admirable an institution, and being aware the Reading branch was not in a pecuniarily prosperous condition, I was desirous of placing the twenty sovereigns with my own hand into that of the rector, whose good opinion I was anxious to obtain. Cheque drawn at once, and handed to me with a blessing. Half an hour afterwards I was journeying on foot—(travelling by coach would never have answered; I should have been stopped and trundled back home to a certainty),—half an hour afterwards I was trudging along the road to Portsmouth. This mad step was based upon the fact that, as I had seen by the newspapers, my maternal uncle, Commander Bertie, was at that port with his sloop-of-war, the *Falcon*, refitting for active service.

My uncle Bertie, one of the best-hearted men that ever walked the earth, received me in the kindest manner, yielded to my entreaties, and gave me an acting warrant as midshipman. My vocation thus decided, I wrote a dutiful letter to my Reading relative; pleaded, in excuse for running away, an irresistible longing for a sea life, which I had no doubt came to me by descent, it being, as he knew, a tradition—a somewhat hazy one, perhaps—that an ancestor of ours had fought and been gloriously killed in the famous naval battle of Sluys, in which King Edward, surnamed Longshanks, commanded as his own Lord High Admiral—a slight historical inaccuracy, by-the-bye. I also requested my worthy relative to pay over twenty pounds to his reverence the rector, and place the same to my account. Now I by no means wish to hold myself up as an example to youth or age in this transaction. To be sure, there was no fraud, if there was falsehood. The money I had surreptitiously obtained really belonged to me. Still it was a sad deception, and bore sad fruits, as two cork legs creakingly remind me every day of my life.

My Reading uncle's reply did not reach me till a few hours before the *Falcon* sailed. He was rather glad, he politely intimated, that he was quit of me, for some time, at all events, without having himself incurred any responsibility; and he heartily wished my maternal uncle, Captain Bertie, joy of his acquisition. Enclosed was a note from his reverence the rector; an acknowledgment, no doubt, of the twenty pounds which had been handed to him, as requested. "I don't know," continued my uncle, "whether I ought to tell you of it; but if I don't, you are sure to hear of it from some one or other, as it is the subject of general gossip in

this gossiping place. Your rich curmudgeon of an aunt (aunt Bertie), finding herself seized with, as she herself and the doctors believe to be, mortal illness, sent for lawyer Simpson (you know what an inveterate babbler Simpson is), gave him instructions to immediately prepare her will, by which will you are bequeathed no less a sum than fifteen thousand pounds. It was duly executed three days ago. It is said, and it appears truly, that a certain dark individual's numerous children have that individual's luck and their own too. But let me counsel you, my dear boy—I have a real regard for you, spite of your follies—to endeavour, by doing your duty in the noble profession you have made choice of, to make a man of yourself; and, by leading a worthy life in all other respects, to lay up for yourself treasures in heaven, which do not pass away.—Your affectionate uncle, J. Rutherford. P.S.—Your aunt has rallied considerably, but there is no hope, they say, of her ultimate recovery."

His reverence the rector's note scarcely alluded to the twenty pounds. It dwelt upon sublimer things. He had heard through Mrs. Rector of a certain garden scene, and was disposed to regard the incident with indulgence, he might almost say with favour. "In the morning of life"—in my case it was certainly early morning; his beloved Jane and I were about the same age,—"in the morning of life, when the blandishments of passion take the reason prisoner"—(surely I had read that tall talk before),—"in the morning of life, when the blandishments of passion take the reason prisoner, much would be overlooked by the eye of a comprehensive philosophy. Moreover, that which at fourteen might be a person's fancy merely, time would perhaps develop into a confirmed, lasting esteem and affection. I might," his reverence added, "correspond occasionally, through her mamma, with Jane, who would add, she said, a few words to the note." The few words were these:—"You silly boy to run away to sea! But perhaps you knew how much I admire a gallant, glorious sailor. But I fear there will be no fighting; no chance of your returning home short of an arm or a leg, and covered with glory. You will be glad to hear that papa's rhododendrons have won a prize at the flower show; and who shall say you will not a few years hence win the prize, 'Jane'?"

My uncle once took a Bank of England note which was returned with the word "Forged—Forged," stamped all over it. Now, had I not been the blindest young buzzard that ever blinked, I should have seen, plainly as the Bank's "Forged—Forged," "Fifteen thousand pounds!—Fifteen thousand pounds!" graven upon that precious note and sub-note. I saw nothing of the kind. On the contrary, I feigned indisposition, and turned in to chew the cud, if I may so speak, of the delicious postscript. Was it not one of our Queens—I was not, it has been seen, particularly well up in history,—was it not Queen Anne, or Eleanor, or Mary, or Elizabeth, who said that when she died, "Calais," lost during her reign, would be found written on her heart? Whether that anecdote

be apocryphal or not, I cannot say; but I have a firm conviction that, if I had suddenly died that night of over-excitement, the *post-mortem* surgeons would have found the words, "Who shall say you will not a few years hence win the prize, Jane?" written in a bold round hand on my heart.

But I must make better headway, or I shall never drop anchor. I did correspond during four years with Jane through her mamma. The tone of the young lady's letters warmed sensibly as these years flew past, and the last I received glowed with a fervour, a maidenly fervour, which both surprised and delighted me. By the same post I was informed by my Reading uncle that aunt Bertie was dead, and I therefore secure of the fifteen thousand pounds.

I was then at Malta, serving on board the *Powerful*, 80-gun ship, Captain Charles Napier; the late Sir William Peel, one of my brother mids. This was in 1840. The next mail brought me a letter of credit upon an Armenian banker, and one from his reverence the rector, expressing in the most affectionate terms his anxiety to see me in Reading as soon as possible. The good man's health was giving way, and he was anxious to give me his blessing as Jane's husband before he quitted this transitory scene.

I spoke with Captain Napier, stated how matters stood, and should certainly have sailed by the next packet had not news meanwhile arrived that England, inspired by Lord Palmerston, had determined, in defiance of France, to put down the Pacha of Egypt, Mohammed Ali, and his equally miscreant son. Admiral Sir Robert Stopford was ordered to act, and without delay. The news spread like wildfire through the fleet. England had at last awakened from her lethargy. We were allowed to go in, and should win, of course. Hip! hip!

It is needless to say that if I had wished to do so, I could not have left my ship on the very eve of battle. I was consequently present at the bombardment of Beirût—Queen City of Palestine—at the landing, witnessed the panic-flight of the much-boasted Egyptians at the bare sight of our fellows, and was present at the fall of Acre. I never estimated very highly the glory of that Syrian campaign. What real resistance could a multitude of Egyptian soldiers offer to a well-organized British force? It signifies little to the wolves how numerous the sheep may be.

Hostilities having ceased, my moral freedom was regained. I obtained practically unlimited leave of absence, and at my own request was put on shore at Beirût. I was persuaded to do so by Tom Elton, assistant surgeon of the *Powerful*, who had determined for reasons of his own to quit the service.

This Tom Elton, a handsome, clever young fellow, endowed, beyond any other person I have ever known, with a marvellous "gift of the gab," to use a vulgarism, had acquired great influence over me. There were reasons for this apart from his peculiar powers of fascination, which were

considerable. He was a Berkshire man, knew the rector's family at Reading, had conversed with and greatly admired Jane.

He was possessed by a passionate desire to visit the holy places of Palestine, and he inoculated me with that ardent desire. It was tacitly understood that I, having plenty of money—those, you know, were my salad days—should defray the costs of the journey. We left in high health, followed the sea-shore to Sidon and Tyre, where, I believe, merchant princes first came into existence, crossed over the mountains to Jordan, then, skirting the Lake of Tiberias, returned to the sea-coast, contemplated the ruins of Philistia, and away again in our erratic course to behold Mount Sinai.

For several days before we were near to it the central summit of Mount Sinai was distinctly visible in the pure, cloudless atmosphere. Contemplating the sacred mount as we did through the dark backward and abysm of time, it impressed me with a solemn, shuddering awe. Abrupt cliffs, from six to eight hundred feet in height, their surfaces blackened by the sun, enclose the avenues leading to the lofty plateau to which the name Sinai specifically applies. I sat in what is called the seat of Moses, and was informed by the monks—monasteries are plentiful there—that the body of Saint Catharine of Alexandria was, after she had suffered martyrdom, conveyed to Mount Sinai by angels. Her relics are carefully preserved, and, I was seriously assured, still worked astounding miracles. The dietary of the monks of Sinai, I may observe in passing, does not include meat or wine, but as when the founder of the order dictated his rules alcoholic drinks were unknown, date brandy is not held to be a prohibited article, and the clerical consumption is said to be considerable.

From Sinai we crossed the desert in a direct line for Jerusalem. The impression made upon me by that silent, solitary journey will never be effaced. True, we were fourteen in number, but in that seemingly limitless dead waste, that sea of sand, what specks we were! And though no human life except our own was there, Death was ever present in his ghastliest shape. Behold that corpse direct in your path, his head turned back, his mouth wide open! He wanted water: Death has choked it with sand. He wanted air: the wind is laughing through his ribs. He struggled to reach his journey's end: his feet are sticking in the air!

This was the sort of pleasant converse with which my guide, philosopher, and friend, Tom Elton, favoured me in that dread wilderness; and I certainly wished myself more than once, spite of the sacred sublimity of the scene, safe back in the coffee-room of the "Red Lion," Reading. Vulgar, no doubt, but fact.

We had been about three weeks in Jerusalem, and I was recovering, so to speak, from the subduing awe inspired by looking with one's bodily eyes upon the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of

Gethsemane, the brook of Siloam, the rock Calvary, when one fine morning Tom Elton, with a very anxious, perplexed look and manner, said he had a particular favour to ask of me, upon the granting of which the happiness of his life, and life itself, depended. I was not unused to that style of thing, and answered mechanically, "How much?" supposing he meant money.

"No, no, no," he hastily replied; "it is not that. At least, not wholly or chiefly that. First, however, I must ask you to accompany me to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to-day, at the time of the Latin or Roman Catholic service. You know the Latins and Greeks take turn and turn about in that church."

"Yes, I do. Well?"

"A young lady will be there whom I wish you to see. I am anxious to interest you in her, for my own selfish purposes, I frankly admit."

"Oh! ah! Sits the wind in that quarter? I am with you, old fellow."

"Ayesha is an orphan, and an English girl; her mother and father were natives of Lancashire. They came to Syria with the Lady Hester Stanhope, the much-beslavered maniac, who, to the last day of her snuff-taking, opium-chewing, virago's life, dreamt—and died dreaming—of a sacerdotal empire in the East, a throne in Jerusalem. Mr. Compton, Ayesha's father, was Lady Hester's medical attendant—one of them, at least. This daughter was born at Lady Hester's residence, and baptized by the Eastern name of Ayesha, at her request or command. Dr. Compton's widow survived her husband five or six years, and had the inconceivable folly to marry a penniless Frenchman—a *chevalier d'industrie*—whose sole recommendations were youth compared with her own years, tolerably good looks, and an insinuating tongue. His motives for marrying an elderly widow were not far to seek. A relative in England had bequeathed her, a few months before Monsieur Camille—which may or may not be the fellow's name—made her acquaintance, a considerable estate not far from Preston, Lancashire, consisting of several farms, houses in Preston, and realizing a net rental of something like eight hundred a year. Very fortunately, the property was reserved absolutely to herself during her lifetime, with reversion to her children, should she have any. The child, or children would have, however, at the mother's death, the right to sell, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of the estate. It would seem that neither Monsieur Camille nor his bride herself knew of the real conditions of the bequest; for she, in the first infatuation of marital illusion, yielded readily to the specious Frenchman's representation that he could double their income by selling the English estate and investing the proceeds in some superb Syrian speculation, and sent orders to the English attorneys who had the management of the property, to realize forthwith. The answer threw the husband into a paroxysm of brutal rage, and poor Madame Camille thenceforth lived a wretched life with him. Death released her, after about five years of galling bondage to

a fellow she had learned both to detest and despise. Her death did not help him, for the daughter Ayesha, to whom as stepfather he was the natural guardian, could not, did she wish to do so, sell or alienate the estate till she attained her majority, which she will do in about two months. Camille has, of course, received and spent the annual proceeds; but eight hundred a year, though an immense, a princely income in such a country as this, could not suffice—what *would* suffice a reckless gambler such as Camille? and he is overwhelmed with debt. His only hope of extrication, of enriching himself, is through Ayesha, over whom, though indulgent towards her, he exercises a species of moral terror of which she cannot divest herself. He has determined she shall marry a nephew of his, Auguste Collet, probably an illegitimate son, whom he sent for to France some eight or nine months agone. I have no doubt father and son, or uncle and nephew, intend to divide the spoil."

"And they have let Mr. Elton make himself acquainted with all these particulars?"

"Ayesha herself is my informant."

"The deuce! You have boxed the compass so far round to the true and constant north already!"

"I happen to have found favour in the damsel's sight, and with your assistance I trust to make her my wife before many days are past. She is a Roman Catholic, her mother having been one. But you must see Ayesha before I venture to take you further into my confidence. I mean, before I can venture to ask for the rather extraordinary assistance without which the project will infallibly be wrecked. You are a fine-hearted and uncommonly susceptible young fellow. Ayesha will interest you. Oh, you needn't raise your eyebrows; the vice of flattery cannot be reckoned amongst my sins, though they are many: you *are* a fine-hearted and uncommonly susceptible young fellow, the charming Jane to wit, and, like a prudent general about to fight the Waterloo of his life, I must avail myself of all means and influences within my reach. I had almost forgotten to say that the Frenchman Camille, to whom all religions are matters of supreme indifference, has, in order to be enabled practically to defy his Christian creditors, turned Mahomedan. He has consequently much interest with the Turkish authorities, with the local mufti especially. This adds considerably, I am bound to acknowledge, to the danger of the enterprise I am committed to. If caught running away with the rascally renegade's daughter and ward, the British consul could not save me from the bastinado."

"Now let us go."

A very, very charming young woman was Ayesha. Her large, melting violet eyes beamed inexpressible sweetness. Innocence, modesty, truth, radiated in every line of her beautiful face. If she could be saved by money from the pollution of marrying the villanous renegade's no doubt

equally villanous son or nephew, the thing was done. That perhaps which charmed me most, as seated on the Mount of Olives she sang Miriam's song, was the halo or atmosphere of pensive piety which seemed to envelop, almost transfigure her. I was only about eighteen, you know, and Tom Elton well knew how much I admired Madonna purity of aspect and manners in women. A very clever fellow was Tom Elton—knew how many beans make five as well as any man in London; had reckoned up and knew the sum total of his young friend to a fraction.

"You are willing to assist me?" said Elton, when we were alone. "However extravagant I may sometimes be in talk—fast in my habits,—you know perfectly well that my serious word once pledged, it will be kept; that the pounds I have borrowed, or may borrow, of you, will be faithfully repaid."

"I am quite sure of that; and there is no necessity to waste one word upon the subject. You want money to run off with the rascally renegade's stepdaughter; marry her, and be off to England upon golden wings. How much will amply suffice? Here," I added, "is a signed unfilled cheque; write upon it what sum you please. The agent of the Armenian banker here will cash it."

"I felt quite sure," said Tom Elton, quietly depositing the cheque in his pocket-book—"I was quite sure you would not fail me in that respect. But I have a much graver request to prefer. I want not only the loan of your money, but of your name."

"What is that? The loan of my name!"

"Yes! Camille and his son, or nephew, happen just now to be away for a few days from Jerusalem. They are from Beirût, as I told you, Monsieur Camille and his ward not having been domiciled in the Holy City more than about two years. They lodge in the Latin quarter. An imprudence on my part has caused M. Camille to warn the proprietor of the house, to whom fortunately I was unknown personally, on no account to admit an English doctor named Elton to an interview, upon any pretence, with Ayesha. The renegade having, as I have said, considerable influence with the Turkish authorities, the proprietor would not dare to violate that positive injunction, even under the temptation of a heavy bribe. Lieutenant Norton—they call you Lieutenant here—well known to be rich, can easily overleap that obstacle by a present gift and a large promise. It has, in fact, been done. I have used your name, and as Lieutenant Norton have placed twenty sequins—those I borrowed two or three days ago—in the greedy palm of Ayesha's custodian, with a promise of one hundred more."

"Rather cool, that! but I don't mind."

"Any note that may be brought here addressed to Lieutenant Norton, with a small A in the corner, you will know is for me."

"All right, old fellow."

"The two Frenchmen are expected to return in a week, possibly sooner. There is no time to lose, and the knot once tied, swift as the wind we speed away. I have no fears now," he added, "and the remembrance of your kindness, dear boy, will only cease with my life."

He then left, and, being a mere lad, I don't think I was disturbed by any misgiving as to what figure he would fill up the cheque for.

There were some awkward hitches in running out the project to its triumphant end, which gave poor Elton more than one heartache, but all came right at last. They were married—gone. I assisted at the ceremony, of course; and I don't mind saying, as things have turned out, that I should not have committed suicide if, instead of giving the charming bride away, I had found myself suddenly compelled by some previously unknown Sultanic law to take her myself for better for worse; though I don't see how there could have been much "worse" about it. It is not exactly pleasant to look at happiness through another man's eyes.

My part in the entertainment was to come,—quickly too,—the very next day. I had dined, half finished a letter to Jane, quite one bottle of wine, and three or four cigars, when a tumult of angry voices, the up-rush of hurrying feet ascending the stone steps, caught my ear.

The next moment nine or ten fierce fellows, amongst them M. Camille and his son, or nephew, in a state of foaming rage, burst into my room. Their companions were gambling-table creditors, to whom the flight of Ayesha was as great a pecuniary calamity as to the Frenchman.

"*Scélérat, coquin*, villain, robber, you Lieutenant Norton, where is my daughter? Where is Ayesha? Give her to me this moment! or, *sacré Dieu*, I will kill you!—cut you into pieces!"

"Yes, and this moment. Tell us where is my wife that was to be. Where is Ayesha, you thief, rascal, robber, Norton?"

This was a pretty fix, but I was not so much alarmed after a moment's reflection. *Civis Anglicanus sum*,—I was an English citizen. They dared not lay a finger upon me. Didn't they though?

"Get out of this!" cried I, springing up from the divan, "or I shall give you all into custody. Don't think to bully ME! Ayesha is, I have no doubt, halfway to Stamboul by this time, in company with her husband."

Good heavens! what shrieks, what howls of rage, greeted my words! and, unlucky youth that I was, I was seized upon, buffeted, my clothes were torn from my back, and they positively pitched me out of the window, in reckless defiance of *Civis Anglicanus sum!*

When I regained consciousness I found myself in the British consul's house, and was gently informed that, both my legs being broken—compound fractures—it was imperative that both should be immediately amputated above the knee, to give me a chance of life. The consul added, by way of super-consolation, that he feared no adequate punishment could,

under the peculiar circumstances of the case as explained to him, be inflicted upon the ruffians who had used me so barbarously.

The surgeons sawed my legs off, and, thanks to youth and a healthy constitution, I survived the operation. I have said I lost my legs through love; now that is not exactly correct. I can't entirely lose them, I wish to goodness I could; for whenever it freezes harder than usual, or a fit of the gout sets in, hang me if my two legs and ten toes don't come back again, just to give me the pleasure of their sensational connection with me, and feelingly persuade me that, though lost to touch, I am still to memory dear. Moral:—Never go by a false name, or allow any one to assume yours; for it may happen, as in my case, that no time or opportunity will be allowed to amend the errors of description.

As soon as I was allowed to read I opened a letter, the address of which was, I saw, in Tom Elton's handwriting; it was full of joy, rapture, gratitude! Good Lord! how sick and savage it made me! There was another, of which I languidly broke the seal; it was from the Reading lawyer, who blandly announced that my aunt Bertie had, at the very point of death, added a codicil to her will, by which, influenced by some unexplained caprice, she had reduced the legacy bequeathed to me from fifteen to five thousand pounds!

At last I was sufficiently recovered to essay walking with the cork legs, with which a European artist in that line had furnished me at by no means a modest figure. With the help of two sticks I, after considerable practice, got on pretty well, and then determined upon no longer delaying my return to England. I remembered Jane had expressed a sort of wish that I might return home *minus* a leg or an arm and covered with glory. I had not a superabundance of glory to boast of, though I had done my duty, but I had a large quantum of its usual penalties. Two legs gone instead of one leg or one arm,—that ought to count for something in the compassionate heart of a high-souled young woman. Arrived in England, the following pleasant note was delivered to me:—

"*The Rectory, Reading, March* 12, 1841.

"The Reverend Mr. —— presents his compliments and condolences to Mr. William Norton, and felicitates him upon his return to his native land. With respect to the particular subject touched upon in Mr. William Norton's note, the Reverend Mr. —— has to observe that, quite six months ago, his daughter, Miss Jane ——, accepted the addresses of ——. The wedding, at which they would all be exceedingly happy to see Mr. William Norton, will take place within the next fortnight."

I did not, you see, die of a broken heart; in fact, I am getting fat, very. The medical man says that legs absorb a great portion of the nutriment digested by the stomach, and that, but for certain inconveniences, wooden or cork legs would be advantageous, as they would effect so great a saving in the cost of living; from which it would appear that the uses of adversity are sweet—at all events, not entirely verjuice—even in the matter of cork legs. I beg to differ from that deduction of medical science.

RECORDS OF AN OLD POLICE COURT

BY W. H. WATTS.

No. V.

DIPPING casually into some of the musty note-books kept by the old magistrates half a century ago, I came upon entries having reference to applications of officers for leave of absence. I presume these memoranda were for the inspection of the Home Office, which required a periodical return to be made of the attendances at each police court, and a voucher, in case of the absence of an officer, that such officer was away on public business. I have already stated that the old system permitted country justices and clients to apply for the assistance of a London police officer of known experience, in cases where the local constabulary had been at fault, or where it was not deemed prudent or advisable to employ them. The Marlborough Street officers, the seniors especially, were in frequent request; and certainly the most profitable portions of their professional duties were these country engagements. I may here take the opportunity of stating, although a special staff of officers was attached to the different police courts, each staff under the control of their own magistrates, that police officers' duties were by no means limited to the service of warrants and summonses, and the apprehension of delinquents within stated jurisdictions. There were many occasions where police services were called into requisition, of which the public would know nothing, because these services were in their nature confidential, secret, and not directly connected with public matters. It is not my present province to touch upon the higher duties police officers were occasionally called upon to perform. I shall not speak of political cases in which they were engaged by the Home Office on special emergencies, nor shall I enter into detail of the delicate missions in which they were not unfrequently employed, when some of our Continental allies paid a visit to this country, or wished to have periodical reports of the doings and whereabouts of *suspects* who had found a home in this country, under the name of political *refugees*. I shall content myself with selecting a case or two of a domestic character, which may serve to place the tact of the old police in a favourable light, and which, I think, are of sufficient interest to be worth giving to the public.

There are many yet living who will have a lively recollection of the terror spread throughout the agricultural districts five-and-thirty years ago, the threatening letters signed by the ubiquitous but intangible "Swing," and the nightly incendiarism which was the complement of these dreaded missives. Sir Frederick Roe, then Mr. Roe, who at the period I refer to was senior magistrate, was applied to by the Chairman of Quarter Sessions in one of the principal agricultural counties, for the

assistance of an experienced officer in tracing out the writer of five or six letters signed "Swing," which had been received by as many magistrates, which not only threatened destruction to their property, but injury to their persons. As all kinds of atrocities were then being committed by rustic mobs throughout the country, and ricks and farmhouses were blazing in every direction, the receipt of these threatening epistles naturally created much alarm; and as all attempts to discover the writer or writers had proved abortive, the magistrates deputed their Chairman to apply to Sir F. Roe for one of his best officers, to help in tracing out the delinquent. John Clements, an officer of repute, was selected for this duty. Of course I derive the materials of the following statement from himself, though the heads were embodied in the official report he was required to make on his return.

The officer proceeded to Bury, and was received at the private residence of the Chairman of the bench of magistrates as "Captain Johnson." The officer thought it advisable to assume an *incognito*, and his exercise of sagacity in this respect, as will be seen in the sequel, was not supererogatory. The first step taken by Clements was to get possession of all the letters received by the various magistrates. Having compared the writing and style of composition, he arrived at the conclusion—though the writing was disguised in various ways, and the wording studiously different—that they had been written by one and the same person, and that the writer, from peculiarities of the formation of some of the letters, was either in the law, or had been bred to the law. The next step was to examine the paper on which the threatening letters were written. It proved to be all of the same kind—a cheap blue-tinted note-paper, without any distinguishing water-mark. The officer proceeded to ascertain how many of the legal profession were in the town. He found only two firms, both of which he visited, in company with one of the magistrates, as Captain Johnson; and, after making his observations, became satisfied that the letters had not emanated from either of these establishments. The only other legal person was the clerk to the magistrates, a young man who had served his articles, and had afterwards been inducted into his present post on account of his activity and presumed acquaintance with county routine business. This young man had been previously entrusted with the task of finding out the sender of the letters, but had failed to make any progress in the discovery. It was this failure that had induced the magistrates to decide upon a private application to Mr. Roe. Clements proceeded to every shop where paper was sold, and there bought samples of all the note-paper the shopkeepers had in stock. On comparing his purchases with the paper on which the letters were written, he found no assistance was given to his inquiry. Having satisfied himself that the letters had been all posted at one post-office about eight miles from the town, he proceeded there, and was rewarded by learning that one Thomas Rounding, a supernumerary server of summonses, had

been seen to post letters at the village post-office; and on one occasion the postmistress had noticed that a letter, which she had seen Rounding drop into the box, was directed to the Chairman of the magistrates. This circumstance excited no remark at the time, as it was presumed the epistle had reference to magisterial business connected with Rounding's public duties. The "Swing" letters being shown to the postmistress, without any hesitation she pointed out the letter whose superscription she had noticed, which letter proved to be one of the most atrocious of the batch sent to the magistrates. Pursuing the inquiry, Clements went to the only shop where paper was sold, and succeeded in obtaining a quantity of note-paper, which exactly tallied with the paper on which the letters in question had been written. The owner of the shop, without any hesitation, stated that the only sale of paper he had had made within the last month was a packet of this note-paper to Thomas Rounding. Feeling now assured he was on the right scent, Clements immediately returned to Bury, and communicated his discoveries and his suspicions to the magistrates. As there were several summonses with the signature of Thomas Rounding to them in the clerk's office, they were sent for and compared with the writing in the letters. A glance was sufficient to show that the scrawl of the process-server bore no resemblance to the finished yet disguised caligraphy of the writer of letters. Clements expressed his opinion that two persons were concerned in the mystery of the letters, and that Rounding was probably only the tool of a more accomplished delinquent. The magistrates concurred in this view, and inquired what further step the officer proposed to take. Clements replied that, on his deposition, he would apply for a warrant against Rounding. The magistrates, after consulting together, suggested that their clerk, who had been kept in the dark as to the private inquiry then going on, should be called in and consulted. Clements having no objection to make, the clerk was sent for into the magistrates' private room, and made acquainted with the details as far as they went. Having prepared the deposition of Clements very carefully, he gave it as his opinion that the evidence was too vague to take action upon, and strongly dissuaded the magistrates against issuing their warrant, as it was not unlikely, if stronger proof could not be had, that an acquittal would be sure to follow, and that an action for damages would then lie against them. The magistrates were evidently nonplussed by this view of the matter, and as they had great confidence in the legal knowledge of their clerk, they hesitated to issue their warrant. "Then," said Clements, "on my own responsibility I will make the caption, and to-morrow bring formally forward my charge." Another difficulty was here started by the clerk;—the borough gaol was undergoing repair, and there was no place except the temporary lock-up, at a distant part of the town, where the prisoner could be secured. Nothing daunted, the officer proceeded at once to carry out his purpose. Thomas Rounding—who, in addition to being a constable, carried on a small

business as shoemaker—was then at work. Armed with a search-warrant, Clements proceeded to Rounding's house and took him into custody, lodging him in the lock-up under the care of the temporary gaoler. Rounding's house was afterwards searched, but not a particle of proof that he was in any way connected with the writing or sending of the letters, except that which had been already obtained, could be discovered. Clements, after a private consultation with the Chairman, determined to take the place of the under-gaoler, and during the night to keep watch himself over the prisoner. To prevent the possibility of a discovery of his intention, the under-gaoler was not warned of the arrangement until about nine o'clock at night, when he was despatched on a mission to another part of the county, care being taken that he should communicate with no one before he was fairly on the road to his destination. These precautions were both wisely and timely taken, as the result will prove. Clements sagaciously surmised that the apprehension of Rounding would probably reach the ears of his confederate, and that Rounding would be visited during the night. The lock-up was an old stone building with two rooms, one above the other, the top room having a large window securely barred with iron. In this room Rounding was placed and confined for the night. Clements, occupying the room on the ground-floor there, quietly waited in the dark, with eyes and ears open for any sight or sound that might assist him in the business in which he was engaged. Clements remained on the watch until past midnight; suddenly he heard a stealthy step, and then the sound of gravel thrown against the window above. In an instant he was on the *qui vive*. He looked out of his own window cautiously, and could just discern the figure of a man apparently muffled up in a large cloak, body and face. After waiting a few minutes, more gravel was thrown, and then he heard the prisoner drag a table to the window, mount upon it, and break one of the squares of glass. The figure disappeared, as if in doubt whether the noise might not have attracted attention. Everything remaining quiet, the figure ventured from his place of concealment, and, coming beneath the window, entered into conversation, in a low voice, with the prisoner. Clements was able to catch the purport of this conversation. The prisoner was to deny everything; above all, if he was firm and faithful, and kept his own counsel, he might rely not only in getting clear off, but in being well rewarded for his fidelity. Clements opened the outer door noiselessly, and was in time to see the retreating figure making his way swiftly up the street. Clements followed at a distance, keeping his eye on the fugitive, and never losing sight of him until he entered a house in the High Street with a latch-key, and closed the door after him. Clements returned to the lock-up, keeping guard until morning, when he was relieved by a couple of borough constables, to whom he gave strict orders to enter the prisoner's place of confinement at ten o'clock, and to bring him to the court-house, where the magistrates would be assembled for business. Clements, having

taken note of the house into which he had seen the muffled figure enter, made inquiries as to the occupants, and having obtained all the information he wanted, he waited leisurely for the hour when the examination of prisoners would commence. The magistrates were punctual; the clerk, warmly cloaked, was at his post. Clements applied for a few minutes' conversation before business began.

"Well, Mr. Clements," said the Chairman, "have you succeeded in obtaining any further evidence?"

"I find there were two in this business, as I thought. One is in custody; the other visited the prisoner last night." The clerk gave a start, and asked abruptly,—

"How do you know that?"

"I was at the lock-up. I saw and heard him, and I traced him to his house."

The clerk looked confused, but rallied.

"Can you identify him?"

"I did not see his face; that was covered up; but I can swear to his cloak and his voice."

"Why did you not take him into custody?"

"It was not necessary; I knew where to find him when he was wanted."

"And where can you find him?"

"In this room. Here is his cloak," pointing to the clerk's cloak. "Young gentleman, I will thank you to hand me over your keys."

The clerk, who appeared almost paralyzed with fear, held out the keys mechanically.

Clements took them, opened his desk, and, turning over some office papers, came upon the packet of note-paper, a portion of which had been used, and after making further search found a copy of the threatening letter which had been sent to the Chairman.

The clerk fell on his knees and begged for mercy. He had only intended to carry out a joke.

The magistrates were astounded and grieved at the discovery, but the offence was too grave for condonation.

The clerk and Rounding were placed at the bar; the evidence was conclusive, and they were fully committed for trial. The assizes were being held, the prisoners were tried and convicted. The clerk received a sentence of two years' imprisonment; his accomplice, who was assumed not to know the full contents of the letters he posted, two months.

The motive which led the clerk to adopt this mode of intimidation was soon disclosed. The magistrates had, in a fit of economy, seriously curtailed the perquisites of the clerk's office, and, when applied to for compensation or increase of salary, had declined to accede to the request. This refusal exasperated the clerk, and he had resolved upon giving the bench a little fright, for which, however, he paid dearly.

The magistrates were delighted at the termination of this affair. They invited Clements to dine with them, and after the cloth was withdrawn, the Chairman, in a neat speech, complimented the officer highly for the ability he had displayed throughout, winding up his oration by asking Clements, in the name of himself and his brother magistrates, to accept a handsome silver snuff-box and its contents as a mark of their approbation.

"I thanked the bench in the best terms I could," said Clements; "and when I took leave they all shook hands with me. On my road to the inn I thought I would see what sort of snuff the box contained, as it felt agreeably heavy. When I opened it I found it was filled with sovereigns."

Another case, in which the same officer was employed, refers to a domestic semi-tragedy in high life, which in its day formed the topic of conversation in the upper circles, but which never reached the general public. It will not be necessary to publish names, as one of the principal actors is still alive, nor will it be proper to revive a defunct scandal that must give pain to more than one noble family.

A nobleman—the guardian of two heiresses, the youngest of whom had been made a ward in chancery—applied for an officer to execute a mandate of the Lord Chancellor to take possession of the person of the ward in chancery, who had been abducted by the husband of the sister, and kept for profligate purposes at his country seat—there was but too much reason to believe with her own consent. Clements was entrusted with the business, and, having been put in possession of the leading particulars of the case, was armed with full authority to execute the warrant placed in his hands. The circumstances were briefly these. Colonel ——, a member of a noble family, a man of violent passions and loose morality, had married one of two heiresses, a very beautiful woman, by whom he had two lovely children. The younger sister, then about fifteen years of age, who was permitted by her guardian to spend her holidays at the seat of her married sister, in a short time fell a victim to the arts of her sister's husband. The wife, naturally indignant at this desecration of her home, appealed to her sister's guardian, and steps were immediately taken to remove the erring young lady from the roof of her seducer. Colonel —— was not a man to allow any obstacle, moral or legal, to bar the way to a full indulgence of his licentious propensities. He contrived to gain an interview with the young lady, and with her full consent carried her off from her guardian's house, and took her down to his country seat at ——, inducting her openly into the position hitherto filled by his wife, and confining that wife to a suite of rooms, without permitting her to enjoy the least liberty or to communicate with her friends. The house in which the wife was confined, and the usurper of her rights kept up his immoral connection, was barricaded against all intruders. The guardian, however, obtained such information, through one of the servants, as induced him to apply to the county magistrates for a warrant, which was granted with reluctance, as it was to be directed against one of

their own body. Two county constables, on attempting to execute the warrant, were so severely handled that it was deemed expedient to apply to the Lord Chancellor, who at once gave a peremptory order for the immediate delivery of the young lady into the custody of her guardian. Clements was provided with ample funds. A carriage with coachman and footman were placed at his service, and he was requested to have relays of post-horses in readiness at all the posting-houses, so that when the capture was effected, no time might be lost in bringing the young lady to London. I will leave Clements to tell the rest of the story :—

"I was a day and a night on the road, though I travelled as fast as four post-horses could take me, before I reached —— Hall, in the West of England, the residence of Colonel ——. After we had refreshed ourselves I took the carriage on, and directed the coachman and footman to remain within a short distance of the Hall,—not in sight, but near enough to come to my assistance as soon as they heard a shot fired. I looked to my pistols, and seeing that I had the Lord Chancellor's warrant handy, I laid my plan,—determining, however, that no one but myself should share either the danger or the glory of the business. Having satisfied myself that it would be a hopeless task to attempt to make my way into the house by force, I determined to rely upon stratagem. After reconnoitring the place, I decided that the best course to take was to gain admission by the back of the Hall. I made my way through several long shrubberies, across the lawn into a magnificent flower-garden, access to which from the house was gained through several long French windows. By a piece of great good fortune, the very first window I tried was unfastened, and having pushed it open noiselessly, I got into the hall and placed myself behind a large screen that was there. I had not been in my hiding-place many minutes before a servant crossed the hall with a small breakfast-tray, which he took up-stairs. I felt certain this was for the poor lady who was kept in durance there. I left my place of concealment and went through the billiard-room and the library until I came to another room, the door of which was open. Hearing voices and laughter, I crept cautiously forward, but could see nothing; for a fine old Indian screen was placed near the doorway so as to prevent a view of the interior. I peeped round the screen and saw two persons—a lady and gentleman. The gentleman I knew at once to be Colonel ——, as I had seen him frequently at fashionable London parties; the lady—a young creature, the loveliest being I ever beheld—I correctly presumed was the very lady I was in quest of. The colonel, I recollect perfectly well, had on a magnificent silk dressing-gown; the young lady was in a loose muslin morning wrapper, which became her admirably. In an instant I had made up my mind to act promptly and decidedly. I walked round the screen and suddenly presented myself before the unprincipled pair. The young lady caught sight of me first. She called out, or rather screamed out,—

"'Oh, Alfred, here is a man!'

"The colonel jumped up in a towering rage.

"'Scoundrel!' said he, 'how dare you to enter this room? Who are you?'

"'I am a police officer,' said I, coolly. 'I have a warrant from the Lord Chancellor to take that young lady back with me to London, and to place her in the hands of Lord ——, her guardian.'

"'D—— the Lord Chancellor and his warrant! Leave the house instantly, rascal, or I will blow your brains out!'

"'At your peril, Colonel ——, obstruct me in the execution of my duty. I am armed, and if any violence is attempted or committed, the consequences be on your head.'

"'Where are my fellows?' shouted the colonel; 'some of you come here!' stamping furiously, and at the same time making a rush towards the table, on which the breakfast-things were arranged, evidently for the purpose of possessing himself of a knife. This was enough for me. Before he could lay hold of the knife I ran in upon him, and seizing him collar and elbow fashion—I was not born in Devonshire without knowing how to wrestle a bit,—I gave him a tremendous back-fall, going down upon him purposely with my knees on his chest, so as to drive every particle of breath out of his body. I held him down firmly.

"'Colonel ——,' said I, 'you have provoked this treatment. I wish to do my duty quietly, but you are determined that I shall use force.'

"'D—— you!' roared he, for he had got his breath; 'I'll make this the worst business you ever undertook in your life.'

"The colonel then struggled furiously to master me. He was as strong as a bullock, and it took all I knew to keep him down. Finding there was no hope of inducing him to listen to reason, I gripped his windpipe with such perseverance, that at last his hands relaxed their hold, and he lay helpless and almost senseless on the floor. By this time the noise of the struggle and the screams of the young lady had brought half a dozen stout livery servants into the room. They were about to drag me from their master, when I got up, and, pulling out my pistols, said,—

"'I call on you in the King's name to aid and assist. I am a police officer, and have a warrant to take this young lady with me; the first man that interferes shall receive the contents of my pistol.'

"The footmen were intimidated, and I saw I had gained my point thus far. The next step was to get the young lady from the house—no very easy task, taking into account the fact of her being without shawl or bonnet, and only dressed in light summer clothing; however, there was no time to stand on ceremony. I laid hold of a fine velvet table-cover, and wrapped it round the young lady, who, though apparently in screaming hysterics, contrived to bite, kick, and scratch like a young tiger-cat. I carried her out of the house the way I entered; and having given the preconcerted signal, the coachman and footman soon came to my

assistance, and by their help the young lady was placed safely in the carriage. I went back to the hall, to ask for some suitable travelling costume. I saw Colonel —— sitting in the room where I had left him, the picture of rage, shame, and mortification. He had not thoroughly recovered from the punishment he had received. I spoke to him respectfully, and told him what I wanted. He desired one of the women-servants to give me what was requisite; and having at last seen my young lady properly dressed for travelling, I set off towards London. For eight hours the young lady, who had turned sulky, sat in a corner of the carriage, with her face hidden in the cushion. She would neither speak nor move, but kept sobbing and moaning, as if her heart was breaking. I felt there must be an end to this violent grief. Eight or nine hours of fasting would hardly do for young stomachs; for when we stopped to have dinner, she would neither get out of the carriage nor taste the least refreshment. Our last place of stopping was about two stages beyond Bath; it was by this time nine o'clock at night, and we were to get nothing more before we reached London in the morning. The young lady was prevailed upon to alight and enter the inn. I thought this was a good time to try how far her sulks would prevent her from satisfying her hunger, for I was pretty sure, notwithstanding her tears, she was hungry. With tea and plenty of toast, I ordered a rump steak. When the tea and accompaniments were placed on the table, the appetising smell of the viands evidently had its effect. I saw the young lady look round, but immediately afterwards turn herself towards the fire again. I went up to her, and begged her to have a cup of tea. She merely shook her shoulders like a spoiled child. I told her I really could not allow her to starve herself; that she would be ill, and that I should be blamed for not getting her something she could eat: then taking her hand with a little force, I placed her at the table. I helped her to a good plateful of steak, and placed the toast handy. I fell to myself, without pretending to take any notice of my lady, and made a hearty meal. I was right in my conjectures. The long fast and long journey had sharpened the young lady's appetite. She put away a tidy allowance of steak, and tucked in a round of toast and a couple of cups of tea, every now and then taking a full stare at me. I was at that time a decent-looking young fellow, of two-and-thirty, and thought no small beer of my powers of pleasing any young lady, whether gentle or simple. I took a bottle of Madeira and some biscuits into the carriage, thinking that a glass or so during the night, which for summer was remarkably chilly, would not be unacceptable. When we got fairly on our road again, the young lady, whose feed had evidently done her good, threw out overtures, as if she wished to become more sociable. At last she turned round to me, and said,—

"'Where are you going to take me?'

"'To Harley Street, Miss.'

"'Oh, to my old guardian and his fussy wife! I don't want to go back to them; do, pray, take me anywhere else. Oh, do.'

"'I am under orders, and must obey them.'

"'Oh, do! oh, do!' said she, laying hold of my arm. 'I've got plenty of money, and shall soon be of age, as I am nearly sixteen. I will give you anything if you will only take me back to ——.'

"'Impossible, quite impossible! You are in your guardian's carriage, and with his servants. I must do my duty, and cannot lose sight of you until you are in Harley Street.'

"The young lady turned sulky again. I reasoned with her and soothed her as well as I could, till she at last gave in, and went comfortably to sleep until we arrived at Harley Street, when I roused her up, and saw her safely taken charge of by Lord ——'s housekeeper."

"Did you ever hear how this young lady was received by her guardian?"

"No, I did not."

"Nor ever see or hear of her again?"

"Well, about fifteen years afterwards I used to attend at the crush-room of the opera during the season. I had lost any good looks I might have formerly had by that time. I had just come from the races, and was as tanned as a gipsy. One night Sir H—— M—— came up to me, having a magnificent lady on his arm,—a regular stunner: — 'Mr. Clements, be kind enough to call up Lady ——'s carriage.'

"Sir Harry had no sooner pronounced my name than the lady turned full upon me, and looked me hard in the face.

"I proceeded to the colonnade, and, having called the carriage, returned to the crush-room to inform Sir H——.

"The lady, as she went down-stairs, passed close to me, and, with a little pleasant laugh, shook her fan, as I thought, at me.

"I was puzzled for the moment; and after the carriage had driven off I asked Paddy Carey, the opera linkman, if he knew the name of the lady before she was married.

"'Why, Lady —— was formerly the Honourable Miss ——, the great heiress. She don't live with her husband.'

"The lady was indeed my travelling companion of fifteen years ago. She recognized me although I did not know her, and evidently remembered our night journey to London."

"What became of her?"

"I cannot say from my own knowledge. But Leadbitter, who was in the pay of the French Government, had something to say to her when she was in Paris."

"And what was that something?"

"You must look into the French newspapers. There was a deal about her in them about ten years ago."

A FEW WORDS ABOUT BEGGARY.

It is winter! Well muffled in our woolliest of all woolly cloaks, with the caloric kindling agreeably in our frames, out we go upon some imperative errand of pleasure. After braving no end of breezes blown this way from icy Spitzbergen, we arrive at that particularly odious corner held responsible for so many rheums and sore throats, round which, nevertheless, scores of good folk must pass daily, and I among them. Now here at this particularly odious corner, with its piercing, sweeping, deadly blast, stands our bugbear, the beggar. Look at him well; he is a sturdy, importunate, troublesome, flinty-faced ruffian, asking, cap in hand, and with every ugly gesture which can give force to the unmelodious voice of beggary, an alms, a trifling gratuity, a small dole of the superfluity we can well spare, just to relieve him from the painful, increasing pressure of some nasty animal want. He makes himself as mean, sorrowful, and touching in aspect as his talents for his craft enable him. He takes good care to be clothed in rags, to exhibit a hungry, meagre look, with a proper addition of dirt and disease, and to utter his plaints in a tone to which the heart, not altogether stony, cannot turn a deaf ear,—cannot, try and reason as you will. A base, pitiful occupation; he doubtless a bad fellow, and his trade a very pernicious one; but his querulous importunity is scarcely a just and reasonable cause why he should stir up so much of your indignation and anger, as I will presently show you. Begging, too, in the streets of London, and playing the various parts studied with great assiduity and performed with splendid success by the professionals, are at least very arduous trials, and no man who loves idleness, and hates the exercise of his talents or the roughness of life, has a chance of that recompence which renders this vocation so tempting to those of the indigent with the opposite character. The veterans, naval and military, the distressed operatives, the frozen-out gardeners, the broken-down tradesmen and ruined gentlemen, the clean family beggars, in parties of from five to seven, the patriarch being a patterer of no ordinary qualifications, the numerous poets and cripples, the famished beggars, pronouncing the stunning fact that they are then and there simply and literally dying of hunger, the foreigners, black and white, from east and west, and many more, are all regular varieties of the genus Beggar, and to perform their respective parts with proper effect, labour, ingenuity, and practice are indispensable.

But our friend skulking in the cold draught there, hear him; he is only imploring, in his own ungarnished fashion, the means of indulging those tastes which in your particular case you are seeking to gratify with all the perseverance you can command. What were you about yesterday, waiting so patiently and yet so anxiously in the anteroom of my lord the secretary of state? True, you pleaded your cause with a bearing of a precisely opposite significance to that so carefully studied and adopted by the

ragamuffin at yon corner. You dressed yourself in your very best, and lingered a quarter of an hour longer before your toilet-glass, to arrange with minute scrupulosity the fall of your cravat, and the position of your favourite and most effective curl. You never *looked* so little like a beggar in your life, and you were going to beg harder than you ever begged before. Now yon vagabond has the same suit of self-interest to urge as you, but he exaggerates, deceives, and lies, to give a sensational effect to his story and appearance; whilst your excessive attentions to his lordship, your elegant compliments, your expressions of esteem and admiration, are equally the traits of an assumed character, enacted by you with ulterior views, levelled at the same mark, and exactly as centred upon self, and perhaps unworthy, as his.

It is curious to note how much beggary has prevailed in various distinct forms through every period of history; how the pity of a hard-hearted, cold world, as it is called, has contributed to encourage it, and how impossible it must ever be to eradicate the principles upon which it is maintained. Most unquestionably, beggars are not all equally bad. We have good, pitiable beggars, comparatively good and pitiable, and bad ones; good, pitiable classes of beggars, comparatively good and pitiable classes, and bad ones. To speak absolutely, all beggars, although excusable upon theory, are practically objectionable: they bore one; the bile rebels against them; they produce the pains and penalties of remorse, on account of the sharp things and improper imprecations they provoked us to utter whilst worried by them.

In examining this subject of beggary, we shall find the world to have produced four grand classes of supplicants,—the friars, the regular licensed beggars, the impostors, and the beggars in disguise. It is among this last class that the foregoing general observations find their chief applicability, and I shall first say all I have further to remark upon these beggars in disguise, and then take the other orders in succession.

The other day, as I was walking home from Lambeth, I came suddenly upon a little untidy plot of ground, growing a small crop of miserable laburnums, dying of vegetable atrophy. At one of its angles swung, upon poles, a black board covered with a dirty white inscription, a licensed letter of beggary, appealing to all passers by on behalf of a proposed work of benevolence, the exact object of which, as I hate personalities, I decline to specify. There were no blue and silver policemen about, to interfere with the wearisome supplication, and if there had been, they would have been without instructions. Pained and cross as I was—most unreasonably—at the annoyance, and wickedly disposed as I might have been to kick the thing to perdition, and quarrel with the impertinent ardour of the kind-hearted, worthy gentlemen who had stuck it there, I in time recovered my temper, and in the place of wrath coached up a little moral philosophy. The laburnum-covered ground was licensed—at least by sufferance—to beg, and this licence, which has taken the peculiar shapes I am at present adducing, had, as we shall soon see, a very strange

and remarkable origin. Give, give, give—the cry of the horseleech—was before me, and of course the sensations were uncomfortable. It was not with me a question of right or wrong, of expediency or inexpediency, but of fact. There could be no doubt that the appeal constituted an act of begging. This, I said to myself, is a monument of the distresses of our fellow-creatures, whose claims to relief are to be recognized by all who pass by and behold it. I was disturbed, of course, but continued my journey. Then, when I went to church on the Sunday following, there was read from the desk a Queen's letter—another licence to beg—on behalf of some charity, which was subsequently enforced from the pulpit with such energy, that the congregation were somewhat unceremoniously menaced with a very dreadful fate indeed, upon the bare supposition that their response to the appeal would prove incommensurate with what the reverend advocate deemed to be his just expectations. No solicitations from the most impudent class of those who live upon alms could have been more moving than this, and whether proper or improper was again no question for me, but the fact of begging stared out in palpable reality. Again, when upon some other occasion I sat at my desk, engaged in my own domestic employments, a rap-tap at the door and a ring-ting at the bell announced the visit of another set of beggars, who had come armed with every apparatus usual with their order, to extort compliance with their praiseworthy demands, and zealously resolved to put them in force without the smallest regard to my own voluntary concurrence. This time it was for the erection of a church, which I should have rejoiced equally with them to see rearing its noble head in front of my windows, but which I regarded, perhaps foolishly, as a work of some invidiousness, on account of the barefaced beggary to which it was proposed it should owe its existence. The gentlemen beggars who made this attack upon me consisted of two dull curates; a bustling, pushing churchwarden, in my own rank of life; two lusty sidesmen, of whom I had bought butter and bacon for some years past; and a thin, hungry-looking verger, with exceedingly slender means and a countless family of children, all *in prospectu*. Again, this was not a matter into which I could go upon the grounds of utility or otherwise, but the circumstance itself sufficed to remind me that that system of begging, which in many phases is thought so illegitimate, is in some pursued with all the impunity in the world, as a most laudable means of attaining ends which, though good in themselves, might otherwise be left unrealized. I remembered, too, both how St. Francis begged single stones to accumulate his church, and also how Martin Luther in his day deplored the diversion into ecclesiastical channels of those streams of charity which he thought might be more usefully directed towards the sick and indigent; and what with the church and the reformer, I got into a fix. Said I to myself, The spontaneity of real benevolence is despaired of; we must hope for nothing but what we may get by begging. And yet it is not unworthy of observation, that antecedently to the crop-

ping up of the friars, the foundation of churches and chapels was always a work of individual piety. The coaxing, and wheedling, and screwing, and squeezing, and draining, and intimidating system, not uncommon in the present day, was introduced mainly by this eccentric religious order. And this helps us to answer the question, whence the origin of all this begging, and the abuse into which nobody will dispute it has so generally fallen?

Now the grand object in view in forming the multifarious fraternities of mendicant friars was the restoration of the credit of the monasteries, which in the beginning of the thirteenth century stood very low. Excessive luxury could not be charged against societies repudiating the possession of all fixed property, and leading a life of vagrant and austere mendicity. Nothing could have been better than their start in the world. The Pope conferred upon them the highest privileges, and they were so renowned for their theology and general learning, and the purity of their lives, that the principal universities of Europe were indebted to their several orders (more especially the Franciscans or minors, the Dominicans or preachers, and the Carmelites or white friars) alike for their scholars and their professors. All these gentlemen were mendicants, and mendicant scholars in time became one favourite form of beggary, more particularly in Germany, by which impostors very fruitfully levied taxation on the credulous and beneficent. But the pattern they aspired to follow was the life of the seventy. Failing to obtain alms in money or kind, they were constrained by theory to go without. Of course, as this alternative is extremely distasteful to nature, the weaker brethren, in order to avoid it, had recourse to every shift and contrivance of which they were capable. Spiritual denunciations and the imprecations of evil acted magically upon those who, if left quietly alone, would have suffered the poor friars to famish of hunger. When I am asked an alms by a pauper of the present day, I hear the love of God and large importations of other religious motives coupled with the story of his distress; and if I turn a deaf ear to his prayer he waxes wroth, and in a suppressed tone begins to curse and swear, whilst I wonder all the time whether among the less patient of the friars of old the same kind of anathema against despising the needy and repulsing the suppliant was as frequent and exasperating. No question about it: they began it. I have no doubt they urged their pleas with as much pertinacity as my friends urged theirs about the new church, and that the same reference to a future world, by way of improving the occasion, was quite as common with them as with preachers of the stamp to which I have alluded in the matter of the Queen's letter. The builders of our modern costly churches have doubtless been encouraged in their system of house-to-house visitation by the numerous examples of success among the religious mendicants of those days. Their monasteries were among some of the most magnificent in the country, and the refectories and chapels adjoining them were always erected at the cost of benefactors. This method of casual charity

proved infinitely more lucrative than that of regular endowment; and the result upon the character of the friars was an amount of arrogance which made everybody but the Pope to abhor them; and when they fell before the enlightening doctrines of the Reformation, there were none either of clergy or laity to pity them.

The useful lessons on the art of begging left by the religious mendicants will never be forgotten. Voluntaryism was originally set up and worshipped by them. The hat, or box, among these peripatetic divines, regularly succeeded to the service, for which a portable stone altar and a wooden pulpit were carried about, and the net profits of the trade were in due course appropriated by the partners in the concern. And as an inducement to their hearers to be liberal in their donations, they had wares in the shape of Papal Indulgences, which they exchanged for cash or bodily supplies; and their superior excellence was so effectively puffed off that the parochial clergy grew jealous and lean just in proportion to the obesity of the friars. The encouragement afforded to vagrancy and imposture by this singular mode of holy living is undoubtedly in operation throughout Europe at this present moment. They were not by any means the first to beg—for begging is one of those respectable institutions of antiquity which, like the famous Welsh pedigree, nobody can trace to its source,—but availing themselves of the experience of former generations, the friars reduced it to a science, and constructed for it a machinery, something of the effectiveness of which we of the nineteenth century witness every day of our lives that we come across our modern beggars in disguise.

Neither were their dealings confined to indulgences and other spiritual immunities. Exactly like the gipsies of less holy repute, they charmed away evils of all kinds, and bartered pins and needles for cheese, and wool, and bread, and eggs, and hard coin; and if they had any scruples about collecting money on the score of their professed poverty, they took with them on their journeys those who acted as their treasurers. Like all other beggars, they went barefooted, and followed those who were rich and lordly, to the neglect of people of smaller consequence. In short, they were tuft-hunters. And such property as they afterwards acquired in defiance of their rule of life they pretended was invested in the Pope, the use of it only in themselves; so that they must have been subtle casuists as well as tuft-hunters. As is customary with nearly all whose life is spent chiefly on the roads, these worthies were prone to comfort themselves unduly after the fatigues of peregrination. They thus got to know the best houses for the wayfaring, and to benefit by them. Then the familiarity which they cultivated with all whom they met, and the interest they had in getting into their best graces, originated a tendency to conviviality. Hence the friar is a character extremely common and telling in tales and ballads of the period, and from that disposition among men to ridicule the infirmities of others, especially if they should be those of the clergy, he generally appears in a garb

little likely to inspire the respect of posterity. Chaucer has so depicted him. The friar in his time frequently leased a "haunt," in which he was to enjoy the exclusive prerogative of begging. But his aspect is not always represented as beggarly. Contrariwise, his semi-cape was of double worsted, his mien jovial, and you saw at once that the spiritual consolations he professed to administer were of a kind which were sure to elicit the gratitude and liberality of his lay brethren, however lax their morals. The Crutched Friars came over to England with rather a high hand. They stipulated for two special concessions—a home to live in, and exemption from reproach; though it is said the conditions were not duly observed without the fulmination, on their part, of those spiritual terrors which were imperatively needed to keep the wayward English to the strict terms of their bargain.

But we now come to the regular licensed beggars—who had every reason to esteem themselves, and did,—very nearly allied to that renowned class we have just done speaking of.

Five hundred years and more ago, the law took into its hands the regulation of beggary. It was then carried on as a recognized trade, and punishable only when its practice and the mode of pursuing it deviated from the restrictions to which the law confined it. You might beg as much and sturdily as you listed within certain limits. The parish in which you were born was to be the field of your industry; and the King, and afterwards Henry VIII. more definitely, supplied you with a licence to authorize your inflicting upon your neighbours both the exhibition of your sufferings, aggravated in proportion to your ingenuity, and the importunity of your addresses, as harrowing as you could make them. Street music is a joke to this; and yet it was positively legalized by the highest sanction. Paupers without number embraced this profession, and, as a security against imposition upon the public, they were called upon at fixed periods to exhibit their sealed letters before the justices of the peace, to justify the mode of life they had selected. Even parsons from their places in church read out to their congregations these permissive documents, that the humane might be informed of the distinction they were to observe in the bestowal of their charity. But, on the other hand, almsgiving beyond the bounds of the parish was a severely punished offence, and death threatened as the penalty to which a beggar stood liable for a contumacious persistence in his calling without the permission, and contrary to the limitations, in question.

The earliest legislation on the subject of beggary dates back to the reign of Richard II., when vagrancy was punished by scourging, and the stray pauper returned to the hundred from which he had wandered. But so long as people were allowed to beg at all, every prohibition to migrate appears to have been futile. The above-named reign, the reign of Henry VIII., those of Edward VI. and of Elizabeth, all produced severe enactments against vagrancy; and Elizabeth's famous Act, which lawyers know as the 43rd of Elizabeth, cap. 2, by which compulsion for the relief of the

poor was placed upon a more satisfactory basis, aimed a death-blow at mendicity altogether, but with what imperfect effect the experience of subsequent generations too plainly shows. Of course the suppression of the monasteries increased the evil in one way, whilst in another the toleration of the mendicant orders was considered an injustice to the general sick and indigent. Fish, of Gray's Inn, wrote a book in 1534, called "The Supplication of the Beggars," in which he pointed out how the crowds of begging friars, with which the country was then overrun, robbed the legitimate poor of the alms which were their due, and nobody else's. An honest beggar was at that time spoken of tenderly and compassionately, and was held to be a very different creature from a vagabond rogue. In fact, there *were* honest beggars,—those who kept to their calling, lived by their calling, and got credit by their calling; and these were not confounded with the tramps and cheats who preyed upon the community by nefarious arts, tricks, and violations of the law. They were regarded as a necessary evil, or even more favourably than an evil of any kind; for as they incited the rich to deeds of benevolence, philanthropists, who were pretty ignorant of political economy, included them among the properest and most useful objects for its operation, and the system itself as a healthy stimulus to the display of the best Christian virtues.

The Impostors form a class of beggars which speak plainly enough—in most senses of the word—for themselves. But I have first to say a few words about the gipsies, who, though without doubt emphatically illicit, cannot justly be reckoned with the impostors; and whilst they are hardly beggars in the strict meaning of the term, their vagrant habits and precarious means of subsistence cause them, in many points, closely to resemble them.

Gipsies prevail over Persia, Turkey, Russia, Germany, the Peninsula, France, and England, in large hordes, leading everywhere the same nomadic life. But there is one exception among them to this mode of life, which exists in Moscow. There a race of gipsies is found as equally distinct from the Russians as they invariably are from every people among whom they dwell; but a rich, settled class, who, chiefly by their talents for music, have worked themselves up into a rank of society and a position in the world much above their caste. The history of the arrival of gipsies in Europe is a curious one. Mr. Borrow tells us of a mode of tracking by *patterans*, which they employ to keep their party together. Bunches of grass are spread upon the road, or crosses are marked in the mud or dust, with the finger, to indicate to the members of the gang in the rear the path taken by those in advance. Such is their existing practice; and it is probable that, by this device, thousands of weary miles have been travelled by multitudinous gangs in their original immigration into Europe. Three centuries ago desperate attempts were made to exterminate these people from the country; and in consequence they took

refuge in the caves of the earth, to hide themselves during daylight from the vigilance of their persecutors. In very many instances they fell a sacrifice to the cruelty of the law; and when justices of the peace could not indict them for a more definite crime, they were swung upon the gibbet on the charge of sorcery, which, however, upon any show of reason, could have been attributed only to the women, their husbands' dealings being with fanciers of horseflesh, and never with the devil.

The imputations laid at their door by Henry VIII.'s Act were those of corrupting the common people and cherishing superstition; palmistry formed the crying sin, and robbery was thrown in as a mere make-weight. Not only were they expelled from the King's dominions, but all who might be detected in harbouring them or affording them protection came under the ban of the heaviest penalties. Notwithstanding the severity with which they have been treated, gipsies are still spread about over all England, in much the same purity of blood as when they first came amongst us. They have nominally embraced our religion; and in proof of it, are for the most part particular in getting their children baptized, certificates of the rite being in the possession of some of them which are as old as two hundred years; but in other respects they remain a peculiar people. Their numbers are, however, considerably diminished; so much so that, by the computation of the authority just mentioned, we may suppose them—genuine gipsies—to amount at the present moment to something less than ten thousand.

It is an easy transition from the gipsies to the vagabonds. In the "Liber Vagatorium," which Mr. Hotten has made familiar to the English reader, the distinction is well pointed out between the accredited beggars of which I have been treating, and those who carried on an unlawful trade of mere idle pretences. Beggars of this spurious class constituted a prominent order of the community, and became, about the middle of the sixteenth century, a society of men affording very curious matter for investigation, their inventiveness having contrived forms of knavery which survive to the present day. The suppression of the religious brotherhoods left plenty of scope for the growth of this industrious idleness. Those, like Holinshed, who were skilled in their history, enumerated various species:—there were Rufflers, or sturdy beggars; the Upright men, or beggar chiefs; the Priggers of Prances, or horse-stealers; the Abraham men, or pretended lunatics; and the Counterfeit Cranks, who feigned sickness; besides many more. Holinshed, who wrote upon the authority of Harrison, in 1577, reckons the vagabonds then scouring the country at about ten thousand, and he divides them into twenty-three different sets. He goes on to lament the impotency of the magistrate to restrain their excesses, and commends them to the mercies of martial law. The language spoken by them he terms "cantting;" and as it appears to be much in vogue among thieves and ruffians now-a-days, the antiquity of the beggar lingo may be readily granted. These rascals, it seems, evaded

the law by the dexterous manner in which they forged the licences to beg. The authorities had nothing to say against those who could produce sealed letters, and the imitations were so exact that the fraud passed undetected. Tinkers, pedlars, jugglers, minstrels, shipmen, players, fortune-tellers, scholars, "prisoners gathering for fees," and many others, are named by him, and might form a classification thoroughly applicable to the circumstances of our own country. Earlier than this there roved over a great part of England a remarkable band of ramblers, who are thought to have been the followers of Robin Hood's men; and if so, the depredations they committed were of a kind which proved the degeneracy into which they had lapsed. They were called Robertsmen, and are alluded to by Blackstone. A statute of the reign of Edward III. makes mention of two tribes, the Wastours and the Drawlatches, who also are supposed to have been strollers of a similar description; and, judging from the nature of the enactments against them, their reputation for every iniquity must have been a black one. Germany became as great a sufferer as England by the multiplicity and depravity of her wandering rogues; and I fear there is no avoiding the inference that the social changes consequent upon the Reformation had very much to do with the disorganization complained of. Then, in the reign of Charles II., we in London were admonished of our sins by the Lord Mayor of the day, who, in issuing from Guildhall a proclamation in which the divine judgments upon us are earnestly deprecated, enumerates among the evidences of our national wickedness the swarms of "rogues, vagrants, idle persons, and common beggars," which infest our streets; and he reminds them how they all are liable "to be openly whipped, and forthwith sent from parish to parish, to the place where he or she was born;" and how the constables are subject to a fine of ten shillings for not doing *their best* to apprehend and bring to punishment the aforesaid offenders.

Dr. Johnson has characterized London as "the needy villain's general home;" and in spite of our lion's share of the £5,000,000 which is, in round numbers, the annual contribution directly made by the property of the country, in the shape of a rate, to support the sick and necessitous, it *does* look, to judge merely from appearances, as if this "general home" were inhabited by all the vagabonds and the afflicted that can be squeezed out of the whole kingdom. And certes we have quite our due portion. Here is a grand central rendezvous; it is situated in Church Lane, opposite to Carver Street—known by the fraternity as the Beggar's Opera; and the London lodging-houses occupied by the same depraved class are not merely sheltering places from the weather, and for night accommodation, but their keepers furnish the roving tribes who present themselves with a sort of map of the various country routes adapted to their requirements, together with all necessary information respecting the great houses in the neighbourhood, and the degree of watchfulness exerted by the local magistrates. These low lodging-houses are, indeed, the very nurseries

of vagrants. *Cadgers*, as they are termed, who canvass the rural districts with forged lists of subscribers to the objects they represent and travel for, derive all the particulars required for their adventures from these sources. They make their summer tour accordingly, and in the winter-time mostly return to London, where, if their gains enable them to be fast and jolly during the dreary season, they spend their days and nights in fun and frolic, and when destitution overtakes them, fly to the metropolitan refuges as very bearable quarters.

Some eight or ten years ago there existed a club or society of a kindred family of vagrants, called in slang *Lurkers*, who are a knavish sort of hawkers, carrying wares and small merchandise as a blind, but really and mainly intent upon thievery and swindling. This club was magnificently christened the "House of Lords," and it held its meetings at the "Roebuck Tavern," in Holborn. After a short career it wound up for lack of funds. These men are hardly beggars in the common acceptation of the word; but the perseverance and earnestness with which they solicit the conversion of their trumpery goods into your good, sound money, places them on a footing with the most persecuting of the genuine, thorough-bred stock. Then, again, the sham invalids and cripples, who of late have gone much out of fashion. The *scaldrum dodge* is an artifice, however, of recent adoption. It is an imitation of sores upon the skin, by the application of soap and vinegar. *Shivering Jemmies*, who are as old as the sixteenth century, and get their livelihood by exciting pity at the exposure of their half-naked persons to the cold and wet, are rather blown upon; and as it was a branch of the profession entailing considerable real suffering, I don't imagine the actors much regret its extinction. The truth is that the Mendicity Society, which has done a world of good since its establishment in 1818, has been the instrument for suppressing many long-standing, long-approved forms of beggary and imposition, some so old that notice has been taken of them by writers on the subject, both in England and Germany, for the last three hundred years. Harman, Audley, Harrison, Grune, and Decker recorded, between the years 1573 and 1612, many interesting details about the condition of the country as to vagrancy and mendicity. Formerly ten or twelve shillings a day was an ordinary take among beggars, and those who were entitled to be classed with the great talents earned their pound; but since the meritorious and successful exertions of the above society, in which it has been supported by patronage from the magnates of the land and the public at large, the hungry are starved out, the indigent have been reduced to extremities, and multitudes who hitherto had lived upon deception, clap-trap, and vice, have been compelled to make two ends meet by worthier and more lawful expedients.

WORKING IN THE DARK:

A Romance of the Black Coats.

BY PAUL FÉVAL,

AUTHOR OF "THE DUKE'S MOTTO," "BEL DEMONIO," ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN ANGLER'S AMBITION.

ABOUT a league in front of the equipage of Three Pegs, the beggar-man, to whom the wit of some of the travellers had given a baron for his banker and a countess for his favourite, two men were angling at a short distance from the Château de Boisrenaud, which had a landing-place to itself on the canal. M. Schwartz, the proprietor of the Château de Boisrenaud, and one of the principal shareholders in the *bateaux-postes*, was well worthy of this privilege.

Our two anglers were fishing close together, and in rivalry with each other. A painter might from them have taken the subject of a painting entitled, "Rich and Poor." The poor man, more shabbily attired even than our ambitious Similor, had the appearance of a broken-down druggist's assistant; his apron of grey canvas, with a pocket in front, was all in rags; the straw hat, which partly concealed his rough black hair, was in ruins; and his square shoulders were rapidly working through the threadbare cloth of his jacket. His black trousers, shining from the effects of wear, covered a pair of legs which contrasted strongly with the famous calves of Similor, and which seemed too weak to support his athletic torso, and his head resembling that of a half-bleached negro. Beyond an equal share of ugliness, there was therefore but little resemblance between him and Similor; and it would be difficult to explain why the sight of one should have reminded us of the other. There are certain subtle relations which sometimes associate our ideas, such as what is termed "a family likeness;" and these two, from head to foot, belonged to the great family of Parisian outcasts.

Can we call a man an angler who casts into the water a thread fastened to a stick, and furnished at the other end with part of a bent pin? Yes, if he takes fish. Our poor angler caught gudgeon after gudgeon, in spite of his imperfect tackle; and the piece of old handkerchief tied at the four corners, which served him as a net, contained already a good plateful, while his neighbour, the second fisherman, had not yet had a bite.

The latter, nevertheless, was a real angler, a classical angler, carrying with him a whole arsenal of destruction. He had on waterproof boots and mackintosh gaiters, manufactured specially for the whale fishery in

the polar seas. Two straps, somewhat less in breadth than the buff-belts of a gendarme, supported on one side his assortment of fishing tackle; and on the other a kind of larder for the fish, a supplementary tin box, containing, with all due respect to the reader's feelings, a *recherché* collection of indigenous and exotic maggots and worms. On the ground beside him were several admirably manufactured lines, some for bottom fishing, others with swivels for trolling and spinning, a vessel with bullock's blood for ground bait, and several hand-nets for the purpose of relieving his creel, in case it should become uncomfortably crowded with fish.

And the angler himself was, if possible, more carefully got up and more magnificent than his tackle. Under his fishing-cap, in the shape of half a melon, which had been imported expressly from New Orleans, his light brown hair was curled like that of a child; his round, ruddy cheeks had all the freshness which could be expected in a man of fifty, who has taken good care of himself, and enjoyed in moderation the good things of this world; his limbs were spare, but his well-lined corporation formed an ample projection in front of his carefully fitted and elegant fishing-jacket. He was holding his rod with serious deliberation, and obeyed to the letter the directions of the "Manual of River Fishing," bound in red morocco, with gilt edges, which he kept always at hand for reference.

We cannot adequately describe the deep and mutual contempt which our two anglers exhibited for each other. The one with the bent pin, who was catching all the fish, from time to time quitted his spot to traverse the towing-path, in order to inspect an object deposited in the adjacent clover-field, and every time he made this excursion his odd-looking face assumed a tender expression; when he returned, however, he never missed the occasion of glancing towards his neighbour in a provoking and aggravating manner. On the other hand, the proprietor of the perfected engines of destruction, the value of which was probably more than that of all the gudgeons in the canal, eyed his neighbour obliquely with an expression in which envy was mingled with disdain. They had not yet spoken to each other.

"*Bourgeois*," said at length the more primitive of the two anglers, as he landed a struggling gudgeon a few feet from the brilliant but motionless float of the amateur, "it amuses you to fish like that on a Sunday?"

"My good friend," replied the other from the height of his grandeur, "I am not trying for those insects with which you seem to be satisfied."

"What are you trying for, *bourgeois*?"

"I have promised Madame Champion a pike of fourteen pounds weight. Be silent, if you please, for the sound of the human voice disturbs the fish."

"But you'll scarcely like to go home empty-handed, eh, *bourgeois*?"

M. Champion drew himself up with the air of a man who is determined to cut short a compromising conversation. But there was no necessity for

his insisting upon silence a second time; his seedy-looking companion had suddenly changed countenance and was anxiously listening.

Wherever there is water sounds may be heard at a great distance. An uncertain dull sound, well known to the frequenters of the canal, came from the direction of Paris. The man with the bent pin listened for a moment, and his face put on a solemn expression.

"The *bateau-poste!*" murmured he. "We must have done with this trifling. Now we shall find out!"

At the same time he quickly rolled up his improvised line and put it into his pocket. M. Champion coughed, coloured, and said,—

"How much for your insects, *mon brave?*"

The man evidently expected this, for he smiled as he answered,—

"They may perhaps please Madame, instead of the pike weighing fourteen pounds."

"For shame!" said M. Champion, indignantly; "do I look like a man who would take home a handful of fish to fry?"

"Oh no!" returned his neighbour.

"I want to purchase your animalcules for bait. How much will you take for them?"

The handkerchief was opened, and the silvery gudgeons shone on the grass in the last rays of the setting sun. M. Champion, in spite of himself, looked towards them with a covetous eye. The gallop of the horses along the bank of the canal was already distinctly heard.

"One sou each," said the neighbour, "on account of Madame."

"One franc for the lot," offered M. Champion.

The neighbour was about to hold out for more, when suddenly the horses appeared in sight. He held out his hand quickly and snatched rather than took the piece of silver from between the thumb and forefinger of M. Champion. Without saying a word he picked up his handkerchief, leaving the gudgeons scattered upon the grass, and sprang into the clover-field which extended between the towing-path and the forest. It was time he did so, if, as appeared to be the case, the man with the druggist's apron had an interest in not being seen from the boat. The horses, going at full pace, were close upon the pikefisher, occupied in gathering together his gudgeons, some of which were still scattered upon the ground at the moment when he had to crouch down to avoid the rope.

"Holloa, Monsieur Champion!" cried the captain, "still at your post? What sport?"

"Pretty good, pretty good, Monsieur Patu, in spite of the terror which this new mode of navigation causes to the inhabitants of the deep."

So saying, he pointed with triumphant modesty to the gudgeons caught by his poor neighbour.

The *Eagle of Meaux, No.* 2, passed before him like an arrow.

The other fisherman, in the mean time, had slipped behind the hedge which separated the clover-field from the towing-path. As the boat passed

he placed his frizzled head at an opening in the hedge, and looked through with all his eyes. When he withdrew his head his red face had become paler, and a tear had started to his eyelid.

"Ah, Similor! Similor!" murmured he, in a plaintive voice, "it is then true that you can deceive a friend!"

Great emotions last but a short time; besides, Similor exercised an irresistible attraction upon Echalot. With the back of his hand the latter wiped away his tears and started forward, but suddenly he paused.

"Saladin!" said he, with emotion; "I was going to forget Saladin!" He returned and took from amongst the clover an object of oblong shape, the nature of which it was not very easy to make out, but had some resemblance to those infants of rag and *papier maché* which the traitor carries off during the first act of the melodrama, and which at a later period become, according to their sex, the hero or heroine of the piece. The object had a strap attached to it; Echalot passed the strap round his neck, and then threw the object over his shoulder, saying,—

"Be calm, Saladin!"

Then he started off along the hedge-side with a rapidity that would not have been anticipated from his heavy appearance. His intention was evidently to race against the horses. His face grew more and more red, and the perspiration streamed upon it; still he went on, keeping his eye upon the boat through the bushes, and murmuring the name of Similor. At the end of a few hundred yards, however, the object, which had been most outrageously shaken, awoke and began to cry like a young eagle. Whether made of *papier maché* or not, he certainly had a magnificent voice. Echalot mildly remonstrated with him.

"Hold his little beak, the dear *Bibi!*" cried he to the object, without slackening his pace. "I'll stop it up for you, Saladin, if you keep on! We are going to see papa, don't you see, you young owl?"

Saladin only cried the louder.

Men sometimes die from the effects of such a mad career: witness the soldier of Leonidas, who brought to the Spartans the first news of the battle of Thermopylæ. Luckily for our heroic and tender-hearted Echalot, the horses suddenly fell into a gentle trot. Amidst a beautiful landscape was now seen the château of Boisrenaud; they were approaching the landing-place belonging to the Baron Schwartz. Echalot brought his package to the front, and unceremoniously placed his hand over the *beak* of Saladin.

Three persons alighted from the boat: first, M. Cotentin de la Lourdeville, whose creaking boots proceeded along the gravel walk leading to the château; then the young girl with the black veil, who followed more slowly in the same direction; and lastly, Similor, light as a feather, who, after courteously saluting his adversary the captain, was proceeding up the towing-path on the tips of his toes. Echalot, still hidden behind the hedge, was blowing like a porpoise as he contemplated his friend's

movements; with one hand he still stifled Saladin, with the other he mopped up the perspiration from his forehead.

Upon the towing-path, where Similor was hopping in his list slippers, gracefully avoiding the least vestiges left by the recent shower, a grave man was walking with measured steps, philosophically contemplating the water, and twirling between his fingers, like a marquis at the Comédie Française, a snuff-box of enamelled silver. The gesture was so perfect that one might have expected to see the traditional outline of his shirt-frill, and the folding opera-hat under his arm. But it was not a marquis, unless indeed it was one whom the misfortune of the times had considerably lowered in the world. Instead of the frock of silk cloth, he wore, in fact, an iron-grey coat, cut square, and adorned with silver buttons. M. Schwartz, the great financier, who was quite a king in this part of the country, had chosen for his servants this livery, reminding one of the uniform of the porters at the Bank of France. Our dignified friend was but a servant, though he was in the habit of addressing all the authorities about Sevran, Livry, and Vaujours, with his cap upon his head, whilst they stood hat in hand. Similor walked up to him, and raising his grey hat timidly inquired,—

"Is it M. Domergue that I have the advantage of addressing?"

M. Domergue no more condescended to answer than had that insolent M. Patu, the captain of the *Eagle of Meaux No. 2*; but there is one dignity respected by Similor and his equals, that of major-domo in a large establishment; there is in this high position something which fascinates and dazzles them. This time Similor did not get angry. He waited patiently.

The great Domergue was absent in his mind; he was examining at a distance the strange kind of vehicle of which we have spoken, the basket belonging to Three Pegs, drawn by a large dog. He was smiling with a lofty good humour, and had already placed himself close to the hedge, in order to make way for the cripple and his equipage.

"Good morning, Monsieur Mathieu," said the butler, civilly; "business is prosperous, I suppose?"

The bearded face of Three Pegs had the fixed smile of a mask. He replied,—

"Money is hard to earn. I have come to talk about money matters. Is the baron at home?"

"To you always, Monsieur Mathieu."

The equipage of Three Pegs was already at the entrance of the avenue to the castle. M. Domergue added, in an undertone,—

"A curious whim, that of Monsieur, to talk with a beggar like that!"

"As for that," said Similor, seizing this opportunity of beginning the conversation, "I own I can't get over my surprise!"

M. Domergue threw towards him his lofty glance, and examined him from head to foot. Similor winked his eyes complaisantly, and resumed,—

"It seems to me that mysteries abound on every side of us."

"What is your business, my friend?" interrupted M. Domergue.

Similor, lowering his voice and holding his hand to his mouth, that his words might not be caught by any other ear, replied,—

"Don't be afraid, I have the young man's entire confidence!"

"What young man?"

"M. Michel, of course."

The features of the domestic relaxed at the sound of this name. Echalot, listening with open mouth and outstretched neck, was making every effort to catch a word. Assuming a theatrical posture, Similor added,—

"Consequently, we are directed to inquire of you whether *it will be daylight to-morrow?*"

CHAPTER XX.

THE CHATEAU.

THE Château de Boisrenaud, where once resided the Abbé de Gandi, and which the Duchess of Phalaris chose for a retreat, on account of its vicinity to Raincy, could boast also amongst its celebrated denizens the dancer Trénitz, who in 1798 had the honour of receiving there Mesdames Tallien and Récamier. At the present period of our narrative the château and its magnificent dependencies had for some years been the property of M. le Baron Schwartz, who proposed greatly to embellish it. *Embellish* is a treacherous word, born of that *better*, which, according to the proverb, is the old enemy of *good*. In the history of art, monuments may be cited which, embellished at great cost, have, from imperfect masterpieces that they were, become finished platitudes.

The Baron Schwartz had, one day when money was scarce, purchased all this at a very low price, purely as a speculation, and without even visiting the estate. When at length he gave his attention to the means of turning it to the best advantage, he was at once struck with the beauty of the situation. He was by no means devoid of taste, and, in his own way, he had a certain grandeur in his ideas. The château, however, displeased him, because the Baron Schwartz was a son of the present, and detested the past. Instead of cutting up this paradise in small lots, and disposing of it at fifteen sous the square *mètre*, for the purpose of building those delightful little residences, surrounded with a garden, like those of the tombs at Père La chaise, the whim took him to spend a couple of millions or more upon it, according to the proportions his caprice might take.

It was not much for him; his banking business was like the river in the proverb, whence water was ever flowing. Although his nobility did not date from the Crusades, his was already an old, solid, well-established fortune, based upon a European credit.

A palace bran-new, spick-and-span, was the thing to please him! somewhat in the style of the Exchange: that would recall the most

touching recollections. Besides, the Gothic seems to be inharmonious in connection with the wealth of commerce, although your millionaire is sometimes taken with a passion for ogive and battlement, and even for blazonry. Around this palace of marble whiteness, the marvels of a park laid out *à l'Anglaise,* velvet grass swept carefully every morning and evening, filtered water in a large lake as clean as a salad-dish, Naïads dwelling in iron water-pipes, varnished birds and painted fish, game in a domesticated state,—in a word, nature considerably improved and civilized all this would be enchanting.

And thus, at two hundred paces from the old castle, in a well-chosen situation, masons were at work upon the new palace; the meanderings of the new paths were being traced in the park, the shallow bed of the lake had already been dug out and was being plastered with clay, and the spot which was to be mountainous was receiving barrowfuls of earth at the expense of the valleys. Cedars of Lebanon were to be planted there, and terrible rocks from Fontainebleau, fastened with Roman cement! If you are inclined to laugh, laugh at our stockbroker, who has but sixty acres of land at Verrières, with a few gallons of water in what he terms a river. Our stockbroker, for his part, laughs at his notary, who contents himself with half a dozen acres of land, and who is killing the old horse who has to fetch the water for his ornamental basin.

Every one according to his means; any sort of ambition may be respectable.

The sun was sinking behind the trees which hide in the distance the turret of Aulnay le Bondy, as the young girl with the black veil made her way along the avenue towards the gilt iron gates of M. le Baron Schwartz. She walked quickly, but her steps were uncertain, like those of a person just recovering from a long illness. Everything about her, in fact, suggested the same idea; her graceful form was bent with fatigue, and appeared to have grown too slender for the robe she wore, and twice she was obliged to pause upon the road, as though to recover her breath.

The equipage of Three Pegs came up with her when she was still only halfway down the avenue, although M. Cotentin de la Lourdeville had already reached the house. The cripple appeared to know her, for a smile played upon his motionless features, but he did not speak to her as he passed.

The look of the young girl followed him, with a mournful and absent expression.

Trois Pattes and his carriage had already entered when she reached the gate. She drew her breath, and her hand seemed to hesitate as she touched the bell.

"How thin you have grown, Mademoiselle Edmée!" said a voice behind her. "Upon my honour I did not recognize you."

The young girl turned towards him quickly, as though she had been detected in some guilty action, and a rosy tint suffused her pale face.

"Good morning, Domergue! I have been rather ill. How are they all at the château?"

She was smiling, and there was something painful in the charming sweetness of her smile.

The interview between the all-important M. Domergue, and our friend Similor had not apparently been a long one, for the former had rejoined the young lady without at all hurrying his dignified steps; but, in business, we must not judge of the importance of an interview by its length.

On this occasion Domergue raised his cap, and his demure countenance softened considerably. Upon second inspection, he looked really a very good-natured fellow; only he knew how to keep up his dignity. A lady was now in the case, and everybody must be aware that gallantry is no derogation, however high a man's position may be.

"Rather ill!" he repeated. "Everybody is pretty well here, thank you, in spite of the demolitions and the shaking. You are as pale as a sheet, upon my honour! Rather ill, did you say? We've some great news here, you know?"

"No, Domergue, I know nothing."

"They talk of a marriage—"

"That of M. Maurice?" interrupted Edmée, almost joyously.

Domergue shrugged his shoulders.

"That would be nothing of a marriage!" resumed he. "Our cousin Maurice is in disgrace, like M. Michel. I fancied that M. Michel was to become our son-in-law. M. the baron would not have said No, in spite of the difference of fortune. But the thing is found to be impossible. Have you rung, Mademoiselle Edmée?"

During the last words of the valet the young girl had several times changed colour.

"Not yet," she answered, in a voice that was trembling. Then she added, thinking aloud,—

"Blanche! a marriage already!"

"Sixteen years old," resumed Domergue, raising his hand to the brass bell-handle, and sounding a full and sonorous peal, "and as pretty as any of the Graces. A dowry of two millions sterling does not usually grow mouldy for want of a suitor. M. Lecoq may be past forty, but he is still a fine-looking man."

The young girl repeated with amazement,—

"M. Lecoq!"

"Yes, yes—that's what is said, although I should have thought they would have chosen a banker—or at least a duke. There was some talk of a duke, you know."

"I know nothing," repeated the young lady.

"True. The thing was being arranged by M. Lecoq. There's a man who get's through his work. Still, so long as they have not been to the *mairie* nothing is sure. But come in, Mademoiselle Edmée; you know

we are good people, and not proud. Mademoiselle will be pleased enough to see you, I am sure, Madame Sicard!"

Madame Sicard, the housemaid, was a woman of a certain age, neat and prim, who held her head as high as M. Domergue did his, but she never smiled. The voice of her colleague stopped her as she was mounting the steps to the house.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed she. "Mademoiselle Leber!"

She added, not without a certain kindness of manner, which with her meant a great deal,—

"We have just been arranging her bedroom to-day."

"I have only come to call upon the ladies," murmured the young girl, with an embarrassment which her reception appeared scarcely to justify. "If you would kindly tell Mademoiselle—"

"Sit down in the drawing-room in the mean time. I will tell them to lay the cloth for you."

"But let me see!" continued Madame Sicard; "Madame la baronne said, I think, that if you came I was to tell her. But pray sit down."

Madame Sicard mounted the staircase, whilst Domergue showed Edmée to the drawing-room. The young girl's paleness had suddenly increased, and she seemed about to faint. She sank upon a seat, and raised her handkerchief to her lips.

"It's not likely we are going to let you leave at this hour and in this state," said the good-hearted Domergue, actually seizing her icy hands, and warming them between his own. "You are the same as one of us, my dear child; and I have often heard Madame la baronne say that a music-mistress like yourself was a real friend."

"A glass of water," murmured Edmée.

And, as if to excuse herself, she added,—

"I have just been rather ill."

Domergue immediately ran to get it. He thought to himself,—

"Rather ill! Upon my honour, in this world there seems to be too much for some and not enough for others. It is *want* that is revealed on the countenance of that poor child."

Terrible evil which cannot be hidden! There are I know not what mysterious symptoms which always betray thee, O want! and the more surely as thy victim appears further removed beyond thy reach.

This delicate and charming girl, Edmée Leber, was poor. If her neat but shabby attire had not expressed the fact, her timidity would have proclaimed it. Servants understand these things better than their masters; servants have a special and subtile sense which smells out indigence. It is to their eyes the first and the worst of all evils; and perhaps they are right, for from this evil how many evils flow! The idea had struck Domergue that Edmée was hungry.

He was mistaken; bread was not yet wanting in the home of Edmée's

mother, though almost all else was wanting. And if Edmée had not had bread, her fever would have supported her.

As soon as she found herself alone, the tears which her pride had conquered slowly rolled down her cheek. She raised her veil, and showed her lovely face of eighteen, which suffering had already touched. Edmée was at once pretty and beautiful. That characteristic trait which, once seized, enables the painter to produce a speaking likeness, was not, in Edmée, either in the sovereign purity of the outlines, or in the exquisite delicacy of the details. You could not have seen without being moved those large glistening eyes beneath the forehead crowned with adorable golden hair, that delicately chiselled nose, that mouth, alas! serious, but where one could divine a treasure of smiles; and yet all this was not Edmée. That which was most charming in her hovered over all this like a mystic radiance, a subtle spirit of harmony. It was an emanation almost divine; a soul of sweetness and honour.

The drawing-room was large, sumptuous, and furnished *à la Romaine*, a fashion which is now returning, but which was then overwhelmed by the taste for things belonging to the *renaissance* and the Middle Ages. The tearful eyes of Edmée glanced round it, and were for a moment fixed upon the piano.

The piano spoke to her, for she murmured, smiling bitterly the while,—

"Blanche marry M. Lecoq!"

Above the piano was the portrait of a little girl, a brunette—a merry, laughing face.

"Can it be possible?" added Edmée. "Blanche, the dear little love!"

On either side of the Etruscan mantelpiece, of violet marble, ornamented with mosaics and loaded with curiosities from Pompeii, two other portraits were hanging. The one represented a man of twenty-five, narrow-shouldered, small, thin, and with intelligent features; the other a woman quite young, almost as beautiful as Edmée, and who, like her, had her charm in the expression more than in the perfect regularity of her features.

As Edmée's glance fell upon this last portrait, her eyes flashed, and a little colour came into her cheeks. She rose, in spite of the extreme fatigue which had caused her to be seated; she walked with a heavy step across the room, and stopped in front of the mantelpiece. The portrait seemed to exercise a kind of fascination upon her. Was it the portrait? A portion of the portrait, rather; for her eye was directed upon something that was not the face, but which was near the face. The portrait was a three-quarter face, the baroness was in her ball dress, and in the small pink ear which was shown amidst her splendid hair there was a diamond ear-drop. It was the ear that Edmée appeared to be looking at, or rather the ear-drop, for the ear could be readily distinguished, and Edmée, in spite of her suffering

and lassitude, had raised herself upon a chair in order to examine more closely.

For a few moments she continued this examination. She was trembling and changing colour.

The sound of an approaching step was heard; she hurriedly descended from the chair, and her lips moved to pronounce these words,—

"Then it *was* she!"

Domergue entered, bearing a salver.

"I have kept you waiting, my dear *demoiselle*," began he.

"Give it me!" interrupted Edmée, in that dry and hard voice which indicates fever as surely as the acceleration of the pulse.

"How are you now?" inquired the valet, after she had taken a long draught.

"Better, I thank you."

"You are so much changed! And see how your hand is trembling!"

"Much better!" repeated Edmée, impatiently.

She added, more coldly,—

"I wish to see Madame la baronne immediately."

And again,—

"Tell them not to prepare my room, and not to lay the cloth for me."

Domergue, astonished, looked at her. There was sadness and compassion in his eyes.

For the second time Edmée was alone. She sat down near the window, and waited.

The windows of the drawing-room looked out upon the garden, and were shaded by Venetian blinds. Through these Edmée could see the Sunday guests collected in little groups upon the magnificent grass plot in front of the house. Blanche was not there, nor was her mother, the baroness. Two ladies of a certain age were playing at shuttlecock with a certain affectation of gaiety; a few gentlemen had collected in a circle round M. Cotentin de Lourdeville, who held in his hand the evening paper.

Some were walking up and down beneath the windows, and were chatting together.

"I can see in that," said one of them, "nothing but what is perfectly honourable. M. le baron remembers that, at the onset of his career, he was the banker of the poor."

"A good trade," was the answer.

"There is sometimes a good profit to be made out of the poor."

"One may have an eye both to business and philanthropy," said Cotentin.

"There are some extraordinary anecdotes. I have heard of a man, apparently in want, who every year invested a thousand or twelve hundred francs in the funds."

"A beggar of Lyons, Madame, recently gave with his daughter a heavier portion than we ourselves could afford."

"And you know the story of the blind man who had fifty thousand crowns sewed up in his mattress."

"This Three Pegs is a curious kind of animal."

"Where can M. le baron be hiding?" inquired some one aloud.

A window opened on the first floor, and M. le baron replied,—

"I shall be with you presently; I am just concluding some business."

"With Three Pegs," slily added somebody.

Edmée Leber was no longer listening; a reverie had seized her. Her half-closed eyes were bent down upon the carpet, which she did not see, and her pensive head was leaning upon her hand.

"Let us go to look at the carriage of this curious-looking capitalist," again said somebody beneath the windows.

The arrival of the new client had created a sensation amongst the guests assembled at the château of Boisrenaud. Money has no odour; even if this great truth were forgotten elsewhere, it should be found inscribed over the door of every well-conducted banking firm. If Three Pegs was a moneyed man he naturally had a right to be well received. But money is received over the counter, it is taken by the banker's clerk. Under what pretext therefore did Three Pegs and his grotesque equipage pass the threshold of this sumptuous villa on this day of repose, when the millionaire was wont to receive only his friends?

This was the subject of many surmises. The rule at the château de Boisrenaud was that the conversation should not turn upon business. M. the Baron Schwartz had left his guests in order to receive Three Pegs in his private room. Was it to talk with him upon politics?

No one here was ignorant of the history of this Three Pegs, whom the servants of the baron were ordered to announce and to address as M. Mathieu. Three Pegs was a personage who had long been celebrated in the quarter of the Porte Saint-Martin, and his relations with M. Schwartz thenceforth extended his glory as far as the Madeleine.

Three Pegs had arrived one day, no one knew whence, at the yard of the Plat d'Etain, the head-quarters of the *messageries* or stage-coaches which, before the establishment of railways, monopolized all the passenger traffic in the east of Paris. He had alighted from his basket, drawn by a dog, and had made his way on foot—that is, on his hands and knees—to the office. There he had taken the necessary steps to acquire the right of taking up his place in the yard as a public messenger or commissionaire. Working himself about, with tolerable rapidity, by means of his hands, which were furnished with pegs—the rest of his body being contained in the before-mentioned basket upon wheels,—he had then installed himself by the spot at which the coaches drew up on their arrival in the yard of the Plat d'Etain.

At starting he met with some difficulties. In point of fact, he possessed none of the physical qualifications of the commissionaire; his mental qualifications, however, amply made up for these shortcomings.

Besides, at Paris anything out of the common way creates a sensation; and a man without arms, who could paint historical subjects by substituting his toes for his fingers, would be certain to obtain a brilliant success.

Three Pegs, walking with his legs in his pocket, according to an expression of the witty people of the quarter, excited that astonishment which precedes and prepares a great success. To his back he had attached four hooks, which answered the purpose of hands, and to which he adroitly fixed his parcels. By his side hung a whistle, the sound of which was soon well known to the cabmen on the boulevard station; when a *fiacre* was wanted it was sounded once, twice for a *citadine*, three times for a *cabriolet*. In matters of business requiring a little care and attention, or some amount of verbal explanation, Three Pegs had not his match.

Nor must it be thought that it took him long to cross and re-cross the yard of the Plat d'Etain. His hands were agile, and he had a wonderful way of managing the receptacle in which was enclosed the lower part of his body. His gait resembled that of a lizard, and lizards can get along quickly, whatever may be said on the score of their laziness.

An anonymous genius hit upon this surname—Three Pegs, which depicted in one word his lamentable infirmity. Every one must be aware of the prodigious popularity which a nickname may bestow upon any local celebrity. Mathieu the cripple might perhaps have got on pretty well; but Three Pegs became simply the rage, and his colleagues left the Place in disgust.

Upon the heels of glory two divinities follow. One crawls, rising from black Tartarus, and the other lowers her flight, which is from heaven. Their names are Envy and Poetry.

Envy scattered abroad, in relation to Three Pegs, the thousand rumours which may destroy a feeble reputation, but which contribute to swell a great renown; she accused Three Pegs of belonging to the secret police, or to an association of malefactors,—two allegations of which Paris is excessively prodigal; so much so that popular report often unites them together, in spite of their apparent incompatibility.

Poetry, daughter of the gods, scattering around the new favourite the marvellous flowers from her garden, gave him riches, that irresistible charm; she affirmed that he was somewhere amassing a fabulous treasure. We no longer believe in sorcerers, but the supernatural has nine lives. Poetry made of Three Pegs a sort of gnome, changing his skin at certain hours, and quitting his miserable level for the gilded regions of aristocratic elegance.

Let us be more specific: poetry lent mysterious amours to Three Pegs, the human reptile. It was something like one of those tales in which Perrault coupled monsters with princesses. A young and beautiful woman was in question: so far, there was nothing impossible. But the woman was also noble and rich.

Poetry and envy combined therefore to complete the glory of Three Pegs. Nor was he spoilt by all this celebrity. Serious and modest, he contrived to fulfil his calling with exemplary care, and you would have thought that he did not even hear the trumpets of his fame. He never begged, but he took whatever came, and gravely thanked those whose generous purses opened at the aspect of his infirmity. His morals were pure, in spite of all reports; he lived alone, and soberly.

And yet the reports were not utterly without foundation. There was enough of truth in them, certainly, to warrant any amount of astonishment.

We already know that Three Pegs was received at the château of M. le Baron Schwartz. On the humble staircase which led to the garret of Three Pegs, a star of the Parisian drawing-rooms, the beautiful Countess Corona had one day been met and recognized. This was the enigma proposed to the curious by the lizard of the yard of Plat d'Etain.

That day the Baron Schwartz was in his cabinet when a servant announced M. Mathieu.

"Let M. Mathieu come up," said he, without hesitation.

M. Mathieu alighted from his equipage without much trouble, and mounted the door-steps by seizing the latter with his hands, and thus lifting the appendage which enclosed his legs. This was performed with tolerable alacrity, to the great surprise of the spectators. At the foot of the staircase, an obliging domestic having offered to raise the paralyzed portion of his body, M. Mathieu thanked him and said,—

"Useless."

Nevertheless, after he had been shown into the cabinet of the rich banker, and had crawled to within a few feet of his desk, M. Mathieu, heaving a sigh of relief, drew a very clean handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped his forehead.

"In a great hurry then, Monsieur Mathieu?" inquired the Baron Schwartz, with a smile.

He had a style of his own when he chose, this Baron Schwartz. He had a reputation for great conciseness of expression. According to grammarians, the principal part of speech, the word *par excellence*, is the verb; nevertheless it is to be observed that the suppression of the verb need not render a phrase unintelligible.

"Time, money!" often said M. Schwartz, translating in his manner the famous axiom of our well-beloved England.

In virtue of which he gained per annum more than the salaries of three or four prefects, simply by omitting his verbs. Those who knew him well were aware, however, that the least emotion caused him to speak like anybody else.

Three Pegs replied, bowing with respectful politeness,—

"I was anxious to see the estate of M. the baron; but I should not have allowed myself to intrude upon him merely for my own pleasure."

CHAPTER XXI.

THREE PEGS.

WHETHER or not M. Mathieu, surnamed Three Pegs, belonged to that category of the victims of poverty who possess fifty thousand crowns sewed up in their mattress, he at least did not push economy to its extremest limits. His velvet jacket, ornamented with metal buttons, was almost new, his linen was good and tolerably white. On the other hand, his hair was like the mane of a wild beast, thick, bushy, and ill-combed; and his beard bristled like a bundle of brushwood. His face, expressive of a strange kind of gravity, was half hidden beneath this double thicket.

Abstraction being made of the lamentable infirmity which cut him in two, and packed all his life within the bust alone, there was nothing in Three Pegs to inspire disgust or even pity. A barber would have made of him, simply by trimming and shaving his hair and his beard, a good-looking half of a man, tranquil and well fed. He was a monster, it is true, but a mitigated monster, suited to the most civilized forest in the universe. It should be said, also, that the little children about the quarter liked him, because he sometimes smiled; and there was I know not what indescribable attraction in the tender melancholy of his smile.

From a physical point of view, M. the Baron Schwartz was a thin man who had acquired *embonpoint*. Such men are recognized at a glance; prosperity fills them out without for a long time effacing the angles of their primitive architecture. When their fatness has destroyed all the characteristics of their original build, they become suffocated by their happiness; they are like fat oxen, ready for the butcher.

They feel this; they energetically combat the invasion of fat. I know some who would willingly shut themselves up in an oven to melt down. Here is the great secret I have to tell them,—we have no fat soldiers.

Exercise and munition bread,—here is the safeguard.

The Baron Schwartz was a small man, fat, but still angular under certain aspects. The true Schwartzes of Guebwiller resist better than other conquerors. Towards thirty, when they lead steady lives, they acquire that uncertain appearance which deceives the eye for ten or twenty years. The Baron Schwartz had no specific age.

Were I to follow my instincts of veneration, it would be on my knees that I should trace the portrait of a man such as the Baron Schwartz. But our century speaks lightly of everything and everybody. Though he had never frequented the colleges, the baron possessed a vast fund of knowledge, derived from the "Dictionary of Conversation." He was fond of the arts; he patronized letters in the person of Sensitive, the poet, and the *vaudevilliste*, Savinien Larcin, employed at Père La chaise; he lent

money to kings without interest, providing they returned him his capital doubled; and he even interested himself in lodging-houses for the people, for a profit of cent. per cent.!

Thus flowers and fructifies J. B. Schwartz when he can only catch in passing one hair on the head of bald-pated opportunity. Perhaps was there something beyond the arithmetical explanation furnished by M. Cotentin de la Lourdeville; but certain it is that the millions actually possessed by the opulent baron were the fruits of that note for a thousand francs thrown to him by M. Lecoq on the morning which followed a troublous night passed on a deserted road in the vicinity of Caen.

It is probable, however, that something beyond finance was an element in the relations of M. le Baron Schwartz with M. Mathieu surnamed Three Pegs.

"Anything new?" inquired he, with an assumption of indifference.

Three Pegs fixed upon him his large motionless eyes, shadowed by his thick tangled hair.

"The colonel is sinking," replied he.

"Very old!" muttered M. Schwartz.

"I thought that Monsieur the baron—"

"All right!" coldly interrupted the baron. "Business settled."

Then he added,—

"Engaged. Go ahead!"

"They think," resumed Three Pegs, "that the colonel will not get over the night."

"Countess at Paris?" inquired M. Schwartz.

The cripple made a sign in the affirmative.

"M. Lecoq also?"

"Also."

"All right!" repeated M. Schwartz. "Anything else?"

A painful pre-occupation was apparent beneath the dryness of his style.

"If M. le baron is really all right," resumed Three Pegs, "it is of little consequence to him to know all the various reports. It's a rum kind of place over there."

"Gossip!" exclaimed M. Schwartz.

"M. le baron had directed me to watch attentively the windows of the fourth story—yard of Plat d'Etain . . ."

"Oh! ah!" exclaimed the banker, much more interested than he wished to appear.

"And also to watch the interior of the house of which the entrance is in Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth," continued Three Pegs, "on account of the young people—M. Maurice, M. Etienne, and M. Michel."

"Very well," said the baron, raising his hand to his mouth and gaping.

A yawn, half dissimulated with politeness, has a certain diplomatic value.

"Long!" said he, in an explanatory tone.

"At that age," quietly continued M. Mathieu, "men lead rather a rackety kind of life."

"Women?" inquired M. Schwartz.

"Not much—except M. Michel."

Evidently the baron was listening attentively.

"But," interrupted the cripple, "Monsieur le baron is not interested in M. Michel. It is M. Maurice, who is his nephew."

The baron raised his forefinger to the tip of his nose, which was, in his case, a symptom of great impatience.

"I will not therefore mention M. Michel," said Three Pegs: "M. Maurice and his friend M. Etienne have a vocation towards literature—they are working like galley slaves in writing dramas; I know that, because the neighbours often hear them declaiming and disputing, and think they are going to set fire to the house."

"Funny!" said the banker. "Go ahead!"

"They have sold everything. Writing plays which are always refused at the theatres is not very profitable. Formerly M. Michel worked with them, but——"

Three Pegs stopped short, as though ashamed of having inadvertently again made a digression.

"Comical!" said the baron, whose look seemed to encourage him to proceed.

"You will excuse me," resumed Three Pegs, "I know that M. Michel does not matter to you. We Normandy people are very talkative."

The banker gave a somewhat deprecating gesture as Three Pegs continued,—

"M. Maurice is seriously in love, and if Monsieur the baron would consent—"

"Loves my daughter!" said the banker, coldly. "Idiot!"

"Bah! Mademoiselle Schwartz is rich enough for two."

This was said with unction. The baron answered,—

"Marriage settled—nearly."

Then he crossed his legs, and assuming an air of perfect indifference, he murmured this name inquiringly,—

"Michel?"

"You mean Maurice?" said Three Pegs.

The banker repeated,—

"Michel."

A smile might have been perceived under the bristling moustache of the cripple. As he hesitated, like a man who thinks he has misunderstood, M. Schwartz stamped his foot, and exclaimed, much less concisely,—

"Why the devil, Monsieur Mathieu, do you keep me in suspense? You know something about this rascal Michel! Go ahead."

M. Mathieu assumed an air of astonishment, in which perhaps was a slight shade of mockery.

"You had forbidden me," began he, "but I am quite at the orders

of Monsieur the baron. M. Michel is doing worse than when he joined in that nonsense of the two young men, Maurice and Etienne. He is leading a devil of a life, excuse the expression. He lives, Heaven knows where, running from one hell to another, and playing heavily."

"Playing heavily?—Michel?"

"Losing two or three hundred louis of an evening, if you please; frequenting the theatres, giving suppers, contracting absurd debts, and paying them."

"Paying them!" repeated again M. le baron; "comical!"

He rose and began to walk about the room.

The moment his back was turned, the physiognomy of Three Pegs changed so rapidly that it seemed like a transformation. The mask grew more lifelike, and the eyes, full of animation, threw a piercing glance towards the open window. This window was over the garden. The guests at the château of Boisrenaud were scattered amongst the alleys; this glance dwelt upon each and all of them like lightning. It was seeking some one.

When M. le baron turned, Three Pegs was looking out upon the lawn with placid admiration.

"What a paradise!" sighed he. "Excuse me."

"Where does he get this money?" inquired M. Schwartz.

"Young M. Michel? I have no idea. If Monsieur le baron wishes, I will make inquiry."

"That Lecoq has a hand in this!" thought the banker aloud.

Three Pegs lowered his eyes and did not answer. M. Schwartz was frowning.

After a silence the cripple resumed, with a kind of repugnance,—

"There is a lady . . . who must be very rich."

The steps of M. Schwartz were suddenly arrested.

"Young?" inquired he.

"Very beautiful," replied Three Pegs.

The eyes of the banker, which were fixed upon him, seemed to demand a more explicit answer.

"It is not the countess?" began he.

"No," returned Three Pegs.

The banker, visibly agitated, continued his walk up and down the room; then he suddenly stopped.

"Monsieur Mathieu," said he, "my only interest in all this is a wish to be useful. This young man, M. Michel, has been in my employ, and has even had my confidence. My good heart has already caused me many anxieties, but I am rewarded by public esteem. . . . You know a good deal about this Countess Corona, do you not?"

"Yes, a good deal," replied Three Pegs. "The colonel will leave her everything."

"I do not mean that," quickly interrupted M. Schwartz.

"True. Monsieur le baron is all right."

Their parts were changing. The laconism was no longer on the banker's side. The latter resumed,—

"Thank goodness, in regard to those who are near to me, I have no inquiries to make, nor have I any anxiety on their account. M. Mathieu, you perhaps have your reasons for being discreet."

"Yes, Monsieur le baron," said Three Pegs, "I have my reasons."

The banker turned upon his heel.

"Time, money," muttered he, as he returned to his desk. "Matter ended. Good afternoon."

Three Pegs, thus dismissed, crawled towards the door. On the threshold he paused, and said with humility,—

"I had counted upon the kindness of Monsieur le baron—"

The latter, who was already turning over his papers with a certain affectation, interrupted him with the two words,—

"Speak out."

"It was to know," continued Three Pegs, "whether M. le baron could give me any information relative to M. Schwartz, the father of M. Maurice, whom M. le baron knew at Caen under the Restoration."

The cheeks of the banker grew pale. He answered, throwing emphasis upon the last word,—

"Know the father of Maurice, at Paris!"

"No offence," resumed Three Pegs, "at Caen or Paris. One of my clients is seeking some persons from Caen; the wife and the daughter of a banker. They were formerly very rich, but are now as poor as Job; a curious story. But I see I am tiring M. le baron, and that he is not very well pleased with me. I am growing old and gaining experience. I don't like looking too closely at certain people and certain matters. Some other time I will mention the subject about this M. Schwartz and the banker's family. I am M. the baron's very humble servant."

He disappeared, closing the door behind him.

M. Schwartz made a movement as if to detain him, but again sat down.

"This Lecoq has a hand in this," said he for the second time; "I feel his influence about me, and at times I am afraid."

His head fell upon his two hands, and he became deeply immersed in thought. After a few moments his reflections took another direction.

"My wife," murmured he, while the furrows upon his forehead grew deeper; "Michel!"

That was all. His thought was kept to himself.

But we have here to note a piece of pantomime. After reflecting and perhaps struggling with himself, M. le baron took from his waistcoat pocket a little key of carved steel, a very pretty key, like that which a lady would use to close her escritoire.

He looked at it and hesitated.

A painful smile was upon his features.

This was not a business of money; in money matters M. Schwartz never hesitated.

Having thus hesitated, he opened a drawer in his secretaire, from which he took a stick of modelling wax.

For what purpose did he keep this? You may have some; I also; and yet neither you nor I manufacture false keys.

With one hand he held the little key, with the other he moulded the wax which was growing warmer and softening within his fingers.

As Three Pegs was descending the staircase in his fashion, a woman's step glided along the corridor on the first floor. He stopped, as though he had suddenly been seized with a faintness.

It was Madame Schwartz, who was proceeding to the drawing-room, where Mdlle. Edmée Leber was awaiting her. Three Pegs heard her say,—

"It is not necessary to call my daughter."

That voice, soft and sonorous, but firm, produced upon Three Pegs an extraordinary impression. For an instant one would have thought that this miserable creature, a human reptile, crawling upon the earth, was suddenly about to raise himself erect like a man.

He darted a glance behind him; the flash of his eye was like that of lightning.

But whatever may have been his impulse, fear was predominant; for he descended the last steps of the staircase with great rapidity. When Madame Schwartz came down, followed by Domergue, the staircase was empty.

Edmée was still alone in the drawing-room. Her charming countenance reflected alternately an expression of strong resolve and one of profound discouragement.

She was suffering. Her fever allowed her no rest.

From time to time a name came to her lips,—the same which had had the effect of disturbing the grave indifference of M. Schwartz,—the name of Michel.

Once, falling from the story above, a brilliant finger mounted and re-descended all the octaves of a piano in a sparkling run.

Edmée smiled through a tear.

At length a woman's step sounded upon the carpet of the great staircase.

Domergue was heard saying, outside the door,—

"I would not have disturbed Madame la baronne, but Mdlle. Leber is still very ill.

Edmée made a violent effort to regain her calmness.

Outside, the heavy step of Domergue had died away in the distance.

Evidently, the Baroness Schwartz was there, upon the threshold. And yet she did not enter. Edmée remained for an instant erect, her eyes fixed upon the closed door. Then, vanquished by fatigue or emotion, she again sat down.

"Is she then trembling too?" she murmured, without knowing she was speaking.

She took from her pocket a purse which gave forth no sound of money and from this purse a small folded paper, enveloping an object of the size of a grain of maize.

"Even if it be so!" thought she, "perhaps she has nothing to deny, nothing to conceal. For years have I respected and loved her!"

Mechanically she was about to unfold the envelope, when at length the door opened. Edmée rapidly replaced the paper in her purse and the purse in her pocket. The Baroness Schwartz was on the threshold; her first glance surprised the young girl's movement, and her black eyebrows slightly contracted.

The Baroness Schwartz was the well-beloved wife of an immensely rich man. She acted worthily her part under Providence, and many benedictions surrounded her ever-open hand.

It was therefore while remaining perfectly herself, and without passing the limits of her usual bounty, that she took Edmée's hands, as she kissed her forehead and said,—

"Why did you not let us know sooner that you were ill, dear child? You knew that we were at Aix. Did not Blanche write to you?"

"Yes, Madame," replied Edmée, whose eyes were bent upon the ground. "Mademoiselle Blanche was so kind as to send news of you.

"Then why did you not answer her? Can you have been so ill as to lose your lessons?"

"I kept my bed during three months, Madame."

The baroness seated herself; but her voice was less assured when she resumed,—

"Three months! The whole period of our stay at Aix? And your good mother?"

"My mother fell ill whilst she was tending me, Madame; I got well. I am afraid for my mother."

Her eyelashes, still lowered, were now moistening.

"And you have waited so long," said the baroness, affectionately "before having recourse to our friendship!"

Edmée raised up to her face her large blue eyes, sad and almost severe.

"Madame," answered she, "we require nothing."

The baroness grew pale. She tried, nevertheless, to smile as she said,—

"If this is pride, dear child, I beg you will not be offended. We will repay ourselves on the lessons which you will give my daughter this winter."

Edmée's eyelids moved as though she was restraining her tears, and her charming features contracted; nevertheless, it was with a distinct voice that she replied,—

"I shall give no more lessons to Mdlle. Schwartz, Madame."

THE ST. JAMES'S MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY, 1865.

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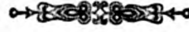

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ONLY A CLOD

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

TAKING IT QUIETLY.

"If you could know all, Harcourt, as you never can, you might excuse— you might forgive—"

Harcourt Lowther, very quick of apprehension always, especially so where his own interests were concerned, had taken careful note of these broken sentences uttered by Maude Hillary, and, rowing Londonwards in the summer darkness, pondered on them long and deliberately, only arousing himself now and then from his sombre reverie, in order to express his profound contempt for some amateur waterman who was just saved from a foul by the superior skill of the young officer.

What did it mean? That was the question which Mr. Lowther set himself to answer.

"It means something more than the caprice of a shallow-hearted jilt," he thought, as he rested on his oars and lighted his cigar. "How pale she grew at sight of me! That white, agonized look in her face was real despair. 'If I could know all!' she said. All *what?* There's a mystery somewhere. Maude Hillary is the last woman in the world to throw over a poor lover for the sake of a rich one. The sentimental girl, who was ready to keep her engagement with me at the sacrifice of her father's fortune, would scarcely marry a clownish rustic for the sake of his thirty thousand a year. Besides, these heiresses, who have never known what it is to have a wish denied them, are the most romantic creatures in creation, and cherish sublimely absurd ideas upon the sordid dross question. No,

I cannot think that Maude would be influenced by any mercenary considerations—and yet how else—?"

The villas and villages on the river banks flitted past him like phantom habitations in the dim light. The flat shores of Battersea; the dingy roofs and chimneys of crowded Chelsea and manufacturing Lambeth; the bridges and barges; the low-lying prison, lurking like some crouching beast upon the swampy ground, shifted by as the oars dipped in the quiet water, while Harcourt Lowther's light wherry sped homeward with the tide. But all the length of his water-journey he could find no satisfactory answer to that question about Maude Hillary; and when he relinquished his boat to its rightful owner at a certain landing-place in Westminster, he was still undecided as to the meaning of those broken phrases which had dropped from the lips of the merchant's daughter in the first moment of surprise and emotion.

"I daresay it is only the old story after all," he thought, as he walked towards the Strand, in the purlieus of which he had taken up his quarters. "Lionel Hillary, being as rich as Crœsus, is determined that no poor man shall profit by his daughter's fortune. Water runs to the river, and Maude's dowry will go to swell that old Cornish miser's savings. It's only my usual luck. I am engaged to a beautiful woman with a hundred thousand or so for a fortune, and I find a victorious rival in the man who cleans my boots."

But Mr. Lowther had not settled the question even yet. Lying awake and feverishly restless in his lodging in Norfolk Street, Miss Hillary's pale face was still before him, the sound of her imploring tones was perpetually in his ear.

"'If I knew all, I might forgive, I might excuse!' There must have been some meaning in those words, some secret involved in them. Surely, if her father had forced this marriage upon her, after the manner of some tyrannical old parent in a stage-play,—surely, if that had been the case, she would have candidly told me the truth; she would have pleaded the best excuse a woman can have. There must be some secret reason for this marriage, and I must be a consummate fool if I fail in getting to the bottom of the mystery."

Mr. Lowther breakfasted early the next morning, and dressed himself with his accustomed neatness before going out. He had no body servant now whom he could badger and worry when the world went ill with him; or that individual would most assuredly have paid the penalty of Miss Hillary's broken faith. Harcourt Lowther, the younger son, was too poor to keep or pay a valet. He had grown weary of waiting for promotion in the army, as he had sickened of hoping for advancement at the bar, and had sold his commission. The world was all before him now, as it had been seven years ago, when he had first looked about him for a profession. The world was all before him, and his one chance of fortune, the possibility of a marriage with Maude Hillary, seemed entirely lost to

him. It was scarcely strange if his spirits sank before the dismal blankness of the prospect which he contemplated that morning, as he loitered over his breakfast of London eggs and lodging-house toast and coffee.

He went out at a little after twelve o'clock, hailed the first prowling Hansom he encountered in the Strand, and ordered the man to drive to a certain street in the City, sacred to the stockbroking and money-making interests. Here he alighted, dismissed the cab, turned into a narrow court, still more entirely sacred to stockbroking, and entered a little office, where there was a desk, two or three horse-hair chairs, a great many bills hanging against the wall, all relating to the stockbroking interests, and a six-foot screen of wooden panelling, dividing the small outer office from a larger inner office.

Mr. Lowther walked straight to this screen, and, standing on tip-toe, looked over into the second office.

A gentleman with sandy whiskers, a light overcoat, and a white hat, was standing at a desk, and jotting some pencil memoranda upon the margins of a file of documents, which he was turning over with a certain rapidity and precision of touch peculiar to a man of business.

"Can you spare a quarter of an hour of your valuable time from the calculation of last year's prices for the Fiji Island Grand Junction Stock in order to devote it to the claims of friendship?" asked Mr. Lowther.

The clerks smiled as they looked up from their desks; and the gentleman in the white hat dropped his pencil, and ran to a little wooden door in the partition, over which Harcourt Lowther's hat made itself visible.

"My dear Lowther," he exclaimed, presenting himself in the smaller office, and stretching out both his hands towards the intruder, "this *is* a surprise; I thought you were at the Antipodes."

"Yes, that's the way of the world," answered Mr. Lowther, rather peevishly; "a man is banished to some outlandish hole at the remotest end of the universe, *ergo*, he's never to return to the civilized half of the globe."

"But it seems only yesterday when—"

"And that's another cruel thing a man's friends say to him when he does turn up in the civilized hemisphere," interrupted Mr. Lowther. "'It seems only yesterday when you left us;' that is to say, life has been so pleasant and rapid for us, amidst all the gaieties and luxuries and successes of the most wonderful city in the world, that we are utterly unable to believe in the dreary months and years that you've had to drag out, poor devil, in your hole on the other side of the line. That's what a fellow's friends *mean* when they talk their confounded humbug about its only seeming yesterday."

Harcourt Lowther's City friend was not the most brilliant or original of men when you took him away from the stockbroking interests. He stared blankly during Mr. Lowther's discontented remarks upon the selfishness of mankind.

"Haw! that's good. Meant no offence by allusion to yesterday; only meant that I was jolly glad to see you, you know, and so on. But you see a fellow turning up in the City when you've been given to understand that he's in Van Diemen's Land is rather a surprise, you know. Can I do anything for you? I'll tell you what, old fellow, I can put you up to a good thing in the Etruscan Loan,—panic prices, —nine per cent., and certain to turn up trumps in the long run."

Mr. Lowther smiled bitterly.

"Do you suppose I've any money to invest; or that if I had money, I'm the sort of man to sink the glorious principal for the sake of some miserable dribblings in the way of interest? No, my dear Wilderson, you *can* do me a good turn, but it's in quite another direction. Just step this way."

He had his hand upon the buttonhole of his friend's light overcoat, and led him to the door leading into the court. Here, safely out of the hearing of the clerks at work in the inner office, Mr. Lowther lowered his voice to a confidential tone.

"Wilderson," he said, "I think you know Lionel Hillary, the Australian merchant?"

"Hillary and Co.?" exclaimed Mr. Wilderson,—"I should flatter myself I did."

"I want you to tell me all about him—how he stands—how he has stood for some time past; in short, all you know about him."

The stockbroker pulled his hay-coloured whiskers thoughtfully, and shook his head.

"These sort of things are rather difficult to *know*," he said; "but a man may have his thoughts about 'em."

"And what are your thoughts? Hang it, man, speak out. You talked just now of being ready to serve me. You can serve me in this matter, if you choose."

Mr. Wilderson shrugged his shoulders, and again pulled his whiskers in a reflective mood.

"Dear boy," he said presently, "come out into the court."

Evidently in Mr. Wilderson's mind the court was as some primeval forest, wherein no listener's ear could penetrate.

Out in the court the stockbroker hitched his arm through that of Harcourt Lowther, and began to discourse upon Lionel Hillary, or Hillary & Co., as Mr. Wilderson preferred to designate him. He said a great deal in a low, confidential voice, and Harcourt Lowther's lower jaw fell a little as he listened. One thing was made clear to the ex-officer, and that was, that Lionel Hillary's affairs had been hinted at by the knowing ones as rather shaky; that there had been even whispers of that awful word "suspension;" but that somehow or other Hillary & Co. had contrived to right themselves; and that it was supposed by the aforesaid knowing ones that the Australian merchant had found a wealthy backer.

"There's fresh blood been let into his business, you may rely upon it, dear boy," said Mr. Wilderson. "I know that he was in Queer Street last Christmas. Bills referred to drawer, and that sort of thing. The bankers were beginning to get shy of his paper. I held a little of it myself, and a deuced deal of trouble I had to plant it."

This and much more to hear did Harcourt Lowther seriously incline. Then he asked Mr. Wilderson to dine with him at a certain noted establishment in the Strand, and left the court, very grave of aspect, and slow of step.

"So my lovely Maude is not a millionaire's daughter after all," he thought. "And my friend Hillary has been dipping his capacious paw into Francis Tredethlyn's purse. I ought to have known that half these reputed rich men are as rotten as a pear. So this is the explanation of my simple Maude's heroics. Poor little girl, *she* has been the pretty fly with which that accomplished angler, Mr. Hillary, has whipped the stream for his big gudgeon! Any little card I may have arranged to play for myself has been very neatly taken out of my hands; and I find my friend provided with a needy father-in-law and an extravagant wife. However, I daresay there's some small part left for me to play: and perhaps the best thing I can do is to take it quietly."

Harcourt Lowther's servant!

The man to whom Maude Hillary was now engaged, had once been the valet of her discarded lover. This could scarcely be a pleasant thought to any young lady early imbued with all the ordinary prejudices of society. Miss Hillary was not a strong-minded woman; she could not console herself with a neat aphorism from Burns to the effect that "a man's a man for a' that;" and to her, Harcourt Lowther's revelation seemed cruelly humiliating. She had heard of young women in her own position marrying grooms, or perhaps even footmen, for love, and she had shuddered at the very idea of their iniquity. But was it not quite as degrading to marry a valet for money, as to elope with a groom for love?

"He blacked Harcourt's boots!" thought poor Maude; and it is impossible to describe the utter despair expressed in that brief sentence. She met her lover with a very pale face the next day, and, seating himself in his accustomed place by her embroidery frame, Francis Tredethlyn saw that there was something wrong. Alas! poor Francis, he had already learned to watch every change upon that beautiful face; already, before the marriage vows had been spoken, all the miserable tortures of doubt had begun to prey upon his devoted heart. She had promised to marry him, but she had not promised to love him. He remembered that. She had given herself to him in payment of her father's debt. She had sacrificed herself in accordance with the loyal instincts of her noble nature. Francis, generous and loyal himself, could understand this, much better than it was understood by Lionel Hillary, for whose sake the sacrifice was made.

There were times when the young man reproached himself for his selfishness in accepting the supreme desire of his soul. Ought he not rather to have wrestled with himself and let this bright young creature go? But there were other times when Francis Tredethlyn suffered himself to be beguiled by delicious hopes. Had not true and honest love sometimes triumphed over circumstance? Might not the day come when Maude Hillary would be able to return his affection, to reward his patience?

"I can afford to be so patient," he thought, "for it will be such happiness to be her slave." To-day, watching her pale face in pensive contemplation, Francis puzzled himself vainly to guess what was amiss with his promised wife. It was not only that she was paler than usual,—and the brightness of her colour had faded very much of late,—but to-day there was a shade of coldness in her manner which was quite new to her affianced husband, and which sent a chill to his heart, always ready to sink under some vague apprehension where Maude Hillary was concerned. We hold these supreme joys of life by so slender a thread, that half our delight in them is poisoned by the dread of their possible loss.

"Maude," he said by-and-bye, after a few common-place phrases, and after he had watched her for some minutes in silence, "I am sure there is something amiss with you to-day. You are ill—you—"

"Oh no, not ill. Only a little worried!"

Worried—but about what?"

"I heard something about you last night, Mr. Tredethlyn," said Miss Hillary,—it was the first time she had called him Mr. Tredethlyn since their engagement—"something which you never told me yourself. Mr. Lowther,—a—friend of papa's, who has just come home from Van Diemen's Land, told me—that—that you had been—"

"His servant! Yes, Maude, it is quite true. I was a soldier, and I was obliged to obey orders. I was ordered to attend upon Ensign Lowther, and I did my best to serve him well. When I enlisted in her Majesty's service I had all sorts of foolish fancies about fighting and glory, but they all dwindled down to the usual routine. No fighting, no glory, no desperate attacks upon Indian fortresses, no scaling walls to plant the British flag upon the enemies' ramparts; but any amount of drill and hard work, and a discontented fine gentleman to wait upon."

A flood of crimson rushed into Maude's face as Francis said this; but the young man's head was drooping over the embroidery frame, and he was trifling mechanically with the loose Berlin wool lying on Miss Hillary's canvas.

"I am afraid you think it a kind of degradation to you, that I should have been a servant, Maude—" he said presently.

"You never told me—"

"No—I told you I had been a private in the 51st. The other business was only a part of my duty."

Maude was silent for some moments after this. She sat looking

dreamily out of the window, while Francis still twisted the Berlin wools in his strong fingers. Maude was the first to speak.

"Was it Mr. Lowther you meant just now, when you spoke of a discontented fine gentleman?" she asked, with some slight hesitation.

"Yes; I never served any other master. Ensign Lowther was horribly discontented. He was one of those men who can't take things easily; but I can understand a good deal of his peevish restlessness now. I can sympathize with him now, Maude."

His voice grew low and tender as he said this.

"Why?" asked Miss Hillary, rather coldly.

"He was in love, Maude,—an unhappy attachment, as I understood, to some lady—an heiress, I think—whose money was a hindrance to a marriage between them."

From the beginning to the end of this conversation Maude Hillary's thoughts had been employed in debating one question—should she, or should she not, tell her future husband that Harcourt Lowther was the man to whom she had been previously engaged? He knew of that broken engagement, but he did not know the name of her lover. Was it her duty to tell him? It would be very unpleasant to do so; but then duty is so often unpleasant. She was still silently debating this subject; the words which she should speak were forming themselves in her mind; when the drawing-room door was opened, and a servant announced Mr. Lowther. Maude's heart beat violently. Would there be a scene? Why had Harcourt come, when he knew——? But Mr. Lowther very speedily relieved her fears upon this subject. Nothing could be more delightful than his manner. He was cordial to his old servant, without attempting any airs of patronage. He could not have been more entirely at his ease with Maude, had he been the most indifferent of first cousins.

Mr. Lowther was only acting up to his determination to take things quietly. He had met Lionel Hillary in the City that morning, and had surprised the merchant by speaking of Maude's engagement to Francis Tredethlyn.

"But don't alarm yourself, my dear Hillary," he said, with a frank smile. "To say that I adored, and do adore your daughter, is only to admit a fact to which, I daresay, every male visitor at the Cedars would be happy to testify in a round-robin. Miss Hillary is made to be worshipped. I have only been one among a score of worshippers. If ever I hoped to overcome your very natural prejudice against my disgusting poverty, I have long ceased to hope it, so it was scarcely such a death-blow to me to discover what had happened during my exile. Will you let me renew my old relations with your household? Will you let me be one of the moths again? I know now that the candle will burn, and that its dangerous glare alone, and not its tender warmth, is reserved for me, so I shall have only myself to blame if I come away with a scorched wing."

Mr. Hillary's only reply to this rather sentimental speech was a hearty invitation to dinner.

"I can give you your favourite Rhudiescheimer with the oysters. Chablis is a mistake, when you can get good hock. Sharp seven, remember; but you may go earlier if you care for croquêt. I daresay you'll find Tredethlyn there."

"The poor fellow is very hard hit, I suppose?"

Mr. Hillary smiled, and shrugged his shoulders.

"I never saw such a devoted creature. Good day."

The merchant hurried off, and Harcourt walked slowly away, pondering as he went.

"A devoted creature. Yes, and there has been new blood let into the commercial anatomy of Hillary & Co. I daresay that poor devil, Tredethlyn, has been bled to a hideous extent."

The dinner at the Cedars went off very pleasantly. What dinner could fail to go off tolerably well, enlivened by Harcourt Lowther, when that gentleman cared to exercise his genius for making conversation? There were other guests at the merchant's round table, and after dinner people showed an inclination to stroll out of the lamplit drawing-room on to the dusky lawn, and down to the terrace, drawn perhaps by the magnetic influence of the river, which *will* be looked at.

It happened somehow—I suppose Mr. Lowther himself managed it—that he and Maude were left a little way behind the rest of the loiterers upon the twilit terrace. Ah! how vividly in the memory of both arose the picture of a time long ago, when they had stood there side by side, by the same river, in a twilight calm like this, with the same star glimmering faintly in a low rose-tinted western sky. In Maude's breast that memory awakened cruel pangs of shame and remorse. In Harcourt Lowther's breast there was a strangely mingled feeling of bitterness and regret;—bitterness against the Destiny which had given him so few of life's brightest possessions; regret for the vanished time in which some natural earnestness, some touch of fresh and manly feeling, had yet lingered in his heart.

"Poor, simple, unworldly Maude," he thought, as he contemplated the girl's pale face, "what a penitent look she has! and yet if she knew—"

He smiled, and left the thought unfinished. Then, turning to Maude, he said, with a little touch of melancholy solemnity, worthy of Edgar Ravenswood himself, "Miss Hillary, let us be friends. If you can bury the past, so can I. We may yet strew sweet flowers of friendship on the grave of our dead love."

"And I really don't want to let Francis Tredethlyn slip through my fingers altogether," Mr. Lowther added mentally, as a sort of rider to that pretty little speech.

Maude looked at him with rather a puzzled expression.

"You are very generous," she faltered, embarrassed, and at a loss how to express herself, "but—don't you think it would be better for us—to—to say good-bye to each other—for ever. I—I—hope you will marry some one—worthy of you—some one who is less the slave of circumstances than I am. I want to do my duty to Mr. Tredethlyn—and I think it is a part of my duty to tell him of our broken engagement."

"My dear Miss Hillary, you would surely never do anything so foolish. Poor Francis is the best fellow in the world, but he is just the man to be ferociously jealous if he once got any foolish crotchet into his head. I have lived in the same house with him, remember, and must therefore know him better than you do. As for saying farewell for ever, and all that kind of thing, your eternal parting reads remarkably well in a novel, but it isn't practicable between civilized people who belong to the same rank of society. Georgina bids Algernon an irrevocable adieu on Tuesday morning, and there is burning of letters and love-locks, and weeping and wailing in Brompton Crescent; and on Wednesday evening the same Algernon takes her down to dinner in Westbourne Terrace. We can bury the past in as deep a grave as you like, and lay the ghost of memory with any exorcism you please, but we can't pledge ourselves not to meet any day in the week in the houses of our common friends."

Maude was quite unable to argue with so specious a reasoner as Mr. Lowther. She did her best to defend her position, and urged the necessity of telling Francis Tredethlyn the whole truth. But Harcourt overruled her objections, and in the end obtained from her a promise that she would still remain silent as to the name of her discarded lover.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TIDINGS OF SUSAN.

ABSORBED in the conflicting tortures and delights of his bondage, Francis Tredethlyn had thought very little of that missing cousin who had once been so near and dear to him. Now and then, when he had been most entirely under the spell of Maude Hillary's fascinating presence, the vision of a rosy rustic face, framed in a little dimity bonnet, had arisen suddenly before him, mutely reproachful of his forgetfulness and neglect, and he had resolved that on the very next day some new steps should be taken in the search for Susan Tredethlyn. But then, on that next day, there was generally some flower-show or *matinée musicale*, some boat-race at Putney or appointment to play croquêt at Twickenham, in short, some excuse or other for devoting himself to Maude Hillary; and poor Susan's rustic image melted away into chaos. But Mr. Tredethlyn was suddenly startled into recollection of his neglected duty by the receipt of a letter from his solicitors, Messrs. Kursdale and Scardon, asking for an early interview, and announcing that they had an important communication to make respecting Miss Susan Tredethlyn, otherwise Miss Susan Turner.

An important communication. The Cornishman felt his face grow hot as he read the letter. Susan was found, perhaps, he thought. He had never mentioned her name to Maude Hillary, and now it might be that she would need all the devotion of a loving protector, perhaps even the strong arm of an avenger, at a time when his every thought was absorbed by his approaching marriage. The young man did not wait for any ceremonious appointment, but hurried off at once to Gray's Inn, and presented himself before Mr. Kursdale, the senior partner.

In the quiet office Francis Tredethlyn's hot eagerness tamed down a little before the matter-of-fact manner of the solicitor. There was a sober tranquillity in the aspect of the man, and of the place, which seemed to have a singularly soothing effect upon all human emotion. The sober little clock ticking on the grey stone mantelpiece, a skeleton clock, exhibiting its entire anatomy to the public eye, and superior to all meretricious adornment, seemed to be perpetually ticking out in the stillness,—

"Let me advise you to take it easily; let me recommend you to take it quietly: whatever the Law can do for you will be done for you here; but it must be done in the Law's own way, which is very slow, and very complicated, and rather trying to human patience."

Mr. Kursdale received Francis with calm cordiality, and after a few stately compliments proceeded at once to business.

"You will remember that my opinion, and that of my partner—for I availed myself of his judgment in the matter,—you will, no doubt, recollect, that after considerable study of the manuscript or journal which you confided to me, I came to the conclusion that the writer of that journal had contemplated imposing upon your cousin's simplicity by a mock marriage, a sham ceremonial, performed before some person falsely representing himself to be a district registrar. This opinion was really forced upon me by the wording of the diary. Look at the diary in what light I would,—and I assure you I weighed the matter most carefully,—I could not see my way to any other conclusion."

"I understand," answered Francis, "I knew the man was a scoundrel. I made that out, somehow or other, from his journal. I knew he meant mischief and treachery upon little Susy; but I couldn't make out *what* treachery till you opened my eyes to the truth."

"But suppose that, after all my care, I was too hasty in forming a conclusion. Suppose that we have been mistaken, Mr. Tredethlyn."

"How do you mean, sir?"

"Some days since, I happened to open a drawer which had been unopened for a long time, and hidden under a lot of other documents I found the diary which you entrusted to me. The sight of the manuscript reminded me of you and your missing cousin, so I suppose it was only natural that I should turn over the pages,—not in the hope of finding any new meaning in them, however, for I had studied them too carefully for that. I turned them over, and while debating the question of a mock

marriage, the thought suddenly flashed upon me that it would be at least very easy to ascertain if any genuine ceremonial had taken place in London. Remember, Mr. Tredethlyn, I did not for one moment imagine that there *had* been a real marriage, and I fully believed that the trouble I was about to take would be wasted trouble. If I had not from the first been firmly convinced that the writer of the diary contemplated a sham marriage, and nothing but a sham marriage, I should, at the outset, have done that which I only did the other day."

Francis Tredethlyn's impatience was so very evident, that the lawyer, slow as he generally was, quickened his pace a little as he went on.

"I was determined to institute an investigation of the books of every registrar's office in the metropolis during the months of January, February, and March, 1849. I entrusted a confidential clerk with this task, and three days afterwards he brought me the result of his investigation. On the 27th February, 1849, Robert Lesley was married to Susan Turner, in the office of the district registrar for Marylebone. The registrar's name was Joseph Pepper; the names of the witnesses were Mary Banks and Jemima Banks, of number 7, Woolcote Villas, St. John's Wood."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Francis Tredethlyn, reverently. "Thank God, for my little Susan's sake, that this man was not the scoundrel we took him for."

"Whether such a marriage, contracted under a false name on your cousin's part, and it is very possible, also under a false name on the part of the writer of the diary,—whether such a marriage might not be open to dispute, is another question. However, the ceremonial, so far as it went, was genuine, and in any case there would be some little difficulty in setting it aside.

"It shall not be set aside!" cried Francis, "if I have the power to enforce it. Thank God for this, Mr. Kursdale, and thank you for the thought, late as it came, that led to the discovery of the truth."

"You must remember, though, my dear Mr. Tredethlyn," remonstrated the solicitor, who was almost alarmed by the young man's eagerness, "you must bear in mind that it is just possible there may have been some other Susan Turner and some other Robert Lesley married in the month of February, 1849, and that this registration may refer to them."

"I am not afraid of that," Francis answered, decisively. "No, the man meant to be a scoundrel, I daresay; but my little Susie's artless confidence touched his heart at the very last last, perhaps, and he *could* not be such a villain as to deceive her. Rely upon it, Mr. Kursdale, the marriage was a genuine marriage, and I shall live to see my cousin righted, and to divide my uncle Oliver's money with her."

Mr. Kursdale stared at his client in blank amazement.

"You would—do that?" he asked, after a pause.

"Of course I would. Poor little, ill-used darling! The money was hers, every penny of it, by right. I—I meant at first to have restored it

all to her; but new claims have arisen for me, and I can only give her half the fortune that should have been her own."

The solicitor stifled a groan.

"And now how am I to find Susie?" asked Francis. "This registration business gives us a new clue, doesn't it?"

"Unquestionably. We can at any rate hope to find the two witnesses, Mary and Jemima Banks, and from them we may discover your cousin's present whereabouts, I'll send a clerk to these Banks people to-morrow."

"Do you know, I think I'd rather go and look for them myself, and at once," said Francis. "I've been very neglectful of Susie's interests lately, and I feel as if I ought to do something to make up for my neglect. I'll go myself, Mr. Kursdale, and try to find out these people. If I fail, you must help me to find them. If I succeed, I'll come here to-morrow morning and tell you the result."

The young man wrote the address of the people in St. John's Wood in his pocket-book, shook hands with his legal adviser, and hurried away. He was so eager to atone for the neglect of the past by the activity of the present. He hailed a Hansom in Holborn, and was on his way to St. John's Wood five minutes after he had left the lawyer's office. He sat with his watch open in his hand, while he made abstruse calculations as to the time it would take him to find the females, Mary and Jemima Banks, extort from them all the information they had to give, drive back to his hotel, reorganize his toilet, and then make his way to Twickenham. Mr. Tredethlyn had grown something of a dandy of late; he employed a West-end tailor, belaboured his honest head with big ivory-backed brushes, and bedewed his cambric handkerchief with the odorous inventions of that necromancer of the flower garden, Monsieur Eugène Rimmel. The big Cornishman smiled at his reflection in the glass sometimes, wondering at his own frivolity. But it was for Maude Hillary's sake that he brushed his hair laboriously every day, and grew critical in the choice of a waistcoat. He had even hired a man to wait upon him, and had a little regiment of boot-trees in his dressing-room.

St. John's Wood proper is perhaps one of the most delightful suburban retreats in which the man who, yearning for the waving of green trees about his abode, is yet obliged to live within an easy cab drive from the City, can make a pleasant temple for his *lares* and *penates*. Dear little villas, embosomed in foliage; stately mansions, towering proudly out of half an acre of trimly-kept garden, invite the wealthy citizen to retirement and repose. The young lilacs and laburnams of to-day may represent but poorly the bosky verdures of the past, but still the Wood of St. John is a cool and pleasant oasis in the great arid desert of London.

But there are outskirts and dependencies of St. John that are not quite so pleasant,—ragged wastes and shabby little terraces, that hang like tattered edges disgracing a costly garment. These dismal streets and dreary terraces may not belong of right to St. John, but they hang

about him, and cling to him, and shelter themselves under the grandeur of his name nevertheless.

Woolcote Villas, St. John's Wood, were very pretentious little dwelling-places, fronted with damp stucco, and with a tendency to a mossy greenness of aspect that was eminently dispiriting. Woolcote Villas were of the Elizabethan order of architecture, and went off abruptly into peaks and angles wherever a peak or an angle was possible. How such small houses could require the massive stacks of Elizabethan chimneys which made Woolcote Villas appear topheavy and incongruous to the eye of the stranger, was an enigma only to be solved by the architect who designed those habitations; and why Woolcote Villas should each be finished off with a stuccoed mustard pot, popularly known as a Campanello tower, which was not Elizabethan, and not practicable for habitation, being open to the four winds of heaven, was another problem perpetually awaiting the same individual's solution.

The Hansom cabman, after driving through all the intricacies of St. John's Wood on different false scents, came at last upon Woolcote Villas, through the friendly offices of a milkman, and pulled up his horse before the door of number seven.

Francis alighted and rang a bell,—a bell with a slack wire, which required to be pulled a great many times before any effect was produced. At last, however, the bell rang, and then, after a pause and another peal, the door was opened, and a slipshod servant maid, with a flapping circle of dirty net hanging from the back of her disorderly head, emerged from number seven, Woolcote Villas, and presented herself at the little gate before which Francis Tredethlyn was waiting.

The young man asked if Mrs. Banks was at home. Yes, she was at home, and Miss Banks also. Did he please to want the apartments?

Mr. Tredethlyn told her that he had particular business with Mrs. Banks, and that it was that lady whom he wished to see. The girl looked disappointed. There were a good many bills in the Elizabethan windows of Woolcote Villas, and the demands of lodgers were not equal to the supply of furnished apartments.

The sound of a tinkling piano, played very badly, greeted Mr. Tredethlyn as he entered the narrow passage. The dirty maidservant opened the door of the apartment whence the sound came, and Francis found himself in a shabby parlour, tenanted by a young lady, who rose from the piano as he entered, and who was very fine and yet very shabby, and a trifle dirty, like the parlour, and like Woolcote Villas generally. The young lady wore a greasy-looking black silk, relieved by a coquettish little apron of Stuart plaid, and adorned by all manner of ribbons and narrow velvets, with a good deal of Mosaic jewellery in the way of hearts and crosses, and anchors and lockets; and her hair was turned back from her forehead, and flowed in graceful ringlets of the corkscrew order upon her stately shoulders. She was altogether a very extensively adorned young

lady; and she gave a little start expressive of surprise and timidity, with just a slight admixture of pleasure, as Mr. Tredethlyn presented himself before her. Many single gentlemen had inspected the long-vacant lodgings, but there had been no one among them so good-looking, or so splendid of aspect, as this tall, broad-shouldered Cornishman, revised and corrected by his West-end tailor.

"The apartments, I suppose," the young lady said, curtseying and simpering. "My 'ma being busy, perhaps you will allow me to show them to you. *This* is the parlour. If the use of a sitting-room only is required, *with* partial board, including dinner on Sundays, the terms would be seventeen and sixpence. Private apartments, without board, fifteen shillings, or with full board —"

The young lady would have proceeded further, but Francis Tredethlyn interrupted her.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "I don't require apartments; my business is quite of a different nature. Your name is Banks, I believe?"

The lady inclined her head graciously. Life was very dreary in Woolcote Villas, and the advent of a good-looking stranger could scarcely be otherwise than agreeable, even if he was not a prospective tenant.

"Mary—or Jemima—Banks?" asked Francis.

"I am Miss Jemima Banks," the young lady replied, with considerable dignity. She began to think the good-looking stranger inclined to be presumptuous: but Francis was too preoccupied to be aware of the intended reproof.

"I am very glad that I have been so fortunate as to find you," he said, "for I believe you can give me the information I want. You were present at a marriage before the registrar, at an office in Folthorpe Street, Marylebone, on the twenty-fifth of February, 1849. Can you tell me where the young lady who was married went after the ceremony? I have some right to ask this question, for Susan Tre—Susan Turner is my first cousin."

"Well, I never did!" exclaimed Miss Banks, surprised out of her stateliness. "Poor Susan was your cousin, was she? Why, she came home here a fortnight after her marriage."

"She came here?"

"Yes; she was lodging here before that, and she and her husband went off to Paris after the ceremony, and there was no breakfast and no nothing; and Mr. Lesley, he was always very high and mighty-like in his ways, he flung down a twenty-pound note upon the desk before the registrar, and when the man said something about change, he threw up his head scornful-like—it was a way he had if anything vexed him,—'There's your money,' he said, 'and don't let's have any humbug,' and then he dragged his poor little wife's hand through his arm, just nodded to me and mother, and walked off to the cab without a word, leaving me and mother in the registrar's office. The registrar was full of praises of the gentleman's

generosity, and said he'd like to tie up half-a-dozen such couples every week, but mother was regularly cross about that twenty-pound note, and went on about it all the way home, saying, that Mr. Lesley had ground her down close enough about the rent for these rooms, and needn't go showing off his generosity to strange registers."

"And my cousin Susan went to Paris?"

"Yes, but only for a fortnight, and we was to keep the apartments for her, which we did, and at the end of a fortnight she came back, dressed beautiful, and with all sorts of lovely things in her boxes, and she was looking so well and so happy, and anybody would have thought she was the luckiest woman in the world. But mother, she used to shake her head about it, and say she never knew those secret sort of marriages to come to any good, because, when a gentleman begins by not wanting to own his wife, he's very apt to end by wishing he hadn't married her; but mother always looks at the black side of things, whether it's taxes, or whether it's lodgers, or whatever it is, so I didn't take much notice. Mrs. Lesley seemed very happy, and Mr. Lesley, for the first week or so, he stopped at home a great deal, and scarcely ever went out, except to take his wife out to dine, or to a theatre, or something of that kind, and they really seemed the happiest couple that ever was: but by-and-bye Mr. Lesley went away; to college, his wife told me; and I shall never forget how she cried, poor thing, the night he left her, or how lonely she looked sitting in this room, where they'd been so happy together, with their little oyster suppers after the theatre, and everything that heart could wish. She'd got some books that he'd left behind him spread out before her on the table, and she was turning one of them over when I went in to see her.

"'They're very hard to understand, Miss Banks,' she said, 'but I try to read them, because I want to be clever, and able to talk to Robert when he comes home.'"

After this she was almost always reading, poor little thing, and she'd sit in this room for days and days together; for she didn't like to go out alone, and mother does drive and worry so, that it wasn't often I could get out with her. Mr. Lesley was to be away three months, she told me; and I'm sure that poor thing used to count the hours, and minutes almost, wishing the time to go: but when the three months was up, there was no Mr. Lesley; he was going fishing somewhere in Wales with some grand friends, she told me, and wouldn't be home till the next vacation. I never saw any one so cut up as she was by the disappointment, though she wouldn't talk about it, only I could see every morning by her face, that she'd been lying awake half the night, crying her poor eyes out."

"Poor girl, poor girl!" murmured Francis Tredethlyn.

This all-absorbing passion called love was a sorrowful thing then, he thought, let it come to whom it would, a onesided frenzy, a perpetual sacrifice, a self-imposed immolation.

"Pray tell me all you can about my cousin," he said to Miss Banks. "You cannot imagine how anxious I am to hear of her."

"I'm sure she and me was always the best of friends," answered the fair Jemima, with a touch of diplomacy; and if you *did* think of taking the apartments, me and mother would do all in our power to make you comfortable, if it was only on Mrs. Lesley's account; for she was one of the sweetest young creatures I ever knew. She stayed with us three weeks before she was married, and I never shall forget her pretty face the day she first came up from the country after the lodgings had been took for her."

"Mr. Lesley engaged the lodgings, I suppose."

"No, it was Mr. Lesley's brother."

"Oh, he had a brother, then?"

"Yes, his brother was something in the law, I think—a very nice gentleman, and almost the living image of Mr. Lesley himself."

"Can you give me a description of Mr. Lesley? I never saw him, and I want very much to know what kind of man he is."

Miss Banks hesitated for some moments.

"It's so difficult to give an exact description of any one," she said. "Mr. Lesley was a tall, handsome-looking man, with fair hair and blue eyes. I don't think I could describe him any nearer than that."

Francis Tredethlyn sighed. There are so many tall, handsome-looking men with fair hair and blue eyes; and it is chiefly in melodrama that people go about the world conveniently marked with a strawberry, or a coronet.

"Answer me one question," said Francis, eagerly, "before you tell me the rest of my cousin's history. Do you know where she is now?"

Miss Banks shook her head, and sighed despondently.

"No more than you do, sir," she exclaimed. "It's two years and a half ago since I set eyes upon Mrs. Lesley, and I don't know no more than the dead what's become of her since."

"Then she is as much lost to me to-day as she was yesterday," said Francis, sadly. "But you can at least tell me all you know of my poor cousin. It may help me to some clue by which to find her."

Jemima was evidently a good-natured girl. She begged Mr. Tredethlyn to be seated, and placed herself opposite to him.

"I'll call mother if you like," she said, "but I think I can tell you more about Mr. Lesley; mother is such a one to wander, and when one's anxious to know anything quick, it don't do to have to deal with a person whose mind's always harping upon lodgers and their ways. Of course everybody knows lodgers are tiresome, and nobody lets apartments for pleasure, and nobody would pay taxes if they could help it, and poor-rates are not expected to raise people's spirits; but if facts are disagreeable, that's no reason you should have them cropping up promiscuous in every style of conversation. Till now it used to be a relief to

me to come and sit with Mrs. Lesley of an evening, and hear *her* troubles if it was only for the sake of a change."

"I thank you heartily for having been good to my cousin," Francis Tredethlyn said, earnestly. He was thinking that he would drop into a jeweller's shop on his way homeward, and choose the handsomest diamond ring in the man's stock for Miss Jemima Banks.

"I don't know as I deserve any thanks, sir," answered the girl. "I couldn't help taking to Mrs. Lesley, and I couldn't help feeling for her when I saw her so solitary and so sad. Months and months went by before her husband came back to her, and when he did come her baby was born, and there was the cradle in the corner just by where you're sitting, and she seemed as if she couldn't make enough of the child."

"A child!" murmured Francis. "Mrs. Burfield never told me of the child."

"But Mr. Lesley, he didn't seem so wrapped up in the baby as she did," continued Miss Banks; "and I used to fancy she saw it, and fretted about it. He couldn't take her out to dinner anywhere this time, nor yet to the theatre, on account of the child. She asked him once to take her for a drive somewhere in the country, and to take the child with them; but he laughed at her, and said, 'I don't think there's a pleasanter sight in creation than a estimable mechanic in his Sunday clothes, with three children in a wicker chaise, and a fourth in arms; but don't you think we may as well leave that sort of thing to the mechanic, Susie? the poor fellow has so few chances of distinguishing himself.' That was just the sort of speech Mr. Lesley was always making, half laughing, half scornful; he was always going on in a sneering way about the baby, and her being so fond of it, and devoting herself so much to it; and sometimes one of those nasty speeches of his would set his wife off crying, for her health wasn't very strong just then, and any little thing would upset her. And then he'd look at her with a hard, cruel look that he'd got sometimes, and throw his book into a corner, and get up and walk out of the house, banging the door to that degree that mother would be unnerved for the rest of the evening. Mr. Lesley took to stopping out very late this time, and used to let himself in with a latch-key, long after me and mother had gone to bed; but I know that Susan used to sit up for him, and I know that he used to be angry with her for doing it; for Woolcote Villas are slight-built, and I've heard him talking to her as I lay awake overhead. He was at home for some months this time off and on,—but he'd be away for days together,—and when he was at home he had a tired way like, that made me feel uncomfortable somehow to see him. He was always yawning, and smoking, and sitting over his books, or lying asleep upon the sofa; and I'm sure if I'd been Mrs. Lesley, I should have been very glad when he took himself off. But lor' bless your heart! poor little thing, she fretted about his going away, just as if he'd been the kindest of husbands. He wasn't going back to college any

more; he was going to Germany this time. I know she wanted to go with him, poor, tender-hearted thing; and I heard her say to him, so pitiful like, once, 'Oh, Robert, what will become of me when you are gone! If you would only take me!' But he only laughed at her, and cried out, 'What! abandon the baby?' So at last the time came for him to go, and his poor wife got paler and paler every day, till I'm sure she looked like a living corpse walking about the house," said Miss Banks, unconsciously paraphrasing Shelley.

"And this man left her."

"Lor, yes, what did he care for her looking white and sorrowful? He was more wrapped up in his new portmanteaus, and travelling bags, and dressing-cases, and such like, than in his wife or his child. He went off as gay as could be, though he left Mrs. Lesley almost broken-hearted. And he didn't leave her too well off either, I know, though she always paid mother to the moment; but all her pretty dresses and bonnets that Mr. Lesley had bought her in Paris had grown shabby, and he hadn't bought her any new ones. He had so many expenses, she told me; for she was always making excuses for him like, and pretending that he was very good to her. Poor dear thing! after he was gone away the baby was her only comfort; and I'm sure if it hadn't been for that child she'd have fretted herself away into the grave. Well, sir, the baby was four months old when Mr. Lesley went away to Germany, and he was only to be away three months at the longest, Susan told me: she was very friendly with me, and I always called her Susan. And she used to count the days just as she did before; and she'd say to me often how the time was going, and her husband would soon be back. She used to write him letters,—such long letters, all full of her talk about the baby, and his taking notice, and growing, and such like; but she didn't have many letters from him. 'You see, Jemima, he's always going from place to place,' she said; 'and then my letters lie at the post-offices where I direct them, and half the time he doesn't receive them at all; so I can't wonder at not hearing very often from him.' She used to be so pleased, poor dear, when a letter did come, though I'm sure they were short enough, for I've seen her open them; but, ah! when the three months went by, and Mr. Lesley didn't come back, how dreadfully she did fret!—always secretly, though, for she didn't seem to like that anybody should know her troubles; for fear they should blame him, the brute. 'He's going further north,' she told me; 'Germany's such a big country, you know, Jemima; and I'm afraid, from what Robert says, he thinks of going beyond Germany, to St. Petersburg perhaps. You see, it's necessary for him to travel in order to complete his education.' I couldn't help laughing outright at this; for I thought if Mr. Lesley wasn't educated enough with all his books, and colleges, and crackjaw languages, and such like, he never would be educated. However, that was no business of mine, and I keep my thoughts to myself. The time went by, and still there

was no news of Mr. Lesley coming home. He was always going further and further north, Susan told me, when she spoke of him; but she'd got to talk of him very little now, though I know she was thinking of him and fretting about him all day and all night too; for I've slept with her sometimes, and heard her moan in her sleep, and speak his name, O so pitiful!"

"Poor girl! poor child! she was little more than a child!" murmured Francis Tredethlyn.

"No more she was," answered Miss Banks, with energy; "and him as ill-treated her was a brute. I'm sure *I* never thought much of him, with his scornful, sneering ways, treating me and mother as if we was so much dirt under his feet. As for that poor young thing, it was a sorrowful day for her when she first set eyes upon him, fine gentleman though he was, and above her in station, which she was always telling me as a kind of excuse for his bad conduct. Well, sir, his letters got fewer and fewer, and still Susan kept her troubles to herself, and only said he was going further north, and that he would be back before the year was out. But the year passed, and he didn't come back, and he'd been away nearly ten months, and the baby was fourteen months old, when a letter came for Susan, with St. Petersburg on the post-mark. I never shall forget that day. It was dull, cold, March weather, with the wind howling and moaning enough to give the liveliest person the dismals, and Mrs. Lesley had been sitting by the window all the afternoon watching for the postman. She was beginning to be nervous about her husband's health, she told me, as it was so long since she had heard from him. The postman came at last, and I was down-stairs with mother when he came. Mrs. Lesley ran into the passage and took the letter herself. We heard the parlour door shut, and then five minutes afterwards we heard a scream and a heavy fall. Me and mother rushed up-stairs, and there was poor Susan lying on the floor, with a letter clutched in her hand, and the fingers clenched upon it so that neither me nor mother could loosen them. We lifted her up and laid her on the sofa. She didn't seem to have fainted dead away, for she opened her eyes directly, and said, 'Oh, why didn't you let me lie there till I died?' And it was enough to pierce the hardest heart to hear her. Mother began talking about the troubles of the world, and asked her if there was bad news in the letter. 'Oh yes!' she cried; 'cruel news—dreadful news!' And then mother asked her, Was Mr. Lesley dead? 'Yes,' she said, 'dead to me! dead to me!' Mother fancied she meant he was really dead, and said she hoped Mrs. Lesley was left comfortably provided for. You see, having seen a deal of trouble herself, mother will look at things in that light. And then Susan cried out that her trouble was one that we could never understand. I couldn't bear to leave her; but I got mother out of the way—for her ways are apt to be wearing to any one that's in trouble,—and I stopped with Susan all the evening. But she never spoke once; she only lay quite quiet upon the

sofa, with her face turned to the wall; but I knew that she was crying all the time; and when I took her the baby, thinking the sight of him might comfort her, she only waved him away like, with her hand. I didn't leave her till twelve o'clock that night; but she was still lying on the sofa with her face turned to the wall. But just as I was going away she stretched out her hand and said, 'God bless you, Jemima, it is very good of you to stop with me, but there is nothing upon this wide earth that can give me any comfort now.' I didn't see her the next morning, for she went out very early, and took the baby with her, and she didn't come back till late at night, and then she came back without the baby. You might have knocked me down with a feather when I opened the door to her and saw her come in without the child. 'Oh, Susan,' I said, 'what have you done with Robert?'—he'd been christened Robert after his 'pa, and I'd stood godmother for him. Susan was as pale as death, but she said very quietly, 'I've put him out to nurse in the country, Jemima. I was obliged to part from him, for I'm going away.' I thought all in a moment that she was going abroad to her husband, and that her grief had been about parting with her child; but then I remembered what she'd said the night before, about Mr. Lesley being dead to her, and do what I would I couldn't make it out. I'm sure I was as much cut up at the thought of her going away as if she'd been my own sister."

"I wish to Heaven she had stopped with you," exclaimed Francis Tredethlyn. "She had few friends, poor girl, and had no need to leave any one who felt kindly towards her."

"But she did leave us," replied Miss Banks; "she paid mother every farthing she owed her, and packed up her few little things. She would make me take some of her pretty ribbons and collars, that had been bought in Paris, and never worn out, for she didn't care to dress herself smart when Mr. Leslie was not at home; and then she sent for a cab and went away. I heard her tell the driver Shoreditch railway station, for I ran out to the cab and kissed her the last thing, and begged her to come and see us whenever she came back to London; and she promised that if she lived, and things went well with her, she would. But from that day to this we've never set eyes upon her."

And this was the end of what Miss Banks had to tell. Francis Tredethlyn's thoughts wandered back to Mrs. Burfield; it was to her that Susan Tredethlyn had gone in the March of 1851. So far the girl's history was complete; but the grand question still remained, Where was she now to be found? A deserted wife, a friendless, and perhaps penniless mother; what had become of this lonely, inexperienced girl between the March of 1851 and this present autumn of 1853.

"But surely you can give me some clue by which I may trace my cousin?" said Francis, after a pause; "you can give me the address of some friend, some intimate acquaintance of Mr. Lesley's: he must have had visitors while he lived here."

Jemima shook her head decisively.

"Not one," she answered: "except for bringing his brother home to dinner once or twice, when he was first married, no mortal belonging to Mr. Lesley ever darkened mother's doors. Mother and me used to think it odd, and of course there always are advantages in lodgers keeping much company, which makes up for extra trouble; and the most audacious lockers up that ever were can't go and lock up under visitors' very noses. But we supposed, as Mr. Lesley's marriage was a secret one, he didn't care to bring his friends home."

"But his brother came?"

"Yes, only when they were first married; he never came after."

"Did you hear the brother's address?"

"Well, I have heard that it was in some of those law places, the Temple, or Gray's Inn; but I never heard any nearer than that."

Mr. Tredethlyn gave a despairing sigh; he thought of Mrs. Burfield's description of his cousin, pale and wan, waving her little hand out of the carriage window as she left Coltonslough, friendless and poor. Was it not more than likely that she had only gone away to die, and that his search for her would end at last in the discovery of a grave?

But might not the man, the husband who had deserted his innocent and confiding wife, might not he be found and made to pay a heavy penalty for his sins? Vengeance seems but a poor thing at the best, but it is at least something; and Francis Tredethlyn felt a fierce desire for revenge against the cold-blooded destroyer of his cousin Susan's happiness.

He asked Miss Banks many more questions, but she could tell him no more than she had already told him. She had never heard anything of Mr. Lesley's family or antecedents, directly or indirectly. She knew he went to college, but she never remembered hearing what college. She had fancied sometimes that Mr. Lesley's name was an assumed one: indeed, she was sure it was; for when his brother had come to dine at Woolcote Villas the first time, he had inquired for Mr. Robert by some other name. Unfortunately, that other name had entirely escaped Miss Jemima's recollection.

"He caught himself up short," she said, "as if he was vexed with himself for having let slip that other name, and I never heard it again the whole time Mr. and Mrs. Lesley were with us. I don't think Susan knew much more about her husband's affairs than I did, for he always treated her like a child; and even when he was kindest to her, he seemed to have a high and mighty way with her, that would have kept any timid person from asking questions."

Francis thanked Miss Banks very heartily for the trouble she had taken to enlighten him to the extent of her power, and then bade her good afternoon.

"If you should meet with any one wanting apartments and board, either partial or entire, you'll perhaps be kind enough to bear mother in mind,"

the young lady said, as she escorted him to the door. He murmured some polite assurance that he would neglect no opportunity of promoting Mrs. Banks's interest, and returned to the Hansom which had been waiting for him during his prolonged interview with the good-natured Jemima.

From Woolcote Villas he drove to the office of the Marylebone registrar, and from that official he obtained an assurance that the marriage between Robert Lesley and Susan Turner, on the twenty-fifth of February, 1849, was, so far as his part of the business went, as legally binding as if the ceremony had been performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury within the solemn precincts of Westminster Abbey.

"If they chose to be married in false names, that was their business," said the registrar, "and they might find themselves bothered about it by-and-bye. But, except where there's property, it isn't often that a person's called upon to prove his marriage. I suppose, by your making the inquiry, there *is* property in this case?"

Francis Tredethlyn shook his head.

"I know no more about that than you do," he said.

"Well, I sha'n't forget that business in a hurry," said the registrar, who was inclined to be communicative. "In the first place, the man was one of your regular tip-top swells, and that's a kind of party we don't often see here; and in the next place, he gave me a twenty-pound note, which was the first windfall of that kind that ever dropped into my pocket, and is more than likely to be the last."

"Can you tell me what the man was like?"

"Tall and fair, with blue eyes and light hair; your regular swell: not the heavy military swell,—more of a delicate, womanish way with him; but such as you may see by the dozen any afternoon in St. James's Street or Pall Mall."

This description was no clearer than that given by Jemima Banks. Francis could scarcely walk through a London street without meeting with some man who might be described in the same words. He left the registrar's office, and went back to his hotel; and, absorbed in the arduous duties of his toilet, thought alternately of lost Susan Tredethlyn, *alias* Susan Lesley, and of beautiful Maude Hillary, who was so soon to be his wife.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FRANCIS TREDETHLYN'S DISINTERESTED ADVISER.

SHE was so soon to be his wife! Yes, October was near at hand. Already the woods and hills beyond the "Star and Garter" were bright with autumnal tints of vivid orange and glowing crimson. The milliners and dressmakers, the outfitters and bootmakers, were perpetually appearing in the hall and on the staircases at the Cedars. Wicker baskets lined with oilskin seemed continually passing in and out of Mr. Hillary's abode,

and Maude could rarely enjoy a quiet half-hour undisturbed by a mysterious summons, entreating her to inspect or try on some garment newly brought home by a "young person" from town. Harcourt Lowther made himself quite at home both at the Cedars and at Francis Tredethlyn's chambers during this period of preparation. Francis took very kindly to his old master in his new capacity of friend and mentor. The habits of the past made a link between them. The old half-friendly, half-supercilious familiarity which had characterized Harcourt Lowther's treatment of his servant melted now into a playful and almost caressing friendliness. Mr. Lowther was a thoroughly selfish man, and he found himself called upon in this instance to sacrifice his pride in the cause of his interest. He affected a hearty interest in Francis Tredethlyn's affairs, and contrived somehow, by a series of manœuvres, so subtle as to be imperceptible, to instal himself in the post of chief adviser to the inexperienced young Cornishman. Mr. Lowther was an idle man, a very clever man, too versatile for greatness, or even for any celebrity beyond that species of drawing-room reputation, which women are able to bestow on the men who are not too noble to waste a lifetime in small accomplishments and shallow courtesies. He was very clever, very idle, very much inclined to quarrel with the decrees of Providence; and in Francis Tredethlyn he saw the possessor of the two things he himself most ardently desired—a great fortune, and Maude Hillary for a wife. But he was true to his resolution to take matters quietly: and he assisted in the preparations for the wedding with as much outward show of pleasure as if he had been a match-making mother, rejoicing in the happy disposal of a whole brood of daughters. The big mansion in the new district of palatial streets and squares lying between Kensington and Brompton was fitted and furnished under Mr. Lowther's superintendence. He had meetings with architects, gilders, decorators, and upholsterers; and, with only an occasional reference to Francis, gave his orders as freely as if the house had been his own. Sometimes, walking up and down the whole length of the three drawing-rooms, a strange smile flickered over his face,—a contemplative smile, which faded away in the next moment, giving place to that perfection of fashionable indifference to all things in heaven and earth which was his ordinary expression.

The appointed day came at last, and poor Francis drove down to Twickenham, looking as pale as his light waistcoat, but supported by his friend Harcourt Lowther as best man. Once, and once only, Maude Hillary looked at her discarded lover while she remained Maude Hillary; but there was a world of mingled scorn and reproach in that one look. Ah! how different his love must have been from hers! she thought. Had he forsaken her for a wealthier bride, she would have gone far away from the sound of his wedding bells, and the sight of his wedding finery. In that one look she had seen that he was almost as pale as the bridegroom, but she could not forgive him for being there.

There was all the usual business. Autumnal flowers scattered under the feet of the bride and bridegroom; charity children in clean pinafores cheering in shrill treble voices as the bridal carriage drove away; and then a breakfast, and the popping of champagne corks, and the creaming of delicately perfumed Moselle, and a little speech-making of the mildest character; and then a departure amidst all the confusion of a crowded hall and portico—young lady intimates pressing forward to caress the bride; loud-voiced young men congratulating the bridegroom; servants with white favours standing on tiptoe to get a peep at the show: and then the postillions crack their whips, and the carriage rolls away through the chill autumn evening, and Maude sees Twickenham town spin by her in a dim glimmer of comfortable firelight, twinkling redly in cottage windows.

The wedding tour had been amongst the many things which Harcourt Lowther had kindly undertaken to plan for his friend, and after a great deal of deliberation, that gentleman had pitched upon one of the dullest and quietest watering-places in Devonshire, as the one spot upon all this earth best suited for Mr. Tredethlyn and his bride.

"You don't want the stereotyped Continental tour;—the Rhine steamers are crowded with cockneys, who find it easier to spout 'Childe Harold' than to regulate the adminstration of their h's. What do you know about the castled crag of Drachenfels, dear boy, and what do you care for all the hackneyed sentimentality about beery old knights and battered old castles? You don't speak any language but your honest native tongue, and you would be bothered out of your life before your travels were over—unless you took a courier—and then imagine seeing nature through the eyes of a courier! No, my dear Tredethlyn; the sort of thing for you is some quiet little watering-place,—'an humble cot, in a tranquil spot, with a distant view of the changing sea,' and all that sort of thing; in other words, a tranquil little retreat where you and Mrs. Tredethlyn may have time to get acquainted with one another."

Francis was only too glad to take such pleasant advice. To be alone with Maude, alone beside the still gray sea in the quiet autumn evenings, seemed to him the highest bliss that earth could hold for any human being: and poor Francis blessed his generous friend for the sound judgment which was to secure him such happiness.

"I dare say I should have gone scampering all over the Continent, but for you, Lowther," he said, innocently. "Those other fellows at the Cedars advised a tour through half Europe: 'See plenty of life,' they said; 'freshen yourself up with change of scene, and pick up all the jargon you can out of Murray, so as to be able to hold your own in society. Everybody travels now-a-days, and it doesn't do for a fellow with lots of tin to be behind the rest of the world.' But I'll take your advice, Lowther. I wanted Maude to choose the place for our bridal trip, but she wouldn't; so we'll go to the Devonshire village."

It is not to be supposed, of course, that Mr. Lowther had any other than the most friendly intention when he selected Combe Western as the scene of Francis Tredethlyn's honeymoon; but, on the other hand, it must be confessed that had Harcourt wished to inspire Maude with a weariness of her husband's society, he could have scarcely selected any place better calculated to assist him in the carrying out of his design. At Combe Western, the misty autumn days were unbroken by any change, save the slow changes of the hours, and the gradual darkening of the sky. There were pleasant drives and romantic scenery to be found in the neighbourhood of Combe Western; but Devonshire is a rainy county, and as it rained with little intermission during the whole of that honeymoon period, Francis Tredethlyn's bride was compelled to find her chief amusement in the prim lodging-house drawing-room and the society of her husband.

And this society was not congenial to her. He was handsome, and pleasant to look at; manly, good-tempered, generous. No mean or unworthy sentiment ever dropped from his lips. She respected him, and was grateful to him; nay, even beyond this, there was a certain latent affection for him lurking in some corner of her heart, but she was very tired of him nevertheless. To be truly attached to a person, and desperately weary of them, is not altogether an impossibility. Are we not sometimes weary of ourselves, whom we yet love so dearly? When you get tired of a book you have nothing to do but close the volume and restore it to its shelf. But you cannot shut up your friend when he becomes tedious; you must needs go on, wading through page after page of his conversation till you yawn in his face, and arouse him to the unpleasant conviction that he is a nuisance.

Maude was very gratefully and affectionately disposed towards her father's benefactor; but she grew terribly tired of his sole companionship during that rainy six weeks in the quiet Devonian watering-place. If the bride and bridegroom had gone on that stereotyped foreign tour so strongly protested against by Harcourt Lowther, Maude's sunny nature would speedily have asserted itself. She would have found in the rapid changes of scene, in all the pleasant excitement of quick travelling, plenty of subject-matter for conversation with her new companion; there would have been always some common ground on which they could have met, some little incident, among the hundred incidents of a traveller's day, which would have aroused a sympathy between them. But thrown on their own resources at Combe Western, a Horace Walpole and a Madame du Deffand might have exhausted their conversational powers, and yawned drearily in each other's faces. Maude found herself wishing for the end of her honeymoon before the first week thereof had drawn to its close; and Francis, always timidly watchful of his wife's beautiful face, felt a chill anguish at his heart as he perceived her weariness of spirit.

Thus it was that, when they returned to London, the husband and

wife were little nearer to each other than on their wedding day. No pleasant familiarity with each other's thoughts and feelings had arisen during that dull residence in a dull watering place. That subtle process of assimilation by which—except in some dismal examples—husband and wife grow like each other in mind and feeling had not yet begun. They were strangers still; in spite of Maude's esteem for her husband's character, in spite of Francis Tredethlyn's blind idolatry of his wife's perfections; and Harcourt Lowther, who was one of the guests at their first dinner-party, was not slow to recognize the state of the case.

"You'll get on admirably together by-and-bye, dear boy," he said to Francis, as they smoked their cigars together in a luxurious little study behind the big library, some days after the great dinner. "You'll get on superbly with your lovely wife, if you only play your cards cleverly. There must be no Darby and Joan business, you know—no sentimentalism. Lionel Hillary's daughter is just the woman to be disgusted by that sort of thing. It was all very well, of course, to do the romantic during the honeymoon; but that's all over now. Your wife will go her way, and you'll go yours. Her friends will absorb a great deal of her time and attention; your friends will absorb you. You'll have your club, your horses, your men's parties, and perhaps, by-and-bye, the House—for you ought decidedly to get into Parliament,—and it will be utterly impossible for you to spend all your mornings hanging about your wife's rooms, or nursing her Skye terriers, as you seem to have done hitherto."

"But I like so much to be with her," Francis remonstrated, piteously. "It's very friendly of you to give me these hints, and I daresay you're right, to some degree. I know Maude used to seem very tired at Combe Western, and we both got into the habit of looking at our watches in a dispiriting kind of way every quarter of an hour; but since we've come to London she has quite recovered her spirits, and we are so happy together;—you should have heard her laugh the other morning, when I taught one of the Skyes to shoulder arms with a lead pencil."

Mr. Tredethlyn laughed aloud himself at the recollection of this feat. Harcourt Lowther shrugged his shoulders, and a frown, or the passing shadow of a frown, darkened his handsome face.

There are some natures in which there is a certain element of childishness, and between such natures no desperate antagonism is ever likely to arise.

"We were dull at Combe Western," said Mr. Tredethlyn, presently; "but since we've been in London we've got on capitally. I've been everywhere with Maude—shopping even; and I've written out the lists for her parties, and been on a round of calls; and, in short, I've been the happiest fellow in all creation."

"No doubt, my dear boy; that sort of thing's delightful for a fortnight; but look out for the day when the twin demons of satiety and disgust will arise to wither all these Arcadian delights."

Francis pondered gravely. He had been happy since his return to London, for he had seen Maude bright and lively, pleased with the novelty of her position, happy in her father's affectionate welcome, serene in the consciousness of pure intentions, and grateful for the devotion, of which some new evidence met her at every turn. Poor Francis had been entirely happy; but it needed only a whisper from an elegant Mephistopheles in modern costume to render this simple Cornishman doubtful even of his own happiness. It might be only a sham and delusion after all, and Maude's sunniest smile might be the smile of a victim resigned to the sacrifice.

"If you think that Maude is likely to grow tired—," Francis began, in a very melancholy tone; but Mr. Lowther interrupted him.

"*If* I think! my dear boy. How can I do otherwise than think what is obvious to the dullest apprehension. Take life as other people take it, my dear, simple-minded Tredethlyn, and you'll find it go smoothly enough with you. Try to live on a plan of your own, and—the rest is chaos. No woman will long tolerate a man tied to her apron-string. She may be flattered by his devotion in the beginning, but she ends by despising his folly."

So it was that Francis Tredethlyn began life under the advice of his friend, Harcourt Lowther. After that evening in the studio the young husband no longer intruded himself upon his wife's leisure, or attempted to identify himself with her pursuits. He found plenty to occupy his own time, for Harcourt Lowther always had some new scheme for his friend's employment or amusement. A race, that no man living in the world could exist without seeing; a horse to be sold at Tattersall's; a celebrated collection of pictures at Christie and Manson's; a bachelor's dinner at a club; a review at Wimbledon;—somehow or other there was always something to be seen, or something to be done, of a nature in which Mrs. Tredethlyn could neither have any part nor feel any interest; and when Francis and his friend dined alone with her, as they did very often, it happened somehow that the conversation was always of a horsey and masculine character, painfully wearisome to the ordinary female mind. If Mr. Lowther had been intent on widening the natural gulf which circumstance had set between these two people, he could scarcely have gone to work more skilfully than he did; though it is of course to be presumed that he was only an unconscious instrument, an involuntary agent of mischief and ruin.

ETHERIELLE.

THOU wert with us, and thy presence was the sunshine of our home;
Where thy childish footstep lighted, nought but joy could ever come;
And we watch'd our priceless treasure as the miser guards his gold,
Watch'd her as the gentle shepherd tends the tiniest in the fold:
We seem'd to think an angel had come down on earth to dwell,
As we gazed upon our darling one, our bright ETHERIELLE.

Thou didst leave us—and the shadows fell around our lonely hearth,
In the gloom and in the sunshine did we miss alike thy mirth.
We laid thy gentle form beneath the daisied churchyard sod,
Gave the jewel that was lent us back into the hands of God.
We thought, as on thy coffin-lid the dust and ashes fell,
How more than ever thine was now *that* name—ETHERIELLE.

Still thou'rt with us—we must think so, or we could not linger on,
If from our midst we deem'd thy saintly presence quite had gone.
We see thee not, yet love to think thou'rt often by our side,
All the night, whilst angels watch us,—all the magic eventide.
When the pale and solemn moonlight throws o'er earth its holy spell,
Hovers near us, soft and spirit-like, our own ETHERIELLE.

And once more we shall rejoin thee, when the grave's dark clouds unfold,
Walking with thee by the glassy sea, along the sands of gold;
Listening to the countless wonders of thy radiant spirit-home,
Up beyond the far horizon of yon starry sapphire dome.
O'er the amaranth-cover'd meadows, up the hills of asphodel,
Shall we roam—as once on earth—with thee, our dear ETHERIELLE.

REV. C. MAURICE DAVIES, D.D.

THE TRANSATLANTIC PRESS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DANGERFIELD'S REST."

THE apophthegm of the sage who cared not who made the laws of a people, provided he were permitted to write their songs, like many old-fashioned sayings, shows but a fading significance in the light of modern inventions. The sage would affirm, with more pregnant emphasis to-day, "Let me make the newspapers of a people, and I care not who makes both their songs *and* laws."

The modern newspaper, in truth, beside the numerous ancient usages and customs its use has superseded, also supplies the niche once filled by the popular ballad. Long ere the German monk had dreamed of types, or Caxton thought of books, the valour of knights or the beauty of ladies was preserved from oblivion in traditionary song. Wars, battles, sieges, and many a moving tale by land and flood, the very names of which had been otherwise forgotten, were transmitted, generation after generation, by the lips of bards. As for the law, the great mass which is unwritten is only so because when custom first gave its sanction to accumulated precedents, our ancestors, less happy than ourselves, had not the printing-press. The influence of the press, in its various objects of informing, amusing, or instructing, is so generally appreciated, that to acknowledge it seems idle and trite enough. But there is an especial, although very natural error long prevalent in America, and deserving examination, albeit it has been, as I believe, detected and generally eschewed in Great Britain: I mean the error of assuming that the substantial influence of a press bears always an exact and elastic relation to its circulation.

In England the refutation of such a theory appears sufficiently practicable and obvious. For example, the parties broadly recognized as Liberal and Conservative may be regarded, perhaps, as tolerably balanced in the opinion and adhesion of educated Englishmen; and yet the Liberal press is said to print as many as four copies to one of the Conservative in the metropolis, and more than five to one in the whole empire. The lesson which this fact suggests has been for the most part unknown to Americans, although, like many others no less salutary, they have commenced to learn it since the outbreak of the civil war. They have begun to find out that the point is, all the world over, in respect to influence, not so much the numbers circulated, or the vigour with which a given cause is advocated, as the general conviction which obtains as to the honesty or dishonesty of the press itself. People learn in time to disregard a man who habitually exaggerates or tells downright untruths; and a newspaper gains character and respectability precisely as does an individual. Adroitness may hoodwink for a time, but the result in the long run is as certain

as that the sun shines. That the process of enlightenment has been slow among the American masses is due to a variety of causes, which I shall attempt (as I understand them) to explain.

In America everybody reads the papers;—a circumstance unfortunate for their quality, since, if my inferences are correct, they would be much better if they had fewer readers. The besetting sin of the American mind—that of eternally truckling to majorities—seems to be as unfavourable to the excellence of the newspaper press as it is to real independence in political action. The prevalence of such a sin furnishes a prime cause for the arrogance, the personality, the illiterate coarseness of the journals which enjoy the largest circulations: there are others, however, to which we will presently give our attention.

The *New York Herald* is usually regarded as the type of whatever is most vile and objectionable in American journalism. Nothing, indeed, can exceed the foulness of its vituperation, the uncouthness and vulgarity of its style. It has now been in existence for over twenty years, but its moral characteristics have not improved with its age or with its prosperity. This is certainly disgraceful to its conductor, but it is still more disgraceful to the community which not only tolerates, but in some degree upholds him. He has, indeed, been frequently horse-whipped within a stone's throw of his printing-office; he has been repeatedly charged with using his journal for the unjust extortion of money; he has regularly sustained the base and the profligate, and as persistently blackened and reviled the upright and the pure; so that the very name of the *New York Herald* has become a synonyme for anything that is gross and corrupt; and yet its circulation increases every year, and many Americans, who are loudest in its denunciation, patronize and suffer it to pass into their families.*

Why should this be? Owing, I reply, to a number of circumstances which require careful consideration before the inquirer can be in a position to form a fair and deliberate opinion. Among these, it must be remembered that its writers are chiefly Irishmen, who hate England and love the Pope; that a very large proportion of its supporters are Irish, or Catholic, or both; and that these classes, strong in numbers at all the great seaports, are particularly so in New York. Here we find some clue to its

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* Nothing is more common abroad than to hear Americans, when the *New York Herald* is alluded to, indignantly disclaim its acceptance as an *American* organ, or in any sense as a fit or acknowledged exponent of their country. It is natural that they should not wish to endorse a print which is commonly regarded as disreputable; but they are wrong in repudiating its representative character. The *Herald is* a representative newspaper. It represents a very numerous class indeed; so numerous as to constitute a good reason, without going further, why the general tone of the American metropolitan press has not gained a higher level. Our travellers, then, instead of denying that the *Herald* is an organ at all, should specify the truth, which is, that it is the organ of the immigrant foreign population.

animus, some explanation of its power. Hence we penetrate a mystery which must hitherto appear to the stranger as strikingly abnormal; that is to say, the case of a leading metropolitan journal which plainly hates another country far better than it loves its own.

But the *Herald* is essentially and conspicuously the "sensation" journal of America. Like all great things and great men, it has its imitators, but they lag far behind their original in each of the most piquant and attractive characteristics of its style. They offer the sensation public a marrow-bone when it has stomach to digest the ox of Milo. No; there is but one *Herald*, and, happily for the country, there is likely to be but one. But why, asks my sober English friend, why this monstrous appetite for exaggeration, and perversion, and slop? I answer, for the same reason that a child craves unwholesome or forbidden sweets. We in America have been—at least, until the advent of our dismal teacher, the civil war—in the condition, aggregately considered, of a rapidly growing, uninstructed child, who, being without restraints or guardians, has been forced to learn for himself, and through bitter experience, the lessons of life which are necessary to the wholesome development of mind and body. He finds out in time that there is no stimulant without a reaction. He uses too much tea or coffee, wine and tobacco, food piquant with condiments; or rises to delicious reveries by dint of opium or hascheesch. We all know the result, for it is uniform—the mortgage of future health or happiness for present indulgence or luxury. So has it been with my countrymen as a nation,—corporeally, indeed, for that matter, as well as intellectually. For mental food, like the physical, that it may not injure the partaker, should be tempered, simplified, and made wholesome. The brain and the heart may be vitiated as well as the stomach. As the world grows older this conviction gathers strength and brings forth fruit. The wise and good, not for cant's sake, but for the genuine happiness and well-being of their species, learn to set their faces against meretricious and licentious literature. Such reflections and their consequences seem commonplace and obvious enough to the English reader; but they are precisely of the species of commonplace which, in its application to the periodical press, has been, in the Republic, unappreciated or ignored.

It is true that the early press of America—such as existed before the Revolution—showed no such tendencies as have since been developed. But we must remember how many influential elements enter into the resolution of the problem. Not alone are the mingling of races and religions to be considered; not alone the prodigious immigration, the high price of labour, the opening of countless avenues for the acquisition of wealth,—thus diminishing the incentives to intellectual culture, and reducing to a minimum the demand for its products. Not alone the paucity of leisure and the development of precipitancy as a national characteristic. In addition, it is to be remembered that innovation in a form of government always suggests innovation in other matters,—frequently in matters

hitherto deemed sacred and inviolable. Witness the French Revolution; when the laws were upset, the downfall of religion, the overthrow of social tenets became inevitable.

The American Revolution did not bring in its train results so radical and subversive for numerous reasons, such as are connected with Anglo-Saxon origin, the strength of old prejudices, the effects of insulation, and, to some extent, the influence of climate. Still there have been tendencies of undeniable vigour toward notable subversions and alterations. One of these has been a sort of literary rebellion against the old-fashioned sobriety, solidity, and purity of diction most esteemed in the land of our ancestors. It might be going too far to say that, as an additional punishment for the mother country, her rebellious colonists deliberately proceeded to mangle her language (although I believe the imputation may be veraciously alleged against some Irish-Americans of the present day); but certain sins they have committed, of style and word-coining, look suspiciously like it.

The sensation newspapers have certainly striven to do all the mischief they could in this direction; and, it must be acknowledged, with no little success. They have aimed to debase and vulgarize the national tongue while grossly flattering the national vanity. They have succeeded tolerably well in convincing the world that the normal characteristics of the American mind are flippant ignorance and hideous exaggeration. Their motto has been, intellectually speaking, a cheap and low-toned article rather than a fairly made and substantially good one. Large sales and small profits. Bad English, doubtful morals, dirty reports, libellous stories, filthy details, fast presses, a large circulation,—and what could be asked more? Nothing else, I assure you, is necessary for the manufacture of the model sensation newspaper.

But it is my conviction that this pestilent monster has seen his best or his worst days. He has been tried, and having shown inherently evil and poisonous results, the public mind has begun to experience a healthful revulsion. The Americans are a progressive people, and they are beginning to find out the sensation newspapers. I believe the time is going by in America when effrontery will pass for intelligence, and slipshod ribaldry be accepted as a legitimate substitute for wit. I believe that the number of people is decreasing who think it necessary to offer incense to and deprecate the wrath of the devil for no better reason than that he is opposed to everything that is good. Moreover, if we may accept the old-time precursor in evidence of the destructive intentions of the gods, we shall find occasion for rejoicing and congratulation; for the greatest of the sensationalists seems of late to increase in absurdity and immorality in so wild a fashion as to lead to the hope that his dissolution cannot long be postponed.

We find, as a curious effect of the American sensation press, what may be styled an antithetical phenomenon which is highly interesting as

well as remarkable. This is a class of newspapers and periodicals which thrust themselves with everything *but* energy into an opposite extreme. Everything but energy, because that is the quality which the publications in question are most fearful in exhibiting; at any rate, the one which, if their conductors possess it, they are wondrously adroit in concealing. To avoid Scylla, they rush upon Charybdis. They roar you more mildly than any sucking dove. They are afraid to say their own or any one else's soul is their or his own. Their editorials are for the most part careful compoundings, but the principal ingredients are milk and water. Such journals are the *New York Times* and *Evening Post*. Both are respectable, well-intentioned; and the latter, especially, is a conscientious sheet;* but in neither is there any real pith or vigour. In neither can be found any equivalent for the force or the brilliancy of leading British newspapers. English readers may be surprised, perhaps a little amused, at a statement they will generally regard as superfluous; but I can assure them that Transatlantic ones will receive it with surprise, indignation, and incredulity.

The truth is, that the most respectable portion of the American press is essentially provincial. As it becomes more unexceptionable in a moral point of view, it also becomes more stupid. When it turns the cold shoulder to exaggeration and turpitude, it is to worship at the shrines of dulness and vacuity. As it becomes noted for having a good character, it becomes equally celebrated for being a bore. There seems to be no conception of a just medium; no idea that a newspaper can be sprightly without being licentious, or satirical without being personal. Whoever enters the dreary columns of these sheets may well leave all hope of interest or cheerfulness behind. As with the secular, so is it with the religious press. The latter is inconceivably dull, barren, and wearisome. There may be many exceptions, but I know of only one, and that is the *Independent*, Henry Ward Beecher's paper, which enforces our antithetical argument by being emphatically the sensation religious newspaper of the country. Let me not, however, be understood to ascribe the timid, feeble, and provincial character of the reputable American press exclusively to the reactive effect of the sensation portion of it; its origin, like that of most things, is a mixed one, and probably we could trace many of its seeds far back into the congenial atmosphere of New England Puritanism. Whatever its cause or causes, it helps amazingly to sell such prints as the *Herald*.

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* There is here an implication which appears invidious; but it will not appear unjust when it is explained that the principal editor of the first-named sheet is always in, or seeking to be in, the public official service; while the principal editor of the second has never either sought or held office. This distinction carries a weight which those who have been in America will best know how to appreciate.

Meanwhile, it is an undeniable, however unfortunate fact, that the so-styled sensation papers are by far the most enterprising and active in the collection and publication of the current news of the day. They incur vast expenses for the sake of getting the earliest possible intelligence by telegraph or otherwise; and they pay very liberally for every sort of labour, excepting editorial writing. As for the latter, excellence not being in demand, the poorest and cheapest slop may be supposed to answer the purpose—and does. It is true that the *New York Times*, *Tribune*, and *World* also spend money and pains for early news, but they are certainly not in such demand as *news*papers—as the *Herald* is; and, moreover, they are each and all occasionally sensational. The *New York Journal of Commerce* and the *New York Evening Post*, which are never sensational at all, are admirable illustrations of the opposite principle suggested,—their editorials being usually more moderate, more gentlemanly, and less sprightly than those of the before-mentioned journals; and their other matter, in most respects, far inferior.

A certain priggishness of manner, a gently reproving, I-am-holier-than-thou sort of expression, so offensive to a cosmopolitan taste, is also strongly marked in the Boston press. But it is fair to add that the latter exhibits, in the main, much more breadth and scholarship than does that of New York; which is not saying a great deal, but is still saying something. In New York, life seems so utterly given up to money-making, so overcharged and absorbed with stocks, groceries, and hardware, that there is, I suppose, no time to spare for either producing or enjoying elegance of diction or originality of ideas. There the press appears to be addressing an audience of gold-grubbers, pure and simple, and its tone therefore instinctively becomes that which best assimilates with the taste and intelligence of its patrons. While the Boston writers show us they aim to delectate an assemblage of ascetics, those of New York as clearly evince that theirs is one of traders. One would certainly expect that a journal of which Bryant the poet is chief editor would exhibit a liberal measure of taste and elegance in its columns, but such is scarcely the fact. His paper is pervaded by a cold, dull formalism; and notwithstanding the principal writers have American reputations for scholarship, their style is often uncouth and generally provincial.

Mr. Greeley's paper, the *Tribune*, deserves that recognition from candid minds which straightforward honesty of purpose should always command; but although the purity of his intentions is acknowledged by all save the ultra pro-slavery party, he is so continually making blunders—is so *gauche* and clumsy and jejune in his style of composition—a description therefore too frequently applicable to the writings of those he selects to supplement him in his endeavours to mould public opinion,—that his success as a journalist is not so marked as his industry and capacity might otherwise have made it. Notwithstanding his weaknesses and mistakes, however, his general influence on journalism in America has been a healthful and

honourable one, and his name will stand the higher in its history, for the reason that those who have been his bitterest assailants have exerted an influence of a character precisely opposite in both respects.

The *New York Times* is a journal which has sometimes exhibited considerable merit, but like the *Post* it is very provincial, and unlike the *Post* it is excessively trimming in its politics. The editor of the *Herald*, with all his faults, moral and intellectual, has shown in his own person the great commercial advantages of the editor of a daily newspaper attending to his business and attending to nothing else. The usefulness of the *Times* is seriously impaired by the place-hunting proclivity of its editor, and by the suspicion that its columns have been too often surrendered to stock-jobbing interests and speculations. The *Times* is second to the *Herald* in circulation, and is superior in general to either of the New York journals in the departments of criticism and foreign correspondence.

The *New York World* is a very young newspaper, much younger than either of those mentioned, and is conducted, nominally, by a very young man. Some of its articles have been smartly written, but it is too flippant, and lacks ballast. The latter circumstance was curiously instanced of late by the outburst of its anger against President Lincoln, on the occasion of the paper being stopped for two days by the authorities for the trifling offence of publishing a forged proclamation, purporting to come from the President, and calling for 400,000 more men, General Grant's campaign in Virginia being then at its most critical acme. The *World* was allowed to resume its publication after the interruption described, and in the first issue the editor assailed the President in a heated and violent philippic three columns long, in the editorial columns and over his own name! As the latter was previously but little known, the motive of the advertisement was, to say the least, equivocal. And as the letter in question was received by the public with a hearty laugh, and by the President with contemptuous silence (the burthen of its argument being that American liberty was fast being destroyed by the tyrant Lincoln, through his despotic stifling of the press), I dare say its writer has long since appreciated and laid to heart a lesson from his folly.

For the foregoing reasons it is evident that literary weeklies, after the plan of which there are so many in London, would be unlikely to attract a living share of public attention in the United States; and such, indeed, is the fact. Where the British metropolis can boast of its *Athenæum*, its *Spectator*, its *Examiner*, its *Saturday Review*, and others, that of America has nothing whatever—or next to nothing—to which it can point as a prototype. Attempts of the sort have been made, indeed, and probably will continue to be made in the future; but they have all failed, and for some time to come are likely to continue to fail. There is, in truth—or lately was, for death often comes speedily in these cases—a feeble effort at a weekly review begun last spring in New York. But it was enough to make Hazlitt—whose remains it rifled for a title—anathematize in his grave.

Pert without sparkle, oracular without dignity, dull without learning, didactic without force—behold its description! Neither belonging to the humdrum category of the honest respectabilities, nor to that of the garish yet sprightly sensationists, I fear its chance for protracted vitality is but small, and that it will but add to the long list of its predecessors who have gone to pave Hades with those superabundant commodities which, unless coupled with brains, are inadequate to the permanent establishment of literary weeklies.*

If any proof were wanting as to the provincial character of the more respectable American press, it is to be found in the tone of its current criticism on all matters connected with literature and art. We find two kinds of criticism,—that of the sensational press, which is gross, ignorant, and vulgar; and that of the respectable press, which is costive, tiresome, and watery. The former consists of tautological hyperbole, wreathed into indiscriminate praise or indiscriminate abuse; the latter of weak and grudging non-committalism, always in sensitive terror lest it be thought to have said too much or too little. There is, consequently, no such thing in American newspapers as hearty, manly, generous commendation of that which is good, or thoughtful, discriminative censure of that which is bad. No book, no picture, no artist is really and heartily acknowledged in America until he has the European stamp; and to this rule there is but one exception. That exception is in the case of a work which may happen to be abusive of the mother country. Anything which censures England, her manners, her constitution, her people, bears warrant of exception which saves the need for Transatlantic endorsement. It would be invidious to name instances in the way of books, and I do not mean to do so; but although perfectly aware that most Americans will dislike this statement very much, I am equally certain that those of my countrymen who are at once educated and candid must acknowledge its absolute truth.

Who cared for Irving, or Cooper, or Hawthorne in America—I mean in any extended sense—until their writings had been published, their merit conceded in London? Who would have allowed Mr. Bellow to be a great tragedian before he had crossed the sea and been permitted to awaken the echoes of Drury Lane? Who would have believed Powers was a great artist before his "Greek Slave" had challenged and conquered the admiration of the Old World to endorse the thin and frightened dicta of the critics of the New? I do not mean to affirm that there are not really good judges of books and pictures and artists in America; on the contrary, I believe there are many, and that the number is on the increase, and that the future has a far more cosmopolitan and catholic promise than Europeans would, from the results of the past, be disposed to believe. But either from the want of standards which are afforded by a recognized metropolis, the moil and hurry of business life, the lack of education of

* The print referred to has expired since this paper was written

newspaper men, the effect of the sensation press in leading the others to be morbidly fearful of being thought exaggerated, or, more probably, from a mingling of all these causes, the facts are as I have stated them. If a new William Shakspeare were suddenly to turn up in Connecticut, with a new "Tempest," I firmly believe that the *New York Vampire* would belabour him with abuse in its choicest American, and the *New York Doubter* would faintly and cautiously allow his production to be entitled to rank with Mr. Hookey Small's last adaptation of Planché's "Fortunio."

The monthlies and quarterlies are of much the same character as the periodicals of more frequent publication, having, as they may belong to the sensation or virtuous school respectively, the peculiarities of each, duly emphasized. The *North American Review* is a dignified and trustworthy exception. The *Eclectic* and *Littell's Living Age*, being entirely scissored from English magazines and reviews, are of course not American at all. The *Atlantic Monthly* is highly esteemed in some circles, but to my mind it is a sadly monotonous publication. It is said to be written by a knot of persons, all of whom live at or near Boston; and it assuredly has a triple-steeped flavour of New England. It says a great deal about nature and natural objects, which is all very well and wholesome in its way, but which continually gives you the idea that the writer is religiously convinced no one ever saw any beauty in a blade of grass or a daisy until he made the discovery. For my part, I believe that the *Atlantic* is the work of one man, who by dint of superhuman effort does up the whole magazine every month; that he spends his extra time on Boston Common, except when he goes to Mr. Kirk's church on Sundays; that he would like to kill every one who does not attend the same church; that he wears black "pants" of a morning, and talks through his nose; and, finally, that he is a lineal descendant of Cotton Mather.

TOUCHING DEAD PLAYS.

In those dismal tragedies with which our more remote ancestors were accustomed to entertain themselves, so many personages were slain, that I think the writers must have been frequently puzzled to know whom they would permit to live for the purpose of speaking the tag. This practice of extermination obtained in the very infancy of our drama. As far back as the time of James I., Thomas Goff concludes the opening act of his "Courageous Turk" by holding out to the audience any amount of theatrical bloodshed :—

> "If the first part, gentles, do like you well,
> The second part shall greater murthers tell."

In Southern's "Oronooka," of a more recent date, the stabbing at the finish is enough to satisfy the most sanguinary requirements of tragedy, nearly every one in the play-bill becoming a subject for the coroner. How did people sit out those lugubrious productions? With the patriotic resolve of acquainting myself with the heavy as well as the light literature of my country, and encouraged by a hope of disinterring something worthy the readers of *St. James's*, I recently went down into the funereal recesses of the book-world, where lie those dead plays. If allegory were in fashion, I might invent one to describe my adventures and encounters in that forgotten district; but as the favourite figure of Addison is now entirely monopolized by the pulpit, and as, moreover, in my service it might bring about the same effect it usually induces in its sacred situation, I must endeavour to record my experiences, or the result of them, in other and simpler terms.

One of the first principles of dramatic art is the observance of what is called the unities. The unity of emotion, for instance, your critic invariably insists upon; he does not spare Shakspere for sometimes neglecting it. He says it is wrong to have the gravediggers in "Hamlet;" they interrupt and break upon that state of mind which it is the proper business of the whole composition to produce; nor should the fool be in "Lear" for the same reason. Then Smellfungus pulls "Sophocles" from his pocket, and makes him the text of a sermon. Behold the true model of a tragedy! None of your jokes here, I warrant you! We are all serious as we ought to be. We wear masks, and tune our voices to a flageolet. We add to our stature by means of thick-soled sandals. We will have men to act the heroine's part, "because the voice and general carriage of women *would be inadequate to the energy of tragic heroines.** Such do the oracles speak. Now this unity of emotion, what is it? and who has ever succeeded in perfectly complying with it? Sophocles says

* Schlegel, "Dramatic Literature."

of Æschylus, that he did so by chance. But Homer* over and over again offends against this canon law. Schiller is often adduced as an instance of a great poet who persistently worked out his conceptions in the strictest adherence to the rules. It should, however, be remembered that Schiller did not write for the stage, that he repudiated the advantage of illusion, and constructed his lengthy "Wallenstein" and "Maria Stuart" more in the form of dramatic poems than of acting plays. Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, and Alfieri are also brought forward as examples of what may be done within the ring-fence of criticism. I candidly confess, the only unity of emotion personally felt by me on the perusal of the very magnificent writings of the four last-mentioned authors was similar to that which Sancho Panza invoked a blessing on the head of somebody for inventing. When I found Alexander alluding to Sporus as Monsieur, perhaps I shook a little with suppressed emotion, but it was not of the kind which the poet meant to excite. Athalie, Horace, and the Henriade, may be inscribed, "Warranted soporific." I don't deny that Greek tragedy was a very superior sort of exhibition, and that an Athenian, after listening to the charming story of "Medea," went home from the pit a bored but a better man; I simply protest against it furnishing a datum from which arbitrary statutes are framed in order to cramp and frustrate the designs of later English dramatic authors.

The importance given to those Greek tragedies arose from other causes than their own intrinsic merit. The theatre was to the Athenians what our churches are to us, and even more. Those speculations which we expend either in theological or philosophic studies were embodied in that wonderful chorus which sang the stern decrees of fate, the anger of deities offended, the happy fields of Elysium, and the grim nether place of punishment. The Hellenic temples were galleries for the display of art, of art in its most glorious shape, where every figure seemed instinct with a consciousness of incomparable repose, and yet appeared to wear a look of anxiety for utterance, "like the tongue vibrating on the balance of expression."† But within the theatre the poet was heard to speak, and his office was made an affair of state. No one could venture to offer a tragedy before the age of forty, and a sum of money was laid by in the treasury for the purpose of encouraging writers, which it was deemed sacrilege to appropriate to any other use. Eubulus passed a law, making it death to interfere with it; and Demosthenes, when urging the populace

* As in the episode of the "Beaten Beggarman" (spiritedly translated by Maginn). ΟΔΣ. I. 116. The learned writer, in a note preceding his version, brings forward the names of Dante, Ariosto, Calderon, and Camoens, as having shared with Homer in the supposed impropriety of making his hero take part in a comedy. He says to the commentators, "Did it ever strike these gentlemen, that what to the greatest minds of the world appeared not inconsistent with their splendid reveries, might not need defence or regard attack from the meanest minds in that same world, viz., the critics of *goût*?

† Winkelman.

to exhaust this fund in a war against Philip, approaches the subject with the nervous delicacy of an M.P. hinting at the reduction of a bishop's revenue. Even with this patronage, with the investiture of a religious importance, with everything attached to it which ought to have sustained, fostered, and caused it to fructify, Greek drama declined. Aristophanes laughed at it, and found a large audience to laugh heartily with him; so that the writers never had an entire period of triumph. Is it natural, after all, to eliminate nature from what ought to resemble nature? Aristotle says the end of tragedy ought to be the painting of the human heart. Is this to be done of one colour and with one brush? What combination of circumstances ever came about which consisted of an invariable melancholy? Is it not true that, whatever happens, the world goes round and things take their course, and we, beyond the circle of action, know as little of the tragedy or comedy happening as the engine-driver did of the murderer smashing the head of Mr. Briggs a few yards from him. I believe nothing heightens a horror more than the fact of the smiling ignorance and unconcern of those who are moving near it and joking near it, and yet without knowledge of it. This it is which makes a sudden death so terrible, and it is exactly the element of legitimate interest which some critics would deny a work of art. This is the fault they find in our best written novels, though with a strange inconsistency they are quite prepared to condemn an author for the contrary practice. If an incident is brought to a certain pitch by the aid of scenery,—if a dark night, for example, is selected for a murder, you are sensational; if you kill your man in the open day, the unities are offended. Strip Shakspere of those glorious faults, those congruities and incongruities, and the Swan will resemble a goose plucked before his time, and who, deprived of his chiefest glory and best feathers, shivers at the very sight of the water in which he previously disported to the admiration of the common. "Art never gives the rule to art;" and in every age we find genius by its own royal right and power asserting its claim to supremacy, and, as Wordsworth has it, "creating the taste by which it is to be enjoyed." The bard of Rydal himself, by walking in the clouds for the principal part of his "Excursion," has made that really fine poem as unreadable to thousands as the "Máhábharatá" of the Hindoos. If he had given it the vivacity of a more varied metre, or waked the dreamy metaphysics with a dash of humour, or stirred up his Pegasus out of the jog-trot by an occasional play of fancy, his work would have found an audience as fit, and not so few, as it enjoys at present. Why is Goethe's "Faust" so popular? Because Mephistopheles is not a dull, mooning devil, acting his devilment through sulphur and a soliloquy, but a lively, entertaining fiend, who says the deepest and wickedest things with an air of innocence more revolting than any posture or ceremony which made Walpurgis Night so hideous on the Brocken. Put him merely through his legendary paces, and he becomes a common bogy with a tail and a limp; but infringe

the unities, make him do everything to anger the critics, and you raise a demon, a double-brewed October impersonation of evil, far superior to the small-beer wizard of a mediocre eclecticism.

Numbers of plays have died of a species of apoplexy; they were choleric and passionate, and in their worst fits there was no getting at a vein of fun to open, no way of loosening the stiff cravat which choked up the pompous gobble-wobble with which they were trussed. Such were the "Orphan," the "Revenge," and James Thomson's "Tancred and Sigismunda." You are perpetually reminded of gods for whom you don't care a straw, by windy abstractions in whom it is impossible to conceive an interest. Even in their palmy days such compositions were only tolerated, and seemed always to require an apology. In "Barbarossa," a tragedy by the Rev. Dr. Browne, Garrick spoke the prologue in the character of a country bumpkin, and exerted his comic powers to the utmost to laugh the audience into crying for the play. So also Addison, in his introduction to "Phædra and Hippolytus," endeavours to shame the pit into patience. He accuses them of an increasing regard for opera, and of a dislike for what they were then about to get. He says,—

> "Calm and serene you indolently sit,
> And, from the dull fatigue of thinking free,
> *Hear the facetious fiddle's repartee.*"

(And, by the way, that last line is as neat a thing as ever he wrote.) In a prologue to Aaron Hill's version of "Merope" the boxes are told to keep their countenances; that, in a moral point of view, mirth is sinful, and under the present circumstances would be altogether criminal. The ladies are exhorted to sigh, "for sighs are love's breezes, and will fan the flame," which figure inevitably reminds one of a bellows. They are also to remember that the lover who has the bad taste to giggle at "Merope" will in all probability laugh the future wife of his bosom to scorn. Aaron then gives a final stroke of his rod:—

> "Nobly weep out, nor let an ill-timed blush
> Keep back the struggling tear that longs to gush."

Here we have a clear admission that these tragedies should be received in a disciplined frame of thought, and that allowances should be made for their inevitable dulness and weight. This distaste for them is as old as history. Livy expressly mentions that the Roman youth, wearied of the regular dramatic performances, got up amateur theatricals among themselves, full of licence and pleasantry; they were called Attellane Farces, from Attella, a town in Naples, where it was reported they originated. It would appear that these farces were never entirely written out, but were merely sketched in lines, the actors extemporizing the dialogue. Cicero alludes to them in a letter to his friend Papyrius Pætus, and also to the practice, then popular, of introducing a light piece after the more substantial fare. The position at which we have arrived concerning our high-flown tragedies I believe, in spite of all that has been written, to be a

natural and intelligent one. We are better judges of good literature than those who denied merit to Spenser, Shakspere, and Milton. We have thrown aside the yard measure by which poetry was formerly estimated, and our views upon criticism are widely extended by that intellectual free trade which has lately subsisted between us and the Continental authors—a commerce which has happily removed that conservative doggedness which caused us to believe implicitly in Dr. Blair and Mr. Addison.* It was perhaps a useful training for our language, that of passing through an era when more value was attached to words than to ideas, and when it was made to jingle, to alliterate, and go through those various other literary gymnastics to which its present strength and flexibility may be partly ascribed. The sonorous blank verse of Dryden, the stately polish of Atticus, even the turgid "Irene" of Johnson, did us no little service; the copies they set required an elaborate care and selection on the part of the imitators; if they had given an example of looseness, or facility, we should have been left a legacy of bad language as well as of bad tragedies. It may have been just as well they were practically unacquainted with Shakspere; he was ever so much beyond them, and they were in truth not fit for him. He was, moreover, too strong for them, and so they took him adulterated; Shakspere and Cibber, or Shakspere and water.† Had they any comprehension of the vintage they were growing, or spoiling, we might have been deluged with second-hand "Lears," "Othellos," and "Hamlets." We have confessed the great bard immutable, but it is doubtful whether the Restoration or Alexandrine rhymesters would have had either the acumen, humility, or discretion to make a similar acknowledgment. One thing is certain,—what was a tragic play to them would be death to us. "Sophonisba," as well as the "Red Ruffian," must retire. We will have Melpomene either with Shakspere or Comus. Not so long ago, the first figure an author cut in his biography was coming to London with a tragedy in his pocket. A manager used to mislay it, and offer him a drawer-full to select from. *Nous avons changé tout cela.* The solemn muse—the muse of the deep-voiced Siddons—is made to wear cap, bells, and motley, causing our sides to ache instead of our hearts. In the twinkling of an eye or the tootling of a piccolo, she will drop (alas, poor Robson!) from metre, metaphor, and declamation, to *argot;* from the feigned passion of Ristori, to the Bedfordian "How are you, my boy?" of an Adelphi farce.

Tragedy, then, is dead—dead as great Pan. When "Ion" was the

* I am aware that French was more commonly spoken in England during the reign of Charles II. than now, and that some of our best writers—Dryden amongst others—used French words often in preference to their own language. It would be more correct to say German for Continental authors. Among the worst of bad critics was Boileau, in whom both Addison and Blair believed.

† Davenant converted "The Taming of the Shrew" into a rascally piece of nonsense called "Sawney the Scot."

rage, and Macready in full swing, even then Talfourd despaired of a continued hearing; and his "Castalian," "Glencoe," and "Athenian Captive," where are they? "There is a want of passion in actors," he complained; and he added a compliment to Mr. Browning, which Mr. Browning has since more fully proved he deserved. "Ion" is a fine poem to read, but there is no life in it. To compare great things with very small, let the reader call to mind our mutual friend, "Claude Melnotte." Claude, you may recollect, is always *doing* something, taking the stage, rushing in, plunging out, and timing his business with a nice sense of melodramatic regularity; what he *says* is not unfrequently a kind of sentimental rubbish, but it is impossible not to feel a certain interest in his movements.* His talk is often to his strut, as the fiddles are to the ballet. Not so *Ion;* he is overflowing with poetry, and some of it of the best quality: his buskin creaks in metaphor; he discourses *Clemanthe* in an ethereal style of address, which puts the shade completely over those lamps we know so well. I prefer the alabaster chandeliers. I prefer Como to Elysium. I belong to that "miscellaneous audience" which is best conciliated by that sort of talent which reflects the average mind.† Think of a young gentleman describing a promenade with his intended after this manner:—

> "The stolen sweetness of these evening walks,
> When pansied turf was air to winged feet,
> And circling forests by ethereal touch
> Enchanted wore the livery of the sky,
> As if about to melt in golden light!"

Not a word about *Clemanthe!* I warrant you he moped by her side, or bored the poor creature with more of this wordy sweetstuff. You see, *Monsieur Melnotte* holds out the bait of a snug establishment, well provided and furnished with nightingales and everything else that the most romantic lady could desire, but *Ion* has not even the fictitious reversion of a *château en Espagne* to offer *Miss Clemanthe.* There are very hard lines in Sergeant Talfourd's work, lines only to be understood by close application and a damp towel round the forehead. His hero is fenced away from all human interest by a palisade of unities, and to the general public will ever remain a fine conception, which, from a want of greater power in the author, lacks that positiveness and reality which alone can make a drama endurable upon the stage.

If a *post-mortem* examination of many of our defunct tragedies were here permissible, it would not be difficult to show how they carried the seeds of destruction within themselves. Those who run may read this,— that literature follows the law of everything else; and that varieties of it

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* As the "Tatler" writes of the "Earl of Essex," a tragedy long since dead and consigned, "the incidents are laid so happily, that the spectator makes the play or himself, *by the force which the circumstance has on his imagination.*—Vol. I., No. 14.

† De Quincey.

increase and multiply with the facilities for its production. The primitive passions of revenge, love, and hatred, went into tragedy because there was no other medium for display or expression afforded them; but by the novel an entire continent, as it were, was thrown open to those emotions, the effect of which scope was, that they took a wider field, and broke those artificial bounds of restraint that would confine them within the old limits. Sensations are more complex affairs than appear at first sight. There are fifty times as many ways now of making people laugh or cry as there was three hundred years ago. Our emotional culture has been improved since then by various tentative processes in every literary department. We have increased our sensational experiences, just as we have increased our knowledge in science. We have gone into secret places, and found out entirely new monsters. But we have lost that credulity, concentration, and simplicity, which could keep our ancestors awake during one of Dr. Young's instructive tragedies; and we believe that fear, surprise, terror, and pathos, find a more forcible exposition in three volumes than in five acts. It is not so apparent, however, that in neglecting thorough English comedy we are following a better light. Of course we should not contemplate a return to the boorish trash of the ante-Elizabethan date. Except the names, how few will you find acquainted with Skelton, Bale, Heywood, "Royster Doyster," Peele, Kyd, Marlow, Nash, Greene, Dekker, Webster, Randolph, and Middleton! yet Mr. Halliwell knows all about them, and could tell you their several histories. Probably hundreds of well-read people have never heard of the once famous Dick Tarleton, who, as old Fuller has it, could "undumpish" Queen Bess at pleasure. He was indeed a sorry jester, though his jokes are reverentially chronicled by writers of the period. I recently came across a bundle of them connected with some former transactions of the Shaksperian Society, but would not venture to retail them here. "On being asked what countrie-man the divell was, Tarleton replied he was a Spaniard, which mightily amused the people. . . It would have been better for Mr. Tarleton's reputation, that no industrious antiquarian had turned up this exhausting specimen of humour; for such a touch of the clown's quality goes far with us to demolish his claim to a character for any more." "Pity it is," writes Cibber, "that the momentary beauties flowing from an harmonious elocution cannot, like the graces of poetry, be their own record; that the animated graces of the player can live no longer than the instant breath or motion can present them, or at best can but faintly glimmer through the memory of a few surviving spectators." This is a very beautiful sentence, and true when applied to Betterton, or to Garrick; but there are many of those histrionic lights which would certainly be extinguished if a little air were let in upon them, and who may be said to resemble those soap-bubbles or wind-bags of history, which are made so often to vanish at the point of the pen. The comedies of the Restoration have been denounced by Macaulay with

a fierceness quite beyond his usual manner. It is amusing to note how seriously he goes to disprove one of Lamb's sportive apologies for them. Yet, while condemning their immorality, he puts forward an argument to this length in their favour, that they ought not to be altogether shelved.* He furthermore adds, that young gentlemen versed in the intrigues of Jupiter, and whose business it is to know something of Juvenal and the Platonic dialogues, are not likely to learn anything new from Wycherly, Congreve, or Vanbrugh. We live, indeed, in an age (theoretically) the purest that ever has been; and there is no chance of the revival of the plays in which pretty Nelly took such frequent part. But we might imitate one feature of them with considerable advantage,—the smartness of the dialogue.† Our modern playwrights work upon a theory which possibly may be sound, but which omits to give to our language that

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* "We cannot wish that any work or class of works which has exercised a great influence on the human mind, and which illustrates the character of an important epoch in letters, politics, and morals, should disappear from the world." —*Essay, Leigh Hunt.*

† The following extract from the "London Assurance" of Dion Boucicault is a capital specimen of the Congrevian manner:—

"*Littleton.* Is she rich?

Roe. She is fair.

Lit. Possibly—a thing to be admired in a *danseuse* or a friend's wife; but in the matrimonial stocks done on our Western Change, the fairest hue we recognize is yellow.

Roe. Does virtue go for nothing?

Lit. Oh no! Character is indispensable to servant-maids, but virtue as a word is obsolete; we have indeed a French one like it, *vertu;* yes—ladies of *vertu* might signify articles of rarity.

Roe. Does the lexicon of fashion then abjure the sense?

Lit. Certainly not; virtue signifies the strength in a bottle of salts.

Roe. And vice?

Lit. A fault in horses.

Roe. And religion?

Lit. A pew at St. George's.

Roe. So it would appear that beauty is invested in bank stock, grace consolidated with the landed interests, while speculation fluctuates with the three and a half per cents.

Lit. Exactly; gold is the Medean bath of youth, possessing also a magnetic attraction for every cardinal virtue, while all the plagues of Egypt are shut up in one English word, and that is *poverty;* the exhibition of which, like that of the Gorgon's head, turns the hearts of your dearest friends to stone.

Roe. Can May Fair legislation so repeal the laws of nature? By Jove! the West End at last *will cut the sun because it rises in the east, and live by waxlight.*

Lit. You perhaps may never see the world as I do, Charles, because I am poor; but a rich man's view of life is bounded by his parasites; he feels but through his glove, and thinks all things are soft.

Roe. Then I am lost, for my angel is penniless.

Lit. Right. Angels are the only things who can be poor and lovely; but to

epigrammatic pungency and vigour which their predecessors succeeded in imparting. Mr. Tom Taylor, for instance, who has written a few excellent dramas, often makes his characters speak not only naturally, but prosily. In Congreve, Colley Cibber, and Sheridan, we find the several personages exchanging quips, *bons mots*, and repartees, in a give-and-take, *clink-clank* sort of fashion, resembling the regular clash of the broadswords during some terrific combat at a transpontine theatre. You may extract whole pages of capital things in this way from Congreve:—

"*Mirabel.*—Think of you! To think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation! . . A fellow that lives in a windmill has not a more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man that is lodged in a woman. There is no point of the compass to which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turned; and by one as well as another; for motion, not method, is their occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play the fool by the force of instinct. Oh, here comes," &c., &c.

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"*Mirabel.*—Beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms. Your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet who after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it, for that reflects our praises rather than your face."—"*Way of the World*," act ii.

This dexterous skill in word-fence and engaging variety of illustration dropped off in the days of easy writing. Goldsmith, in "She Stoops to Conquer" and the "Good-natured Man," rather seeks to develop the moving figures and the action, than to flourish rhetorical antitheses about the ears of the audience. There are few better plays than "Masks and Faces," which seems constructed upon this latter plan. When *Triplet* calls out (I quote from memory), "Let me be serious and write my comedy," one is immediately reminded of the humour of the "Spectator" and the "Vicar of Wakefield." *Peg Woffington* is admirable. She is, indeed, a Peg lovelier than the visions of Captain Cuttle, who, if I mistake not, frequently hung a tribute of musical praise upon an apocryphal nymph of that romantic name. She it was who first assumed upon the stage those manlier habiliments whose adoption by her sex had been before confined to an occasional domestic usurpation. Peg, the pioneer of leg-pieces—Peg, the originator of fascinating leg-a-logues—Peg, to whom we owe pants, shorts, tights, and female tigers' jockeys, middies,

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marry them before you have given the worshipful company of mamma-brokers a chance, is against all rule.

Roe. Would you have me go on parade at Hyde Park, and fall in with the Rotten Row dawdles, or the light lavender apathetics? . . .

Lit. Hollo!

Roe. Marry a thing whose heart has been so cured by London smoke, that she keeps her feelings in it, like dried botany between the leaves of an album? . . .

Lit. The devil!

Roe. Whose mind is bounded by her bonnet," &c., &c.

and officers—Peg, who has enlarged the sphere of woman's mission, in a theatrical point of view, far beyond that ever contemplated by the most enthusiastic disciple of Miss Martineau, what a stir she did make in her time! I am afraid that very spice of wickedness rendered her more interesting than if she had been thoroughly proper. On Thursday, the 11th of August last, a letter of hers was auctioned, fetching nearly twice the sum given for the copyright of "Paradise Lost." It was directed, "For Master Thomas Robinson, at Goodwood, in Sussex." It told, I understand, of her triumphs in Sir Harry Wildair. It was also understood to settle a disputed point, and to silence the scoffers who had reported she was unable to write. Here is a neat verse cotemporaneous with the fascinating Miss Sir Harry:—

"Her charms resistless conquer all,
Both sexes vanquish'd lie;
For who to *Polly** scorn'd to fall,
By Wildair vanquish'd die."

It was rumoured that Mr. Burke was introduced to the Prime Minister, the Duke of Newcastle, by Mistress Woffington. Do not your handsome improprieties come in for a large share of fame after all? We hear of Aspasia as often as of Plato, and left-handed queans fill up as much space in history, and make much more noise in it than the virtuous consorts of sovereigns. Think of the author of the sublime and beautiful, and the political chief of the first country in Europe, dating their acquaintance from the *soirée* of Madame Violante's pupil! Jane Shore meets with an immense lot of blank verse sentiment in our English plays. This charity is very affecting, and would afford ample verge and scope for the speculations of a philosopher or a philanthropist. It would be a most suitable task for the critical German mind to summon the idea of a Thespian horsebreaker from the depths of his moral consciousness and his meerschaum. To revert, for a moment, to Congreve. Macaulay accuses him of being ashamed of his reputation, which he intimates he would have willingly sacrificed for the sake of being thought a fine gentleman. A fair excuse may be offered for this disposition. Congreve was brought up with all the pride and prejudices of a cavalier. In the old Staffordshire country house, where his childhood was passed, it is more than probable that the only person who could write and spell correctly was the chaplain; and he, poor man, was not treated either with the deference or respect that would render his position or accomplishments desirable. We learn that his reverence nailed up the peaches, saw after the farmyard, went upon errands, and was butt for the stupid and coarse jokes of the time. He was, indeed, permitted to dine with the family, and say grace in full canonicals; but his appearance at table was evidently for the purpose of adding to the pomp of the feast, which was set off by his bands and

* *Polly*, I presume, of the "Beggars' Opera."

sleeves, as by the liveries of the butler and the other servitors. He was expected to fill himself with such solid and economical food as corn-beef and cabbage, while the rest of the company were helped to high venison and tender mutton. He generally married a waiting-woman, and, in contracting this alliance, the popular inference was, that he was guided more by the wishes of his patron than was conducive to even an ordinary consideration of the character of his future wife. Such, most likely, was the venerable aspect of learning first presented to young Congreve. He was afterwards at school at Kilkenny, and in Dublin. At the latter place he might have observed that the best scholars swept out the rooms, and waited behind the chairs of the more opulent students. When he came to eat his dinners at the Middle Temple, he found it necessary rather to conceal what he knew than to acquire any fresh learning. He did not warm to Coke; and his imagination was much too brisk to be satisfied with the slowness of conveyancing. His connections and introductions were excellent. He thought poets were needy fellows (as, indeed, they generally were), who would write you a ream of praise for your buying a few copies of their trash.* He sought those agreeable successes of society for which a winning address, a handsome face, great wit, and a good figure eminently qualified him. But he had that within him which must out. He would not be a mere Cæsar among the ladies. His talent would not exhaust itself in peeping into sedan chairs, rapping out pretty oaths, acting Drawcansir, or intriguing with married women. He was impelled, as it were, in spite of himself to write plays; and plays he wrote accordingly. I believe it was not so much his fault that he was ashamed of having done so, but simply the fault of the age which he was not above, and which influenced him to think one way, while we would have him think another. Just as a man who has been educated for a liberal profession shrinks from undertaking the honourable but lower engagements of commerce, Congreve shrank from avowing his connection with letters. To his intimate friends such an association conjured up Grub Street and seediness, everything that was *de trop,* and bad style. It required almost as great an effort on his part to join the ranks of penmen, as it would for a modern barrister to go behind a counter, and retail the books which he had before expounded. We should judge of him with a charitable regard to the state of society under which he lived. Voltaire, on one occasion, administered a severe rebuke to him. He was one of the very first Englishmen whom the author of the "Philosophical Dictionary" visited. Congreve, in an early part of their conversation, reminded Voltaire that he desired to be considered a gentleman who only wrote for his own entertainment. "Had you been so unfortunate as to be nothing more than a gentleman," replied Voltaire, "I should not have given myself the trouble to

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* "You're undone, sir, you're ruined; you won't have a friend left if you turn poet."—*Jeremy,* in Congreve's "Love for Love," act i., scene 1.

wait on you." * This did not come so well from a personage who bought the place of bedchamber attendant in the French Court, in order to curry favour with the Pompadour, and who scrambled for the dirty ribbons and orders of Mr. Carlyle's hero, with an eagerness only to be measured by his insatiable peevishness and vanity.

The "Refusal" of Colley Cibber was once a prime favourite. It bore a second title, "The Ladies' Philosophy," which seems to reflect a sneer upon the first. This comedy discloses some of the domestic influences of the South Sea Bubble,—perhaps the most curious chapter in the commercial history of London. It treats of love, shares, and Platonism; the three knocking each other aside in the same game like the wooden balls in a match of croquêt. It is strange that the main drift should be identical with the plan of Mr. Tennyson's "Princess." Substitute the clever banter of Mr. Tennyson for the pungent satire of Cibber; and though very different, the characters of the two writers, in other respects, here they have a point of contact, from having both turned to the same subject. In both we have a lady superior to the general weakness of her sex, and who endeavours to find in learning the satisfaction she was born to derive from contributing to the furniture of a nursery. Both go in, as the Yankees say, for the anti-matrimonial platform. In Cibber, as in Tennyson, of course the fair Miss Ann Thropist does not succeed in expelling nature with her philosophical pitchfork. She stuffs her head with speeches upon the delights of a merely spiritual sympathy; she protects her position with a stockade of railings against the coming man; her whole time is spent embroidering a banner of "No surrender;" and yet at the very first sound of his voice the citadel falls as the fortifications of Jericho did at the blare of the trumpets, and the suitor walks into his mistress's affections with a facility which ludicrously contrasts with her mighty display of defiance. Love laughs not only at locksmiths, but at social science; and to my mind "violet-hooded doctors" should not wear blue stockings until the prospect of a husband is tinged with the same melancholy complexion. The "Beaux Stratagem" is a standard, but Farquar profited little by its success. Praise and pudding came too late. Farquar was an actor as well as an author, but must have been rather indifferent in the former capacity, as we find him retained by Wilks, the manager of Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, at the low salary of twenty shillings a week. He was scarce thirty when he died. His constitution was always delicate and sickly; but, like Rabelais, who could joke at the hiccough killing him, or like Hood, who punned when his lungs were racked with pain, Farquar never gave in to his sufferings. During the rehearsal of the "Beaux Stratagem," Mrs. Oldfield complained he had dealt improperly with the character of Mrs. Sullen, in making her over to Archer without a proper divorce. "I will, if she pleases, solve that im-

* Connoisseur.

mediately," said Farquar, "by getting a real divorce, marrying her myself, and giving her my hand that she shall be a real widow in less than a fortnight." His quill might truly have written the words which Thackeray puts into the slit of his pen, when the pen tells a tale of its master :—

> "I've help'd him to pen many a line for bread,
> To joke with sorrow aching in his head,
> And make your laughter when his own heart bled."

There is something exceedingly touching in the few lines which Farquar addressed to Wilks (who was his true friend, and used to loan him money), and which were found among the papers of Yorick, when Yorick could no longer jeer at the paint on my lady's cheek :—

> "DEAR BOB,—I have not anything to leave thee to perpetuate my memory but two helpless girls ; look upon them sometimes, and think of him that was to the last moment of his life thine,— GEORGE FARQUAR."

There is a wide gap between Congreve Cibber and Cumberland. Cumberland was to Congreve as Witwould to Truewit. Still "The Brothers" was once almost as popular as our Corsican fraternity, which even royalty has bespoke for its especial delectation. Cumberland was a man who mistook his vocation, and yet struggled bravely against the consequences of the blunder with an industry that was like genius. He appears to have conscientiously studied every situation and turn of phrase by which a smile could be raised ; and yet, when he applied his preparations for the purpose, you heard the creak of the machinery as you did in those heavy jokes of which the great lexicographer was laboriously delivered. He knew nothing of that art which hides the endeavour, nor was he sufficiently happy in his exertions to compensate the audience for the pain they experienced in reflecting upon the difficulties he had to contend with. The rope-dancer must smile and shake his toe in the very face of death ; the singer must reach that C in alt which has taken years to acquire, without looking distressed ; and the writer must play upon our passions not only with a sufficient dexterity, but with an accomplished ease, that shall give us confidence in the performer, and remove all suspicion of failure from the exhibition. Look at a wretched pavior, the breath leaving his body at every "hech!" and you will feel out of wind for mere sympathy. I experienced something of this kind the other day, not from a pavior, but on reading a definition of poetry by a Scotch professor. He was laying down the literary law instead of macadam ; but the "hech" of his rammer is too good to lose, so here it is :—"Poetry . . . is a well-jointed structure of intelligent discourse on the harmoniously elaborated procession of significant sounds." Addison's "Drummer" contrasts most favourably with the comedies of Cumberland. I wonder it does not occur to some of our managers to revive the spirited tattoo of Mr. Fantome. The "Drummer" is a very ingenious production ; and the author follows the rule of his own "Spectator," making the

humour show in what he says, rather than in his manner of saying it. A clever man may support a reputation for wit by sinking the verisimilitude and local colouring of the characters in a play, making them all consistent with his own manner and style of writing, but inconsistent with the habit of speech and conduct which would naturally attach to them if they were in the real position of the personages whom they are intended to represent. Congreve is certainly open to this charge, so is Sheridan. But, on the other hand, it is only writers with the most delicate imaginations who can seize upon those subtle points of effect in the individual without weakening the sketch by the addition of peculiarities which merely distract, though they may amuse; and the fault of the author who would be humorous without the aid of verbal or rhetorical art is much more unbearable than the incongruities of the author who strives to put fun into everybody's mouth, to the risk of the plot; for in the one case you may fall asleep before the drama has begun to interest, in the other you are at least kept awake until finally disappointed. I would place the "Drummer" second only to "She Stoops to Conquer." It is throughout pervaded by that winning half-smile, so much more agreeable than the sneer or the horse-laugh. It has all the ease of art, and all the art of ease. So close are the parts in relation to each other, so well jointed is the structure, that a sample would give but a poor idea of the whole. Addison sets his brave face against the practice of Wycherly and Vanbrugh, in whose dramas that bird, "the wandering voice," was hung up and caged in as regular and domestic a fashion as if the mocking fowl were an innocent canary. To those gentlemen every husband presented the appearance of Herne the Hunter. He is made to give a zest to the sport of the merry wives of London. He is put out of sight in a most contemptible way, like Falstaff hid in the clothes-basket. He is even made to receive his indignities comically, in the manner of Sir John Brute, who certainly does not answer Walpole's description of Selwyn, in being *un bête inspiré*. He is commonly spoken of in a style of address which reminds one of the doggrel concerning the mythological animal who engages the lion by putting out his tongue at the king of the forest from behind the safe rampart of the British crown :—

> "Go tell that ass that wears a horn,
> And calls himself a unicorn."

Addison turned from this picture with disgust (I don't mean that of the regalia), and drew one with his own chaste, clever pencil, in which he as usual avails himself of every opportunity to enlist his finest wit in the service of religion and of morals. Tinsel, the atheist and free-thinker—Tinsel, who is much too fashionable and town-bred to believe in church, faints at the drumming of the spectre, and begs his life, with a ludicrous abjectness, upon his knees on the entrance of the creature. That mission

which the "Spectator" ever had before him of cleansing our literature from the wine-stains of a reckless age, he has not forgotten on an occasion when it would have considerably helped his popularity to do so; and be it ever said to his credit, that at a time when such a feat was considered impossible, he wrote a comedy so modest, that, were it put into the pages of this periodical, not a single line would require an alteration or an excuse. Arthur Murphy's name is now seldom even written, and yet he was the best translator of Tacitus into our language, was pronounced by Johnson* to be only after the very first of dramatists, was the companion of Burke, who could quote most of his "Apprentice," and is chronicled in Fanny Burney's gossiping diary as a great man, not only at the play-houses, but at the tea-parties. The story is told that Murphy had an uncle, whose detestation for literature was only equalled by his admiration for Cocker's arithmetic. He liked Murphy, and tried to persuade him to his own plodding pursuits, but without success. On his death the nephew, whose circumstances necessitated the acknowledgment of another and a different uncle, expected a legacy from the deceased relative, which might enable him to cut the acquaintance of him who required all his favours to be repaid with interest; but, alas! his name was not even mentioned in the will. "I then bethought me of the advice Nunks had frequently given me," said Murphy, relating the anecdote, "and stuck him into the 'Apprentice' as *Wingate;* and as he turned out to be the most popularly disagreeable character in the whole comedy, I found he was of more value dead than alive, and of more assistance in extricating me from my difficulties." I have left myself but little space to speak of Colman, who, by-the-bye, made his first appearance in print in a *St. James's Magazine,* addressing a few schoolboy verses to Lord Pulteney. His "Ways and Means" is smart, careless, and improbable; and the same description will apply to everything he wrote. Macklin was a better observer, and could hit with great directness. "Love à la Mode," and the "Man of the World," do not quite belong to the histrionic Kensal Green, where I have been to some extent acting the part of Old Mortality. They are associated with Kemble and Cooke (whose *Archy MacSarcasm* took famously), and the elder Kean. Macklin was on the stage himself, and at sixty retired, and reappeared before the public as proprietor of a coffee-house in the Piazza, Covent Garden. Here he established a sporting club known as the "British Inquisition." This was a part of the regular programme:—

"The doors will be opened at five, and the lecture will begin precisely at seven o'clock, every Monday and Friday evening. Ladies will be admitted. Price one shilling each person. The first lecture will be on 'Hamlet.'

"N.B.—The question to be debated after this day's lecture will be, 'Whether

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* "I doubt much whether we have anything superior to Arthur."—*Johnson,* Boswell's "Life."

the people of Great Britain have profited by their intercourse with, or their imitation of, the French nation.'

"N.B.—This evening the public subscription card-room will be opened. Subscriptions taken by Mr. Macklin."

At this queer entertainment a young gentleman might be seen who afterwards lived to hear other applause than that of the idle audience who greeted his round sentences at the "British Inquisition." It was here Mr. Burke gave his maiden speech, and here Alexander Wedderburne, afterwards Lord Chancellor, figured among the barristerlings, the embryo Ciceros of the Temple. The "Inquisition" eventually went into that court from whence it is necessary to return with a certificate; and Macklin stood upon the boards once more, and, between *Shylock* and *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant*, supported himself respectably until he reached the patriarchal age of ninety. I have a portrait of him before me now, and in the burly frame, square, massive forehead, and full mouth, there is a distinct indication of the breadth, vigour, and sensibility which he is said to have given his impersonations.

So much for the dead plays. I have only examined a corner of the ground, and wiped off the dust from a few of the tombstones. I feel as if I really had been walking in a churchyard. Nothing is so ghastly as your departed vanities; here lie the rouge pots, ruffles, doublets, farthingales, sword knots, wigs, and collars; here the—you know what—under the long rank grass. It would be pleasant to think those dead plays only slumbered, and could be waked once more like the dreaming beauty at the touch of her lover's lips. But nobody cares enough for them to do as the prince did to his ladye. Old things give way for the new, and we have our own favourites. We would no more exchange them for those departed than we would exchange our telegraphs, paper collars, railways, cattle food, hair-cutting by machinery, *Saturday Review*, chloroform, the rope-trick, and crinolines, for highwaymen, stage-coaches, witchcraft, the cart's tail, the pillory, and the women-flogging of merrie England some hundreds of years ago. Dear me! how the great lexicographer would see-saw if one could take him to the pit of that theatre to which the diminutive epithet is no longer applicable, and put him directly in the stare of Lord Dundreary's eye-glass! Or think of him looking at Davy (translated from the French) doing drunk and sober, and like enough to Davy but for his height! But, above all, picture him touching the lamp-posts along the Strand, and, attracted by a wonderful light, turning into our charming little bandbox, where the people are never wearied of laughing. He is a fish out of water there. Every pun gives him a probe, the Bengal fire scarcely expresses the heat of his indignation; and the pink legs, blushing through the clouds of muslin, have the same effect upon him as a red handkerchief upon the temper of a bull. Suddenly the music takes a dying fall, and the splendours of modern scene-painting burst upon his astonished gaze. Giant ferns spring from

the ground, wavering under the luxurious beauties *posed* so charmingly on those delicate couches. Ten feet away the distant mountains are alight with the pale gleams of the moon, while a lake of water-lilies serves to hide a surprising device presently disclosed. Anon the music swells to the voluptuous measure of a stage waltz, the quivering fronds stoop lingeringly with their delicious burdens, the flowers open their white lips, and softly as a perfume the nymphs creep out, and wave and toss their gleaming arms, swinging their lithe forms into motions which become words to the rapturous hinting of the orchestra. I tap the doctoron the shoulder:—

"Well, doctor, how do you like that?"

"Like it, SIR! The 'Guadia Vana,' the preposterous ignorance of your benighted——" Here I interrupt the Rambler with a favourite quotation of mine, which I discharge upon all critics and pundits who don't enjoy a burlesque or a pantomime as I do myself:—"*Dieu vous fasse la grace de devenir moins savant.*"

W. BARRY.

THE COUNTESS OF ALBANY.

We doubt very much whether the history of the Countess of Albany, or even her name, is generally known to the great mass of the reading public, though she was so closely connected with the last scion of the royal House of the Stuarts. She was the wife of the Pretender, who, after his well-known adventures and failure in 1745, in the attempted recovery of the British Crown, took up his residence in Paris, where he was received with great distinction, both by the Court party as well as by the population in general. But he was not allowed to remain for any considerable time undisturbed in his place of retirement. His expulsion from the French territory was made one of the conditions of the treaty of peace in 1748, concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle. Charles Edward positively refused to leave the country, and much interest in his behalf was made with the Government, both by the Dauphin and other members of the Royal Family, to allow him to remain. But the interference was of no avail; the administration proved inexorable. The Pretender was seized in the Opera House on the 11th of December, 1748, conveyed in the first instance to Vincennes, and from thence was sent out of the country. He wandered about the Continent for some time, and it is supposed that he secretly visited London in the year 1750. When subsequently allowed to return again to France, Charles Edward was so dispirited and depressed by his wanderings and misfortunes, that he fell into the habit of intemperance, of which mention is made in one of the despatches of the British ambassador Stanley, who, writing from Paris in 1761, states that the Pretender was given to drinking to such an excess as to be often drunk in the morning, and carried senseless to his chamber by his attendants.

By the death of his father in 1766 he became titular King of England, but the elevation to the fictitious dignity did in no wise cure him of his inveterate propensity to intoxication; and the French Government, seemingly ashamed of their royal guest, drove him in 1770 once more from their soil. In the following year, however, it suited the policy of the French ministry—as a kind of demonstration or menace against England—to recall the Pretender to the capital of France, and he was informed by the Duke of Fitzjames, on behalf of the French Court, that if he would consent to be married to a wife chosen for him, a pension of 240,000 francs would be settled upon him. Charles Edward made no objection to the proposal, and the lady thus chosen was Louise, the daughter of the Prince of Stolberg-Gedern, a member of one of the most ancient and distinguished German families, raised to the princely rank in the person of his father. Her mother, too, was of a most noble family, of the illustrious House of Horn, maternally allied to the Bruces of Scotland and to other distinguished families, both in France and in the Low Countries.

The Princess Louise, born September 20th, 1752, lost her father, a general in the Austrian service, when she was in her sixth year. Her widowed mother received a pension from the Empress Maria Theresa, and she was placed in the educational establishment for young ladies of the highest rank of nobility, at Mons, in the Austrian Netherlands. Here she remained until her twentieth year, when she was married to Charles Edward, who was then fifty-two years of age.

The marriage was celebrated at Macerata, in the private chapel of Cardinal Marefoschi's palace, on the 17th of April, 1772, that day being Good Friday—a circumstance which elicited, some years after, the remark from Louise, the Countess of Albany, that her marriage proved what a marriage on such a day—" a day of Christendom's lamentation"—might have been expected to turn out. The newly married couple arrived, five days after their marriage, at Rome, where they were received with something like royal honours, though, on the part of the Papal Court, no formal notice was taken of the Pretender's announcement to Cardinal Pallavicini, the Secretary of State, of the arrival of the King and Queen of England. The title, however, under which the royal pair was better known was that of the Count and Countess of Albany. The Countess is described as a woman of most dazzling beauty, of great powers of conversation, and as turning everybody's head. Their residence in Rome proving disagreeable, owing to their equivocal position, they retired early in the year 1773 to Sienna, and in October of the following year they took up their abode in Florence. Soon after his arrival in that city, Charles Edward's health gave way, he was seized with symptoms of dropsy, his old habits of intemperance had gained a greater ascendency, and he was almost confined to his apartment. He required the Countess, whether from helplessness or from jealousy, to be in constant attendance upon him, an office which she fulfilled with every mark of propriety and attention.

It was at this period, in the autumn of 1777, that the poet Alfieri arrived in Florence. It were beside our present purpose to draw a biographical sketch of this renowned tragic writer, beyond observing that he was a Piedmontese by birth, of a noble family, of independent fortune, and of a most impressionable temperament. He set out on his travels when he was but seventeen years of age, and found himself very soon engaged in amatory adventures. In Holland he fell in love with a young married woman, who appeared not altogether insensible to the advances of the youthful Italian; but the suspicions of the husband being awakened, and all further intercourse broken off, the poet became so very much affected, that it was necessary to bleed him; and he was with difficulty restrained from tearing off the bandages and wilfully bleeding to death. In England a somewhat similar adventure was attended with graver circumstances. Alfieri had fallen in love with the wife of a peer, who returned his passion and admitted him into her house. The intrigue was discovered to the husband, who challenged the poet; they fought in the

Green Park; Alfieri, being ignorant of the use of arms, was speedily wounded in the arm. His antagonist, declaring himself satisfied, assured the poet that he would no longer stand in his way of free access to the lady, as he intended to be speedily divorced from her. The ardent lover, as may be supposed, made no delay in offering his hand to the object of his passion. But on the third day after the duel, the lady frankly told him that, previously to their acquaintance, she had bestowed her favour on a groom still in her husband's service, and that this man, in a fit of jealousy, had betrayed both intrigues to her lord. Alfieri, though at first greatly staggered, mortified, and full of resentment—and the more so as the whole affair, the duel, the intrigues, appeared in the newspapers,—was nevertheless so full of infatuation that he clung to his paramour, and travelled about with her for some time. He was made the defendant in the subsequent proceedings for a divorce; and we may here mention—considering the lapse of time—the names of the parties. The peer was Lord Ligonier, and his frail partner Penelope, daughter of George Lord Rivers.

We know not the precise period at which Alfieri parted from his paramour, but we know that not very long after his arrival in Florence he became acquainted, through the agency of a friend, with the young and fair Countess of Albany. He states, that he had not gone many times to see her before he felt himself, as it were, unconsciously *caught*, and agitated by a passion of the mind to which he had heretofore been a stranger, and the more profound and lasting in proportion as it was less impetuous and fervent. "Such was the flame," he says, "which little by little got the upper hand of my every thought and feeling, and will never be extinguished in me but with my life."

It can hardly be questioned that the Countess reciprocated Alfieri's passionate feelings, and allowed him to take an active part in her separation from her husband. This occurred in the month of December, 1780. It was the custom of the Pretender, on St. Andrew's day, to indulge to the greatest excess in drinking; and in a fit of intoxication he committed a most brutal assault on his wife, beating her at night and in bed, and attempting to strangle her. Making her case known to the Grand Duke, she was advised by the Tuscan Court, in concurrence with the opinion of the Pretender's own brother, Cardinal York, that she should throw off her worthless husband for ever, and retire into a convent. Alfieri assisted in her removal; and Charles Edward declared that he would give a thousand zechins to anybody who would kill the gentleman who assisted his wife on that occasion. Alfieri, in referring to the Countess's removal, observes, "Suffice it to say that I saved my lady from the tyranny of an irrational and constantly drunken master, without her honour being in any way whatever compromised, nor the proprieties in the least transgressed." There are, however, some historical writers who cast considerable doubt on the purity of their intercourse from the beginning. The present Lord

Stanhope, in his "History of England from the Peace of Utrecht," remarks, "The Count and Countess of Albany lived together during several years at Florence, a harsh husband and a faithless wife; until at length in 1780, weary of restraint, she eloped with her lover Alfieri." We doubt whether this allegation is borne out by facts; for her removal to the convent, under the immediate protection of the Grand Duchess, can hardly be designated an elopement; and her subsequent retirement to Rome was in accordance with the advice of her brother-in-law the Cardinal, and under the sanction of the papal Nuncio. Her removal to Rome took place at the end of December, 1780; and we are told by an historian of the period, that she was treated with the greatest respect by Cardinal York, who frequently invited her to his residence at Frascati.

Alfieri did not immediately follow the object of his passion to Rome; he tarried for a while—perhaps to save appearances—at Florence, but after a short interval he set out for Naples, passing through the Eternal City on his way. He remained but a few days in Rome, during which he contrived to have a brief interview with the Countess, and of which he speaks in these terms,—"I saw her a prisoner behind a grating: less vexed, however, than I had seen her at Florence, but for other reasons I did not find her less unhappy. We were completely separated, and who could say for how long we were so?"

Alfieri's restless spirit did not allow him to remain for any length of time at Naples; he speedily found his way back to Rome, and passed most of his evenings with the Countess, and with whom he was occasionally seen in public. This extreme intimacy of the two parties, "although," as Alfieri assures us, "it did not exceed the bounds of honour," created the greatest scandal in Roman society—otherwise not very fastidious in regard to such matters; and the Pretender, aroused from his fits of drunkenness to a sense of his supposed dishonour, with the assistance of his brother the Cardinal, laid his grievance before the Pope, by whose order Alfieri was commanded to leave Rome within fifteen days. In pursuance of such order the poet left the city for Sienna, on the 4th of March, 1783, declaring that he was at his departure "like one stupid and deprived of sense; leaving his only love, books, town, peace, and his very self in Rome." During his separation, however, he carried on a steady and regular correspondence with the Countess, who reciprocated all his tender effusions. His banishment from Rome terminated in the summer of 1784, when, through the mediation of the King of Sweden, it was arranged that a formal separation should take place between the Countess and her besotted husband. Accordingly, a legal instrument was executed, signed by herself, Charles Edward, the Cardinal, and attested by the Pope; in conformity to which she relinquished her pin-money as a return for an amicable divorce *à mensa et thoro*, and to be at perfect liberty to select her own place of residence for the future.

Nor was it long before the Countess made the fullest use of her newly

acquired freedom; she met Alfieri at Colmar, in Alsace, where they passed two months together. At the end of this period, and as winter was approaching, she returned to Italy, taking up her abode at Bologna; while Alfieri remained for a time at Pisa, not being allowed to enter the papal territory. In the ensuing summer they met again at Colmar, from which place, after a brief sojourn, she removed to Paris, whence in the autumn of 1786 she returned to Colmar, accompanied by Alfieri.

Shortly after his separation from his wife in July, 1784, Charles Edward, whether to annoy the Countess or from a feeling of remorse, publicly acknowledged his natural daughter by Miss Walkingshaw, sending for her from the convent in which she was brought up, installing her as mistress of his family, and conferring upon her the title of Duchess of Albany. Her society, however, tended in no degree to soften or to mitigate the brutal and intemperate habits of her father; on the contrary, as he grew older he became more confirmed in his drunken propensities. "He exhibited," as Wraxall observes, "to the world a very humiliating spectacle;" and another writer remarks that "his daughter was employed in checking him when he drank too much and when he talked too much." He thus continued to linger in a state of helpless imbecility to the beginning of the year 1788, when, on the 29th of January, he was seized with a paralytic stroke which deprived him of one-half the use of his body. Two days after, January the 31st, Lord Hervey, the British envoy at the Florentine Court, writes, "This morning, between the hours of nine and ten, the Pretender departed this life." His remains were interred at Frascati, and little or no regret was expressed by his kindred or friends, as his latter years were so much darkened by his vices and extravagances. After his death, his brother the cardinal assumed the title of Henry the Ninth: he seemed distinguished for no other quality but that of his extreme superstition and bigotry, which rendered him generally odious and unpopular. It is recorded of Pope Pius VI., that after a lengthened interview with the Cardinal, he observed that he was not surprised at the eagerness of the English to rid themselves of so tiresome a race.

The daughter of Charles Edward, the Duchess of Albany, did not long survive her father; she died at Bologna in 1789, from the effects of a painful operation to which she had to submit. She appears to have been a person of pleasing looks and animated expression, with regular features, though without pretensions to striking beauty. Her miniature, once in the possession of her uncle the Cardinal, has now passed into the hands of the Countess of Seafield: her face is said to resemble too much that of her father to be considered handsome.

It was not long after the death of her husband that the news reached the Countess, who was then residing at Paris. Alfieri reports that she was seriously affected on receiving the intelligence. "Her grief," he says, "was neither factitious nor forced; for every untruth was alien to this upright, incomparable soul; and, notwithstanding the disparity of years,

her husband would have found in her an excellent companion and a friend, if not a loving wife, had he not thrust her from him by his constantly unfriendly, rough, and unaccountable behaviour. I owe to pure truth this testimony." A French writer, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, ascribes her grief to a feeling of remorse at having deserted her husband in his helplessness and bodily infirmities. "The Duchess Charlotte," this writer says, "entering the house of Charles Edward, the deserted child coming to the rescue of the deserted spouse, the natural child replacing the lawful wife, and exercising her pious and salutary influence over the old man,—these were contrasts which could not but painfully affect the proud Countess. Madame D'Albany had too elevated a soul not to feel the painfulness of her situation." And yet we can easily believe, without imputing to the Countess, as this writer does, feelings of compunction and remorse, that her grief was altogether unaffected and sincere. The instinctive and better feelings of our nature, and especially those of the softer sex, will prompt us to be deeply affected at the separation from those with whom we have lived in the bonds of the closest intimacy, and with whom we have shared, even for a brief space of time, the joys and sorrows of life.

We are not, however, so much concerned in the inquiry what may have been the true state of the Countess's feelings on learning the demise of her late husband, as what were her relations to Alfieri after that event. It is somewhat difficult to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, as the opinions on the question are conflicting and widely different. While some writers of that period assert that they were privately married, others, on the contrary, maintain that no such union ever took place, and that their connection was never consecrated by the nuptial vows. Thus much is certain, that in every country whither they went, whether in Italy, France, or England, they were received in the very best society, as though they were legally joined together as husband and wife: this may be accounted for by the report of the private marriage. But if we are left to judge by the epistolary correspondence of the parties themselves, we should hardly be led to believe in the matrimonial connection. Alfieri never speaks of the Countess otherwise than as "*la mia donna*"—my lady, and "*la dolce meta di me stesso*"—the sweeter half of my being; and she addresses him as "*cet ami incomparable*"—this my incomparable friend. The mother of Alfieri, in a letter addressed to him, writes thus:—"I do not believe that the lady who you announce is coming with you can feel any liking for me, since I have not the happiness to be acquainted with her. But if this be so, I would fain flatter myself that it is the effect of a tie which I hope may be of a nature to forward your earthly happiness as well as the salvation of your soul. This would be my greatest comfort, as it is my only longing desire."

Those who are of opinion that no marriage ever took place account for it on the ground that the Countess could not make up her mind to lay

aside her royal pretensions, and that Alfieri had no taste for the vulgar and prosaic state of matrimony, and preferred the condition of lover of a Queen. It is certain that the Countess clung with great and foolish tenacity to her royal rank; and we are assured by Wraxall, who had an opportunity of visiting her at Paris, that in one of her rooms she had a throne set up, emblazoned with the royal arms of Great Britain; that her attendants habitually addressed her as "Your Majesty;" and that royal honours were paid her by many of her visitors, and especially by ecclesiastics. Both Madame de Staël and the Duchess of Devonshire, who were frequent visitors of the Countess, addressed her as a royal personage, probably more from a feeling of compassion than from a sense of propriety. It must have been a great shock both to the Countess and to Alfieri, with their high notions and aristocratic pride, to hear the painter David, at their own table, on the day after the terrible procession of the French King and Queen from Versailles, use the following language:—"It is a great misfortune that this Megara (the French Queen) was not torn to pieces or had her throat cut by the women, for there will be no peace during her life."

The progress of the Revolution, and its more ferocious and sanguinary complexion, determined the Countess and her companion to quit Paris. They departed from that city in the autumn of 1790 for Normandy, and in the following spring they visited England, passing their time partly in London and partly in the provinces. We can easily imagine that two such notable persons as the Countess and Alfieri attracted considerable attention in England, and, notwithstanding their equivocal relation, were received in the very best and most fashionable circles of the metropolis; and what may be regarded as very surprising is that the former was presented at Court. Horace Walpole, in a letter addressed to Miss Berry, on the 19th of May, 1791, speaks of the matter in the following terms:—"The Countess of Albany is not only in England, in London, but at this very moment, I believe, in the Palace of St. James's; not restored by as rapid a revolution as the French, but, as was observed at supper at Lady Mount Edgecombe's, by that topsy-turvihood that characterizes the present age. Within these two days the Pope has been burnt at Paris; Madame du Barry, mistress of Louis Quinze, has dined with the Lord Mayor of London (Boydell), and the Pretender's widow is presented to the Queen of Great Britain. She is to be introduced by her great-grandfather's niece, the young Countess of Aylesbury. That curiosity should bring her here I do not quite wonder, still less that she abhorred her husband; but methinks it is not very well bred to his family, nor very sensible, but a new way of passing eldest."

On the evening of the same day, after the presentation had taken place, the writer added a postscript to his letter, in which he makes the following statement:—"Well, I have had an exact account of the interview of the two Queens, from one who stood close to them. The Dowager was announced as Princess of Stolberg. She was well dressed, and not

at all embarrassed. The King talked to her a good deal, but about her passage, the sea, and general topics; the Queen in the same way, but less. Then she stood between the Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence, and had a good deal of conversation with the former, who may perhaps have met her in Italy. Not a word between her and the Princess; nor did I hear of the Prince, but he was there, and probably spoke to her. The Queen looked at her earnestly. To add to the singularity of the day, it is the Queen's birthday. Another odd accident; at the opera at the Pantheon, Madame d'Albany was carried into the King's box and sat there. It is not of a piece with her going to Court, that she seals with the royal arms."

It was generally supposed that the chief object of her visit to England was to obtain pecuniary aid from the Royal Family; and if she failed in this object at that period, subsequently, and at a later date, a grant was accorded from the Crown. It appears, from a passage in Lord Stanhope's "Life of Pitt," that in 1806, when Cardinal York was forced to leave Rome in consequence of the French invasion, and thereby losing his ecclesiastical income, King George, "on the recommendation of Mr. Pitt, granted a yearly pension of £4,000 to the last of the Stuarts. The Cardinal died in 1807, when Lord Hawkesbury wrote announcing that a part of this pension, £1,600 a year, would be continued by his Majesty to the Countess of Albany." That she was greatly straitened in her finances during her residence in England is evident from one of Alfieri's letters written at that period, 1792, in which he attributes the abridgment of their projected tours in the country to pecuniary difficulties. Accordingly, early in August of that year they quitted England, and returned to France.

But it appears that their stay in Paris was very limited in its duration. After the proceedings of the 10th of August that city became an unsafe place of abode, while, at the same time, it was a matter of great difficulty to escape from it. Provided, however, with passports from the Danish and Venetian ambassadors, the only remaining foreign ministers about the revolutionary Government, and furnished also with an order from the sectional authorities, the Countess and her companion attempted, on the 18th of August, to quit the French capital. But on arriving at the barrier, though permission to pass was given by the officers of the National Guard posted at the spot, yet their progress was obstructed by a band of the lowest populace, who rushed out from a neighbouring *cabaret*, and vowed vengeance against the aristocrats. It was after a violent struggle, and with considerable difficulty, that they escaped from the ruffians and proceeded on their journey. After remaining a month at Brussels, they travelled through Germany and Switzerland to Florence, where they took up their permanent residence, with occasional excursions into the country. Alfieri employed his time in preparing for the press some of his most distinguished productions, both in prose and in poetry.

He died at Florence, on the 7th of October, 1803, in the fifty-fourth year of his age. Having all his life long been a professed free-thinker, he died without the ministrations of the church, though it was said that, in his last moments, he manifested some religious yearnings, to which the Countess paid no attention, and was blamed for her impiety and thoughtlessness. The truth is that she herself was an unfaithful member of the Church of Rome. The remains of Alfieri received, notwithstanding the poet's scepticism, the homage of so devout a Roman Catholic as Chateaubriand, who attended his funeral and bent over his coffin. By his last will he left to "the Countess Louïse d'Albany" all his property, "moveables and immoveables," as well as all his books and MSS., and confiding to her care alone the publishing of all his posthumous works—an undertaking which she most scrupulously carried out.

If we are to judge her feelings by the following letter, which she addressed to Count Baldelli shortly after the death of Alfieri, her grief at his loss must have been most profound and poignant. "You may judge, my dear Baldelli," she writes, "of my grief by the manner in which I lived with the incomparable friend I have lost. It will be seven weeks next Saturday; and it is as if this misfortune had befallen me yesterday. You who have lost an adored wife may conceive what I feel. I have lost all consolation, support, society, all, all! I am alone in this world, which has become a desert for me."

Alas for the human heart—"deceitful above all things"—and the fickleness of woman! a few months after the death of Alfieri, M. Fabre, a painter of some celebrity, was taken into favour by the disconsolate mourner. Yea, it is even insinuated that she loved Fabre before Alfieri's death. Certain it is that he was installed in the poet's place, in the *Casa di Alfieri*, as it is still called, and situated in the Lung Arno. The painter was then thirty-seven years of age, and the Countess fifty-one. Their relations seemed to create no scandal in the best circles of the Tuscan capital, for at no former period had the Casa di Alfieri been frequented by a society so brilliant and fashionable. The most eminent Florentine nobility, and all foreigners of any note, constantly crowded the *salons* of the Countess's residence. Among the rest of the *literati* who visited the Casa di Alfieri, Lamartine was one, in the year 1810; and he records his impression of the Countess in the following terms:—"She was a little woman, whose figure had lost all lightness and all elegance. The features of her face, too rounded and too obtuse, also preserved no pure line of ideal beauty. But her eyes had a light, her fair hair a tint, her mouth an attraction, all her physiognomy an intelligence and grace of expression, which made you remember if they made you no longer admire. Her soft manner of speaking, her easy manner, her reassuring familiarity, raised at once those who approached her to her level. You did not know whether she descended to yours or elevated you to hers, there was so much nature in her bearing."

The company that assembled constantly at her *salons* excited at last the suspicion and vigilance of the French police; and in the month of May, 1809, she received a peremptory imperial order to repair to Paris without delay. She repaired thither, accompanied by Fabre. No sooner had her arrival been announced, than she was summoned to an interview with the Emperor Napoleon. After a few complimentary words, he immediately addressed her thus:—"I know your influence over society in Florence. I know also that you employ it in a sense adverse to my policy; you are an obstacle to my projects of fusion between the Tuscans and the French. This is why I have summoned you to Paris, where you will have full leisure to satisfy your taste for the fine arts." She was detained in Paris till near the end of the year 1810, when she was allowed to return to Florence. Here she ended her days; she died on the 9th of January, 1824. By her will she named Fabre her universal legatee, after bequeathing a few objects of no great value to some of her relatives and special friends.

Fabre thus inherited all the books, statues, paintings, medals, and curiosities collected by both Charles Edward and Alfieri. He now resolved, having raised a monument to the Countess, to leave Florence, and to retire to his native country. He presented the Grand Duke with all the manuscripts of Alfieri, but the rest of his treasure he carried away with him, and he subsequently bestowed the whole on his native city Montpellier. Such was the foundation of the *Musée Fabre*, which is still existing in that city. Fabre died in the year 1837.

Of the Countess little can be said except that her life was one full of vicissitudes and chequered scenes. Her character presented nothing very remarkable; nothing of the romantic or poetic entered into its composition. A woman of a sensitive or delicate mind would scarcely have chosen a French painter to replace a royal husband, or a favoured poet like Alfieri. All we can say is, that the interest which is attached to her name and history is derived from the fact that she was the wife of the Pretender, the last of the royal House of Stuart.

J. J., Tr. & Co.

THE CAMP AT CHÂLONS.

The train halted, and I found myself at Petit Mourmelon, a village where the camp of Châlons has its beginning. Instead of following the main road, which runs with a long curve to Grand Mourmelon, a village rapidly attaining the proportions of a town, I at once started for the camp proper. The infantry are quartered nearest the railway station, and send out their *trailleurs* as far as the high road, where they teaze the women bringing provisions to the various restaurants. Whole battalions were at work in enlarging the barracks, which are made out of the branches of young trees, and of the size of cottages. The framework, formed of slender trees, is covered with a layer of clay, and a sort of wall is produced in this fashion. While entire companies were occupied in erecting the framework, others were busied in trenching and digging. The huts are roofed with straw, and the building, though so rapidly run up, has a compactness and solidity which makes it resemble a comfortable dwelling-house. There is a plank flooring in each hut, forming an inclined plane with the outer walls, so as to constitute a bedstead. A row of pegs for hanging up accoutrements is the sole furniture of the room, which derives its light from a few side loopholes, and it is tolerably dark inside when the outer door is closed.

The infantry camp, by itself, forms a large barrack town, with numerous streets named after the latest glorious exploits of the French army. The principal street has been christened Solferino. The streets are admirable as regards the line of communication. They are lined with two rows of paving-stones, and the earth in the centre is stamped down so hard, and the curve kept so oval, that you may fancy yourself in a macadamized road. Comfort has been attended to in a remarkable degree. In front of each hut are earth seats covered with turf. Small gardens surround the huts, and the beds are enclosed, some with small blue stones, others with laboriously collected small shells, which form a very pleasant contrast with the rather gloomy background of the ugly-looking hut.

Life in this barrack town is remarkably lonely. The sentries, whose boxes are made of straw or clay—the former resembling awful scarecrows—stand at every corner. Hundreds of soldiers are dragging in straw, bags of bread, and wood. The distribution of the last-named article is a very interesting sight. Several hundred loads of wood lie scattered about on the ground. The whole resembles a gigantic funeral pyre, on which a hundred forms are cowering while awaiting the *auto da fé* of which they are to be the victims. But the affair terminates more peacefully. The sergeants distribute the wood to the men, the latter improvise out of the longest logs a litter, on which the wood is piled, and before you can look

round, the square is cleared, and the hundred loads of wood, half a forest, are in motion.

At some spots the troops are busy in digging up the ground, and forming a circular hollow in which the watch-fire will be kindled at night. Round the russet hearth lie fellows who have doffed their uniform, and are preparing the meal in their blouses. One splits wood, a second places the iron pots on the logs, while a third maintains the heat. Here a man grasps the huge ladle, dips it into the pot, whose contents he actively stirs up, so that the soup flies around with a hissing sound. There another tries the food by raising the iron spoon with the smoking broth to his lips, and then quietly returning it to the depths of the company's cauldron. A party of soldiers has gathered round a mountain of potatoes, and while their companions are cleaning their muskets close by, and pipeclaying their belts, these gipsy-like gentry, crouching on the ground, sharpen their knives, and scrape the potatoes, which are then thrown into the cauldron.

Further on recruits are being drilled, and drummers exercised. Presently a strange-looking party come along the road. Their caps sit crooked; their coats are thrown over their shoulders, and in their hands they have common cudgels. I do not know what to make of these gentry in shirt-sleeves, till the sentries present arms, and I discover that the inspection is taking place. These comfortable gentlemen are officers,—colonels, majors, captains, and subalterns, all mixed up together. The hand, instead of holding a sword, is buried in the depths of the trousers pocket. The chest is bare; one has two epaulettes on his tunic, another one, and a third none at all. Then the gentlemen stroll down the lines, halting now and then to look at the merry soldiers' games which are going on.

A blanket is spread out, and held at each corner by four muscular fellows. In the meanwhile other soldiers look about for a victim. Some unsuspicious man is dragged from his harmless avocation, and, in spite of his resistance, thrown upon the blanket. The latter is pulled tight. There is a shout of "One, two, three!" and up flies the hapless fellow in the air, and is swiftly caught again. This goes on until mercy is shown the breathless sufferer, and a fresh victim is selected.

While the officers are looking on at the fun, some of them feel an itching to try the tossing on one of themselves. Significant looks are rapidly exchanged, and suddenly a young officer finds himself seized by his comrades, and, in spite of all his struggles, thrown into the blanket. While the victim is still cursing, four officers relieve the soldiers who have hitherto held the blanket, and the sport is continued amid hearty bursts of laughter from the bystanders. The whole battalion congregates, and heartily enjoys the scene, when the captain flies into the air, swearing and laughing by turns, and then falls back into the blanket, till he almost strikes the ground.

Further on the men are amusing themselves with less dangerous

games. For tossing in a blanket, though it appears so comical, has its critical side. If one of the tossers lose his hold as the victim is falling (which may easily happen through his weight), the tosser who thus makes acquaintance with his mother earth may fare badly. In the present case, the man who is going to leap over the backs of his comrades incurs less risk. The first bends down toward the ground, a second sits on his shoulders, and a third clambers up the latter in his turn. Some distance off stands a line of soldiers, one behind the other. At a signal, the first starts and jumps over the group crouching on the ground. If the leap succeeds, which is accompanied by a loud yell from the spectators, the leaper is saved; but should he fail or fall, he is called on to form the base of the crouching group, until another equally unsuccessful jumper relieves him. This game is the cause of endless amusement to the bystanders.

While the men who have nothing else to do are amusing themselves in this way, the greatest activity prevails close at hand. The officers of the infantry division fancied they could give no more suitable expression of their joy at the Emperor's presence in camp, than by arranging a ball. Mounting their horses and riding about the country in brilliant cavalcades, all the pretty women of Châlons were looked up and invited. Reconnaissances were held in all the towns and villages, a correct list was drawn up of all the beauties of the neighbourhood; and they extended so far, that the girls for twenty miles round spoke of nothing else but the impending grand ball at the camp of Châlons. While the officers were thus occupied in seeking ladies, equal activity was displayed in camp in making brilliant preparations. A spot between the station and the camp was selected and converted into a dancing platform. Hundreds of troops were in the first instance engaged in giving a circular form to the selected spot. The earth was excavated to some depth, the clay removed and piled up in the centre to form an elevated plateau, which was covered with turf and surrounded with flowers and shrubs. In the centre of this mound the orchestra was stationed. The dancing platform was covered with firm earth, and sedulously stamped down: with its brown colour, it bore a remarkable likeness to an inlaid floor. The soldiers, when I arrived, had just completed the platform, and were trying its dancing merits. One man seized another, hundreds of couples were formed, a barrel-organ represented the orchestra, and away they flew in a wild galoppe; legs were thrown out after the fashion of a *cancan*, each couple indulged in original and eccentric figures, and every sort of dance movement was caricatured. The nailed boots of the soldiers sank into the ground, dragging up lumps, which were speedily converted into dust, that flew round the heads of the flying couples. Some of the men were not contented with mere dancing, but tried to combine the agreeable with the useful, and blend song with motion. At last, when all were utterly exhausted, it was unanimously agreed that the platform had done its duty, and that the work was first-rate.

I strolled past the lighthouse from which the camp is illuminated at night by reflectors, toward the cavalry camp. A stamping, snorting, and neighing saluted me as I passed along the interminable rows of horses which stood there in the open air, held by slender head-ropes. They were all magnificent Barbs, of so violent a temper, that it was found necessary to remove their shoes, for fear of their injuring one another. Not a minute passed without some high-spirited steed making a bolt; it ran down the line neighing and kicking, pursued by the active hussars, who laughingly hunted the animal down and captured it, after it had made acquaintance with the whole camp, and set a thousand companions, who envied its liberty, in a semi-state of revolt.

I passed the mounted chasseurs before reaching the macadamized road that runs down from the imperial pavilion of Grand Mourmelon; I passed the engineers and artillery park, and tried to reach the bosquet, in whose neighbourhood there is always a lively scene. Not alone that one horseman after the other passes me, but countless pedestrians are hurrying to the spot, where one amusement tries to surpass the other. Here a ventriloquist is performing; there a savage; over there girls entice you to enter a *café chantant;* here is an open-air kitchen, through whose gaping side-walls the wind passes freely, sporting with the lights, so that the thickest candle is burned out in half an hour. The wooden walls are not decorated; where you feed you have the fire before you, and can watch the entire process of cooking the food you have ordered.

Close by is a row of brilliant *cafés,* the Café de Paris, Café Napoleon, &c. From the roofs float tricolour flags, considerably bleached by rain and sun; gigantic inscriptions at once inform you that you are in the midst of a French town, in which puffing is one of the conditions of existence. A tent-shaped verandah, decorated with flags, distinguishes the entrance of the Café Napoleon; flowers and shrubs enliven the room, which is supplied with mirrors and curtains. At the bar sits a majestic dame; idle waiters with their white aprons lounge in the corners. The large Paris journals are lying on the tables; groups of officers are amusing themselves with the popular game of draughts, and drinking their coffee. "*Pension pour les Officiers*" may be read everywhere; and the comfort of the soldiers who cannot stand eight sous for a *demi-tasse* is equally well looked after. Hundreds of wine-shops and *estaminets* surround the large and elegant *restaurants.*

Before I retired to rest at Grand Mourmelon I strolled again into the cavalry camp; it was dark, and an almost spectral scene was presented to me. The hussars were leading their horses to water. The moon cast her pallid light on the busy throng, on this medley of gigantic-looking men and dark animals, so that I fancied I had before me preparations for a nocturnal review.

As morning breaks, the officers shout their orders, the troopers mount, the sergeants call over the names amid the snorting of the horses; from the

distance the wind bears a few notes of the tunes which the bands are performing at the head of the infantry battalions. Suddenly the whole body of horsemen get into motion, and it seems as if all the roads had become alive. From all sides the cavalry columns advance, drawn up in fours, in order to leave a portion of the road free. The helmets sparkle in the sunshine, the sabres glisten as if they were made of silver, the riders strike up a jovial song, which is not unfrequently accompanied by the snorting of the horses. Ere long all are drawn up round the Pavillon de l'Empereur, in front of which the chapel-tent has been erected. Before the latter the ensigns of all the regiments were drawn up with their eagles. Behind these the sappers of all the battalions formed a second line; on the right and left, two battalions of engineers flanked the altar. At the spot reserved for the Emperor three regimental bands were posted to perform the music during divine service. In a second line were drawn up the bands of all the other regiments, the drums and fifes of all the infantry battalions.

The army itself—some thirty thousand strong—formed a large quadrangle round the chapel. Opposite the altar stood the cavalry regiments, on the two other sides the infantry and chasseurs in columns of battalions. At this moment the Emperor emerged from the pavilion surrounded by a brilliant staff. Napoleon walked rather heavily, and produced upon me the impression of a stout man unused to walking exercise. The Emperor took a glance at the battalions which, as he once sportively said, are only acquainted with one book, at once their Bible and gospel,—*c'est* "*La Théorie de l'Ecole de Peloton.*"

The mass commenced. It was a noble sight when at the elevation all the soldiers fell on their knees, the eagles and muskets sank to the ground. During the mass I found an opportunity for examining my immediate *entourage*. My eye at length became fixed on a soldier, who in reality was only half a one, for he had lost a foot and a hand; the right foot was of wood, and only a short stump was left of his left arm. The man wore the antiquated tail coat and three-cornered hat of the old imperial guard. The coat was at least fifty years old, although it had not become threadbare. The man was rather upright, and supported himself on a stout stick, which he held in his whole hand. A snowy moustache hung over the lip of this old man, who was at least ninety years of age. This old invalid attracted my entire attention, and I saw that he fully appreciated the scene that was going on before him.

"A fair scene, is it not, sir?" I said to the aged man.

The invalid slowly raised his eyes to my face, and seriously corrected me,—

"A grand scene, if you please, sir."

"Well, then, a grand scene, if you prefer it."

"Does it interest you?" the soldier asked, quickly; "you seem to be a foreigner?"

"And cannot a foreigner feel a pride in the glory of France?"

The old man's eyes flashed fire. I felt that he would have offered me his hand if he had had a left one to which he could transfer his stick.

"If you only knew, sir, how greatly that remark of yours rejoices me, an old man of ninety!" he remarked.

"I fancy that, if a history of French glory had to be compiled, you could supply many a page to it?"

"You are right. I could tell much, from the day when I, a musketeer but sixteen years of age, stood in the square formed round King Louis's scaffold, up to the present one, when France has done so much to destroy the effect of the treaties of Vienna."

"You stood at the scaffold of Louis XVI.?"

The invalid nodded his head gently.

"My regiment had the service of honour, as it was called at that day. Ah, sir, we had a great deal to do on that night in keeping the people back: we stood shoulder to shoulder, but the heaving crowd frequently drove us to the foot of the scaffold. Above stood the King, in a half-stooping posture. I can still see him; shirt and waistcoat were unbuttoned and thrown back over the shoulders; his hands were fastened on his back; only two men stood near him. One of them knelt down presently and offered him the crucifix to kiss; it was the priest. The other was the police commissary with the red scarf; he had only to prove the fact that Louis Capet was dead. And another stood a little apart; he seized a cord which looked like a bell-rope—he pulled it, and Louis Capet's head lay in the sand. A hollow murmur ran along the crowd, and heads were thrust out in order to see royal blood flowing. It was a bad sight, sir; the only one I should like to erase from my memory as injurious to the glory of France. But to make up for it, I had a thousand splendid nights at the bivouac, when the little corporal led us through the world."

"Were you always with him, sir?"

"Always!—from the Pyrenees to Italy, from the Po to the Rhine, from the Rhine to the Danube, the Vistula, and the Moskowa. From Elba to Paris, from Paris to Waterloo. I did not go to St. Helena, because it was not allowed."

A sad smile played over the old soldier's face.

"You are happy; you saw your general and Emperor conquer, but did not witness his death."

The invalid looked at me strangely.

"Death!" he repeated, "what do you mean by that?"

I did not understand the remark, and attached no importance to it.

"How comes it," I asked, "that you are here, and not in the Hôtel des Invalides?"

"I gave up my turn when my chance arrived to be taken into the hospital. I had a comrade who, though five years younger than I, had one foot less. If I had gone into hospital, the man must have waited till

some other comrade died; I therefore asked the governor's leave to resign in favour of my friend."

"But how do you live? Have you a family to take care of you?"

"I have nobody—in all France there is no other of my name. I saw them all die; and yet I live without being a burden to the state. I keep a little cabaret on the road between Metz and Châlons, which has supported me for the last forty years."

"And the Cross of the Legion, which I see on your chest, makes a slight addition—"

"Which does not belong to me, sir. One of my comrades who died in the Invalides left a widow seventy years of age, and three children, who are unfortunately all cripples. The daughter is an idiot, the sons are prevented from working by illness. The widow is now ninety years of age; the children are almost grey-haired. They live solely on the two hundred francs which my cross brings them in."

There was an indescribable grandeur in the modest words of this old soldier, who narrated the most brilliant actions of his life as if they were something ordinary and natural. The man in his heroic simplicity produced such an impression on me, that words of praise involuntarily died away on my lips.

"Has to-day's military spectacle drawn you out of your hermitage?" I asked, mechanically, in order to say something.

"I am taking my annual trip. For the last forty years I have shut up my inn in August for a month, and take a holiday by making a tour."

"A tour?—you, with your ninety years?"

"I, with my ninety years and my wooden leg. I hobble as well as I can to Paris, and only take ten days in coming the forty leagues—four leagues a day;—that is not so bad, is it? I am always in Paris on St. Napoleon's day."

"Your journey has an object, then?"

"That of saluting my Emperor, as I could not go with him to St. Helena. On the day that bears his name I lay a garland at the foot of the column on the Place Vendôme. I have done so for forty years, and always quitted Paris directly I had done so; on the same day when I decorated my Emperor's statue I started for home again, as I needed violent exercise to overcome the feelings that oppressed me at the column. For a tear does not become an invalid who has passed through a hundred actions, even though it be shed to the memory of the Emperor."

"But surely you did not leave Paris without visiting the Emperor's grave?"

The veteran again gave me that peculiar look which I had observed before, and which expressed amazement and surprise. Then he muttered,—

"The Emperor's grave! What do you mean by that, sir?"

These words appeared to be spoken in a soliloquy. They did not affect me sufficiently yet for me to inquire their meaning.

"How is it that you have omitted your pilgrimage to Paris this year?" I asked.

"What had I to do in Paris, when the Emperor came to us at Châlons?"

"Napoleon III. is certainly here—"

"Napoleon III.?" the old man quickly interrupted me. "Do you also cling to this folly of the short-sighted, credulous mob? There is no Napoleon III., because there is no Napoleon I. There is only one Napoleon, my Emperor, the victor in a hundred battles, from Arcola to Moscow—my Emperor, who cannot die till he has carried out his mission of rendering France mistress over all nations, and has removed the stain left by the treaties of Vienna. And yet there are persons who say he is dead! Credulous people! he lives—he is only waiting for the right moment to place himself at the head of his army, and recapture the left bank of the Rhine. Ere long our armies, setting out from Châlons, will fight again in the East and the North, and the man who will lead them is he—is Napoleon. Of course it was a longer distance from St. Helena to Châlons than from Elba to Paris. It took him as many years as his first return did days. But he has come, and now all is well."

The soldier's remarks were interrupted by the arrival of a brilliant staff. I could only take a sympathizing glance at the weather-worn form of the invalid, who refused to believe in the death of the Emperor, and took Napoleon III. and Napoleon I. for one and the same person. The war was over, and the Emperor has mounted his horse. Orders were shouted. Adjutants flew about. The troops presented arms; twenty bands struck up "Partant pour la Syrie;" a thousand drummers beat the grand march, for the Emperor was approaching. It proceeded at a hard gallop to the spot where the troops were to march past. At his side rode a youthful Amazon, Anna Murat, the daughter of Charles Murat, who made himself so much talked about in his time as Neapolitan pretender, and opponent of Prince Napoleon in the Freemason question. Hundreds of generals and field-officers formed the *cortége* of the Emperor, who looked very well on horseback.

The hussars galloped past as vanguard. At the head of the army rode MacMahon, surrounded by a brilliant staff, who formed the Emperor's suite after marching past. As each divisional staff did the same, the Emperor's escort continually increased, and by the end of the marching past amounted to from four to five hundred horsemen. At two o'clock all was over, and the ball was to take place in the evening. As early as five o'clock, lightly shod ladies in white ball dresses could be seen coming from the station to the dancing-place. Merry peals of laughter enlivened the walk, while the bugles of the band posted in the

central *bosquet* saluted the caravans of guests arriving from all sides. The sky alone appeared to be discontented with the festival: it looked very black, and the louder the laughter and music grew, the darker and more lowering it became, as if disposed to offer a contemptuous protest against the cheery temper prevailing at this spot. At length, finding that mortals were too occupied with their own pleasures to heed the first warning in the shape of clouds, a terrific peal of thunder was heard. But the people down below had resolved on this occasion to listen to no warning; the dancing platform became very lively, and the officers vied with the sergeants in offering a gallant reception to the invited guests.

The privates had been necessarily excluded from the fun, as the dancing-ground must have been ten times larger to hold all the thousands. Still each company had chosen a few privates to represent it with the non-commissioned officers at the ball. Thus private and sergeant stood by the side of captain and colonel, and had the undoubted right of competing with a general, if he wished to win the pleasant smiles of beauty. And the soldiers of the grand army were not at all bashful; and it could be easily seen that they were well versed in the arts of besieging. The rest of the men contented themselves with looking on, criticizing the new comers; and jokes followed each other, which deserved, many of them, reception in the columns of the *Journal pour rire.*

Presently the orchestra struck up the first waltz. The couples formed; generals and soldiers, officers and elegant Parisian evening coats, stiff Englishmen and supple Gandins, formed a strange medley, each one having on his arm a charming lady, some of whom looked down silently and majestically, while others prattled an entire volume in a minute. The dance began, but was at once converted into a disgraceful flight of the entire society. For the envious sky, in its ungenerous opposition, had only awaited the right moment to display its superiority in a striking manner. The rain poured down by buckets. No resistance availed, and all were compelled to seek the protection of the huts and tents, which will never again be filled by such an exquisite party as on this evening.

The soldiers, thus unexpectedly taken by storm, played the part of hospitable hosts with much gallantry. The arms were thrust on one side, and the knapsacks, shakos, and cloaks, hanging on the pegs, made way for the lace shawls and crinoline bonnets of the ladies. In every tent it seemed as if Venus with her *cortège* was paying a visit to rough Mars. Camp stools were supplied at least in sufficient numbers for the ladies. The gentlemen were obliged to put up with logs of firewood, or lay on the ground, upon which thick horsecloths were spread out. Laughter, jokes, and chattering animated all the rooms; the grey barracks ceased to look gloomy. The lively conversation overpowered the rattle of the rain. The gentlemen lit their cigars, and the ladies rearranged their toilette as best they could.

Suddenly the clouds parted and the pallid moon peered out between

the flying masses. The most splendid evening set in. The band returned to its post, and the dancing-platform, which had been really inundated, was strewn with fresh sand, that quickly sucked up the pools of water. When the company returned to the scene of pleasure, the hundreds of bivouac fires were illumined in camp. Here and there the flames darted upward, and ere long a chain of fire ran round the camp. The huts, lit up by the bright light, looked more gloomy and uncanny than ever; and when hundreds of indistinct forms moved round the crackling fires, the whole scene resembled a regular Breughel. Ere long the bugles brayed too, the drums rattled, the bands struck up the *reveil* and marched through the camp.

In the mean while, the dancing-platform had been surrounded by a row of torches that spread around the brightness of day, in which the eyes of the French women flashed more brilliantly than before. The band struck up a galoppe, and thousands of couples flew over the ground. Quadrilles and cotillons were next arranged, as a relief after the wild galoppe, or the couples left the scene for a while, and strolled down the brilliantly lit up street of tents. Many a glance was probably given under the magic influence of the scene which will cause the recipient to remember this night for a long while. One thing is certain—a grander festival, a festival with such interesting details, was never given. The camp, lit up by the bivouac fires, the music and challenges of the sentries, dancing and laughter—words are impotent to reproduce all its beauty.

Midnight arrived, but no one thought of it. The August night was so mild and warm, that persons were pleased at passing it in the open air. The camp gradually became more silent; some bivouac fires died out, and the *qui vive* of the sentries became continually rarer. On the other hand, the scene of the *fête* became more animated. The champagne corks flew into the air, and the officers drank the Emperor's health amid tremendous shouts and the clang of bugles. And then laughing and jokes ran down the ranks again, and a chain of Bengal lights was lit up, marking the road from camp to the station. All said good-bye, the ladies wrapped themselves in warm shawls, the officers offered an escort, and the special train snorted up. Those who were not bound for Châlons were carried off by active steeds in all directions; and when the Bengal lights went out, the sunshiny morn was already breaking over the camp and the two villages of Mourmelon.

LASCELLES WRAXALL.

CONVENTIONAL FALSEHOOD

BY O'DELL TRAVERS HILL.

ONE of the most astounding results of civilization is, that it would be a terrible thing if we were all to speak the truth. That is a bold statement, and one calculated to startle stern moralists; but before we have finished we may be able to show that people who enjoy the most rigid principles, and can utter the most exquisite sentiments about moral rectitude, are capable of saying and doing many little things which, if subjected to a criticism as stern as their morality, would be called falsehood; but, examined by the light of fashion, can be euphemised into conventionalism.

Refined society has a language and a manner of its own, both curiously permeated with a sort of unconscious falsehood. Its language is one which abounds in graceful compliment, meaning in many cases nothing, but in most cases something not strictly true. Its manner is a chivalrous, gentle hypocrisy, which condemns listlessness, however vapid—indifference, however conscious—even hatred the most intense, to assume no other expression than the current conventional smile. All this is very necessary: we live by our honour, and are recreated by social relaxations; but the competition in life is so fierce, that we are compelled frequently to act in such a manner as would make it exceedingly unpleasant if we were to be always telling each other the truth. There is a gentleman, whose private character you know very well is not unblemished, and whose habits are not in accordance with the rules of a strict asceticism; but you speak of having the *honour* of his acquaintance, and you always address him in language which betokens respect. That is quite right; and, as a compensation, you have the assurance that he will extend to you the same consideration. In no condition of social life would you be allowed to address a gentleman with "Sir, I know you to be a rogue, and despise you accordingly," even though you were in possession of facts which would fully justify you in so regarding him. Such a licence would subvert all society, even were it allowed to be expressed in actions merely. We must meet and be courteous to people whom we despise, dislike, and even hate. Let us take a few instances, and for a moment contemplate the appalling results which would ensue were society ever to resolve on speaking the plain truth, even in its mere forms. If, for instance, Mrs. Jones, instead of requesting "the honour of Mr. Brown's company to dinner," were to say that she required Mr. Brown's company to complete the number, as one of the guests was prevented from attending; or if Mr. Smith, instead of regretting that "a previous engagement will prevent his having the honour of accepting Mrs. Robinson's kind invitation," were to decline on the ground that he was going to dine at another friend's, where the dinners were better, the wine more plentiful, and the

company higher,—the consternation of the Browns and Robinsons may be easily imagined.

If the conscientious voter were to write to the independent member, to the effect that, unless he used his influence to get his son into a Government office, he would go over to the other side at the next election, the probability is that the M.P. would fall back upon his integrity, and decline to lend himself to such a questionable transaction. Or were the independent member to reply to a politely couched application from one of his constituents, to the effect that he did not feel disposed to take the trouble of worrying the patronage secretary on behalf of the young gentleman, it might be safely predicted that at the next election the opposition side would gain another conscientious voter. Were you to bid the footman tell Mr. Dumbledore, when he called, that you *were* at home, but would not see him, as you did not wish to be bored, you would succeed in converting that gentleman's friendship for you into something like animosity. And then, too, there is that boundless, gushing affection, which we always show to those aged connections whose property will revert to us at their death; how could the world dispense with such ennobling spectacles? and what would be the consequence were we to greet these dear old souls with—"Dearest aunt, you have a most atrociously sound constitution, and I positively declare you are getting the better of your bronchitis"?

But enough; this plain truth-speaking is too terrible to contemplate; and were we all to adopt it, society would become a chaos, conventionality would be destroyed, and those elegant drawing-rooms, where the wit and beauty of the wittiest and handsomest nation in the world are accustomed to assemble, would soon become as desolate as a forsaken city, as lonely as the most remote desert in Central Africa. We must conform to established usages, and yield a point or two, if we would go through life agreeably and elegantly. One of the latest *bons mots* of Talleyrand was, that language was given to man as much for the purpose of concealing thought as of expressing it. That was his last—the concentrated result of a long experience; and he was as easy a philosopher and as well-bred a gentleman as you could possibly meet. Rigid principles look very well on paper. Mr. Carlyle has written many striking things about the perishable nature of a lie, and the eternal nature of truth; but, no doubt, Mr. Carlyle complies with the conventional requirements of society, like any other well-conducted gentleman. The best proof of the absolute necessity for this refined inveracity is to be had by watching the conduct of an ill-bred man. Place him in the midst of a circle of people whose breeding has toned their manners down into the most sensitive consideration for each other's feelings, and he will operate upon them in much the same way as a shell fired into the midst of a peaceable city; he will be as awkward in his manners as he probably will be in his movements; he will soon be rubbing against the tender prejudices of everybody—treading on

their delicate sensibilities, tumbling over their weaknesses, and tripping himself up amongst their failings. And why? Because the man will be sure to blurt out his sentiments and thoughts, either in speech or manner, without any reserve; he will show that he is not versed in the vocabulary of euphemisms by the way in which he will speak of things by their harsher terms; he will turn his back upon people whom he dislikes; he will contradict others from whom he differs; and in every word and by every act speak the plain, unpolished truth in the most confusing and disagreeable manner. Imagine, only for an instant, the speechless consternation into which a polite assembly would be thrown if one were to come amongst them who would tell a lady that she was vain and solicitous of admiration, or a gentleman that his conversation was vapid, and his intellect of a very mean order. Dr. Johnson was a man of this type, and a terrible infliction he must have been on the polite society of his day. We all know how he used to roar people down, how rude he was when beaten in argument, and what sad havoc he made in every well-ordered china-shop into which he happened to burst. He could never be brought to do anything but roar out the truth. "You know nothing about the subject, sir," he would say. Very true, most likely, but very impudent. And in our own days, when the demarcations between classes are not so clear, society frequently has to suffer, and to suffer in silence, under some of these Attila-scourges. Olympus is often invaded by beings in whose veins there is none of the divine ἰχῶρ. The celebrated altercation which took place in the House of Lords not very long ago will, doubtless, recur to the reader's recollection as a case in point. There was a newly made peer, who would speak out plainly—speak out the plain truth, in fact; but he was soon told that their lordships were not accustomed to that kind of language, and had to subside. The *bourgeois* divinity got the worst of it, though seated on the woolsack. The sympathies of the benevolent may be well exercised in pitying the feelings of those few unfortunate individuals who, coin-created, have gone, reeking with the plain-speaking vulgarities of the lower regions, to take up their position in that austere assemblage, the British House of Lords. Wealth meets blood—alkali meets acid.

But to conclude. This refined, chivalrous falsity is a very venial sin; often, too, only an error in terms. There are yet in the world some few worthy but benighted people who look on the conventional "Not at home" with a sort of pious hesitation, and will even suffer inconvenience rather than employ it. Every tyro knows that a too literal translation makes nonsense. "At home" implies reception of friends; "Not at home" is simply its negative meaning; that although in the house, yet in the conventional sense, or as regards receiving friends, you are *not* "at home." Or if not a mere error in terms, it is often a graceful concealment of disagreeable feelings; as, for instance, the sweet smile with which a well-bred person bows his response to the apology of another who has

accidentally trodden on his gouty foot; a smile so sweet and amiable, as if to convey an impression that the very torment received from such a one were in itself a pleasure.

All this is very proper. Society is made up of a vast variety of characters, which is its greatest charm. Were we all immaculate, social intercourse would be a very tedious thing. Fortunately, we are not all immaculate. A dead plain is wearying to the eye, but the little rugged irregularities of position and character form the greatest attraction in the landscape of life. We want people to look up to in order to excite our emulation; and perhaps it is not a bad thing to be able to look down on some one, as it may give us encouragement and consolation; but in all our dealings with our fellows, whether superior or inferior, we must emember that the secret of our happiness lies in making ourselves agreeable to others, in order to make them agreeable to us.

Disagreeable people do everything clumsily and disagreeably; but people who are accustomed to conform to the little conventionalities of life will do the most unpleasant things in such a manner as to rob them of all their unpleasantness. A disagreeable man will make a beggar curse him for his charity, but an agreeable man would serve you with a writ in so charming a manner as would make you feel it a blessing.

Let us never quarrel, then, with such a gentle sin as conventional falsehood, when we see how intimately it is connected with many of those graces and elegances which embellish human life, and elevate man from the condition of the wild painted savage, who knows no other law than brute violence, to that of the polished, refined gentleman, whose every movement has in it the grace of beauty, and every accent a secret fascination.

MY UNCLE'S HONEYMOON.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

I AM the only son of General Arlington, an officer who for many years had greatly distinguished himself under the immortal Wellington, and who had in active service fairly earned the subsequent repose which the glorious deeds of Waterloo had purchased for England's surviving heroes. It was not until peace had been established that the general thought of marriage; he was then fortunate enough to secure the affections and obtain the hand of a lady who was in every way worthy of his love, and their wedded happiness was rendered complete when a son and heir was born.

Several years of uninterrupted felicity succeeded my birth, my parents vying in their affection for their only child. My father's excessive indulgence was gently counteracted by my mother's care and judicious management; she superintended my education entirely herself, and the task constituted the chief pleasure of her life. Had that life been spared, I might have become in some degree worthy of her ever-watchful affection, but, alas! I had scarcely attained my eighth year when I suffered the greatest deprivation a child can know, the death of a tender mother.

My grief at first was uncontrollable, but like all impressions at that age, it was short-lived: not so with my poor father; he refused all comfort, and was for some time threatened with the loss of reason. When the first violence of his grief had abated, it still left him in so desponding a condition, that he could scarcely bear to have me out of his sight, and, childlike, I very naturally shrank from the contemplation of such continued gloom.

Under these circumstances I was left entirely to the care of servants; and as I found more entertainment in the stables than elsewhere, it was with Roger, the head groom, that I chose to pass most of my time. This individual soon taught me to ride well, and ere long I could manage any of our horses with great ease; but from this improving companion I also learnt many other things not quite so harmless. I accompanied him to all the public-houses which he was in the habit of frequenting, and although I did not, like him, drink and smoke with the gentry he met at these places, I quickly learned to adopt their slang, and to enjoy their peculiar style of conversation. My only reading consisted of the county newspaper and the *Sporting Magazine*, and these I always read aloud for the benefit of my companion in the harness-room.

This lamentable state of things continued until I had reached my twelfth year, when my maternal uncle, Mordaunt, came to visit my father for the first time since the death of my mother. My uncle was greatly shocked at his friend's altered appearance, and at the evident melancholy

under which he still laboured, but infinitely more so at the sadly neglected state in which he found his only child. The good man at once determined to use all his influence to rouse my father from his inert condition: he reasoned with him; reminded him that he had himself experienced the same affliction which he now tried to assuage; that in his case the trial had even been more severe, as the child left to his care was a daughter; represented to him in the strongest light his duty as a parent, his duty to his Maker; and, finally, persuaded him that he would best show his devotion to his wife, whom he so deeply lamented, by his solicitude for her child.

By my uncle's advice it was soon arranged that our establishment in the country should be broken up; that a suitable house should be taken in the metropolis; and that my uncle should accompany us thither in the course of the ensuing month, and himself place me in a public school.

The change would, no doubt, have been quite agreeable to me if my friend Roger had not done his best to set me against it; indeed, it was with considerable glee that I went down to the stables to tell him of the proposed plan.

"Ah!" said he, "I just thought that mischief was a brewing when John told me them two old gents was a-putting their heads together all day long. I told you that old Squire Mordaunt would be the ruin of ye."

"The ruin of me! Why, Roger, he says I am to be made I don't know how clever at the place I am going to: it is called Eton," I replied.

"And a great deal you'll learn there," said he, with great contempt. "Why, there's not one on 'em who knows one end of a horse from t'other. What's the good of all their book-learning at the head of a cavalry regiment, I should like to know?"

"I am not going into the army at all, that I know of," I remarked.

"Lawk! Master 'Arold, you don't say so! Think what a fine gentleman your guv'ner used to look at the head of his men! 'Tis a pity he ain't with 'em *now*, for any good he's been since he have taken to mope and muddle hisself with books—you don't want to be like he, do ye?"

I felt an involuntary horror of becoming the least like my father, as he then appeared to me, and began to consider if study could in any way conduce to such a result; certainly my anticipations for the future were not brightened by my interview with Roger.

The day arrived which had been fixed for our departure, and I really then felt grieved to leave the old place. I had enjoyed the bustle of preparation, and my father was already better for the exertion he had been required to make, but we both felt very melancholy as we visited each familiar spot for the last time. Parting with the horses was the greatest trial to me; and next to them, I most regretted leaving Roger: as I shook hands with him tears came into the poor fellow's eyes, and he gave me some parting advice to the best of his ability.

"God bless you, Master 'Arold! don't you mind them old divining doctors at Eton no more than nothink; they're a queer lot, and no mistake. I were once groom to one on 'em, and he had such a rum seat a 'orseback that I were ashamed to ride after him, that I were."

On arriving in London we went at once to a commodious house in Portland Place, which my uncle Mordaunt's care had secured for us. My persevering relative did not suffer me to be long *there*, but as soon as possible took me himself to Eton, giving me at parting plenty of money and good advice.

I was for some time intolerably idle; my life had hitherto been so free from all restraint, that it was not an easy matter for me to submit to school discipline, and I got into terrible scrapes with the "divining doctors," as my friend Roger called them. I suppose, however, that my abilities were good, as I could frequently help a friend with his Latin verses, when in disgrace for neglecting my own. Another hindrance to my advancement in classic lore existed in my taste, or rather passion, for music, which was first discovered by the authorities when I voluntarily joined in the choir of our school chapel. The master of the choir was in perfect raptures when he first tried my voice and perceived the talent I possessed—taking the utmost pleasure in giving me instruction, and only regretting that he had not had the opportunity of cultivating both earlier; as it was, he encouraged me to spend every leisure moment with him in the pursuit of this favourite study; and as it certainly kept me out of mischief, I was regarded as a very steady character by my companions.

Three years thus passed away very pleasantly, and at each vacation I had the pleasure of finding my father improved in health and spirits: he now frequented his club, gave occasional dinner-parties to his brother officers, and in his own sober way once more enjoyed life.

He constantly expressed the most lively gratitude to my uncle Mordaunt for the part he had taken in producing this happy change, and, as he said, "for rescuing his only son from the ruin to which his own parent had consigned him."

I had now lost my treble voice, and with it much of the keen gusto for the study of music which I had hitherto experienced. I turned, therefore, with greater pleasure to more profitable, if less agreeable pursuits; so that when I left Eton I was, I believe, as well prepared for Oxford as many of my more studious companions.

It was at this period of my life, just before I entered the university, that the head of our family, Sir Harold Arlington, returned from India. He was my father's elder brother, being his senior by ten years. I had no recollection of this relative, as he had left England before the death of my mother; but I was greatly prepossessed in his favour by my father, who always spoke of him with great affection.

In early youth Sir Harold had been disappointed in his first and only love, and the lady's inconstancy in favour of a coronet so preyed upon his

mind, that he gladly availed himself of the offer made to him by Government of an important civil appointment in India, seeking, in so complete a change of life, that peace which he failed to realize amid the scenes of former happiness. He had never married, and as he possessed the bulk of the family property, and the estates were not entailed, it will be readily imagined that the general wished me to make a favourable impression on so important a personage. This wish was completely gratified; for it so happened that, without premeditation on my part, I took the old gentleman's fancy amazingly. He was pleased to consider me the exact counterpart of himself at the same age. "Yes, Harold," he would say, "though you may not believe it, your old uncle was as handsome a fellow at one-and-twenty as you are, and almost as self-willed"—a character he would speak of more approvingly than it deserved. It was certainly a true one, for the over-indulgence, or rather, the total want of discipline of my boyhood, had never been counteracted, and I was in the habit of considering myself at perfect liberty to follow my own inclination on all occasions. This induced me to accept my uncle's frequent invitations, or I am sure I should not have done so from motives of interest; indeed, he did his best to make my visits to him agreeable. Handsome apartments were appropriated to my sole use at Carlton Hall, my uncle's seat in Derbyshire, and he made a very liberal addition to my already ample allowance from my father for my private expenditure.

I need not describe my career at the university; it was nothing remarkable. I did not exceed my income, simply because it was sufficient for all my wants, and I passed with tolerable credit.

It had been arranged by Sir Harold and my father that I should go to Carlton Hall immediately after my examination; but it had been put into my head by a friend who wished to travel, that I ought to go abroad for a year or two, under the auspices of a private tutor, which tutor my considerate adviser himself proposed to be. I quite approved of the suggestion; and inclination being, as usual, my guide, I lost no time in acquainting my father with my intention. I could see that my request was received with some disappointment by Sir Harold; but, with his usual indulgence, he agreed with my father that I should, in this instance (as in most others), have my own way. So, with the Rev. Augustine Loftus as my companion and guide, I proceeded at once to Germany.

I had now determined to read very steadily; so we entered very little into society, and when we had visited every place of note in that country, we decided upon making a pedestrian tour through Switzerland. The charming scenes through which we passed have been so frequently and so well described by other travellers, that I will merely add my tribute of admiration to the descriptions of others, and proceed at once to our final destination, which was Rome.

Twelve months had elapsed since we left England, when we found ourselves located in a picturesque villa, beautifully situated on the banks of

the Tiber. My reverend friend remarked, when we first took possession of this residence, that it was "the very place for study." I rather differed from him at the time, and proved myself to be right afterwards. Surrounded by classical associations, I gradually gave up reading for the study of classical art in the more tangible form of painting and sculpture, and in the interesting relics of the past, with which the neighbourhood of our Italian home abounded. It was at Rome that I resumed the study of music too, and my evenings were usually devoted to that pursuit, while those of my reverend friend were passed with an Italian monk in the study of theology. I thought my occupation the more harmless of the two.

One evening, at a concert, at which the music was too scientific to be interesting to any but the initiated, I met my old friend and instructor, Mr. Morell, who had been master of the choir when I was at Eton school. He recognized me immediately, in spite of my moustache and an additional foot of stature, and seemed delighted to renew our former friendship. He was as enthusiastic as ever on his favourite theme, observing that we were now in a country where a man might really enjoy music without being considered a fanatic.

"Have you left Eton, then, entirely?" said I.

"Yes," he replied, "I gave up the appointment at last; none of the authorities would enter into my views on the subject of church music, so I vacated in favour of a more *fashionable* leader."

I smiled as I recollected all the good man's failures and disappointments.

"Ah! I remember you endeavoured in vain to inspire the Etonians with a taste for the ancient composers; but the clergy there at that time did not possess a note of music amongst the whole set. They must have tried your patience."

"They did indeed," he replied; "but I am now amply repaid. What divine strains we have heard to-night!"

The performers were now preparing to depart, and Morell offered to introduce me to any of the leading members of the profession with whom I might wish to become acquainted, an offer which I gladly accepted. Then, looking at his watch, he observed,—

"There is midnight mass in the Sistine chapel, for which we may be just in time, if you would like to go. *There* you *will* hear Palestrina in perfection."

I accompanied him, and fully shared in the admiration expressed by my friend for that unequalled choral music.

After that evening I became so fascinated with the society of my musical friends, that I had very little time to spare for the Rev. Augustine Loftus, who was, on his part, experiencing a different effect from the atmosphere of Rome. His favourite resort was a neighbouring convent, of which his friend, the Italian monk, was a distinguished member. Under these circumstances my tutor was quite justified in the course he adopted

of writing to my father to resign a post which had become a sinecure. Then came letters from home, entreating me to return according to my promise. Sir Harold seemed even more anxious than my father on the subject; he begged me to recollect my position in life. "You are not," he wrote, "destined to be a professor of music, but the responsible possessor of large estates in your own country, and, I trust, an influential member of her senate." I could not bear the idea of this *responsible* position. I thought my present freedom from all care and anxiety infinitely preferable. "I am sure I can never endure the thraldom of parliamentary life," I thought, "any more than that of the marriage my worthy relatives have proposed for me." "No!" said self-will, "I will choose my own pursuits; and most decidedly I will choose my own wife."

I may as well mention, in this place, that the lady they had selected for me was my cousin, the daughter of my uncle Mordaunt; the idea had been discussed between the two old gentlemen on the occasion of a visit paid by my father at Mordaunt Abbey during my school days. My cousin was several years younger than myself, and the only recollection I retained of her was that of a fair-haired child, who appeared to spend half the day in playing extraordinary compositions of her own on an old-fashioned pianoforte; and though the performance was probably clever for a child, it was so far from pleasing to my fastidious ear, that it actually prejudiced me against the young performer. Certainly I made a point of avoiding her after hearing her name coupled with my own, and I managed to decline my uncle Mordaunt's invitations, on the plea of being previously engaged to spend my vacations with Sir Harold Arlington.

Notwithstanding the repeated remonstrances of my friends, I continued to reside at Rome, where, for many months after my separation from my tutor, I greatly enjoyed the society to which I had been introduced by Morell. I made innumerable excuses for remaining abroad; at length Sir Harold and my father grew weary of opposing me, and when I represented that my Continental tour would be very incomplete if Paris were omitted, I even gained their reluctant consent to my wishes to proceed thither. Thus consoled I left Rome and its various attractions with rather less regret than I should otherwise have done. I took leave of the reverend gentleman, my quondam tutor, at the portal of the convent I have before mentioned. He had obtained leave to speak for the last time to the *heretic* who had been his friend. This parting depressed my spirits more than anything else; I could not help feeling sorry for the melancholy mistake of a really clever man, and one who was in other respects a worthy character.

All gloomy feelings, however, were now dissipated, as I pursued my interesting journey to Paris; here a scene of enchantment was spread before me. I had brought letters of introduction to the English ambassador, and to several French families of distinction, whose brilliant *salons* were at once thrown open to me, and I not only attended the public

receptions at the Tuileries, but was admitted to the private parties of the King and Queen; in fact, my time was passed in one continued round of fascinating yet refined pleasures.

Days, months, years rolled on, and found me still in the French capital, still neglecting the frequently expressed wishes of my best friends, but their patience was at length exhausted. It was on the last day of the year 18—, I had just attained the age of seven-and-twenty; I was that morning indolently sipping my coffee in my luxurious bedchamber in the Rue Castiglione, when my valet entered my room with my English letters and papers. It must be confessed that I opened the latter with the most interest, my long residence on the Continent having estranged me from most of my friends in England; yet one in the handwriting of my father caught my eye. I threw down the *Times* I had just unfolded, and hastily taking up the letter I broke the seal. I had not heard from the general for many months; he had a mortal aversion to letter-writing at all times, and, moreover, he was considerably offended with me at that particular time. The letter was as follows :—

"DEAR HAROLD,—This will be my last attempt to urge your return to England; if you still refuse to comply with my wishes when you have heard the startling intelligence I have now to communicate, I give you up. You have only yourself to blame for the misfortune that has occurred in our family—misfortune, indeed, to you, the acknowledged heir. Your uncle, Sir Harold Arlington, is married! actually married! Grieved and mortified at your continued neglect, he worried himself into a fit of gout; he was ordered for change of air, by his physicians, to Cheltenham, and there, as I understand, he met with a designing old country parson and his daughter, who were extremely attentive to him during his illness, and who finally cajoled him into making *her* Lady Arlington, and himself —a fool! Yes, a pretty fool he has made of himself in his seventy-fifth year. And *you*—I repeat it—*you* are the sole cause.

"I do not of course apprehend the loss of the baronetcy, that would be *too* ridiculous; but you will recollect that the estates are not entailed, and if this woman should gain an influence over your unhappy uncle, you may some day have the pleasure of supporting the title and the dignity of the family upon something less than your present allowance. Oh, it will be very pleasant! You may *then* live in France to escape your creditors! I have but one thing more to say: it is just possible that you may even *now* partially regain your uncle's favour by coming home immediately; and at least you may be some comfort to—

"Your disappointed, but affectionate father,

Portland Place, December 29th. GEORGE ARLINGTON."

I laid down the letter with feelings of mingled regret and amusement, —regret for the annoyance I had given to my father, and amusement at the absurd catastrophe of which he chose to consider my conduct the cause. Sir Harold married! I could scarcely believe it! I laughed aloud.

"Mais qu'y a-t-il, Monsieur?" said Adolphe, who was lingering over the preparation for my morning toilet. "Monsieur est bien gai ce matin."

"Not much to be *gai* about either, my good Adolphe," I replied. "I am, I fear, disinherited!"

I then explained to him in his own language the purport of the general's letter, and the necessity of hastening our departure from Paris. Adolphe was dismayed, and would have remonstrated, but I silenced him peremptorily.

"It *must* be," said I; "so if you do not wish to accompany me, find some one to fill your place."

I felt that the time had now arrived when I must *positively* acquiesce in my father's wishes, as I could fully appreciate his disappointment and vexation at this unforeseen and ridiculous event. For myself I cared nothing. I had always been too liberally supplied with money to know its value, and I thought the old baronet had a perfect right to dispose of *his*, and amuse himself as he pleased.

"Replenish my card-case," said I to the discomfited Adolphe. "I shall get over the unpleasant business of leave-taking without delay, as we really must be off as soon as possible."

In reply to my father's letter I wrote to announce my intention of being in London in a week from the date of mine, offered him my condolence on the recent *melancholy* event, and asked him whether it would be advisable to offer the same to Sir Harold, remarking that, like Sir Peter Teazle, he would most probably find he had "committed a crime which carried its own punishment along with it."

My Parisian friends were, of course, in despair at receiving my adieux, and probably forgot my existence before I was well over the Channel. I need not describe that well-known voyage, nor the journey to London, though it was rather more interesting when accomplished by means of four posters than it is at present; it is sufficient to say that we arrived safely in Portland Place. There I was received with the warmest affection by my kind and forgiving father. He was so delighted to have me once more at home, and I was so pleased to see him looking so well and happy, that we quickly got over the embarrassment each felt at the moment of meeting. Our conversation naturally soon turned upon the subject of my uncle's recent marriage, and I ventured to inquire if he knew what sort of a person the bride was,

"I do not," said the general; "I have not even asked her ladyship's age. Report says that while her father administered spiritual consolation, the daughter attended to the creature comforts of the invalid, and made herself so necessary to him, that, to secure the continuance of such valuable services, the old fool married her."

"And what course do you wish me to pursue on this interesting occasion, my dear sir?" I inquired. "Under different circumstances I should very naturally pay my respects to Sir Harold on my return to England, but I cannot intrude upon the happy pair in the second week of their honeymoon."

"Certainly not, my dear boy," said my father; "but you may write to your uncle to announce your arrival, and say a few civil words on his late insane act, if you can."

The following morning I wrote according to this advice, and by return of post I received a reply to my letter. It was thus expressed :—

"Many thanks, my dear nephew, for your kind congratulation on my marriage. Permit me to offer mine in return on your arrival in England. I will not now repeat the extreme regret I have felt at your protracted absence, as I should be sorry to allow any unpleasant feeling to mar my present felicity. [Here an impatient "pshaw!" escaped me, and a stronger expression broke from the General.] All is forgiven, and I am anticipating our meeting with the utmost pleasure. Lady Arlington is also very anxious to become acquainted with one in whom I take so deep an interest. If your father can spare you, come, then, my dear Harold, and remain with us during our sojourn at Carlton, which will be for the remainder of the honeymoon, and witness the happiness which only needs your presence to render it complete.

"Believe me,
"Your very affectionate Uncle,
"HAROLD ARLINGTON."

"*Carlton Hall,*
January, 18—."

This letter quite overcame my gravity, and I could not help laughing immoderately; at last, seeing my father look somewhat annoyed, I said—

"Do you really think, sir, that I am called upon to victimize myself so far as to accept this singular invitation? Consider the awkwardness of the thing."

"You ought to put up with it as you are now circumstanced, Harold," said my father; "pray do not run the risk of offending your good uncle again. He is, I assure you, much more cordial with you than I ever expected him to be; and, much as we may both deplore his folly, we must acknowledge that he has an undoubted right to please himself; besides, I do not think you will want entertainment at Carlton!"

"Very possibly," I replied; "but really I shall be sorry to see the old place changed, as it must now be; it was a real liberty-hall in Sir Harold's bachelor days."

"Ah, Harry, you now see your own folly. It might have been liberty-hall still, had you looked after your uncle. He loves you as a son, and was constantly lamenting that you did not return his affection. He has frequently told me that his first earthly wish was to see you happily married, and filling your proper place in society; *now* I cannot but fear that this kind interest in your welfare must be considerably diminished."

"So far as it regards my marriage, dear sir," I replied, "I cannot regret it. I have never yet seen the woman I could love sufficiently for such a sacrifice. Indeed, I much doubt whether I shall ever love at all."

"And, pray, why should you think so?" said my father.

"Because I scarcely can hope to meet with my *beau ideal* of what a wife ought to be."

"May I inquire what that *beau ideal* may be, my fastidious son?" said he.

"It is founded on the recollection I retain of one who was most dear to us both," I replied. "Your own choice gave me a mother who was a bright example of all that is lovely in the female character. I have never yet seen her equal."

This allusion to my departed mother filled the old soldier's eyes with tears. He never heard her mentioned without deep feeling to the last day of his life.

It was arranged that evening that I should spend the ensuing fortnight with the newly wedded pair. Adolphe could scarcely restrain his wrath when he heard that we were to leave London directly.

"Mais, Monsieur, c'est absolument affreux! Nous sommes à peine arrivés! et la campagne est si triste en hiver!"

"It is absolutely necessary we should go, Adolphe, so pack up my traps, and grumble over it as little as possible."

He obeyed with an air of melancholy resignation.

England was not then, as now, entirely intersected by its innumerable iron roads, so we posted comfortably down to my uncle's seat in Derbyshire.

Carlton Hall was situated in the loveliest part of that picturesque county. It was built in the Elizabethan style, though of more modern date, and was infinitely more commodious than were the mansions of that period. It was surrounded by a richly wooded park, which, having an invisible boundary, appeared to extend to the blue and distant hills. The house was approached by a noble avenue of chestnuts, which, in their wintry garb of sparkling white, elicited an admiring exclamation even from the town-bred Adolphe.

"You should see them in summer," said I. "It is a fine old place; and it will certainly be provoking if it should pass away from our family. I really think I must make myself agreeable to my new aunt."

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when we arrived at the hall. I was received by Hawkesly, the old butler, with every demonstration of respectful welcome. He informed me that his master and mistress had gone out for a drive, and would be home very shortly—begged to know whether I would take any refreshment, or be shown at once to my apartments. Having taken luncheon on the road, I preferred the latter course, and accompanied by Adolphe, I followed the housekeeper to the rooms I had always occupied at Carlton, the old lady emphatically assuring me that I should find nothing changed there. This was quite true; everything which had been formerly appropriated to my use was left in its pristine order, and I felt really touched by this mark of attention on the part of my uncle, after my own neglect.

Adolphe insisted upon a much more elaborate toilet for me than I considered necessary for the occasion; but, feeling very indifferent on the

subject, I allowed him to have his own way. In due time I descended into the drawing-room; that apartment was still unoccupied, so I amused myself by examining the various changes which had been made there since I had last seen it. These were, in themselves, trifling; yet an air of comfort and refinement was diffused over the whole, which I felt sure had not previously existed. I observed that draperies of lace had been added to the heavy silk with which the large windows were shaded. In the conservatory beyond, foreign birds with brilliant plumage fluttered in their fantastic cages, amidst rare and beautiful exotics; a few of the latter were also blooming in choice vases within the room, evidently placed there by a more tasteful hand than that of my uncle's housekeeper. On a small work-table, with several other ladylike trifles, lay a gossamer handkerchief trimmed with lace, on the corner of which was embroidered, in flowery letters, the name of "Evelyn."

"A very pretty name, at all events," thought I. "Judging from the accessories, my imagination would paint Lady Arlington as a very elegant personage; but my father's idea is more likely to be correct, that she was some ancient spinster who had despaired of matrimony, when fate threw poor old Sir Harold in her way."

I replaced the handkerchief which I had been examining somewhat unceremoniously, and as I did so I heard a slight movement in the conservatory. I looked towards the place from whence the sound came, and my eyes rested upon a vision of youth and beauty such as I never expected to behold in living woman. She did not at first perceive my presence, so I gazed for a moment upon this last and best addition to the scene. I was so completely taken by surprise at the sight of this young lady, that I am sure it was with more than a schoolboy's awkwardness that I presently sprang forward to extricate the fringe of her shawl from a branch of camellias, round which it had become entangled.

"Thank you very much," she said, in the sweetest accents, "for saving my favourite flowers; they were indeed in peril."

I of course expressed my pleasure at having been favoured with an opportunity of rendering her a slight service; and then, supposing her to be, like myself, a visitor to the newly married pair, I said,—

"Sir Harold and Lady Arlington have not yet returned from their drive."

"But just returned," she replied. "Sir Harold has driven round to the front court to inquire for you,—if I am right," she added, "in taking you for Mr. Arlington?"

I bowed assent, and was about to inquire to whom I had the honour of speaking, when she exclaimed,—

"I hear the dressing-bell. I shall be late for dinner, which I know would annoy Sir Harold; so pray excuse me."

She was gone, leaving me in some doubt whether I had seen a woman or a vision.

"Whoever she may be," I thought, with considerable satisfaction, "she will enable me to pass away the time here much more agreeably than I had anticipated. I shall much prefer taking a part, under the circumstances, in a quartett than a trio." And musing thus, I could not help feeling grateful to Adolphe for making me dress with care. Pacing up and down the large room, I puzzled myself in trying to guess who the young lady could be. Suddenly a bright idea occurred to me; she must be the favourite bridesmaid! *l'intime* of the bride, remaining with her during the honeymoon! What could be more natural? In Sir Harold's place, I should certainly not have chosen such an arrangement, but it suited me as his guest exactly. The bride's fair friend would become mine; she would tell me all I so much wished to know about this singular wedding; we should be——"Ah! my dear father, you were right, after all, when you said I should not want entertainment at Carlton!"

My soliloquy was here interrupted; the drawing-room door was thrown open by a servant, and my uncle entered, leading, ***not*** the antiquated bride I had somewhat nervously expected, but—good heavens!—the lovely subject of my thoughts, looking in her light dinner-dress, if possible, more lovely than ever!

"Well, Harry, my boy," exclaimed Sir Harold, "how are you? I am delighted to see you once more on English ground; but I find I am not to have the pleasure of introducing you to my wife" (I started; an undefined fear had stolen over me, which was at once realized by his concluding words), "for I understand you have already met."

My uncle retained my hand, and looked me steadily in the face, as if to ascertain the effect of this announcement; so I felt obliged to stammer forth my congratulations, expressing myself in the most incoherent manner upon the "pleasure—happiness—honour" I then experienced. I scarcely ventured to look at the bride; and it was fortunate for me that a note was at that moment brought in for my uncle which required an immediate answer, as it gave me a few minutes' time to recover from my extreme surprise.

"Eva, my love," said he, turning to the lady, "lend me your portefeuille; it will save me a journey to the library."

She crossed the room to fetch it, and as she was bending over the old man to arrange the writing materials conveniently for him, I had leisure to make my silent observations upon her beauty, the benefit of which I will now communicate to the reader. What a contrast did the pair present!—the girl's youthful figure, slight and elastic, yet promising superb womanhood, beside that infirm and stooping form! her rich brown hair—glazed, as it were, with gold from the brilliant light of the chandelier above her—literally touched his venerable white locks; her exquisitely fair complexion, though mantling with the roseate hue of health, paled beside the old man's ruby-tinted visage; and her eyes, how shall I describe

them? they were at that moment veiled by the downcast lashes, black as night; but when she raised them, their dark brilliance gave a rare and peculiar charm to her beauty, the style of which led one to expect eyes of a lighter colour and softer expression; yet the other features harmonized perfectly well with the bewitching eyes, the whole countenance being radiant with mind. Screened by an engraving, with which I appeared to be engrossed, I gazed in wonder at this young creature. Judging from that countenance, I thought there should be a soul within, and yet the most frivolous of her sex could not have acted in a more worldly manner, sacrificing the very spring-time of her existence to a man old enough to be her grandfather, in exchange for his miserable wealth! Not all her beauty could atone for conduct so heartless; in fact, I indignantly thought, it increases her sin; she has thrown away the bounteous gift of Heaven! I was becoming every moment more virtuously indignant with my fair hostess,—yet I like to linger over the first evening. I can even remember her dress, which was composed of the rich material called moiré antique, (the only silken fabric, by the way, of which I know the name); the colour, a soft grey; a quantity of delicate lace shaded without concealing the beautiful bust and arms; a few well-chosen ornaments, and a choice bouquet of bright exotics completed the picture. The lady's fair hands were now occupied in folding the note Sir Harold had written, and I then looked for the fatal gold circlet, in her case surely the badge of slavery; but it was not to be discerned among the numerous rings with which she had adorned her slender fingers.

The note being despatched, dinner was immediately announced, and Sir Harold desired me to conduct Lady Arlington to the dining-room, while he slowly followed, leaning upon the arm of a footman. "He is muchmore in firm than he used to be," I thought; "he needed no such support when I last visited Carlton." I could not at first conquer the embarrassment caused by my singular position, but Lady Arlington did the honours of the table with such perfect ease and grace, and both she and Sir Harold looked so serenely happy, that I began to think they must be better matched in reality than in appearance. My uncle, meanwhile, endeavoured to draw me into conversation, and asked numerous questions relating to my travels, in which the bride seemed to take so much interest that, in my attempts to gratify her flattering curiosity, I gradually recovered my usual self-possession, and we became a very merry party that evening, notwithstanding our proverbially awkward number. I was somewhat surprised to find that Lady Arlington had never been abroad, and having expressed myself to that effect, she replied, "You would, no doubt, be more surprised if you knew how very retired my life has been; with the exception of two or three visits to London, it has been passed in a quiet country house."

I was on the point of asking in what part of the country she had resided, when Sir Harold interrupted me, as I thought rather quickly, by saying,—

"You must help me, Harry, to show my Evelyn all that is worth seeing in London first, and then I shall try to bespeak your services to escort us through the French capital; it must be wonderfully altered since I was there."

I gladly accepted the proposal, and shortly afterwards Lady Arlington rose from table: before leaving the room, however, she begged Sir Harold to take her place, as it was nearer the fire than her own; she then, with her own fair hands, arranged his cushions, and placed his footstool for him, though I hastened to her assistance. As to the old gentleman, he received these attentions more as a right than as a favour; in fact, their manner to each other resembled that which might exist between an affectionate parent and child so it was not difficult for a third person to forget their real relationship. When she had left us, rather an awkward silence succeeded her departure; at length my uncle said,—

"I do not ask you, Harry, to give me your opinion upon my marriage, I can guess all you would say,—'Youth and beauty sacrificed—May and December,' and all that ever has been said and sung upon such unions as ours; but be not too hasty in your conclusions: Evelyn consulted the wishes of a kind and good parent when she accepted my proposals; she had no prior attachment, and I trust she may never have cause to repent the part she has acted in becoming the wife of an old man who fondly loves her. She secures a good establishment for the present, with the prospect of one day being a rich young widow, free to make a more suitable choice."

This cool speech made my blood boil with indignation. "A pearl cast away indeed," I muttered; contenting myself, however, with remarking, audibly, that I hoped his bride duly appreciated his excessive generosity.

Sir Harold took no notice of my sarcastic tone, and continued to converse very cheerfully upon all that had occurred since our last meeting; at length, pushing the wine towards me, he said,—

"You must take care of yourself, Harold; either the claret or the cushions, which Eva has so comfortably arranged for me, must bear the blame of my inability to do so; I begin to feel quite drowsy."

He was soon asleep, and the sonorous music which now formed my sole amusement was the only interruption to my solitary meditations. Presently, as if by tantalizing contrast, the rich, full tones of a harp vibrated upon my ear; I opened the door to catch the sounds more distinctly, and after listening for a few minutes I could no longer refrain from seeking the performer. I entered the drawing-room, and finding that the music proceeded from an apartment opening from it, which my uncle designated "Eva's boudoir," of course I could not enter therein without special permission, so I gave myself up to the delight of listening to some of my favourite melodies played with exquisite skill and taste. The music ceased, and Lady Arlington entered the room, gaily singing

the air she had just been playing. She started when she saw me, and exclaimed,—

"I thought you were with Sir Harold, Mr. Arlington?"

"I was," I replied, "until he no longer required my company; I trust his dreams may prove more entertaining."

"Poor old man," said she, with *naïveté*, "you see he requires a siesta at his age; you will excuse him."

"Oh, certainly," I said, much amused. "I assure you I have been more than recompensed for the want of his conversation; and you, Lady Arlington, do you generally on these occasions enchant the ears which walls are *said* to possess, with such sounds as I have been so fortunate as to hear to-night?"

"If you mean to ask in plain English whether I practise my harp, I answer that I do so, if only to please my dear father, who is an enthusiastic lover of music, and would be greatly disappointed if I gave it up."

I began to have quite a respect for the "designing person." But then, by his conduct to his lovely daughter, he had proved himself even more worldly than that daughter herself. As these thoughts passed rapidly through my mind, I could not help gazing at her who suggested them, with a feeling of compassion, though I must confess she looked too happy to require it.

Having rung for coffee, Lady Arlington roused me from my reverie by saying,—

"Sir Harold has frequently spoken of your talent for music, Mr. Arlington; he says I must hear you sing. May I ask you to indulge me?"

"Your ladyship's wishes are commands with me," I replied, approaching the pianoforte. "This is a new instrument, I perceive."

"It is a present from Sir Harold to me," said the lady; "he has been most fortunate in his choice, and I think you will be pleased with it, although I have heard you are very fastidious."

"Indeed!" said I, smiling; "well, I believe I must plead guilty to that charge." And taking up the "Adelaide" of Beethoven, I observed that it was one of my greatest favourites, but too long for the present occasion.

"Ah, no, indeed it is not!" exclaimed Lady Arlington; "do pray let me hear that all-but-divine song."

Thus encouraged, I could not help throwing my whole soul into both the words and the music, feeling more than ever its wonderful pathos. As my voice died away on the last "A-de-la-i-de," I heard beside me a deep sigh—almost, indeed, a sob,—and quickly turning, saw Lady Arlington's lovely eyes glittering with tears. Ashamed of her emotion, she said, apologetically,—

"You must not think me very foolish for feeling the music so much, but I never heard that song so truthfully interpreted."

Need I say how gratified I was? I now entreated her to favour me with some vocal music, feeling certain, from her clear, sweet tones in

speaking, that she must be a singer. She consented, and proposed a duet. Again I was enchanted: her voice was of the first order, and had evidently been highly cultivated, but it was her natural taste that gave to her singing its great and peculiar charm. Sir Harold entered the room during our performance, and vociferously applauded at the conclusion, saying,—

"Ah, now I see you two will be capital friends. I told you, Eva, that you and Harry would agree famously on the subject of music."

He was right: from that time it was a source of constant and delightful enjoyment to us both.

It was very late that night before any of the party thought of retiring to rest, and then for the first time I was able to reflect on the occurrences of the past day. I felt as one in a dream. I had been suddenly and most unexpectedly placed in a position which warranted an unusual degree of intimacy with a young and beautiful woman; yet, with all her attractions, I felt the admiration which I could not withhold from her excessive beauty more than counterbalanced by contempt for her as the bride of Sir Harold Arlington. The motive for such a marriage must have been mercenary indeed! And yet by nature she could neither be so cold nor so worldly as such conduct would seem to imply; or whence that excessive sensibility to the power of music? whence that radiant countenance, infinitely more charming than mere beauty of feature, and which gave sure evidence to the contrary? My perplexities increased with these reflections. I felt there was a mystery which I was unable to penetrate, but which would at least save me from becoming *too* lavish of my admiration for my uncle's youthful bride. This was my last thought as I closed my eyes on the night which followed that eventful day.

Alas for the instability of human resolves! the next morning when Lady Arlington descended to the breakfast-room, fresh and blooming as the spring, I forgot mine, and all my angry feelings melted away in her presence, like snow in sunshine.

GLEANINGS FROM A PARISH REGISTER.

The system of registering the births, marriages, and deaths in a settled community is one of very great antiquity and importance. The first book of the Old Testament affords ample proofs of its being known to and practised by the nations of old, and the works of many ancient writers abound with allusions to the same; but the modern system of registration, as practised in most European countries, is of comparatively recent origin, especially with regard to its general uniformity and legal obligations. The precise date when parish registers were first introduced into this country has been much disputed, but they became general after 1538, although very few of that date are known to be in existence. They were intended to serve as a properly attested record of all the births, marriages, and deaths within the parish district, every parish having its own register provided for that especial purpose. Most of these registers consisted of narrow oblong books, each containing from twelve to twenty leaves, formed, in the earlier cases, of parchment; in the later, of paper. Excepting in size, there was little uniformity in the manner in which they were kept until within the last few years, when properly prepared books were ordered to be provided, containing ruled spaces for filling up with the various particulars necessary for the proper identification of those whose birth, marriage, or death might happen to be recorded. It frequently occurred that the keeping of these registers led to the formation of others, in which parish affairs were noted down from time to time as they occurred. Several of these are known as the "constable's accounts," "churchwarden's accounts," and so on, and relate more particularly to the details of rates or levies raised in the parish, and the manner in which the moneys thus obtained were expended. As records of the social manners and customs peculiar to the period, they are invaluable, many of the entries containing much information of a useful and interesting nature. Unfortunately, hundreds of the more ancient registers have been destroyed, either through carelessness or ignorance, a few only escaping to become the treasured prizes of the historical student. Such was the case with the registers of Marston Trussell, in Northamptonshire.

Marston Trussell—so named from the Trussell family, who anciently had possessions here—is situated about three miles from Market Harborough, being almost equidistant from that town and the field of Naseby, on which Charles Stuart lost his crown, and was compelled to fly, a hopeless fugitive, to Leicester. Some few years ago, the Rev. William Law, the present rector of the parish, had his attention directed to an old and dilapidated-looking chest, which had remained for many years unnoticed and neglected in the village church. Desirous of ascertaining the nature of the documents traditionally believed to be contained in the musty receptacle, Mr. Law caused it to be removed to his rectory, where the

contents were speedily examined. They proved to consist of old papers, odds and ends of rubbish, candle-ends, corks, bits of string, and the like. A closer scrutiny showed to Mr. Law that the papers thus rescued from impending destruction were the original account-books or registers of the various constables, overseers, and churchwardens belonging to the parish of Marston Trussell, and that they extended from 1623 to the year 1750. They were in a most excellent state of preservation, the handwriting being in some instances as fresh and clear as if but recently written. They seem to have remained in the parish chest much in the manner in which they were originally deposited, the oldest documents lying at the bottom, and those of a more modern date being placed at the top—a circumstance which tends to account for the preservation of the former, many of the latter having been at various times destroyed as waste paper. Amongst these papers were some old proclamations of James I. and Charles I.; one of those issued by the last-named monarch being concerning "the effects of certain branches of the statute made in Anno 33, Henrici VIII., touching the maintenance of artillerie, and the punishment of such as vse vnlawfull games, to be put in present execution, by especiall order from the King's most Excellent Majestie." In this proclamation allusion is made to the enactments passed in the reign of Henry VIII. for the purpose of maintaining the ancient custom of "archerie and shooting in long bowes (whereby, in times past, this nation above others has been most famous);" and grave complaints are made to the effect that these laws were no longer properly regarded, by reason of the increase of "unlawful gaming," which "was, and yet is, the great decay of archerie and shooting, and the cause of corrupting the manners of the people." The statute then proceeds to set forth how every male person, under the age of fifty-three years, was to provide himself with proper bows and arrows, for the use both of himself, his servants, and his male children under the age of seventeen; and to practise with the same at least once in every year under pain of fine and forfeiture. All kinds of gaming, such as "bowling, coyting, cloyse, coiles, half bowles, tennis, dicing, table, or carding," were strictly prohibited, and the statute forbidding the same was "to be proclaimed foure times every yeare, and the like to be done in all assizes and sessions, and to continue for *ever*"! Did Charles, when he promulgated this edict, ever dream of a future time when he himself would attempt to beguile the weary hours of his imprisonment at Holdenby, by playing bowls at "my lord the Earl of Sunderland's seat at Althorp"? Perhaps not; for the very same statute expressly states that "all persons having the yearly value of a hundred pownds or above may play at unlawfull games in their own houses"! Justice was evidently a little one-sided in those days, but not much more so than at the present time, when we attempt to suppress the betting office, yet quietly tolerate the existence of Tattersall's!

Turning to the registers themselves, we take up the constable's

accounts for the year 1633, and almost the very first entry relates—true English fashion—to the levying of a tax upon the parish. Indeed, the whole of these accounts are instructive and edifying, as showing the mode in which taxes were formerly levied in England, the frequency of the levies thus made, and the manner in which the sums so collected were usually expended. The entry alluded to runs as follows:—

"A levie made ye 7th day of Aprill, after 12d. ye yard-land."

Similar items occur in rapid succession. Thus:—

"A levie made ye 29th day of June, after 12d. ye yard-land. Another levie made ye 9th day of July, after 12d. ye yard-land, and to pay harves [halves] a ye training (of the local militia or train-bands), and to buy capons and chickens for ye Kinge."

(From this and other items it would appear that Charles had a strong *penchant* for poultry.)

"A levie made ye 20th day of July, after 12d. ye yard-land, to hire a carte for ye Kinge's carrige."

"A levie made ye third of August, after 12d. ye yard-land, to buy a loade of old hay for ye Kinge."

"A levie made ye 23rd of September, after 20d. ye yard-land, to pay quarter-money and other charges."

There seems to be some difficulty respecting the precise meaning of the term "yard-land." In *Notes and Queries* (3rd series, vol. ii., p. 465), a writer states that "this measure, like the perch, was different in some parts of England from what it was in others. At Wimbledon, in Surrey, it equalled fifteen acres; in some places it was twenty, in others thirty, and others as much as forty. In a MS. of the abbacy of Malmsbury is the following:—'Virgata terræ continent 24 acres, et 4 virgatæ constituent unam hidain et quinque hidæ constituent fædum militaire.' This uncertain quantity is called, in some old statutes and MSS., a 'verge of land.'"

A *yard* was originally the dimensions round the body, till the time of Henry I., who ordered it to be the length of his arm. The entry of each levy is followed by details of the sums collected, the names of those paying the same, and, in some instances, the names of the defaulters. The moneys thus obtained were expended in paying the local quota of the King's taxes, providing necessaries for the use of the King and his Court, the relief of the poor, the constable's travelling expenses, and a few minor charges. Amongst the King's taxes, the quarter-money and the ship-money obtain a due share of prominence; for instance, in 1636 the constable writes:—

"Item.—Spent ye 27th day [of January], when I was at Rowell [Rothwell], about ye equall taxing of ye shipp-money, and them that were with me, ijs. viijd."

Again:—

"I spent ye first day [of March] at Rowell, ye third time that I was called about ye shipp-money, xd."

In addition to this revolution-breeding tax, the parishioners of Marston Trussell were compelled to contribute largely towards the supply of the royal Court with provisions, as shown by the subjoined items :—

"Advanced to the Kinge's purveyiour for 2 capons, 20d."
"Advanced for 3 young turkies, 3s."
"Advanced for 3 gallons of barley, 7d."
"Advanced for 12 pound of butter, 2s."
"Advanced for 8 chickens, 6d."
"Advanced for 36 trusses of hay, 24s.," &c.

Again :—

"Payd for 2 capons for ye Kinge, 2s. 6d."
"Payd for 3 gallons of barley to feed ye capons, 13d."
"My deputie spent, when he delivered ye capons at Harbrow [Harborough], 10d."
"Payd for 3 turkies and chickens, 6s."
"My deputie spent, when he delivered ye same,——."

Again :—

"To Joseph Spence, for going with ye Kinge's carrige to Kingsthorpe (near Northampton), 19d."
"Spent, when I went to provide hay for ye Court, 2d."
"For my horse, 2d."
"For 12 pound of butter for ye Court, 4s. 6d."
"For 8 chickens ye same time, 4s."
"For a capon, providing, 12d."
"My deputie spent at Wellingborow [Wellingborough], when he delivered ye (same), 13d."
"For his horse, 2d."

The constable appears, for some unknown reason, to have shirked the carrying of the provisions intended for the King, and the continual recurrence of items similar to the foregoing shows that Charles was a very expensive neighbour. As the crisis of his reign approached, these exactions became heavier and more frequent, and the resources of the parishioners must have been seriously impaired by the continual strain thus imposed upon them.

Another source of expense was the relief of the casual poor, who, provided with a pass from constable to constable, wandered from one end of the kingdom to the other, as indicated by the following items :—

"Given to a woman with a pass from constable to constable, 2d."
"To two poor women and three children, with a pass from constable to constable, 2d."
"To a man, with a pass from constable to constable, 2d."

Twopence appears to have been the fixed scale of relief. Sometimes the language of the constable is more expressive than polite. Thus :—

"To one big-bellied woman with a pass, 6d."

Such coarsely worded entries are, however, exceptional. If these registers are trustworthy, Celtic poverty is no effect of modern legislation; it

existed long before the Act of Union, notwithstanding Fenian assertions to the contrary. Thus we read,—

"To two Irishmen, with a pass from constable to constable, 2d."
"To an Irishman and his wife, with a pass from constable to constable, 2d."

In perusing these accounts it is curious to note the similarity existing between the professional beggar of the present day and his prototype, who lived two hundred years ago, in the art of exciting the compassion of the benevolent. When the Hartley Pit catastrophe awakened the sympathies of the nation, the crafty mendicant learned to exchange his character of a disabled sailor or soldier for that of the unfortunate collier; and when, a few months since, the wail of suffering Lancashire penetrated into the households of the kingdom, the streets were infested with beggars whose St. Giles's twang belied their impudent assumption of the dialect spoken by the poor unemployed weavers of the North.

During the seventeenth century, when wooden buildings were extremely common, and conflagrations frequent, it was no unusual thing for a well-to-do family to find themselves suddenly rendered penniless and homeless from "loss by fire." The disastrous effects of the conflagrations of this period may be inferred from a proclamation of James I., which was found amongst the Marston Trussell registers. It is dated 1623, and is to the effect—

"That upon the foure-and-twentieth daye of May last, betweene the houres of one and two of the clocke in the afternoone, there happened at Ramsay, a market town within our foresaid county (Huntingdon), a suddaine and wofull accident of fire, which in less than three houres fiercely prevailing burnt downe to the ground two-and-thirty dwelling-houses, with all the barnes, stables, houels, and other edifices to the same belonging, and almost all the household stuff in them, to the value of two thousand pounds and upwards."

In aid of the sufferers—two hundred and sixty in number—the proclamation empowered certain commissioners "to ask relief of all our loving subjects whatsoever inhabiting within our counties of Northampton, Buckingham, Oxford, Berks, and Lincoln." At the back of the interesting document from which these extracts have been made is written, in a firm, clear hand,—

"Marston Trussell. Collected and gathered in ye parish church of Marston Trussell, ye 29 of July, Ao. Dm. 1623, ye sum of two shillinges.—Walter Thornby, rector. Robert Turner, John Smeton, churchwardens."

In the Marston Trussell registers for 1624 occurs an item:—

"Given to Mr. Astol, of Wilbarston [a Northamptonshire village]—had loss by fire, viijd."

This, however, appears to have been a genuine case,—not so many of the others. In these the applicants invariably represent themselves as having "had loss by fire," the scene of the conflagration being usually laid at some distance,—Yorkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, Lancashire, Gloucester-

shire, Staffordshire, and other counties being mentioned. The experiences of the Marston Trussell constables seem to have somewhat resembled that of Mr. Babbage, who related that, whenever he attempted to investigate a case of street mendicancy, the address given by the beggar always happened to be in the part of London most distant from where he stood! Entries of this description occur so late as 1695, when they entirely cease. On the termination of the civil war the "burnt out" mendicant sometimes gave place to the "crippled soldier"—republican or royalist, as the case might be; and the constable's accounts for the year 1638-9 are filled with such entries as the subjoined:—

"Item.—Gave to five cripples that were brought in a cart ye first day, iiijd."

At this period mendicancy was largely on the increase, and the patience of the Marston Trussell parishioners must have been sorely tried by the burdens indicated in later entries, similar to the following:—

"Item.—I gave to *four* vagrants that I lodged all night, and ye 24th day with passes and a guide, iiijd."

"Item.—I gave to *twelve* vagrants ye 21st day, with two passes and a guide, vjd."

In process of time the "cripple" gave way to the "souldier," who in his turn was succeeded by the "seman" or sailor. "Duch" (Dutch) travellers are also alluded to about the period of the Revolution of 1688. In 1686 the number of mendicants had increased to such an extent, that the inhabitants of Marston Trussell were compelled to meet in public for the purpose of discussing the evil. Accordingly, we read that twopence was paid to Thomas Harbon "for calling ye neighbours together." Like most Englishmen, the parishioners, once fully aroused, did not stop half-way, but immediately adopted decisive measures and appointed additional constables, in the shape of "watchmen," as we learn from the communicative register, which informs us that sixpence was "spent of ye watchmen when they first began." The vagrants who found their way to the parish after the watchmen had been appointed were not long in learning "something to their advantage," for almost the very next entry reads thus:—

"Item.—Expenses for taking up two vagrants, lodging, and *whipping*, 1s. 6d."!

Novel as was the expedient of lodging and feeding the vagrants first, and whipping them afterwards, it appears to have been decidedly successful, the number of mendicants afterwards visiting the parish exhibiting a rapid decrease. What would the Social Science Association say to a revival of the system at the present day? But, as in our own time, there were occasionally cases of real destitution, such as is shadowed forth in the following items:—

"A man that died this 20th day of June, 2s."

"The charge of stripping him, 2d."

"For watching him, 2d."
"For making his grave, 1d."
"For carrying him to church, xd."

Many other items relate their own story; for instance,—

"Item.—Spent at Brampton (near Northampton), when we went about ye Dissenters, 10d."
"Item.—For mending the stox [stocks], 1s."

Sparrowcide is not a modern crime, but was extensively practised by our forefathers, the constable's registers for 1701 and subsequent years containing numerous entries of sums paid for the destruction of sparrows; also of hedgehogs and foxes—fox-hunting not being an institution at that period. The mole-catcher is also mentioned.

The expenses connected with the local militia, or train-bands, find their way into these registers. The quota contributed by Marston Trussell to the county force consisted of a single soldier, who, as at the present day, was paid for his loss of time:—

"Item.—Iames Smith, for two dayes, 6s."

Again:—

"For a hat and stockings, 8s. 4d."
"For mending ye pike, 1s."
"For mendon [mending] ye stockings and saish [sash], 10d."

Again:—

"Gave to John Norton, for mending ye pike when it was broken,——."
"To John [surname illegible], for mending ye butt, 7d."
"Payd at ye training at Kettering on ye 23rd of July [1634], 4s."
"Payd for carrying ye armour, 12d.," &c.

That the constable did not allow his duties to interfere with the comfort of the inner man is abundantly evidenced by numerous entries, such as the following:—

"Spent ye 22nd day, when I went to Rowell at ye Statute Sessions, of my dinner ye same day, 1s. 4d."
"Spent in beere, 2d."

These extracts might be largely multiplied, but sufficient have been given for the purpose of showing the nature and value of the records from which they have been taken. In the hands of the historical student these registers might be turned to some account, not only as illustrating the history of the neighbourhood, but as casting some light on the social life of a bygone period, concerning which our knowledge is not over-abundant.

JOHN PLUMMER.

TIRED OF THE BACKWOODS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "UNCLE ANGUS," ETC.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago last spring—that is, in the year 1839—my two brothers started from our township, east of Stanstead, Lower Canada, with each an axe and some "grub," which meant bread and boiled pork, for a dark wood, ravine, and river, a few miles distance from the paternal opening. They had manfully helped to clear land of heavy trees; to build, first a log-house, and then a frame-house, for their father, and then they wanted another world, or farm, to conquer. With young, strong hearts and hands, they went on to their section of wild land.

Five years, and they had done wonders of work; then the youngest brother began to long for the comforts of civilization.

"I tell you, John," he said, "I cannot stand it; five years I have lived, and moved, and had my being in the woods. True, we have done acres and ages of clearing, but we have been almost as much hermits as the bears in winter while we were doing it. Now the mills are going, with a good and growing connection, and the house is ready for you to bring home a queen bee and begin a hive. My name is Walker."

"The house is as much yours as mine, brother; and if you would just look about for a wife, you might be as happy as the day is long."

"That is just what I want to do; but I do not want to choose from a quarter section, with three red-haired girls and one cross-eyed one. I want to go to Montreal and stay a year, and read and study, and see life. There is money in bank, and money always comes to you like bees to buckwheat. I *must* go. I shall break out and burn down Brookwood, where my palace is to be, if I can come back to settle into a contented Benedict or bachelor. I am going to Montreal, and Jack Burroughs and I will club our wits for a year, and see what sort of mark we shall make. We have both got some money to use or lose, and you shall see what will come of it."

The steady, jog-trot brother, who never did anything with a rush, but always had his year's work done in three hundred days, remonstrated quietly against the loss of his chum.

"Literature is a losing business mostly," he said; "poets are always poor."

"But I cannot be poor unless I turn out a dissipated scamp. There is enough here to come back to, and I must see the world, and sing my song through a periodical, or I shall be desperate."

The end of all their talk was that my literary brother went to Montreal. Jack Burroughs was weary of smoking cigars on the steps of his hotel, of ogling pretty girls at church, driving fast horses, and *doing* nothing else. He was therefore delighted to join "a congenial spirit" in a monthly magazine. The *Portfolio* was charmingly got up, and contained

poems with faultless rhymes, sketches of good society, not drawn from life; letters from abroad, written at home; epigrams, with the stings kindly left out; and satires, penned in a charitable spirit. There was a serial written by Jack, full of naughty people—ten disreputable and two decent characters. Contributors saw themselves in print sometimes, for my brother was a generous youth, and he was editor-in-chief. A young lady wrote from Daisy Dell, and enclosed an original poem; the letter was post-marked Scrogg's Hollow, it was sealed with a red wafer (remember this was in a colony twenty years ago), it was written on coarse paper, and yet the elegant young editor was "taken" with the poem. The young sprig wrote encouragingly to the young bud. The poetess took pattern by his letter, and improved her next missive, though the paper was still coarse, and the wafer differed from its predecessor only in being blue. There was tenderness and grace and beauty in her lines, though she had never seen Paris note-paper, or envelopes, or lady's sealing-wax of various delicate colours, and seals with pretty mottoes. It was plain, from her response, that she was a quick observer, and also that she could only evoke beauty from her own heart, and not from a stationer's shop. At first it was pleasant pastime to the young poet to promote the improvement of the young poetess, who was only fifteen. After a time he had queer fits of palpitation when her letters came, or ought to have come; and finally, when the summer days grew long, he decided to go into the country for health, relaxation from arduous duties, and trout fishing.

"I tell you, Jack, her verses have the ring of the true metal."

"Let me see her MS., governor."

The governor hesitated.

"Hand over her letters, and I will write her life, and tell you her fortune, and character, and all that sort of thing. You will *not*, eh? Then she seals with a red wafer, and writes on whity-brown paper, and commits all sorts of sins against taste. I judge a woman by her stationery when I don't see her, and by her gloves and hose when I do."

"She writes like a Hemans, Jack."

"But your invisible inamorata writes on villanous paper, and in an unformed, ungraceful hand, and you are ashamed of her."

"I have told you no such thing; but suppose you are right, would you find fault with nectar because you had to drink it out of pewter?"

"To be sure I would. I am fond of the everlasting fitness of things, the harmonies of the universe, and all that sort of thing. Diamonds should not be set in copper or lead."

"I am going down to Daisy Dell on Monday."

"You don't say so! What a gathering of hearts and darts, of moonlight on the waters, and shimmering of shadows, and singing of groves and doves, and all that sort of thing, there will be! How long do you tarry with the Peri in Paradise?"

"I'll write and tell you all about it."

"Off in five minutes!" shouted the happy editor to his chum on Monday, as he climbed on the stage-coach, with his pockets full of fish-lines, artificial flies, sinkers, and floats, bullet-pouch, powder-horn and caps, a bundle of fishing-rods, and a rifle in a case.

"All good luck to you, governor," said Jack, looking up, but not climbing to shake hands. "Write and let me know what sort of fish you catch; and if you don't catch any, let me know for my comfort."

The traveller was broiled and baked, and buried in dust that day; and finally he was set down before a village inn, though Scrogg's Corner was a slight apology for a village. The inn was a large white building, lacking the inevitable green blinds of this country of sunshine and sunstrokes, and it stood on a corner in "the village of Mayfield," without a tree to shade it, though no one likes lukewarm beer, coffee, or "black strap."

The two front rooms of this "house of entertainment" were bar and reception room. The bar-room, where the traveller made his first entry, was papered with many-coloured pictures of a travelling menagerie. There were a green elephant, a red lion, a blue leopard, an incredible woman taking an impossible leap from a pony to "a high horse," on the wall; and a live dog as big as a moose, three chairs, and a bench on the floor. There were a pen in one corner, containing what such enclosures always contain. The poet was not enchanted, and he took his leather bag to the next room. The carpet was red and yellow, the curtains were red, the hearth-rug was red, the table-covering was red and blue. The looking-glass was festooned with rose-coloured paper, the fireplace had a screen of the same. There were a sofa and some chairs, covered with horsehair, and an open doorway led into a bedroom, that smelt just like the inside of the stage-coach. There was no bell-pull, and the hungry youth watched till some one passed the door, and then ordered dinner. A tidy girl came then, with her hair elaborately curled and a bow of red ribbon in it. "At least we shall have a white tablecloth," said mentally the melting guest. No such thing. The repast was laid on the blue and red cover, and a plate with red flowers, and no napkin. After a time, a dish of smoking boiled potatoes and fried ham and eggs appeared. A piece of mince pie, the contents of which were chopped by a lazy boy, was set for dessert. The beer was sour and warm, and the poet asked for tea; it came quickly, and had a red look and a taste of brick-dust, but it was the only thing in the room that was not hot. The discomfited diner essayed conversation with the spruce waitress.

"Do you know James Brown of this town?" he asked.

"He's an own uncle of mine. He's a good forehanded man, is uncle Brown; but he's odd. He says he never took a newspaper, or bought a book except the Bible and the almanack; and yet he's got a girl who writes for the papers, and he does not doubt she will write a book one of these days. She writes real pretty verses, though she is two years younger than I am."

"Is she as pretty as her cousin?" asked the gallant young man.

"I don't think either of us will be hung for our beauty; but Minnie is cross-eyed, and she stoops, and she is very thin; and she does not care how she looks very much, if she can get a book, or a chance to write."

"Here's a go," thought the poet. "Where is Mr. Brown's house?"

"Just a mile up the north slope."

Toward evening my elegant brother (he had nearly all the grace and charm there was in the family) strolled up the slope. Two more square wooden houses, like the inn, stood out under the sky, to be burned in summer, and frozen in winter. Not a tree except those in the orchard was in sight, and that was some distance from the dwelling. He called at Mr. Brown's, and asked for a drink of water. A gentle lady, who did not look as though her husband was exactly "a congenial spirit," with the Bible and almanack for his only reading, called to her daughter, saying, "Minnie dear, you will draw some fresh water." Wilhelmina Brown was the poetess of my brother's dreams. There she stood, what people call "all warp and no filling,"—a girl of fifteen, tall, unformed, with arms like sticks, bare, and freckled; red hair, on its way to auburn, but this hot day looking decidedly red; and, possibly worse than this, she squinted. No mistake about it; one eye looked one way, and the other some other way. She brought cool water, and spoke in a sweet voice, though timidly. She wiped her wet hands on her white and blue check apron,—not gracefully, for she was bashful; and the gentleman was finer and handsomer than any she had ever seen. Brother came home, and stayed a few weeks, went hunting and fishing, and wrote a large package of poetry, and "Rural Rambles," for the *Portfolio*. In due time he returned to Montreal. Somehow the *Portfolio* failed of success. It could not be for want of talent of all sorts. Somehow Miss Brown's last two letters remained unanswered. They came to hand when the editor was in the country; and Jack Burroughs had a very proper sense of their want of taste and elegance. Brother read Law, and, for aught I know, Physic and Divinity, and wrote; and alternated between Grassville and Montreal for some years. At last he began to ask, "Why do I live?" "Of what use am I?" "Do I make the world happier or better?" He went abroad, to England, to France and Italy, to try to answer his questions. He went as a student of men, of government, of religion, and art. He studied very humbly, and recorded very honestly; and he would sooner have abjured capital letters altogether than place them at the beginning of lines enough to make a sonnet. So entirely cured was he of poetry.

In Paris my charming brother was at home. He had a pride in speaking French like a Frenchman. He visited the *salons* of distinguished women. He became the friend of the beautiful Madame Levernier, the pet of Lafayette, now seventy years old, and as lovely as an infant. In the home of Madame Levernier he met persons of true distinction, and

of almost all nations. One day Madame said to him, "I will show you this evening one of the most beautiful of your countrywomen. She came to me on her way to Italy. She has returned full of inspiration and beauty." Brother waited impatiently for the evening, with an undefined presentiment in his heart. When he found himself honoured by the promised introduction he did not feel as if he and the lady needed to become acquainted. She seemed to be spiritually of his family. "Surely," he said, "in some anterior state of existence I must have known this lady." Miss Lebrun was tall and regal in her style of beauty. Her rich auburn hair was dressed as a coronal, and her amber robes, shaded with black lace, draped her for a most imposing picture. She opened her mouth, like the fairy, to speak gems and pearls; and her companion gave himself up to the overmastering joy of love. Madame Levernier watched the impression made by her favourite with delight. There was a conjunction of happy stars. The gentleman solicited permission to accompany his new friend through the Louvre. She graciously granted it, promising him a note next day, to fix a time for their visit. More joy! He should see her handwriting. Next day he received a charming rose-coloured envelope, sealed with daintiest care; but within was a worn and time-discoloured half-sheet of paper, on which was written the following:—

"MY FRIEND,—We have met again. The cross-eyed, red-haired, unformed girl of fifteen is forgotten. The dream of my life, that began in brightness, that gave me the germs of education, that had in it the golden clue of hope and heaven, was dashed in darkness and despair. But the true soul finds always its resurrection. I am no longer a child full of tremulous fear, but a woman, born to dare and accomplish. You will not think me presumptuous because I say this. You know me better. I welcome your friendship with a true appreciation, but not with a brighter hope than formerly. I want to introduce you to the friends with whom I am travelling. To-morrow at twelve, at the Louvre, you will meet them.

"Your grateful friend,
"WILHELMINA BROWN.

"P.S.—This is written on the blank leaf of your last letter;—thanks for my paper. I ought, perhaps, to say that I have been in Italy with the family of my uncle, my mother's brother. He had a diplomatic appointment from the President of the United States. My mother was born in New York, where my uncle has always resided. The last five years I have spent with these dear relatives, and I have had the best worldly advantages. I fancy I have made some improvement.

"W. B."

Brother returned with Miss Brown's party. He built a house at Brookwood, and brought home the regal poetess the next year, with no fear of his committing arson. I can answer for him that he has not shown the slightest symptom of "breaking out" for twenty years.

WORKING IN THE DARK:

A Romance of the Black Coats.

BY PAUL FÉVAL,

AUTHOR OF "THE DUKE'S MOTTO," "BEL DEMONIO," ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DIAMOND EAR-DROP.

MADAME *la Baronne* Schwartz was still very beautiful. It was now more than twelve years since the paint had dried upon the canvas of her portrait, hung with that of M. Schwartz, beside the mantelpiece. Time seemed to have had but little effect upon that happy and serene loveliness; she still resembled the portrait; her eyes shone with the same soft radiance; no furrow yet marked the large contour of her forehead; the cheeks preserved the firmness of their oval; and, still more rare, the outline of her neck and shoulders had remained irreproachable.

In the full meaning of the expression, we may say Madame *la Baronne* Schwartz was very beautiful, and without the terrible addition of "for her age."

It was now sixteen years at least since Julia Maynotte had changed her name.

Seventeen years had fled since that hour of anguish and of love, when her smile, so stoically docile, had lit up the sadness of the adieu in the silence and solitude of the forest.

Seventeen years! The rose blooms in its fullest glory for a single day; woman has but one spring-time.

And yet Madame *la Baronne* Schwartz was still like Julia Maynotte.

The water of the heavens may trickle for centuries upon the pure beauty of the antique marbles. There are women who are sculptured in marble.

She was beautiful; the Baron Schwartz loved her madly, with the warmth of a young man and the jealousy of an old one.

He, the Baron Schwartz, the conqueror of millions!

She looked young, even beside Edmée Leber, this newly blown flower which had expanded in the warm sunlight of her eighteenth year. You would have taken them for two companions,—two rivals rather, for there was between them at this moment a mysterious breath of anger.

And this word "rivals" has not fallen from our pen without a meaning. In it is to be found the secret of this strange interview. Edmée loved, and was afraid.

They both remained silent. The countenance of the baroness

expressed pain, astonishment, and perhaps also a shade of embarrassment. The young girl remained cold as marble.

A detail which should not here be omitted, in spite of its apparent frivolity, is that since the commencement of the interview the glance of Edmée had been more than once directed towards the magnificent hair of the baroness, the waved masses of which, according to the fashion of the period, fell over and below the ear. It seemed as though the eye of Edmée were striving to pierce or to push aside the veil. The baroness had observed this.

It was she who first spoke.

"Can it be," inquired she, "that my daughter has shown any want of consideration?"

"No, Madame," interrupted Edmée, "that could not be, for Mademoiselle your daughter is very kind, and very well bred."

"My dear child," said the baroness, again taking her hand, and quite in a maternal tone, "I confess I do not understand you. You have, up to the present time, shown much devotion and friendship towards me. My daughter is at an age when girls are often thoughtless and giddy; you would have excused in her any want of tact, or an imprudent word; but if I am the culpable one, I shall forgive myself less easily. Come, be frank with me; you have something upon your mind."

"Absolutely nothing, Madame," said Edmée, with an effort.

"Then why leave us? Why refuse offers of services which are so natural? I know that you have seen better days, and that a very excusable pride—"

"You are mistaken, Madame; I had a brother and a sister who had seen our home a happier one, but they are both dead. I was born after misfortune came upon my family, and I have known nothing but poverty."

"There is some enigma in this, my dear child," resumed Madame Schwartz, without losing anything of her patient sweetness. "I look to you to explain it. You are now feverish and ill; I will not accept your notice, or at least I ask you to reconsider it. Your mother has only you, remember—"

"Madame," interrupted a second time Edmée, whose tone became firmer and almost harsh, "I have never been calmer than at this moment, and I speak to you in the name of my mother."

The baroness rose quickly, and her gesture seemed to express that the idea had struck her that Edmée could not be in her right senses.

To this Edmée quietly answered,—

"Madame, you are mistaken again; I am in full possession of my reason."

"In this case, my dear young lady," replied the baroness, at length taking refuge in her position, and speaking in a tone of severe dignity, "permit me to tell you that our interview has already lasted sufficiently. Supposing it to be necessary—and I do not consider it was necessary—that

you should inform us of the decision you have taken in regard to us, this might have been done by letter, and in two words. I fancied just now that you desired some explanation, and I was willing to comply with your desire, for several reasons that I need not specify. I then thought I perceived in your words a sort of provocation, and menace even, so much at variance with your good sense and your character, that I wished to find out what it could possibly be. My curiosity does not lead me to question you any longer. I do not dismiss you, Mademoiselle Leber, but if your mind is made up to leave us, you must please yourself. Beyond this interview, in which you have not been yourself, I shall ever have you in kind remembrance, and I shall always be ready to testify—"

For the third time Edmée interrupted her, as she rose, and said,—

"Madame, I shall never ask you for your testimony."

A gesture of indignation escaped the baroness, and she moved towards the door as she said,—

"You are free to act as you please, Mademoiselle."

At the moment she turned her back the quick glance of Edmée again endeavoured to penetrate the lateral masses of her hair; but this *coiffure* kept the ear entirely hidden.

"Madame," pronounced she, in a low voice, as the baroness was about to reach the door, "if I had wished only to take my leave of you, I should have had the honour of writing. You are quite right; that may be done in two words. Be so kind as to remain, I have not finished."

The hand of the baroness touched the handle of the door. The young girl repeated, in a still lower but more earnest voice,—

"Madame, be so kind as to remain."

And as the baroness did not stop, Edmée continued,—

"We have changed our lodgings. For the last three months and a half we have lived in Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth, the second door to the left from the Rue Saint Martin."

The handle, which had already turned, re-turned, and the door remained closed. Edmée continued,—

"At the bottom of the yard, in the house which, at the back, overlooks the *messageries* of the Plat d'Etain."

She gasped for breath, like a person who has made a violent effort. The baroness remained motionless; her face was not visible, but the figure has also a physiognomy that may be read. The attitude of Madame Schwartz betokened a sudden thrill of pain. Edmée must have suffered indeed, for in the dark azure of her eyes there was a gleam of cruel pleasure. She concluded,—

"On the fourth story. The windows with blue blinds. . . . You remember?"

Madame Schwartz at length turned, and her beautiful face was so

calm, that a shade of anger, but also of hope, passed over Edmée's countenance.

"Oh!" thought she, "if I were mistaken!"

And this meant, "How I wish I might be mistaken!"

For the good heart of Edmée was worth more even than her beauty.

"You remember? . . ." murmured Madame Schwartz, repeating the last words pronounced. "How should I remember?"

Then, with impatience, and as though she already regretted this question,—

"And what is all this to me?" she inquired.

But it was too late. Her repetition of the question had given the lie to the calm which was upon her countenance. The arrow had reached its mark.

Without waiting for a reply, Madame Schwartz assumed an expression of gentle pity as she said, almost in a whisper,—

"Poor child! I forgot! . . ."

Which, translated literally, signified,—

"She is wandering! we must excuse her."

The earnest eyes of Edmée, fixed upon her eyes, seemed now to read in an open book.

"Madame," resumed she, gently and sadly, "when, for the first time, I entered your house, I was almost a child, and I paid great attention to objects of the toilet. Never had I seen a woman so beautiful, so elegant, so rich, and so simple, as yourself. I soon knew every ornament that you habitually wore as perfectly as if these things had belonged to me. Young girls are thus, at least young girls who are poor. Amongst a thousand diamond ear-rings I could have distinguished the superb brilliants which never left your ears."

Here Edmée's eyes for a second glanced in the direction of the portrait. Madame Schwartz noticed this, and met her thought halfway by saying,—

"Since the birth of Blanche, at which period my husband made me this present, I have never worn anything else, even when I dressed for a ball."

"I knew that, Madame," replied the young girl, "and it was natural that I should think you would be much pained to be deprived of them."

Madame Schwartz opened her eyes in surprise.

Then, but perhaps scarcely quickly enough, she raised her hands to her ears.

Edmée had taken out her purse, and from it the little paper in which was wrapped an object of the size of a grain of maize.

"You frightened me," murmured Madame Schwartz, who tried to smile.

"But you are now reassured, doubtless?" said the young girl, with such bitter sarcasm that the baroness coloured violently.

With a rapid and assuredly an involuntary gesture, the latter raised one of the bands of her hair, thus showing the pendant which sparkled in her ear.

"And the other?" inquired Edmée, coldly.

The baroness hesitated, and her lips, which were white with anger, trembled.

Yet, instead of chastising this extravagant insolence as she might have done, she preserved her smile, and raised the second band, saying,—

"I am not angry with you, Mademoiselle."

"Madame," replied Edmée, in a deliberate tone, hard and sharp as the point of a poniard, "this other must have cost you six thousand francs, and in future you will have three diamond ear-drops."

At the same time she unfolded the envelope, and held out an ear-ring exactly similar to those worn by the baroness, adding,—

"This was the motive of my visit, Madame. The poor do not always think of the resources of the rich. I thought you had been deprived of your ear-rings during three months; and this is the first time I have been able to leave the house."

The baroness remained as motionless as a statue.

Edmée placed the diamond upon the table, bowed, and proceeded towards the door with a firm step.

The dinner-bell now sounded in the courtyard of the *château*, and the clock struck half-past seven.

The baroness made a step as if to follow Edmée. Then she paused and staggered. On the staircase the voice of Baron Schwartz was calling, with a strong Alsatian accent,—

"To table! Military time! Call the ladies!"

The baroness raised her two hands to her eyes, which seemed dazzled. On the story above was heard the piano of Blanche. Outside, the iron gate was opened and clanged to again.

It was almost dark, but the diamond sparkled upon the table, concentrating the scattered rays of the twilight.

"She is gone!" thought the baroness aloud. "What harm have I done her?"

The piano of Blanche was silent; a light step descended the staircase, and Blanche herself, a living rose, burst into the room.

"Mother!" cried she, "you here? . . . without a light? . . . They tell me Edmée has come. Does she dine with us? Where is she?"

"We must not keep your father waiting," was the only reply given by Madame Schwartz.

If you had seen her face in the brilliantly lighted dining-room, you would have admired her extraordinary self-possession. She had regained the appearance of the most perfect calmness. The customs of the house were somewhat patriarchal; in the presence of everybody she held out her

forehead for her husband's kiss,—her husband, despotic, often cross and mistrustful, and still a slave,—and said to him, thus answering all the multifarious questions of Blanche,—

"It's that little Edmée . . . Mademoiselle Leber. She would not stop to take her leave of us."

"Her leave?" repeated the baron.

And Blanche exclaimed, with sudden sadness,—

"Then will she leave us?"

Madame Schwartz took her place in the centre of the table, and added, negligently,—

"She is going to America."

"Artistic disinterestedness!" said M. Schwartz. "Pretty, that girl—very pretty. Thinks she'll get a rich husband over there. Good, the soup. . . . Come back old and without money. Comical!"

The German accent of the great financier gave a very agreeable effect to the elliptical mode of speech he almost invariably indulged in.

Blanche would have liked to ask further questions, but at the table she was probably the only person who took an interest in Edmée Leber.

The arrangements at the dining-table were perfect. Every day after the soup, Savinien Larcin, the playwright from Père Lachaise, was expected to give a verbal report of all the good things in the *Charivari*, the *Corsaire*, and other witty journals. The brilliancy of these organs, in the time of Louis-Philippe, is well known. Millionaires always side with the Government, but they have a weakness for the opposition.

Savinien Larcin, a little literary animal, black as a mole, contented himself with laying his hands on everything he could find. Rather than invent anything, he would have given a new version of the "Maid and the Magpie" for the children's theatre at Paris. But how amusing it would have been! In compiling one insignificant act he would ransack twenty volumes. "A clever fellow!" used to say Baron Schwartz, "and original!"

Alavoy defined him thus:—"A shameless scribe;" and M. Cotentin de la Lourdeville once said of him,—

"A queer fellow, a mixture of the eel, the cat, the monkey, and the ferret, but with the genius of Molière!"

"The *Charivari*," announced Savinien Larcin, "has published the portrait of M. Romien as a cockchafer."

They laughed. Those were simple times.

"The *Corsaire*," added Larcin, "has found a new name for M. de Montalivet. The others," continued he, laughing, "were as old as the *Journal des Débats* . . ."

"That's good!" opined M. Schwartz, "and comical!"

"The *Mode* calls M. Thiers a little coxcomb, and the *Caricature*

hoists at the top of Loban's well-known historical instrument the night-cap of the *Constitutionnel!*"

Was there, then, a period at which France possessed all this sparkling delicacy of wit?

Blanche herself began to laugh, showing two rows of pearls. It does one so much good to laugh. And how could one resist this mention of Loban's instrument, the familiar emblem of the golden mean? They talked of Poulot, which meant M. le Duc d'Orleans, of the Prince of Joinville's ear, the nose of M. d'Argout. M. Larcin knew them all. He earned his dinner well.

But why had the beautiful Madame Schwartz said, *àpropos*, of Edmée Leber,—

"She is going to America"?

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SCHWARTZ SALON.

THERE are some millionaires who frequent the *très-grand monde*, the highest and most exclusive society; but they are rather the exceptions to the common rule. Generally, the *très-grand monde* is a walled city. One must be born in it.

The millionaire may nevertheless find open to him, for certain special reasons, the doors of certain houses belonging to the *très-grand monde*. Reciprocity in this case is of much rarer occurrence. Under any circumstances, the simple millionaire finds great difficulty in attracting to his house those belonging to the *très-grand monde*, even when the latter have special reasons for patting him on the back.

These are simple axioms, to be stated but not demonstrated.

It is superfluous to oppose particular cases to these axioms: the exception confirms the rule. Certainly, you may have met at the millionaire's one of the most exclusive of the dukes of the Academy, or one of the most stuck-up of the chevaliers *du Saint-Esprit*. You may have done so.

But in the case of their wives it is different. No intimacy ever arises between the wife of the commercial magnate and the lady of high fashion.

Of course we except those occasions when the *très-grand monde*, seized with a childish curiosity, wants to see and know everything at any price. We speak of ordinary days, when the Salon Schwartz is itself.

It is a *monde* by itself; perhaps it is not one at all, for the feminine element constitutes the *monde*, and women are somewhat deficient at the house of J. B. Schwartz, albeit a baron.

Alavoy is a bachelor; Savinien Larcin has married an old *comédienne* whom it is dangerous to produce. Cabiron is a widow; Cotentin de la

Lourdeville has his *ménage* in Normandy; the Viscount des Glayeulx is separated from his wife; Touban alone brings with him Madame Touban, —a person well born, insinuating in her manner, and spiteful.

It is not often we meet with a *Marseillais* weighing two hundred and thirty-seven pounds before his dinner; it is therefore with some amount of pride we introduce Alavoy to the ladies. He was amiable, and wore his heart upon his sleeve. He was always perspiring. He was engaged in carrying out some practical idea, and had some experience in land.

Cabiron was starting a business in the advertising agency and puffing line.

"Publicity, that modern lever which moves our civilizations!" Cabiron had a number of set phrases such as this, when he was talking to any one likely to advertise. There were men in his employ who got up special articles and insidious paragraphs for the papers.

The Viscount Honoré Giscard des Glayeulx was descended from a great family; this constituted his means of subsistence. His rank was a sufficient passport to the dinner-tables of wealthy nobodies.

Touban was a practical chemist. He ransacked the fields of science for new and advantageous processes. Madame Touban had a voice upon literary matters.

Cotentin de la Lourdeville had flourished since we first knew him; by turns deputy, journalist, manager of companies, and now an *avocat* in full practice.

At M. Schwartz's everything was business; even to the vaudeville, in the angular person of Savinien Larcin; even to sacred poesy, in the insipid form of Sensitive, who furbished and bartered the oldest materials in warbling his blonde elegies.

Savinien alone was a young man. Cotentin was now white-headed. The others were ranging about forty, like M. Schwartz himself. Madame Touban had never confessed to any definite age.

We have yet to mention a thin, yellow, humble, and decent couple, M. and Madame Eliacin Schwartz. The husband we knew at Caen, factotum to another Schwartz couple, for the fatality of this book is to wade up to the knees in Schwartzes. Eliacin, when married, had fallen under the displeasure of the wife of the ancient commissary of police, now become chief of division at the prefecture; M. and Madame Schwartz, humble personages, poor princes of the blood, belonging to the Schwartz dynasty, were charged with doing the honours, second-hand, at the *château* of Boisrenaud.

That is all. Upon none of those who were there could we find another word to say. And we may observe that nothing of what is conventionally termed "the dramatic" appeared about this opulent and tranquil mansion, apparently in the enjoyment of all that sometimes tiresome gaiety which belongs to the height of prosperity.

The beautiful young girl, Edmée Leber, was about to start for

America! We have seen her, this Edmée, flitting amongst vulgar commonplaces like a fugitive and powerless menace, revealing just a glimpse of mystery.

Beyond this everything was smooth as glass. M. Schwartz, Madame Schwartz, the pretty Blanche, and their guests constituted merely one of the thousand family *réunions* one may see every day, of people who live without caring for yesterday or thinking of to-morrow, excepting, of course, the *business* which with these people constitutes the blood of their veins and the breath of their nostrils.

Even the marriage of the daughter of the house with this famous M. Lecoq was simply a matter of business, the policy of which was more or less questionable, showing a profit and loss more or less worthy of consideration; but in relation to which any unusual amount of emotion was out of the question.

And yet, look you, my readers, there is a prejudice fomented by poets, hypocritical flatterers of indigence; a prejudice which has no need of poets to find acceptance amongst the poverty-stricken crowd, to whom it constitutes an egotistical consolation.

Opulence has its hidden miseries.

Every one says so. Every one believes as much.

Is it a truth? Is it a fatality?

Is not this belief rather a delusion, with which poverty consoles itself?

The fact is, that the ostentation of happiness is offensive; this is the true explanation. But beyond this is there not always something of truth in this popular notion?

Always. At M. the Baron Schwartz's, for example, the most acute observer would not have discovered the smallest symptom of misery or the least pretext for tears. And yet there was a something. But what? Trifles light as air; certain little underhand whisperings which we will at once confess to the reader, in order to keep up that good understanding which is the safeguard of friendship.

In the first place, after the soup, Madame Sicard, the spick-and-span abigail, whispered something to our little Blanche, who coloured up and smiled.

Secondly, at a later period, Domergue approached Madame *la baronne* to render an account of the execution of an order she had given him. The baroness having replied, "Very well," Domergue, as he withdrew, let fall this phrase,—"It will be daylight to-morrow."

And this terrible watchword produced not the slightest effect upon the serenity of this charming lady.

Thirdly, almost at the same moment, M. Schwartz, who had thrown towards his wife a glance of marital admiration in which there was something of inquietude, made a sign to the redoubtable Alavoy, who was conscientiously feeding. This Alavoy, with his magnificent velvet

waistcoat embroidered with flowers in gold, was the most elegant of those whose business consists in carrying out ideas from a commercial point of view.

The sign had doubtless been agreed upon, for Alavoy suddenly laid down his fork and said, with the air of a man who suddenly recollects something,—

"Ha! that's a matter of consequence. Actually, I had almost forgotten to remind you of the Danduran business for this evening."

"Good; I'll attend to it," answered the illustrious banker.

"If it should slip your memory . . ." insisted Alavoy.

"Entered in note-book!" interrupted M. Schwartz. "Time for anything."

M. Schwartz did ample justice to the various courses. Towards the dessert he resumed, addressing his wife,—

"Profit by this Danduran business? Take a turn at the Opera? No? Tired? Well, liberty."

In spite of the fine conciseness of his style, the baron found means to give both question and answer.

He called Domergue.

"The brougham! Return early," added he.

The baroness exchanged a look with the grave valet.

Fourthly and lastly, as the coffee was being served, M. *le baron* suddenly inquired, looking fixedly at his wife,—

"*Apropos*, Giovanna, this must belong to you."

He held between his thumb and forefinger a pretty little key, which he held up to his wife.

Madame Schwartz looked, smiled, and replied,—

"I have been looking for it. It is the key of my middle drawer."

"Comical!" said the baron.

He gave the key to Madame Touban, who passed it to Des Glayeulx, and Madame Schwartz received it from the hands of the dandy Alavoy. She laid it on the tablecloth without any apparent concern.

Around the table the conversation never flagged. One might have compiled a witty journal from all the good things that Savinien Larcin recited by heart. These gay *vaudevillistes* are very useful in the country.

After a few moments the key seemed to have been forgotten. Certainly nobody observed that three or four drops of perspiration had started, like small pearls, from the forehead of Madame *la baronne*. It was very warm; with some people heat has the effect of causing pallor.

Madame *la baronne* was very pale, in spite of the dazzling brightness of her smile. As the key had touched the table, something had adhered to the table-cloth, almost imperceptibly staining its whiteness—a nothing, a grain of dust, an atom. Madame *la baronne*, who had not even deigned to look at the key, had perceived that this atom was of wax. Did she know that with wax one may take the impression of a key? Certain philoso-

phers pretend that ladies have no occasion to look in order to be able to see, and that without learning anything they know all things intuitively. As the party rose from table, Madame *la baronne* said to Domergue as she passed him,—

"I must go to Paris this evening."

Beyond these futile expressions there was nothing, nothing to disturb the peaceful tranquillity of the abode of the Schwartzes.

Edmée Leber, on leaving the *château* of Boisrenaud, had taken the road across the plain and through the wood leading to Montfermeil. In the darkening twilight Edmée thought she could distinguish a strange form gliding amongst the bushes on the other side of the road; we have not said a human form—it was like a reptile with the head of a man, reminding her of the miserable creature, half beggar, half commissionaire, she had before seen in his basket drawn by a dog.

The house in the Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth where Edmée lodged looked out at the back upon the yard of Plat d'Etain. She had often seen Three Pegs in the exercise of his humble calling. Whilst she was weak and ill, the appearance of Three Pegs inspired her with a compassion mingled with terror. More than once, and as if in spite of herself, Edmée had spent hours together in looking at him, manœuvring the paralyzed portion of his body, and accomplishing, by means of his arms, things which required a very considerable expenditure of strength. But at this moment his dog, harnessed to the basket which contained him, should have been galloping on the way to Paris. The last gleams of twilight often deceive the eye, and conjure up visions which have no actual existence.

She went on without thinking further of this incident. It was a long way, and the road was solitary and gloomy; it was a long way even to Livry through the forest, but, alas! it was much longer to reach Paris. And since she had taken the diamond from her purse, her purse was quite empty. Edmée had given her last piece of money at the office of the *bateau-poste*. Edmée, who had laid upon the table of the baroness, in despite of the latter, a jewel of immense value, which not only she did not claim, but which she declared did not belong to her; Edmée had not the means of taking the coach from Livry to Paris.

What was that to her? she felt herself strong. The effect of her fever was like that of intoxication; it seemed to her quite natural that she should undertake, on foot, this journey of five leagues; if the distance had been double, what would it have mattered? Her heart throbbed, her head burned, her eyes swam, but she felt herself strong.

"I know all I wanted to know," thought she. "Now I am cured, quite cured! And I no longer love; I could not have thought it so easy to give up one's love!"

She defied her love, as she had defied the terrors of that long, solitary

road. But, without her knowing it, her breast was heaving with sobs, and her steps were staggering and uncertain. She at length had reached the forest where the road suddenly plunged beneath a thick vault of foliage. After a few steps, the darkness grew so thick that she could scarcely distinguish the objects around her. Already she could make but little progress, darkness was gathering around her brain as well as about her steps; she was not conscious of the weakness which restrained her movements like a heavy chain. She stopped at the foot of a tree, and leaned her forehead against it as she murmured,—

"I must walk on . . . I must walk . . ."

A sound proceeded from the woody covert, but she could not heed it. A buzzing noise was sounding in her ears, and her breath was failing her. Slowly she sank down at the foot of the tree, still murmuring,—

"On, on . . . I must walk on!"

At these moments, which counterfeit so well the agony of death, we have strange dreams. The vision was returning; instead of falling to earth, the form of Edmée met two arms which upheld her gently, and her eyes, before they closed, distinguished vaguely amidst the darkness the hideous silhouette of the man-reptile, Three Pegs, the beggar of the yard of Plat d'Etain.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COMPACT.

THE coach from Vaujours to Paris (Pantin, Bondy, Livry, Clichy, le Vert-Galant, Montfermeil, Coubron, &c.) generally passed by Livry at half-past eight, unless it was beforehand or behindhand, which happened about seven times a week. About twenty minutes past eight a singular procession entered the waiting-room attached to the office. It was composed of two men, upon the back of one of whom was an appendage of oblong form, carrying a sick woman upon a litter formed of a few branches of trees, behind whom followed a man, apparently belonging to the middle classes, of an open, intelligent, and determined countenance.

The aspect of the latter alone, whose name was M. Bruneau, and whom his two companions treated with timid respect, is new to us. In the other two we should have recognized, in the first place, Similor, formerly dancing-master, with his grey hat and rough coat; and, in the second place, Echalot, whose *tournure* was altogether more modest, and who, in his costume of ruined apothecary, appeared invested with a plaintive melancholy. One was the illegitimate father, the other the dry nurse of the young Saladin.

As the litter crossed the threshold of the waiting-room the smoky oil lamp which illumined its precincts lit up the charming features of Edmée Leber. She had just recovered her senses, and the sudden light around her caused her to open her eyes. Her astonished gaze travelled

round the room, as though she feared to meet there some horrible object, doubtless from a confused recollection of her vision. When her eye fell upon the calm and gentle face of M. Bruneau, she started and then smiled.

"I have been dreaming . . ." she stammered.

Then again closing her eyes, fatigued by the light of the lamp, she added,—

"How came you to be with me?"

"We will talk presently, my dear *demoiselle*," replied M. Bruneau; "just now you require rest."

He took the young girl's hands within his own, and pressed them in a paternal manner. Similor and Echalot were standing in one corner of the room, silent, and hat in hand. Echalot had placed under his arm the card-board infant, accustomed to sleep in the most difficult positions. M. Bruneau approached the booking-office, and said,—

"I engage the *coupé*, if it has not already been taken, Madame Lefort."

The woman consulted her register, and said, throwing a significant glance towards Edmée,—

"Two is company and three is none, Monsieur Bruneau; it just happens that the *coupé* is disengaged. The people about Vaujours prefer the interior."

Similor nudged Echalot. M. Bruneau came towards them and said,—

"I have no further need of you."

They at once left the room. Similor passed his arm under that of Echalot, on the side which was not occupied by Saladin, and said,—

"The little music-mistress might have given us something to drink her health. By the way, my friend, how long are we going to sulk with each other—we two?"

"That depends upon your frankness, Amédée," replied Echalot, with emotion. "Your friendship is the dearest illusion of my life; if we are to part, one of us must perish—that's my idea."

"Nonsense, my friend!"

"Possibly! But I would rather see you dead than showing a bad heart."

Similor made a grimace.

"My friend," resumed he, in an off-hand manner, "shall we have something to eat?"

"I'm not hungry."

"Washed down with a glass of the right kind of stuff, of course?"

"I'm not thirsty."

With this, Echalot assumed a severe expression, and added,—

"You have not even given a paternal caress to the dear little creature!"

"It's not all that slobbering and nonsense that will open for him the horizon of the future!" replied Similor, sententiously.

Echalot withdrew the child from under his arm, and raised the

little grimacing face to its father's lips. The latter kissed it in an absent manner, saying,—

"He's a nice little fellow for all that!"

"And at what trade are you working to open him the doors of the horizon, Amédée?" inquired Echalot, with a sigh.

Amédée withdrew his arm, and assumed a proud and noble attitude.

"Old fellow," declaimed he, "it would matter but little to me to stand up against you with any weapon whatever. I have already picked a quarrel to-day with a naval officer, and we shall at a future period face each other on the field of honour; but I will not be accused by you of laziness or dissipation. There are mysteries everywhere about; it is not a crime to have one's share in them, especially when a fellow is in a precarious position, with a little one, without a home of his own, and in ignorance of his real family. I have then reflected as follows. I have said to myself,—Amédée, you cannot always be a burden to the friendship of him who shelters you beneath his modest roof. You must rise; you have now attained the required age. I might have started a little business like yours, might I not?—an opposition. But I would rather die than do an injury to a friend. So I had to choose between M. Bruneau, next door; M. Lecoq, on the first floor; and the young men on the fourth, whom we have heard talking over crimes through the partition. All mysteries! M. Bruneau told me to call again. M. Lecoq took my name in his big rascally register, where we're both stuck down, you and I, I give you warning. What does that there man do? Find out if you can! I don't mind making a bet that it will end badly. There only remained the youths on the fourth floor. I entered their room one day that I heard them say that they must kill the woman . . ."

"What woman?" inquired Echalot, who was breathless with curiosity.

It would be impossible, in fact, to describe the passionate attention with which he listened to his friend's confession. Saladin hindered him a little; poor Echalot tried, but in vain, to cram the paste-board infant into his pocket.

"Yes, what woman?" repeated Similor, shrugging his shoulders; "just you tell me, if you know. All mysteries. This much I can tell you,—their place is not much better furnished than yours! For all that, they smoke cigars at five sous, and wear fine linen. There are three of them, young men of family and no money, who had come together to carry on larks and all that. And there's one of them, M. Michel, who has taken to living by himself, having hit upon some fine business or a treasure, which M. Maurice and M. Etienne know nothing about. So I did not venture to refer to the woman at once; I merely said, 'Gentlemen, I may be of service to you in some underhand sort of way, being quite unprejudiced.' That at first made them laugh. I told them also that I professed the art of dancing. They laugh at everything. For all that I am accepted. I am to be paid on the first business."

"What business?" again inquired Echalot, replacing Saladin under his arm.

"Find out, my friend."

"And what have you to do at their place?"

"Everything in general."

"Have you any wages?"

"Will you have done? Do I look like a domestic? I am to have a hundred francs on the first affair, that's how it's to be."

"But what affair?"

"That's what we've got to find out. Don't I tell you it's all a secret?"

Echalot removed his old straw hat to wipe the perspiration from his forehead with his turned-up sleeve.

"That at least explains," thought he aloud, "your leaving the little one in his cradle, and your friend, for the time being. And it's quite true that, in point of mysteries, they swarm all over the quarter. . . . But did they make any allusion to the business of killing the woman?"

"Not the shadow of one!"

"Did you get a glimpse of her at the place?"

"I could take my oath she is not there."

"Where is she?"

"Ah! that's just it. It's all a mystery!"

"And what have you been doing in the house up to the present time?"

"During three days," replied Similor, with a slight shade of reserve, "I did what may be called the business of the house, the boots, and all kinds of errands. We must make a beginning, mustn't we?"

"What errands?"

"Tailor, greengrocer, eating-house . . . and that's why you did not see me. . . . But the day before yesterday the business commenced in earnest."

Here Saladin began to squall; he was not at his ease. Echalot desired him to be calm, and approaching Similor with a feverish movement, he said,—

"Let us see if you can make a clean breast of it."

"The day before yesterday," continued Similor, "the youngest, M. Maurice, a fine fellow if you like, gave me a letter to deliver, with two francs and a half for my journey. The letter had no address. I was to take it over yonder."

"To the *château?*" interrupted Echalot, shoving the *beak* of Saladin under his arm to prevent his crying.

"You are near it. . . . But you had then followed me?"

"Only as far as the boat. . . . Who was the letter for?"

"That's a secret!"

"Who did you give it to?"

"To nobody."

"What! . . . I see you are not open with me."

"By the honour of a gentleman, I deposited it under a large stone which is in the middle of a field, at a hundred paces in front of the forest."

The head of Echalot fell upon his breast. A drama at the Ambigu Comique could not have caused him greater emotion.

"And afterwards?" said he, whilst Saladin was being almost stifled.

"Nothing yesterday," resumed Similor; "this morning a second message."

"Another letter?"

"No, a message . . . a message from the tallest M. Michel, who is leading such a devil of a life!"

"What message?"

"Echalot," replied Similor, solemnly, "be cursed to all eternity if you betray my confidence! I chatter like a magpie, because you are always aggravating me with your suspicions. But I wish my existence and that of my child . . ."

"What message?" repeated Echalot, boiling over with impatience.

"This is the whole story. M. Michel, says he to me, 'You will stop at the landing-place at M. Schwartz's, and you will walk up and down, with your hands in your pockets, until you see a domestic, in a grey livery with silver buttons, looking placidly at the water.'"

"I saw him!" exclaimed impetuously the ancient apothecary; "the buttons, the livery; he was gazing at the water! The message, old fellow, tell me the message . . . Saladin, will you be quiet?"

"Will it be daylight to-morrow?" whispered Similor in his companion's ear.

"Eh!" exclaimed the latter, thinking he had not heard aright. "Will it be daylight to-morrow?"

"That's all."

"And what did the stout butler answer?"

"Perhaps . . . that depends."

"Oh, bah! The fat domestic did not know if it would be daylight to-morrow."

"He wanted to make inquiries previously."

"And of whom?"

"Don't know. Says he to me, 'Young man, just walk about and admire the landscape and the sunset, and don't be impatient if I'm rather long in bringing you an answer.' So I strolled about, for it's a pretty bit of country. After nightfall the man in the grey livery returned, and he said, says he, taking a pinch of snuff without offering one to me, 'Young man, it will be daylight, at the usual spot, this evening, about ten.'"

"Daylight! ten o'clock at night!" exclaimed Echalot.

"That's one of the mysteries!" returned Similor.

Echalot endeavoured in vain to struggle against his emotion. He

rubbed his eyes violently; then, obeying an irresistible impulse, he threw Saladin across his back, like one-half of a shoulder-belt, and pressed Similor to his heart.

"Oh, Amédée!" cried he, whilst his tears flowed freely, "I suspected you, it is true; I ask you to excuse me. . . . When you used to return, you smelt of coffee, although father of that child; and I said to myself, 'He takes his enjoyments all by himself, without reference to our partnership.' I determined to put you to the test; you have passed through the ordeal victoriously."

Similor did not abuse his triumph; his greatness of soul asserted itself.

"Come, come, old fellow," said he, "don't take it so to heart. It's merely a lesson to you not to give way to all the blind impulses of your imagination in jealousy . . ."

"Accept my solemn oath!" interrupted Echalot. "I have suffered too much! I was there on the bank of the canal, looking out for you, though the position of a spy is unworthy of my generous character. I saw you arrive, I approached close to you from behind the hedge; . . . if you had deceived me, do you see, something dreadful would have happened. I heard the actual words of that domestic who looks like a porter at the bank, 'Perhaps . . . that depends.' I saw that he went away, and that you waited about for him; I walked up and down behind the hedge, and I had a good deal of trouble in preventing the young one from crying. . . . And when the man in the grey livery returned, it's true that his expression was, 'This evening, about ten.'"

"And what can that possibly mean, Amédée," resumed he, suddenly, "the day mixed up with the night in this underhand kind of way?"

Similor smiled like a man who sees further than the end of his nose.

"Dear boy," replied he, "it's fishing in troubled waters, and the devil only knows what it all signifies. . . . Are you aware you have put Saladin with his head downwards?"

"Nothing inconveniences them at that age," observed Echalot.

Similor acknowledged the correctness of the observation, but, as the infant was struggling convulsively, he set him head upwards. He resumed,—

"I know very well that we are not up to all the tricks and manœuvres of the upper swells; but nothing venture, nothing have. There's some secret society that these people are in, and the pass-words are flying about everywhere. I heard something mysterious even on board the boat. Half of Paris is in it. So you and I may as well see if we can't have a finger in the pie.

"I'm agreeable," returned Echalot. "There's my hand upon it."

"And there's mine. We swear fidelity . . ."

There are certain quarters in Paris where the education of the people is exclusively in the hands of the authors who write for the low theatres.

For a mile around the Boulevards you may recognize the redoubtable style of M. So-and-so; everything is copied, from the somewhat burlesque emphasis of the serious language, to the doubtful Atticism of the facetiousness.

Echalot and Similor seldom indulged in joking; they had just founded an association, the somewhat vague object of which was to fish in troubled waters amidst a fantastic ocean, whose riches and dangers were doubtless exaggerated. They were two warm-hearted, simple-minded poets, two sons of the eternal forest of painted canvas which overshadows the melodrama, two savages of Paris. The theatre had taught them tender sentiments, and that agreeable grammar of which they made use, disdaining the good rude tongue of the people. We do not accuse the theatre of having inoculated them with the sin of idleness, but they detested work; and, believe me, when you meet in Paris these sensitive souls who have no desire to work, you should watch their hands and guard your pockets.

A meditative silence followed the conclusion of the compact. Whilst talking the two friends had proceeded to some distance from the booking-office. A muffled and distant sound arrested their steps.

"The coach!" said Similor. "I could willingly indulge in a place on the *impériale* in order to save my slippers."

"Saladin prefers riding to walking," replied Echalot.

"What funds have you got?"

"The twenty sous for my gudgeons."

"And I have fifteen. Too little."

The door of a house opened close by, and a voice called out,—

"Come, come, Madame Champion, just look alive! Have you got the fish? Félicité, the lantern! I shall not have my corner, you'll see."

The door was lit up by the glare from an enormous lantern, attached to a stick which was held by a cross-looking servant. Behind the latter came a stout lady, loaded with parcels, puffing and stumbling over her petticoats.

"Always the same, Adolphe!" groaned she. "Waiting to the last moment, when it is so easy to reach the office two minutes beforehand. Have I got my handkerchief, Félicité? Mind you lock up the larder, on account of mice. You must see if you can't get some one to give you a cat. But I won't have one that's in the habit of going astray . . ."

"Make haste! make haste!" said Adolphe, who had gone on in front. "Have you the fish, Madame Champion?"

"Have I got the fish, Félicité?"

Adolphe turned round. The light of the lantern illumined him from head to foot, showing the gorgeous angler who had tried for a pike of fourteen pounds from the banks of the canal.

He walked freely and without impediment, carrying only an elegant

walking-stick fishing-rod, whilst the unfortunate Madame Champion was bending beneath the weight of parcels.

Madame Champion's name was Céleste. At the last fair held at Saint Cloud she had weighed about thirteen stone.

At the sight of M. Champion, Echalot uttered an exclamation of joy.

"It's the wealthy angler," said he, jerking Saladin up on to his shoulder. "We shall be able to indulge!"

And as Similor did not understand, he let go his arm, adding,—

"Leave it to me, Amédée. We must show some *nous* in our new business."

After relieving himself of his burden, he approached the handsome fisherman, politely taking off his hat and saying,—

"Good evening, *bourgeois* . . . Is that your good lady who is carrying my small dish of fish?"

M. Champion sprang on one side, as if a wheel had passed over his foot. I know some anglers who would commit a crime to conceal the purchase of a few dozen gudgeons.

"What are you doing here, fellow?" muttered he, as he hastened his steps in the direction of the office.

"I am doing like yourself, *bourgeois*, returning to my little business. . . . I say they were worth at least a sou each for an amateur."

"We have already bargained about the price," objected M. Champion; "you have been paid, and I wish you good evening."

"For all that," insisted Echalot, who was following him like a shadow, "I think the ladies are better able to judge of the proper prices for things . . . and I'm sure if your wife knew . . ."

"Adolphe!" cried Madame Champion, exhausted, "wait for me!"

Adolphe stopped short. He was purple with rage. He took out three francs from his porte-monnaie, and gave them to Echalot, saying,—

"Sir, you profit by a delicate situation. You are an ill-bred fellow."

He turned away. For a moment Echalot paused, and the blood came to his face. But the Rubicon that Similor and he had passed was not very broad. His account of the matter made Similor laugh; this is a dangerous kind of glory. Similor said to him, as he returned Saladin,—

"I see you're improving, old fellow!"

They climbed up to the *impériale* of the diligence without remorse of conscience.

On the *impériale* they were somewhat inconvenienced by a kind of barrow of wicker-work. Previously to mounting they had recognized, in the basket suspended beneath, the stout mastiff belonging to M. Mathieu.

"Here's another rum thing," said Similor. "The trap belonging to Three Pegs! So he must have slept at the *château!*"

"Another mystery!"

The *coupé* was empty. M. Bruneau aided Edmée to take her place in it, and then sat down by her side.

Madame Champion, with all her packages, required a great deal of assistance. Céleste had increased in weight since the last fair at Saint Cloud. In the interior there were people belonging to Vaujours who were endeavouring to defend their places against the invasion of Livry. Everybody except Adolphe was carrying parcels. The struggle was sharp, but decisive; people and parcels at length squeezed into their places, after a few sharp words had been exchanged, and the door closed, leaving the inside crammed like a cannon.

Below, in the *coupé*, M. Bruneau was making as much room as possible for his young companion, who was half reclining upon the cushions, and was saying, in a tone of authority which his age and the service he had rendered sufficiently accounted for,—

"My dear child, I must have no half-confidences. I must know exactly all the details of your interview with Madame *la baronne* Schwartz."

CHAPTER XXV.

ABOUT ROBBERS.

In the interior the conversation was already active. The travellers coming from Vaujours continued the subject which had been started whilst passing through the forest of Bondy. They were three: a lady, a very polite young man, and a taciturn individual.

"We no longer," said the lady, "hear any more of those stories about the forest of Bondy. The robbers are now in the towns."

"Ah! ah!" cried an estate agent from Livry, sitting between two columns of packages, "we are talking of brigands? . . . Your servant, Madame Blot. How is your health?"

"I did not recognize you, Monsieur Tourangeau. And your good lady?"

"Still suffering from the rheumatics . . . Always in pain!"

"Vaujours is a more healthy place than Livry!" cried Madame Blot, immediately abusing the opportunity.

"Allow me!" interrupted M. Tourangeau, warmly; "I, on the contrary, hold that Livry . . ."

"Have you got the fish, Céleste?" inquired Adolphe, whose countenance was still clouded.

Doubtless he was thinking that he had given a good price for them!

"My goodness! yes, I have the fish," replied Madame Champion, overwhelmed with the abundance of her booty. "Don't you think it is stifling hot here?"

"The evenings are chilly," returned Madame Blot, of Vaujours. "For myself, I am fond of warmth."

The official continued,—

"Livry, I am happy to think, is well known for the purity of the air there. The first physicians of the capital recommend it for consumptive patients."

"At all events," said the polite gentleman, "the brigands had one good point,—they occasionally gave one a new emotion."

"Monsieur is not of this part of the country?" inquired the agent, insidiously. "I do not remember to have before had the pleasure of travelling with Monsieur."

"I came this way for the purpose of looking over an estate that is for sale."

"That of the general, perhaps? There was a man of good prospects in the army. A fine man! in the prime of his age,—plenty of money . . ."

"And no heir," said Adolphe; "a tolerably distinguished angler, too."

"It will be sold dirt cheap, that property. The country cousins who inherit the estate are in a hurry to realize."

"A pork-butcher at Caen, they say."

"And a cattle-breeder at Bayeux. The general was a Norman."

"Ah! those Normans!"

"Mind you say nothing disagreeable," said Céleste; "M. Champion is a native of Domfront."

"When I say a distinguished angler," said the latter, "I speak with some reserve. His sport was limited . . . limited to the smaller kinds . . ."

"Sea-fishing would be the thing for me!" cried the agent. "I have a relation at Dieppe who sends me whiting. He packs them whilst they are quite fresh, and they arrive . . ."

"All spoilt," concluded Madame Blot, who was in an aggravating humour.

"Adolphe," said Madame Champion, in a low voice, "see in my pocket if I have got my box."

But Adolphe was saying,—

"The produce of our rivers is in some respects superior to that of the ocean itself."

"The railways have destroyed everything that used to be picturesque in travelling," said the polite gentleman.

"Monsieur," said the agent, "in regard to railways, there are some which will traverse this part of the country; . . . and if you have a serious intention of purchasing a property, I should advise you to make haste, for land is getting higher and higher. There's the Baron Schwartz, for instance, whose name you have doubtless heard . . ."

"I should think so!"

"He is not very much liked in this part of the country, you know."

"Monsieur," interrupted Adolphe, with dignity, "quarrels, leading to fatal results, have thus been commenced by an imprudence. I have the honour of being principal under-cashier in the firm of Schwartz."

"One might well say that this gentleman has not taken root in our part of the country!" said Madame Blot, spitefully.

But the agent answered, in a conciliatory tone,—

"Monsieur is quite right to defend his employer. Far be it from me to wish to speak lightly of a proprietor of this importance! He invites me to his *soirées*. What I was about to add is to his credit. In fact—thanks to the projected railway—M. Schwartz is offered fourteen hundred and fifty thousand francs for his land. Three or four years ago he purchased it for six hundred thousand,—a hundred and twenty per cent. in four years! That's what I call a good profit."

"My opinion is that steam is a very fine invention," innocently observed Céleste.

The polite gentleman replied to her, with a bow,—

"Madame, it must be confessed we belong to a wonderful century."

"To annhilate distance," said Adolphe, "and to economize time; such is the result of an idea as vast as it is ingenious, which must have the best effect upon commerce and political relations."

"Without reckoning," said the agent, "that highway robberies become . . ."

"I am positively suffocated!" moaned Céleste, looking towards the closed window.

"The evenings are chilly," observed Madame Blot. "For myself, I prefer being warm to catching a cold in the head."

"And, as Madame so well observed," added the well-spoken man, again bowing to the lady of property, "Paris has become the haunt of all the malefactors driven from the open country. Paris is a forest . . ."

"The Black Forest, I should think."

"Last year, in an omnibus, I was robbed of a silver snuff-box."

Here Madame Blot, the lady of property, took out her box, and Céleste said to her,—

"Will you permit me, Madame? I am so crowded that I cannot get at mine. And you know, when we have taken to the habit of . . ."

"With great pleasure, Madame!"

All the snuff-takers satisfied themselves at the expense of Madame Blot, with the exception of the taciturn gentleman, who, in an underhand kind of way, took a large pinch out of a screw of paper.

"It was not such a handsome one as this," resumed Madame Blot, as she closed her box; "but I valued it on account of my poor Blot, who had bought it for me, although he did not approve of snuff-taking in ladies."

"My wife's snuff-box cost eighty francs," observed Adolphe. "Take care of the fish, Madame Champion."

"The Black Forest!" repeated the well-spoken individual; "that's the right word. And see how, in all things, there exists a kind of fatality! Paris began by being a forest . . ."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the lady of property.'

"It's a fact, Madame!" asserted the agent,—"the forest of Bondy, or rather of Livry, through the remains of which we are now passing."

"M. Tourangeau, you refer everything to Livry!"

"Libriacum, formerly the abbey of Saint Augustine . . . dating anterior to the capital, Madame!"

"And Vaujours?"

"Was nothing! Have you gone through Cæsar's 'Commentaries'?"

"A forest," continued the fine speaker,—"nothing but a forest. The stag and the boar were chased on the ground now occupied by the Rue Richelieu."

"The sport of angling, at the present period, is alone practicable," observed Adolphe.

"And where bands of daring brigands inhabited the quarter where the Bourse now stands . . ."

Every one burst out laughing. Whatever it may be, any joke at the expense of the Bourse is always wonderfully successful.

"Ah!" cried the lady of property, "my poor Blot used to say such things about the Bourse!"

"*La bourse ou la vie!*" (your purse or your life!), said Adolphe, who was not deficient in memory.

Céleste freed one of her hands for the purpose of pinching his knee, in token of her approval.

"Mind the fish!" admonished Adolphe.

"All this proves," continued the polite young man, "that nothing changes. The forest of Paris still exists, with the exception of the trees. Stags may be found in any number, if we may believe the vaudeville; boars, too, either wild or domesticated; and serpents—who can deny it? And again, roses to hide them, and birds of song at every story of every house. There are, indeed, some minor differences: in the forest, love-making is carried on only in the spring, and here it is billing and cooing all through the year. But see, on the other hand, how many resemblances. There are wolves in abundance . . ."

"They have taken refuge in Paris, the wolves!"

"Monsieur," said Tourangeau, "I shall be happy to make your acquaintance if you propose to purchase land in this part of the country."

"In the forest there must be gamekeepers; we have the *sergeants de ville* . . ."

"And the poachers!"

"And the *chiffonniers* who pick up the dead wood."

"We have broad avenues for the carriages of princes, and bypaths through the thicket, where the bandit lies in wait for his prey."

"That gentleman expresses himself with elegance," said Céleste to Adolphe. "He is accustomed to good society."

"He's too talkative. Mind the fish."

Adolphe answered,—

"As for the bandits themselves," resumed the eloquent traveller, "what forest can boast of a collection like that at Paris? They talk of Sénart and of Villiers-Cotterets; why, the forest of Paris would put them in its pocket!"

"I have kept on the subscription of my poor Blot to the *Gazette des Tribunaux*," sighed the lady of property.

"I take in the *Droit*," said the agent. "Only yesterday we read about the grocer in the Rue Saint-Jacques, whose cellars were used as a magazine by the band of Poulain."

"There was a pretty association," said the eloquent gentleman, who appeared to speak as a connoisseur. "You remember, ladies, the Monrose gang?"

"Ah, the villain!" cried Céleste; "it was at the period of our marriage. Adolphe used then to fish less frequently."

"And that of Nathan!" continued the erudite traveller. "On the side of the ladies, Minette and Rosine! We have an author who tells these things very pleasantly, M. de Balzac; you should read his "Vautrin." Still on the side of the ladies, Lina Mondor, there was a woman for you! and Clara Wendel! dramas have been made on them: these people like to produce an impression at the theatres . . . But it is since the time of Louis Philippe that the forest has become peopled. Why, in 1833 there were seventy-five of them in the Garnier gang alone! Then there was the Châtelain gang; life-preservers and list slippers, so as not to make a noise on the pavement."

"There are two men above who wear list slippers," interrupted Madame Champion.

"She is endowed with the true spirit of observation," said Adolphe. "Mind you don't let go the fish."

The agent was taxing his memory and growing somewhat jealous of the fluent traveller.

"There was the Hug gang!" he at length broke in.

"The fifty-five," said Madame Blot; "the Chivat gang, and those belonging to the wretches Jamet and Dagory."

The taciturn individual sneezed: it was the first sound he had made. He put his hand in his pocket for his handkerchief, but remained quite aghast! the handkerchief was absent.

"You must have lost it, Monsieur," said the agent; "for there are no robbers in this part of the country."

This scene has already led us far into the paths of realism, but we cannot pretent to describe how a man can blow his nose when he has lost his pocket handkerchief. The mute traveller was reduced to this extremity. The two ladies smiled, Madame Blot spread out an ample bran-new silk pocket handkerchief, and Céleste said,—

"Adolphe, just hand me mine."

Which Adolphe did, on condition that she took care of the fish.

Humankind is naturally cruel. Without exception, the people in the coach began to use their handkerchiefs. The silent traveller did not seem at all humiliated. The talkative unknown one continued,—

"Eh! what a forest? Seventy-three convictions amongst the Carpentier gang. And, to speak of late years only, Courvoisier, Mignard, Gautier, Sanque, Chapon, who led more than two hundred soldiers to battle; the slashers of Poulemana, the Vanterniers of Marchetti . . . And those who have not yet made acquaintance with justice, the finest gang of all, these famous Black Coats, who have their soldiers in the mire of the lowest quarters, and their generals in the highest social position . . ."

"My paper says nothing about them," interrupted the lady of property.

"It is forbidden, for fear of interfering with commerce. The truth is that they are working upon a large scale, and that the police are quite powerless against them."

"They say that they are under high protection . . ."

"And that they have a long arm . . ."

"And that justice is afraid of them!"

"What!" cried Madame Champion, who was listening with open mouth. "But do you know that all this makes one's blood run cold?"

"If I was paid for it," declared M. Tourangeau, "I would never inhabit Paris."

Adolphe shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"I am under-cashier," said he, with that serene importance which so endeared him to Céleste, "principal under-cashier; and as our head cashier is a gentleman who leads an easy life of it, it is I who have all the responsibility! I alone, and quite enough too! Mind the fish. Our house, as you know, is one of the most important in the capital. We inhabit an unfrequented quarter, which on this account is considered dangerous; note all these various circumstances. Amongst the celebrated cases which you have enumerated, the name of the Rue d'Enghein has more than once been heard of in connection with criminal justice. That does not matter. Take an intelligent, educated, prudent, skilful, and courageous man, he will succeed in protecting property, as well as in the art of angling. Nothing can be more crafty than fish, who owe their instincts to nature. To him who has long followed the art of angling, the fish have taught a thousand innocent *ruses* which he can apply in

private life. I would defy Mandrin, Cartouche, or even these Black Coats you speak of, to filch anything from my premises . . ."

"Oh! oh!" cried the agent from Livry, "luckily, they are not here to answer you."

"Before them," resumed Adolphe, smiling, "I should not communicate the details which I am about to give, as between people of respectability. Keep your eye on the fish, Madame Champion. . . . Here we are at Bondy, I see!"

The coach stopped. Two or three unfortunate individuals presented themselves with their baskets; but the terrible word, "Full!" was pronounced by the conductor, to whom a servant-girl was bringing that inevitable glass of brandy, which seems to be taken under the impression that it helps to breathe the horses.

Echalot and Similor were singing upon the *impériale;* it was agreed carefully to avoid them on arrival, because they wore list slippers.

These conversations about robbers always produce a certain effect, even upon the minds of the most intrepid. Céleste, who held the gudgeons at arm's length, in order to preserve their freshness, humbly requested that a window at length might be opened; but the lady of property objected, observing that her poor Blot, in his lifetime, abhorred anything like a draught.

"I still claim the right of speech," resumed Adolphe, as soon as the *diligence* again started. What I have to state contains many points of utility and interest; and I may observe by the way, that if, during several years past, I have laboured to establish an anglers' society in the department of the Seine, it is that I have the hope of introducing into the capital of my native country a new element of order and civilization. I am an officer of the civic guard. For the information of those whom I have not the honour of knowing here, I occupy the *entresol* of the Hôtel Schwartz, Rue d'Enghein 19, at Paris, Faubourg Poissonnère, in conjunction with the accountant, whose offices adjoin my own. I said that I defied Mandrin and Cartouche. I may add Poulailler, Barrabas, and Lacenaire. That's how it stands. Now for my arms; I make no mystery about them. In the first place, I have a country residence where I never spend a night; it is there I keep my lines: more than three quarters of the misfortunes which occur are a consequence of the weakness which Paris people have for sleeping in the country. The night is the same everywhere; once in bed, I can dream that I am reposing amidst the most luxuriant verdure. The door of the Hôtel Schwartz cannot open without sounding a bell in my antechamber. That is awkward, on account of the activity which prevails throughout the establishment; but it gives a first warning, which preserves me from any kind of surprise. A second bell, communicating with the door of my antechamber, rings immediately the latter is opened! second warning: the first means 'Attention!' the second, 'Post arms'; But this is not all; a third bell, sounding close to my ear, at the

head of my bed, rings the moment the door of my room is touched. Ladies and gentlemen, the first bell wakens me, the second brings me to my feet, and the third says to me, 'Champion, defend the property which has been confided to thy vigilance!' "

"That is very curious," said the agent from Livry.

"Very curious!" repeated the polite gentleman, who was actually exchanging soft glances with the widow.

The taciturn gentleman gravely took from his pocket a pencil and paper, upon which he wrote down about a dozen words.

"He is a poet!" muttered the eloquent man, in a mocking tone.

The agent replied, seriously,—

"Monsieur, that does not surprise me; we have several in this part of the country."

LET US MAKE THE BEST OF IT

LIFE is but a fleeting dream,
  Care destroys the zest of it;
Swift it glideth like a stream—
  Mind you make the best of it!
Talk not of your weary woes,
  Troubles, or the rest of it;
If we have but brief repose,
  Let us make the best of it!

If your friend has got a heart,
  There is something fine in him;
Cast away his darker part,
  Cling to what's divine in him.
Friendship is our best relief,—
  Make no heartless jest of it;
It will brighten every grief,
  If we make the best of it.

Happiness despises state;
  'Tis no sage experiment,
Simply that the wise and great
  May have joy and merriment;
Rank is not its spell refined,—
  Money's not the test of it,
But a calm contented mind,
  That will make the best it.

Trusting in the Power above,
  Which, sustaining all of us
In one common bond of love,
  Bindeth great and small of us,
Whatsoever may befall—
  Sorrows or the rest of it—
We shall overcome them all,
  If we make the best of it.

CHARLES J. DUNPHY.

THE ST. JAMES'S MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1865.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c.

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ONLY A CLOD

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ROAD TO RUIN.

MAUDE TREDETHLYN took her new life very pleasantly. Her father was happy. There had been a reaction in the City; things were going very well for the Australian merchant; and Francis Tredethlyn was receiving handsome interest for his thirty thousand pounds.

He brought these tidings to his wife's boudoir one morning early in the new year.

"I knew you'd be glad to hear it, Maude," he said; "and now you see that it *was* a very fine thing for me to get into your father's business. So you need not have been uneasy about the matter, my darling."

Mrs. Tredethlyn lifted herself upon tiptoe, and pursed up the rosiest lips in Christendom. A kiss, transient as the passing flutter of a butterfly's wing, alighted somewhere amid the thickets of the Cornishman's beard.

"You dear, good old Francis! That is the pleasantest news I ever heard, except—"

"Except what, darling?"

"The news that papa brought me home a year ago, when a generous friend stepped in between him and ruin."

Francis Tredethlyn blushed like a schoolgirl.

"Oh, Frank, if I should ever forget that day!" said Maude, in a low voice, that had something of sadness in its tone.

Was she thinking that there had been occasions since her marriage

when she *had* almost forgotten how much she owed to the devotion of her lover,—occasions on which some little social failure—some small omission or commission—some petty sin against the laws of the Belgravians and Tyburnians, had been large enough to blot out all memory of her husband's goodness? How can you remember that a man has a noble heart, when, for want of the ordinary tact by which well-bred navigators steer their barks amid the troubled waters of society, he blurts out some unlucky allusion which paralyzes the conversational powers of an entire dinner-table, and brings blight and ruin down upon an assemblage which had fairly promised to be a success? Or how can you be expected to appreciate the generous spirit of a being whose ungainly elbow has just tilted half a dozen *petites timbales de gibier* into the ruby velvet lap of your most important guest?

There were times when Maude was forgetful of everything except her husband's genial good nature and unfailing devotion. There were other times when her heart sank within her as she saw his candid face beaming at her from the remote end of a long dinner-table, and heard his sonorous laugh pealing loud and long above the hushed accents of Belgravia.

He was her slave. If she loved him—and surely it was impossible that she could accept so much idolatry, and render no small tribute of affection in return—her love for him was pretty much of the same quality as that which she bestowed on her favourite Skye terrier.

He was such a dear, devoted creature—so sensible, so obedient; and if he did not quite stand up in a corner to beg, with a bit of bread upon his nose, it was only because he was not required to do so. He was the best of creatures—a big, amiable Newfoundland, ready to lie down in the dirt to be trodden upon by his mistress's pretty slipper, or to fly at the throat of the foe who dared to assail her. He was a faithful slave and defender, and it was very pleasant to know that he was always at hand—to be patted on the head now and then when he was specially good—to be a little neglected when his mistress was absorbed by the agreeable distractions of society—to be blushed for, and even disowned now and then, when his big awkward paws went ruthlessly trampling upon some of the choicest flowers in the conventional flower-garden.

He was her slave—her own. He loved her with an idolatrous devotion which she could rarely think of without smiling at his exaggerated estimate of her charms and graces. He was hers—so entirely that no possibility of losing him ever entered into her mind. He was hers, and we are apt to be just a little indifferent about the possessions we hold most securely. It had become a matter of course that her husband should scatter all the measures of affection at her feet, and hold himself richly repaid by any waif or stray of tenderness she might choose to bestow upon him. She had no uneasiness about him,—none of those sharp twinges of jealousy—those chilling pangs of doubt—those foolish and

morbid fears, which are apt to disturb the peace of even the happiest wife. She knew that he had loved her from the very hour of their first meeting, against his will, in despite of his better reason. She knew that he had been content to stand afar and worship her in utter hopelessness; and having now rewarded his fidelity, she fancied that she had no more to do, except to receive his idolatry, and smile upon him now and then when it pleased her to be gracious.

There was neither pride nor presumption in her nature, but she had lived all her life in one narrow circle; and she could not help being unconsciously patronizing in her treatment of the man who had taken her Majesty's shilling, and blacked Harcourt Lowther's boots.

Francis Tredethlyn might perhaps have been entirely satisfied by brightly patronizing smiles, and gentle pattings on the head, if he had not been blessed with a friend and adviser, always at his elbow, always ready to step in with an intellectual lantern held gracefully aloft, and a mocking finger pointed, when the simple Cornishman's perceptions failed to show him the uncomfortable side of the subject.

"What a darling she is!" exclaimed Mr. Tredethlyn, as he left the house with Harcourt Lowther, after Maude had parted from him on the staircase all in a flutter of silk and lace, and with a feathery bush of golden hair framed in the last Parisian absurdity in the way of bonnets.

"Mrs. Tredethlyn is just the sort of wife for a man of the world," Harcourt answered, with a slight shrug of his well-shaped shoulders. "But I can't help fancying sometimes that you're too good a fellow to be thrown away upon the loveliest creature who ever isolated herself from the rest of the human race in the remote centre of a continent of moiré antique. Of course I can't for a moment deny that you are the most fortunate of created beings—but—there is always a 'but,' you know, even if one has a beautiful wife and thirty thousand a year. I suppose it is the habit of my mind to quarrel with perfection. I think if I were a fresh-hearted, simple-minded fellow like you, Tredethlyn, I should yearn for something nearer and dearer to me than a fashionable wife."

The finger of Mephistopheles, always pointing, generally contrived to touch a sore place. Francis Tredethlyn, even when he had been happiest in the sunlight of Maude's smiles, had felt a vague sense of that one bitter truth. She was no nearer to him than of old. The impassable gulf still yawned between them, not to be bridged over by pretty little courtesies or patronizing smiles.

But in spite of all inward misgivings, Mr. Tredethlyn turned upon his friend, and hotly denied the truth of that gentleman's observations.

Harcourt Lowther was quite resigned to a little fiery contradiction of this kind. The arrow went home to the mark it had been shot at, and rankled there. Such discussions were very frequent between the two men; and however firmly Francis might argue with his friend in the daytime, he was apt to lie awake in the dead of the night, like false cousin

Amy in the poem, when the rain was pattering on the roofs of the palatial district, and wonder, with a dull aching pain in his heart, whether Harcourt Lowther was right after all; and Maude—sunny-haired, beautiful, frivolous Maude—would never be any nearer and dearer to him than she was now.

In the mean time, Mr. Lowther, who sowed the seeds of the disease, was always ready with the remedy; and the remedy was—dissipation.

Harcourt Lowther, in whose few years of legal study had been crammed the vicious experiences of a lifetime, was eager to perform the promise he had made to Francis Tredethlyn some two years before, when the young man first received the tidings of his uncle Oliver's bequest.

"I told you I'd show you life, dear boy," he said, "and I mean to keep my word. While Mrs. Tredethlyn amuses herself with the usual social treadmill business—perpetually moving on, and never getting any further—you and I will see a world in which life is worth living."

Thus it was that Francis Tredethlyn was lured away from a home in which he was taught to believe himself unappreciated, and introduced for the first time within the unholy precincts of the kingdom of Bohemia.

He entered the mysterious regions at first very reluctantly. He had the ignorant rustic's notion of Vice, and fancied that she would show herself in naked hideousness; but he found her with her natural face hidden under a plaster mask, modelled from the fair countenance of Virtue. It was something of a caricature, perhaps, for all imitations are so apt to become exaggerations. He found that Bohemia was a kind of Belgravia in electro-plate. There were the same dresses and properties—only a little tarnished and faded,—the same effects, always considerably over-done; the same jargon, but louder and coarser. Life in Bohemia seemed like a transpontine version of a West End drama, with cheaper scenery and actors, and a more uproarious audience.

This was the kingdom with whose inner mysteries Harcourt Lowther affected a fashionable familiarity. He presented his wealthy friend to the potentates of the kingdom, and carried him hither and thither to worship at numerous temples, whose distinguishing features were the flare of gas lamps, and the popping of champagne corks, branded with the obscurest names in the catalogue of wine-growers, and paid for at the highest rate known in the London market.

Perhaps in all his wanderings in the darksome wilderness which his mentor called London life, Francis Tredethlyn's worst sin was the perpetual "standing" of spurious sparkling wines, and the waste of a good deal of money lost at unlimited loo, or blind hookey, as the case might be. He had high animal spirits and thirty thousand a year, which common report exaggerated into sixty thousand, and which the more imaginative denizens of Bohemia multiplied into fabulous and incalculable riches, so he met with a very cordial welcome from the magnates of the land. But the descent of Avernus, however easy it may be, is a gradual slope, and not a precipitous mountain-side, down which a man can be

flung headlong by one push from a friendly hand. Francis Tredethlyn yawned in the faces of the brightest stars in the Bohemian hemisphere. His frank nature revolted against the shallow falsehoods around and about him. The glare of the gas seemed to have no brilliancy, the bloom upon the women's faces was only so much vermilion and crimson lake bought at the perfumer's shop, and ghastly to look at in a side light. The laughter had the false ring of spurious coin; the music was out of tune. In all this little world there was no element of spontaneity; except perhaps in the uproarious gaiety of some boyish country squire making a railroad journey through some fine old property that had been kept sacred and unbroken for half a dozen centuries, to be squandered on a handful of pearls to melt in Cleopatra's wine, or expended on the soaps and perfumeries of a modern Lamia.

There was neither bloom nor freshness on anything except on the wings of a few pigeons newly lured into the haunts of the vulture tribe. Everything else was false, and withered, and faded. The smiles of the women, the friendship of the men, were as spurious as the rhubarb champagnes and gooseberry Moselles, and were bought and sold like them. Mephistopheles may lead his pupil to the Brocken, but he cannot compel the young man to enjoy himself amongst the wicked revellers; nor can he altogether prevent his perceiving such small *inconvenances* as occasional red mice hopping out of the mouths of otherwise charming young damsels.

Harcourt Lowther found it very hard work to keep Francis Tredethlyn amused, night after night, in remote and unapproachable regions, whose very names were only to be spoken in hushed accents over the fourth bottle of Chambertin or Clos Vougeot at a bachelor's dessert. Poor Frank would rather have been dancing attendance upon his wife, and trampling on the silken trains of stern matrons and dowagers at the dullest "Wednesday," or "Tuesday," or "Saturday," in all the stuccoed mansions in which Maude's pretty face and pleasant manners, and his own good old Cornish name and comfortable income, had secured his footing. He was very good-natured, and did not care how much bad wine he was called upon to pay for. He could lose a heavy sum at blind hookey without the faintest contraction of his black eyebrows, or the smallest depression of his lower jaw. But he did not enjoy himself.

He did not enjoy himself—and yet somehow or other he went again and again to the same temples, always under convoy of his friend Harcourt, and generally very firmly resolved that each visit should be the last. But there was always some special reason for another visit—an appointment with some elegant acquaintance of the vulture tribe, who wanted his revenge at blind hookey; or a little dinner to be given at the "Star and Garter," in honour of some beautiful Free-Lance, whose chief fascinations were the smoking of tissue-paper cigarettes, and a vivacious disregard of Lindley Murray. There was always some engagement of this kind; and as it happened somehow that Francis Tredethlyn generally found

himself pledged to act as paymaster, it would of course have been very unmanly to draw back. If he could have sent his friend Lowther and a blank cheque as a substitute for his own presence, he would gladly have done so; but his friend Lowther took care to make this impossible. So the matter always ended by Mr. Tredethlyn finding himself, at some time on the wrong side of midnight, seated at the head of a glittering dinner-table; with the ruins of an expensive dessert and the faces of his guests only dimly visible athwart a thick and stifling vapour of cigar smoke; while the clamour of strident laughter mingled with the occasional chinking and clattering of glass, as some applauding hand thumped its owner's approval of the florid sentiments in an eloquent post-prandial oration.

It is impossible to be perpetually paying for sparkling wines without occasionally drinking a little too freely of their bubbling vintage. Francis Tredethlyn, under the influence of unlimited Moet or Cliquot, found the Bohemians a much pleasanter kind of people than when he contemplated them in the cold gray morning light of sobriety. Harcourt Lowther took care that his friend should pretty generally look at things through a rose-tinted medium engendered of the juice of the grape, for he found that it was by this means alone that he could retain his hold upon his pupil.

Go where he might, the Cornishman carried his wife's image in his heart, and he would have left the most brilliant assemblage in Bohemia for a quiet *tête-à-tête* in Maude's boudoir, if his friend Harcourt had not carefully impressed upon him that his entrance into that pretty little chamber was an intrusion only tolerated by Mrs. Tredethlyn's good nature.

There is no need to enter very minutely upon the details of the work which Harcourt Lowther was doing. The art of ruining a well-disposed young man is not a very difficult one; but Mr. Lowther had reduced the art into a science. His great effects were not the sublime hazards of genius, but the calculated results of a carefully studied process. So many nights in a tainted atmosphere; so many "Star and Garter" dinners; so many subtle insinuations of Maude's indifference, must produce such and such an effect. Mr. Lowther displayed none of that impolitic and vulgar haste with which a meaner man might ruin his friend. He never hurried his work by so much as a single step taken before its time. He never wavered, or relented, or turned aside even for one moment from the course which he had mapped out for himself. So, in the course of that London season, it became quite a common thing for a street hansom to bring Mr. Tredethlyn to the gigantic stuccoed mansion which he called his own in the early sunlight of a spring morning. There were even times when the returning wanderer found it no easy matter to open a door with a patent latch-key, which *would* go meandering hopelessly over the panel of the door, scratching all manner of eccentric circles and parabolas on the varnish, instead of finding its way into the key-hole. There was one awful night on which Maude, coming home from some very late assembly, was stumbled against by a tipsy man who was groping his way up the great stone staircase, and

found, to her unutterable horror, that the tipsy man—who apologized profusely for tearing half a dozen yards of mechlin from the hem of her skirt, declaring that he was "ver' sorr', 'pon m' word; b't y' see, m' dea' Maurr, if y' w'll wear dress s' long, mussn' be s'prise get torr t' pieces" —was her husband.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A CHILLING RECONCILIATION.

THAT unfortunate meeting on the stairs made a very deep impression upon Maude Tredethlyn. She had never before encountered drunkenness; and it was one of those sins which seemed to her to belong to a region of outer darkness, in which decent people had no place. Her father had always been as sober as an anchorite; her father's guests were gentlemen. She had heard, now and then, in the course of her life at the Cedars, of a drunken gardener dismissed with ignominy from the gardens—a drunken groom degraded from his rank in the stables. But Francis—her husband, — that *he* should be thick of speech and unsteady of foot under the influence of strong drink!—it seemed almost too horrible for belief. She lay awake in the morning sunlight, thinking of Francis Tredethlyn's misdemeanour.

"And just as I fancied that I was beginning to love him!" she thought, regretfully. Would they meet at breakfast? she wondered. And if they did meet, what would Francis say to her? A sickly dread of that meeting took possession of her mind. If he apologized, how was she to answer him? Would it be possible for her to conceal her disgust?

"Let me remember his goodness to my father," she murmured. "Oh, can I ever be so base as to forget that?"

The possible meeting at the breakfast-table was very easily avoided. Mrs. Tredethlyn had a headache, and took her strong green tea and dry toast in the pretty little boudoir, with the pink draperies and Parian statuettes, the satin-wood cabinets and book-cases, the Persian carpets and polar bearskin rugs, the *marqueterie jardinières* and toy Swiss cottage birdcages, selected by Harcourt Lowther. It was rather an enervating little boudoir, eminently adapted for the perusal of French novels, and the neglect of all the duties of life. Mrs. Tredethlyn breakfasted in her boudoir, so there was no uncomfortable meeting between the husband and wife. Francis left the house before noon, in order to keep an appointment with his friend Mr. Lowther. They were going together to the Doncaster spring meeting, where Bohemianism would be rampant, and were to be away for some days. Poor Francis ran into the library, while his friend waited for him, and scribbled a hasty note to his wife, full of penitence and self-humiliation. He gave the missive to Mrs. Tredethlyn's maid at the foot of the stairs, while Harcourt was standing

in a little room opening out of the hall, arranging the strap of a race-glass across his light overcoat. Mr. Tredethlyn went back to the library in search of a railway rug which he had flung off his arm when he sat down to write the letter, and during his brief absence there was a flutter of silk in the hall, and a little conference between Mr. Lowther and the abigail.

Half an hour afterwards, when the two men were walking up and down the platform at the King's Cross station, with cigars in their mouths, Mr. Lowther handed his friend the identical letter which Francis had entrusted to his wife's maid.

"You can post that to its address, if you like, dear boy; but I think *I* should light my cigar with it. The seal is unbroken, you see; but I fancy I can make a tolerable guess at the contents of the epistle. Dear old Frank, if you want to preserve the merest semblance of manhood, the poorest remnant of independence, never beg your wife's pardon."

Of course Mr. Tredethlyn was very angry. Harcourt Lowther was prepared to encounter a given amount of resistance. The wave may lash and beat itself against the quiet breast of the rock; and the rock, secure in its supremacy, has only to stand still until that poor worn-out wave crawls meekly to the stony bosom, a conquered and a placid thing. Mr. Lowther had his work to do, and he took his own time about doing it. The apologetic little epistle was *not* sent to Mrs. Tredethlyn; and at an uproarious after-dinner assemblage at the "Reindeer," Francis abandoned such frivolous stuff as sparkling Moselles and Burgundies for fierce libations of brandy punch. He made a tremendous book for all manner of events, always under the advice of his friend; indeed, its pages contained many rather heavy engagements with Mr. Lowther himself, who affected extreme simplicity amongst the magnates of the turf, but who was nevertheless eminently respected by those gentlemen, as being of the deep and dangerous class—a dark horse, secretly exercised on lonely commons at weird hours of the early morning, and winning with a rush when he was least expected to do so.

While Francis was seeing life through the medium provided for him by his experienced adviser, Maude enjoyed herself after her own fashion. She had been very happy at Twickenham, but she had never until now been entirely her own mistress, with unlimited credit and unlimited ready money, and all the privileges of a matron. At the Cedars she had been always more or less under her father's direction. She had acted very much as she pleased upon all occasions; but she had made a point of consulting him about the smallest step in her simple life; a round of calls, a day's shopping, a little musical gathering after a dinner-party, the amount of a subscription to a charity,—even the colour of a dress.

But now the young matron shook off even the gentle fetters which had held the girl, and spread her pinions for a bolder flight. A much wider world had opened itself to the merchant's daughter since her marriage.

The story of Mr. Tredethlyn's fortune—always multiplied by the liberal tongue of rumour—was one of the most popular topics amongst the denizens of the new district in which Mr. Tredethlyn's house was situated. None of these West End people knew that Lionel Hillary's position had ever endured a dreadful crisis of uncertainty and terror. The marriage between Maude and Francis was supposed to be one of those sublime unions in which wealth is united to wealth—the alliance of a Miss Rothschild with a Master Lafitte—a grand commercial combination for the consolidation of capital.

So Maude took her place as one of the most important novelties of the current year. She gave great receptions in her three drawing-rooms, whose gorgeous decorations were just a little too much like the velvet and ormolu magnificence of a public room at a gigantic hotel. She organized dinner-parties and revised and corrected a *menu* with the *savoir faire* of a Brillat Savarin in petticoats. Always accustomed to a reckless expenditure, she had no idea of the necessity for some regulation in the expenses of a large household. Left a great deal to herself, and frequently at a loss for occupation, she often spent her husband's money from sheer desire for amusement. After that unlucky encounter on the stairs she resigned herself entirely to her position as a fashionable wife. Her husband went his way unmolested, and she went hers. She was tolerably happy, for the life was a very pleasant one to live; but oh, what a vain, empty, profitless existence to look back upon!—the success of a dinner, the triumph of an audacious toilette, the only landmarks on a great flat of frivolity. But Mrs. Tredethlyn was not at the age in which people are given to looking back; she was rich, beautiful, accomplished, agreeable, with that dash of recklessness in her gaiety which makes a woman such an acquisition in a drawing-room, and the fumes of the incense which her admirers burned before her were just a little intoxicating. The Twickenham loungers, who had worshipped her mutely and reverently from afar off, found themselves distanced now by bolder adorers, and, conversing amongst themselves upon the staircases and on the outer edges of crowded drawing-rooms in the stuccoed district, shook their heads and pulled their whiskers, gravely opining that Mrs. Tredethlyn was "going the pace."

Maude had been Francis Tredethlyn's wife more than six months, and the London season was at its fullest height, when an accidental meeting with Julia Desmond brought about that young lady's restoration to her old position of *confidante* and companion to the pampered daughter of her dead father's friend. The two women met in the Pantheon, and it was a terrible shock to Maude to see her old companion dawdling listlessly before a stall of toys, dressed in shabby black silk and a doubtful bonnet, and attended by two ungainly girls in short petticoats and scarlet stockings.

The proud spirit of the Desmonds had been crushed by the iron hand of necessity. In these perpetual duels between pride and poverty, the result seems only a question of time. Poverty must have the best of it,

unless, indeed, death steps between the combatants to give poor pride a doubtful victory. Julia Desmond had carried her pride and anger away from the luxurious idleness of the Cedars, to nurse them in a London lodging. The only money she had in the world was a ten-pound note, left out of a sum which the liberal merchant had given her for the payment of a dressmaker's bill. She had the jewels given her by Francis Tredethlyn—the diamonds which she had thrown at his feet in the little study at the Cedars, on the night of the amateur theatricals—but which the sober reflections of the following morning had prompted her to retain amongst her possessions. She had these, and upon these she might have raised a very considerable sum of money. But the angry Julia had no desire to raise money. A life of idleness in a London lodging was the very last existence to suit her energetic nature. She inserted an advertisement in the *Times* upon the very day after her departure from Twickenham, and she went on advertising until she succeeded in getting a situation as governess in a gentleman's family. But ah! then came the bitterest of all her trials. She fancied that her life, wherever she went, would be more or less like her life at the Cedars. There would be a great deal more work, perhaps; there might be less luxury, less gaiety, but it would be the same kind of life; while on any day the lucky chance might arise, and the beauty of the Desmonds might win her some great prize in the matrimonial lottery.

Alas for Julia's inexperienced notions of a governess's existence! She found herself the drudge of an exacting mistress, with every hour of her dreary life mapped out and allotted for her, with less share in the social pleasures of the house she lived in than if she had been the kitchen-maid, and with two small tyrants in crinkled hair and holland pinafores always on the watch to detect her shortcomings, and to twist them into excuses for their own. The dreadful monotony of her life would alone have made it odious; but Julia had "a sorrow's crown of sorrow" perpetually pressing on her tortured brow. She had the recollection of happier things—the pleasant idleness at the Cedars, the position of Francis Tredethlyn's affianced wife. And she had given up this position in one moment of ungovernable rage and jealousy. She had suffered one mad impulse of her proud nature to undo the slow work of months. Miss Desmond had ample leisure for the contemplation of her folly during the long winter evenings which she spent in a third-floor sitting-room at Bayswater, hearing unwilling children grind hopelessly at a German grammar by the light of two guttering tallow candles. She *did* contemplate her folly, while the guttural verbs and declensions fell with a droning noise on her unlistening ears; but the rage which swelled her bosom was against Maude Hillary, and Maude alone.

She saw Maude's carriage in the park sometimes while she took her allotted walk with the unwilling children, who might have been pleasant children enough, perhaps, if they had not been weighed down by intel-

lectual exercises compared to which the enforced physical labours of Toulon would have seemed light and agreeable. Julia saw her old companion, and her mind went back to the sunny afternoons on the lawn at Twickenham; and the sight of the pretty face and golden hair, the Skye terriers and neatly appointed equipage, stirred the fire of hatred always burning in her breast, until she could almost have shaken her small fist at the merchant's daughter.

She saw the announcement of Maude's marriage in the *Times*, and hated her still more. She saw Maude in the park, after her marriage, in a more splendid equipage than the landau from the Cedars, and she hated her even more and more. She set her teeth together and drew back under the shadow of the trees to watch Francis Tredethlyn's wife drive by.

"She has cheated me out of it all," she thought; "it would all have been mine but for her treachery."

Then one bright sunny afternoon in early May the two women met,—Julia, a wan shadow of her former self, worn out with hard work, depressed by the monotony of her life, indifferent as to her dress and appearance; Maude, a beaming creature in gauzy mauve muslin, with a Watteau skirt, all a-flutter with ribbons, and a voluminous train sweeping in the dust behind her.

"Dear Julia—"

"Maude—Mrs. Tredethlyn!"

Miss Desmond turned as pale as death. The encounter had come upon her very suddenly, and she was neither physically nor mentally able to bear it. She set her teeth and tried to flash the old defiance from her dark eyes. But the light of that once fiery glance died out like the flame of a candle which burns feebly in the glare of the morning sun. Julia was quite worn out by the life she had been leading for the last year and a half. The pride of a Somerset might give way beneath a long course of overwork and indifferent diet.

After that first exclamation of surprise she drew herself to her fullest height, and tried to pass Mrs. Tredethlyn with a bow, and a faint, cold smile of recognition, but Maude stopped her:—

"Dearest Julia, if you knew how anxious and unhappy I have been about you, I'm sure you wouldn't want to pass me by. Do let us be friends. The past is forgotten, isn't it? Yes, I'm sure it is. Will you come up-stairs to the picture gallery? that's always a nice solitary place where one can talk. Are those young ladies with you? What very nice little girls! Miss Desmond and I are going up-stairs, dear, to have a chat. Will you come with us?"

The elder of Julia's pupils, to whom this question was addressed, replied only by a stony glare. She was petrified by the audacity of this smiling creature in mauve who dared to take possession of her governess. The youthful mind, soured by a long course of German declensions, is apt to contemplate everything in a gloomy aspect.

Maude and Julia went past poor Haydon's big cold picture, and made their way to a small room which was quite empty. Julia's face had a stern darkness upon it, which might have frightened any one less hopeful than Maude; but that young lady had been surrounded by an atmosphere of love from her cradle upwards, and was entirely unacquainted with the diagnosis of hatred. She despatched the children to look at the pictures in the larger rooms, and then laying her hand caressingly upon Miss Desmond's arm, she said, very earnestly,—

"Dearest Julia, I hope you have forgiven me?"

Miss Desmond locked her lips, and stood for some moments with her face quite fixed, staring at vacancy. There were hollow rings round the dark eyes now, and the oval cheeks had lost their smooth outline. Perpetual drudgery and friendless solitude had brought Julia very low; but the Desmond pride still struggled for the mastery over its grim assailant—necessity.

"I don't know that I have anything to forgive," she said, after an ominous pause; "Mr. Tredethlyn was free to transfer his affections as often as he chose. I was very glad to read of your marriage, for it was at least satisfactory to find that he had not changed his mind a second time. I do not blame any one but myself, Mrs. Tredethlyn. I should have been wiser than to entrust my happiness to a man who——"

Miss Desmond stopped abruptly. She made a long pause, during which she contemplated Maude almost as if she had been looking for some tender spot in which to plant her dagger.

"I must not forget that he is your husband, and I do not wish to say anything humiliating to you; but I cannot forget that he is not a gentleman. No gentleman would have treated any woman as Mr. Tredethlyn treated me."

If Julia's conscience had a voice it might perhaps have chimed in with an awkward question here,—"And would any lady have spread a net to catch a rich husband, Julia, trading on the generosity of his simple nature, and angling for the fortune of a man whose heart was obviously given to another?"

Mrs. Tredethlyn's bright face crimsoned, and her lower lip fell a little. It is not to be supposed that she could be very fond of her husband, but she felt any allusion to his shortcomings almost as keenly as if he had been the incarnation of her girlish dreams. Whatever he was, he was hers, and she was responsible for him.

"If generosity of heart could make a gentleman, Julia," she said, almost entreatingly, "I think Francis would be the first of gentlemen."

Miss Desmond did not condescend to reply to this observation.

"Oh, Julia," Mrs. Tredethlyn said, after another little pause, "how can you be so unkind and unforgiving? Have you forgotten how happy we used to be together long ago at the Cedars? If—if I thought you were pleasantly circumstanced now, I would not worry you with any

proffers of friendship; but somehow I cannot think that you are happy. Dear Julia, forgive me for the past and trust me once more."

The stony look in Miss Desmond's face did not melt away under the influence of Maude's tenderness; but presently, with an almost awful suddenness, she sank upon the nearest chair, dropped her face upon her clasped hands, and burst into a passion of tears, convulsive sobs that shook her with their hysterical force. The strong will of the Desmonds asserted itself to the very last, for this passionate outburst was almost noiseless. The slender frame writhed and trembled, the chest heaved, the small hands were clenched convulsively, but there was no vulgar outcry. Miss Desmond recovered herself almost as suddenly as she had given way to her emotion, and drew up her head proudly though her face was blotted with tears.

"Heaven help me!" she exclaimed; "what a poor weak wretch I am!"

"You will let me be your friend again, won't you, Julia? You'll come and live with me once more? You need see very little of Mr. Tredethlyn if you dislike him. He and I are quite fashionable people, I assure you, and he is very seldom at home. I shall be so glad to have you with me. I go a great deal into society, and I know you like society, Julia. Come, dear, let us be friends again, just as we used to be in the dear old times."

Maude gave a little sigh—she was apt now and then to think sentimentally of that remote period of her existence, some four or five years back, when she had believed that the happiest fate that heaven could award her would be a union with Harcourt Lowther. Even now, though she had schooled herself to think of him coldly, though she tried very hard not to think of him at all, the memory of the old time would come back; the picture of the home that might have been—the little cottage in St. John's Wood—the long quiet evenings, made delightful by genial companionship—the pleasant hours devoted to art—the dear old concertante duets by Mozart and Beethoven—the "two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one,"—the images of these things were apt to arise suddenly before her, in the midst of her frivolous pleasure in her fine dresses, and gorgeous house, and admiring friends.

"Dear Julia," she said, winding one arm caressingly about the Irish girl, "you will come, won't you?"

"Yes," Miss Desmond answered, "I will come, if you want me. But I must come upon a new footing. This time I must work for my wages. I have been a hired slave ever since I left your father's house. I will be your servant, Mrs. Tredethlyn, if you choose to hire me."

"Julia, you will be my friend, just as you used to be."

"No," cried Miss Desmond, with a resolute gesture of her hand, "no; if you want a companion to keep your keys and attend to your lap-dogs, to finish fancy work that you have begun and grown tired of, to read French novels to you when you want to be read to sleep, to write

your letters of invitation, to take the bass in your duets, or carry an occasional message to your milliner,—if you want a person of this kind, I am quite willing to be that person."

"Julia!"

"I will come to you on those terms or not at all."

"You shall come to me on any terms you please, so long as you come."

"Very well, then, I will come. My present employer gives me sixty guineas a year, and makes me work harder than a pack-horse. You can give me the same money if you think my services worth so much. I will make arrangements for leaving my present situation. A housemaid left the other day, and I believe she gave her mistress a month's notice—I suppose the same rule will hold good with me—I will come to you at the end of that time, unless you change your mind in the mean while."

"I shall not change my mind; I only wish you could come to me today. Take my card, dear, and give me yours."

"I have no cards," answered Miss Desmond. "I have neither name nor place in the world, and have no need of visiting cards."

She wrote her address upon the back of an envelope and gave it to Mrs. Tredethlyn. To the last her manner was cold and ungracious: but Maude parted from her, happy in the idea that she had rescued her old companion from a life of drudgery.

"Why should I not be her hired slave? I shall still have the right to hate her," thought Miss Desmond, as she went back to Bayswater with her gloomy charges.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SEEING A GHOST.

UNDER the perpetual influence of his friend and master Harcourt Lowther, Mr. Tredethlyn's days and nights were so fully occupied that he had very little leisure for serious thought. Day by day the patient master taught his deadly lesson; day by day the luckless pupil took his teacher's precepts more deeply to heart. The simple, credulous nature was as malleable as clay under the practised hand of the modeller, and took any shape Mr. Lowther chose to give it.

Francis was fully impressed with the idea that his money had purchased a lovely wife whose heart could never be given to him. All that fair fabric of hopes and dreams which had been his when he married Maude Hillary had been slowly, but surely undermined, and there was nothing left of its brightness but the memory that it once had been. He thought of those foolish hopes now with anger and bitterness. Could he have ever been so mad, so blind, so besotted, as to believe that this beautiful creature, perpetually floating in an atmosphere of frivolity and adulation, would ever fold her wings to nestle tenderly in his rude breast? Othello, recalled to the sense of his declining years and grimy visage by the friendly bluntness

of Iago, could scarcely have thought more bitterly of his lovely Venetian bride than Francis thought of Maude after six months' daily association with his old master. But if the poison was swift to do its deadly work, the antidote was always at hand. With thirty thousand a year, and a fine constitution, what need has a young man for reflection? It is all very well for Mr. Young, the poet, having failed to obtain wealth or preferment, to retire from a world which has treated him ill, and meditate upon the transitory nature of earthly blessings that he has been unable to obtain; but with youth and thirty thousand per annum, surely no man need be bored by such a darksome guest as dull care. Harcourt Lowther did his best to shield his friend from the gloomy intruder by contriving that Francis Tredethlyn's existence should be one perpetual fever of hurry and excitement. But though you may carry a man from racecourse to racecourse, by shrieking expresses tearing through the darkness of the night; though you may steep him to the lips in theatres and dancing halls; though you may drag him from one scene of mad unrest to another, till his tired eyeballs have lost their power to see anything but one wearisome confusion of gaslight and colour, you *cannot* prevent him thinking. The involuntary process goes on in spite of him. He will think in a hansom cab tearing over the stones of the Haymarket, in an express train rushing towards Newmarket at sixty miles an hour, on the box seat of a guardsman's drag, on the rattling fire-engine of an aristocratic amateur Braidwood, on the downs at Epsom; yes, even at the final rush when every eye is strained to concentrate its power of sight upon one speck of colour, the man's mind, for ever the veriest slave to follow that will-o'-the-wisp called association, will wander away in spite of him,—to mourn above a baby's grave, to sit amidst the perfume of honeysuckle and roses in a still summer twilight, trifling with the rings on a woman's hand.

There were times when thought would come to Francis Tredethlyn, in spite of all his friend's watchful care. He would sit at the head of a dinner-table at the "Crown and Sceptre," staring vacantly at the frisky wine-bubbles in his shallow glass, and thinking how happy he might have been if Maude had only loved him. Ah, this poor substitute of noise instead of mirth—this pitiful tinsel of dissipation in place of the pure gold of happiness,—how miserable a mockery it was even at the best!

Mr. Lowther generally broke in upon such gloomy reveries as these by calling to the waiter to exchange his friend's shallow glass for a tumbler. But there are pangs of regret not to be lulled to slumber by all the sparkling wines that were ever grown in the fair champagne country, and Harcourt Lowther sometimes found his work very difficult.

But amidst such perpetual hurry and excitement it was only natural that some things should be almost entirely forgotten by Francis Tredethlyn, and amongst these forgotten things were the sorrows of his missing cousin. The Gray's Inn lawyers had *carte blanche*, and could have employed all the detective machinery in London in a search for Susan Tredethlyn, *alias*

Susan Lesley, had they so chosen; but your intensely respectable family solicitor is the slowest of slow coaches, and Messrs. Kursdale and Scardon contented themselves with the insertion of an occasional advertisement in the second column of the *Times* supplement, informing Susan Lesley that she might hear of something to her advantage on applying at their office; and further offering a liberal reward for any information respecting the above-mentioned lady.

The advertisement did not entirely escape notice. A good many Susan Lesleys presented themselves:—one a fat old woman of seventy, who kept a tobacconist's shop in the neighbourhood of Seven Dials; another a bony and pugnacious-looking person, with fiery red hair and a fine South of Ireland brogue, who threatened dire vengeance on the quiet lawyer when he refused to recognize her pretensions to hear of something to her advantage. All the Susan Lesleys were ready to swear anything in order to establish their claims to that unknown advantage—which might be anything from a five-pound note to a million of money, or a dormant peerage,—but they all broke down lamentably under Mr. Kursdale's cross-questioning, and he did not even trouble Francis Tredethlyn to confront the false syrens.

So amid Newmarket meetings and Greenwich dinners, chicken-hazard, billiards, and unlimited loo, poor Susan's rustic image melted quite away; and Francis forgot the solemn promise he had made, and the sacred duty he had set himself to do when his uncle Oliver's heritage first fell into his hands. And Francis Tredethlyn's forgetfulness might have lasted very long if an accident had not awakened him to a most vivid recollection of the past.

It was the May-time saturnalia of the turf, the Epsom week, and Mr. Tredethlyn's drag had been to and fro upon the dusty roads carrying a heavy load of Bohemianism under convoy of the indefatigable Harcourt Lowther. Francis had been rather unlucky, and a good deal of money had changed hands after the Derby, the larger part of it finding its way into the pockets of Mr. Tredethlyn's obliging friend. The Oaks day was to have redeemed his fortunes, but the day was over, and Francis drove home amongst the noisy ruck of landaus and waggonettes, ponderous double dog-carts, and heavily laden sociables, tax-carts and costermongers' barrows, with the outer leaves of an attenuated cheque-book peeping from his breast pocket, and the dim consciousness that he had distributed hastily scribbled cheques to the amount of some thousands, floating confusedly in his brain. He drove to town through the spring twilight, with Dutch dolls in his hat, and a heavy pain in his heart. The *papier maché* noses of his companions were scarcely more false and hollow than their gaiety.

Of course it would be impossible to conclude such a day without a dinner. The sort of people amongst whom Francis Tredethlyn are perpetually dining and giving dinners, only the dinner-givers are as one to

twenty of the diners; so at some time between nine and ten o'clock Maude's husband found himself in his usual place at the head of a glittering table in an odorous atmosphere of asparagus soup and fried mullet, and with a racking headache that was intensified by every jingle of glasses and rattle of knives and forks.

He had lost heavily, and had drunk deeply under the warm May sunshine on the Downs. To lose cheerfully is given to many men, but how very few have the power to lose quietly! Francis had taken his disappointments in a rather uproarious spirit; slapping his companions on the shoulder, and making new engagements right and left; backing the same horses by whose shortcomings he had just lost his money; and huskily protesting the soundness of his own judgment in despite of the misfortunes of to-day.

He went on talking now at the head of the dinner-table, though the sound of his own voice by no means improved the splitting pain in his head. He went on talking amidst a clamour of many voices, through which one sober and silent toady, sitting next Mr. Tredethlyn, made a vain effort to understand his discourse. He poured forth misty vaticination on coming events, gave general invitations for a great dinner at Virginia Water on the Ascot cup day, and galloped noisily along the road to ruin in which Harcourt Lowther had set him going. That splitting headache of his was getting worse every minute, when some one proposed an adjournment to an adjacent theatre.

There had been counsel taken with a waiter. A West End waiter is no mean dramatic critic, though he never sees a play; the opinions of playgoers percolating perpetually through his ears must leave some residuum in the shape of knowledge. The waiter opined that the best entertainment in London was to be had at Drury Lane, where a melodramatic spectacle of some celebrity was being played that evening for the last time but one.

Inspired by the waiter, Mr. Tredethlyn's party made their way to the theatre, bearing Mr. Tredethlyn along with them, indifferent where he went, and carrying his headache with him everywhere.

It was past ten o'clock, and the last scene of the great spectacle was on. The house was full, and the audience were chiefly of that restless and vociferous order who drop into a theatre at half-price on great race nights. Mr. Tredethlyn and his party could only find standing-room at the back of the dress circle, and from this position Francis beheld the grand final *tableau*.

The piece was an adaptation of some great Parisian success—some story of the Reign of Terror,—and in this last scene the stage was crowded by a clamorous populace. Upwards of three hundred men, women, and children were engaged in the scene. Blouses and uniforms, the picturesque head-dresses of the provincial peasantry, the scarlet cap of liberty, the cocked hats of the gendarmerie,—all blended in one grand

mass of movement and colour, while the rapid action of the piece drew to its triumphant close.

Mr. Tredethlyn did not trouble himself to wonder what the piece had been about. He saw somebody killed—a villain it was to be supposed, since the crowd set up a well-organized yell of rejoicing; then there was a reconciliation, an embrace, a young lady in white muslin clasped to the breast of a young man in a long-tailed blue coat and low top-boots, adorned with many-coloured bunches of ribbon. Then the band broke into the stately measure of the "Marseillaise Hymn," the crowd clamoured a shrill chorus, and the curtain fell.

It was while the curtain was descending very slowly to that triumphant music that Francis Tredethlyn saw something which startled him like the sight of a ghost.

It was a face—a woman's face in a high Normandy cap, looking out of the many faces in the crowd,—a thin, worn, melancholy countenance, very sad to look upon, among all those other faces fronting the audience with a stereotyped smile.

"My God!" cried Mr. Tredethlyn, clasping his two hands upon his hot forehead, and pushing back the rumpled hair, "who is it? What's the matter with me? I feel as if I'd seen a ghost!"

There was a little piece after the melodrama, a slender little production popularly known as a "screaming" farce. It was not the most strikingly original dramatic invention, and its chief point consisted in one gentleman in tartan trousers being perpetually mistaken for another gentleman in tartan trousers, while both gentlemen were alternately sitting upon bonnet-boxes and dropping trays of crockery.

There was certainly not very much in the farce, but the audience laughed uproariously, and Francis Tredethlyn's party joined in the laughter. He found himself laughing, too, as loudly as the rest of them; but amidst all that confusion and clamour the wan, sad face with two inartistic patches of rouge upon its hollow cheeks kept surging up ever and anon out of the chaos of his brain, and haunting him like the face of a ghost.

Who was it? What was it? Was it some accidental likeness? Was it a face that he had seen and known in the past? Alas for the steady, clear-headed soldier, who had been so prompt to obey military orders, so strict in the performance of duty! Francis Tredethlyn's muddled senses refused to help him to-night. The author of "What will he do with it?" tells us that light wines are the most treacherous of liquors; "they inflame the brain like fire, while melting on the palate like ice." Mr. Tredethlyn had been drinking a mixture of divers champagnes and Moselles all day long, and he tried in vain to fix the vague image which floated amidst the confusion of his brain.

He went home in the early grey of the May morning, but not to sleep. He lay tossing from side to side, tormented by that preternatural wakeful-

ness which is apt to succeed a long period of riot and excitement. The course at Epsom, the gipsy fortune-tellers, the betting men in white hats and green veils, the Dutch dolls and pink calico pincushions, the dust and clamour of the homeward drive, the jingling of broken glass, the popping of corks, the revolutionary crowd in the drama, the tartan trousers and broken bandboxes in the farce,—all mixed themselves in his brain, falling to pieces and putting themselves together again like the images in a kaleidoscope.

Mr. Lowther, coming to see his friend at the correct visiting hour, found Francis still in bed, in a little room behind the library, which he had fitted up for himself at Harcourt's instigation, as a bedroom and dressing-room, a kind of refuge to which he might betake himself when he was unfit to encounter the calm gaze of Maude's clear blue eyes fixed upon him in sorrowful wonder. Her manner to him had never quite recovered its old kindness since that unlucky encounter on the stairs. She was still kind to him, but he could see that it was by an effort only that she retained anything of her old friendliness. He could see this, and the knowledge of it galled him to the quick. Harcourt Lowther's work was more than half done by this time. He had no longer any difficulty in beguiling Francis abroad, for the Cornishman no longer cared to remain at home.

Mr. Tredethlyn had not very long fallen into a feverish slumber after long hours of wakeful weariness, when his friend called upon him. Harcourt seated himself by the side of the narrow brass bedstead, and stared contemplatively at the sleeper, while he spoke to the valet who had admitted him to the darkened chamber.

"You can let your master sleep till four o'clock, Jervois," he said. "At four give him some soda and brandy. He has an appointment with me at half-past five. Take care that he doesn't oversleep himself. I'll write him a line by way of reminder."

He drew a little writing-table towards him, and wrote a few lines on a sheet of note-paper :—

"DEAR TREDETHLYN,—Remember your engagement at my quarters; 5.30 sharp. You had better bring the mail phaeton, and can give me a lift to the 'S. and G.'
"Yours faithfully,
"H. L."

He slipped his note into an envelope, and dipped his pen into the ink, but before writing the address he stopped suddenly, and tore the note into fragments.

"*She* might see it!" he muttered, thoughtfully, "and that might show her the nature of my cards. The only wise man is the one who can do his work without that most dangerous of all machinery—pen and paper. Poor Francis! he looks a little worn."

Mr. Lowther looked down upon the sleeper with the most benign

expression. He had no dislike whatever to the simple Cornishman; he had only—his own plans.

"These fellows who come suddenly into a large fortune are sure to kill themselves before they have done spending it," he murmured, complacently. "Jervois," he said, as he went out, "you won't forget your master's engagement. He'd better drive up to my place in the mail phaeton."

Mr. Lowther's "place" was the same lodging which he had taken for himself when he first returned to England. He was an adventurer, but he was not a vulgar adventurer; and in all his dealings with Francis Tredethlyn he had not sponged upon that gentleman's purse for so much as a five-pound note. He had his plans; but they were not the plans of a man who lives from hand to mouth. He won a good deal of his friend's money; but he never cheated Francis out of a sixpence. His sole advantage was that which must always accompany skill and experience as opposed to ignorance and inexperience. In the mean while, Harcourt Lowther lived as best he might on his winnings and a small allowance made him by his mother.

The Lowthers were great people in their way, and Harcourt had admission to some of the best houses in London. He was very well received in that circle in which Maude Tredethlyn had taken her place, and contrived somehow or other to be present for an hour or so at almost all of the parties in which she appeared; though to break away from the haunts of Bohemianism to drop into politer life, and then return to Bohemia in the same evening, was almost as difficult as a harlequin's jump in a pantomime. Harcourt Lowther did this, however, and did it very often; and Maude Tredethlyn, enjoying all the privileges of a matron, found herself sometimes standing amongst the statues and exotics on a crowded staircase in Tyburnia, talking with Harcourt Lowther almost as familiarly as they had talked in the old summer evenings by the quiet river.

Sometimes, looking back upon such a meeting, Maude felt inclined to be angry with Mr. Lowther for having taken something of the old tone; but could she blame him for the lowered accents of his voice, the subdued light in his eyes, the unconscious tenderness into which he was betrayed in those public meetings, when she remembered how nobly he kept aloof from her in her home? Never yet had he presumed upon his intimacy with the husband in order to intrude himself on the presence of the wife. What harm or danger, then, if, in crowded assemblages, he surmounted all manner of small difficulties in order to make his way to her side? What could it matter if he lingered just a little longer than others, contriving all sorts of excuses for delay? It is rather a pleasant thing for a frivolous young married woman, serene in the consciousness of her own integrity, to know that a man's heart is breaking for her in a gentlemanly way. A word too much, a tone, a look, and Maude would have taken alarm, and fled from her old admirer as from the venomous fangs of some deadly

reptile; but Harcourt Lowther knew better than to speak that word. He had his own plans, and he was carrying them out in his own way: neither by word nor look had he ever yet offended Maude Tredethlyn; but now, when he tried to cut a path for himself through the crowd about her, he found less difficulty in the progress. People began to make way for him, and it was considered a settled thing that he should be found somewhere near her. He had not offended her; he had only—compromised her.

Francis awoke before the hour at which his servant had been told to call him. The valet's place was almost a sinecure, for the Cornishman still retained, of his old nature, the simple, independent habits of a man who can wait upon himself. He got up at four o'clock, and had nearly completed his toilet when the servant brought the soda and brandy prescribed by Harcourt Lowther.

"And if you please, sir, you were to be so good as to remember an appointment with Mr. Lowther at half-past five, and was to please to drive the mail phaeton," said the valet, while his master drank the revivifying beverage.

"Very good," muttered Mr. Tredethlyn, with something like a groan; "you may go and order the phaeton for five o'clock. Is Mrs. Tredethlyn at home?"

"No, sir."

The man departed, and Francis finished dressing. He had ten minutes to spare after putting on his outer coat, and he sat down to look at the newspaper which lay ready cut on his writing-table. He took up the *Times*, but only stared vacantly at the advertisement sheet. His head still ached, in spite of a shower-bath and a vigorous application of hard hair-brushes; but his intellect was a good deal clearer than it had been before he dressed.

Suddenly, out of the advertisement sheet, vivid as the figure of Banquo at Macbeth's uncomfortable supper-party, there arose before him a face—a wan, faded face—in a white muslin cap.

"Great Heaven!" he cried; "I didn't know her!"

The ghost that he had seen upon the previous night was the ghost of the woman he had so long been looking for—his cousin Susan.

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PTOLEMY'S TREASURES.

IT is hardly necessary to remind those who have any acquaintance with general literature, and with history in particular, of the innumerable vulgar errors that creep into books, and the many historical falsehoods which, from the mere force of repetition, end by being adopted as truth.

Among these last may be included the accusation against Omar of having destroyed by fire the books contained in the library of Alexandria. Many authors have pointed out the error of this imputation, and the German Reinart even published at Gottingen, in 1792, a special dissertation on the subject; so it might have been supposed that, except among village pedagogues, the question was set at rest; but lo and behold! in a report of the meeting of the Academy of Sciences in Paris, May, 1857, M. le Baron Dupin, the spokesman of the Academy, informs the public, with much gaiety, that "Omar, the General of Mahomet, having conquered the Valley of the Nile, his Lieutenant, Omron, suggested to him the formation of a canal direct from Suez to Pelusium; but an ignoramus who could be guilty of burning the Alexandrian library was not likely to possess sufficient capacity to entertain so grand an idea."

A short notice that appeared in a bibliographical journal* pointed out the many errors contained in these few lines. First, the Caliph Omar never conquered the Valley of the Nile. Secondly, he could not have rejected the idea of the construction of a canal from Suez to Pelusium, for the very good reason that the canal already existed. And, lastly, he did not burn the Alexandrian library, as it had been destroyed two centuries and a half previously.

In order that we may leave no further room for a doubt on this point, let us return to the proofs furnished us by history against the unpardonable assertion made by a member of the French Academy. It is well known that this celebrated library was founded by Ptolemy Soter. According to St. Epiphanius, the number of volumes amounted to 54,800. Josephus says that it contained 200,000. Under the successors of Ptolemy the number gradually increased to 700,000; but by *volumes* must be understood *rouleaux*, which contained much less than our modern books.

Julius Cæsar, being besieged in the city of Alexandria, set fire to the fleet in the port. The wind carried the flames to some distance, and thus caused the first conflagration of this famous library. Later, a new one was founded; but in 390, under Theodosius, after a sanguinary contest between the heathens and the Christians, this building was completely destroyed from top to bottom, the library pillaged, and the books dis-

* "La Correspondance Littéraire," 2e année, No. 4, du 5 Février, 1858, p. 84.

persed. Twenty years later, the historian Orosium exclaimed sorrowfully, "We have lived to see the shelves empty on which once stood the volumes destroyed by the men of our age."

It now remains to be seen if, after this second destruction, a third library was formed. No author makes mention of it, and history proves that, during the greatest part of the period up to the year 640—the date of the taking of Alexandria by the Arabs—men of letters and philosophers were persecuted, and the collecting of books neglected. The wars, too, civil and foreign, exhausted the resources of the empire, and allowed no time for the cultivation of literary tastes.

Anyhow, if a third library was formed, of which there is no mention whatever, it cannot have been of any magnitude or celebrity.

M. Lalanne, in his *Curiosités Bibliographiques*, very justly surmises that the origin of this error lies in an Arab author of the eighth century, Ebn-Khaldoun, who, in reciting the conquests of the provinces of Persia by the Mahommedans, says that "Saad, the general who commanded the latter, wrote to Omar to ask permission to carry away the books; and that Omar replied, 'Throw them into the water:* for if they are in accordance with the truth, God has taught us better things in the Koran; and if they contain error, they ought not to be preserved.'" Now let us see who was the first to propagate the fiction of the burning of the Alexandrian library. They were two Arab doctors and historians; one died in 1231, the other in 1286,† that is to say, six centuries after the event they record. Now how is it to be accounted for that, during these six centuries, no author has ever made allusion to so important and so remarkable an event,—not even Eutychius, an historian of the end of the ninth century, who has left us a detailed account of the taking of Alexandria?

It is more natural to suppose that the two authors who invented the destruction by fire of this library, found an analogous fact in a history of the eighth century, and adapted it to another circumstance, as was frequently the custom with the chroniclers of the Middle Ages.

OCTAVE DELEPIERRE, LL.D.

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* "Relation de l'Egypt," par Abd-Allatif, traduit par M. de Sacy, 1810, in quarto.

† "Magasin Encyclopédique," 5e année, t. iv., p. 438.

GOLD-WORSHIP IN AMERICA

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DANGERFIELD'S REST."

"GET money; honestly if you can, but *get money*," is the perpetual injunction, the universal shibboleth, in the land of liberty. Whatever may be their compensating advantages, republican institutions produce in this wise an effect which is neither liberal, progressive, nor humane. They abolish titular distinctions; they eschew hereditary rank; they will have none of the law of primogeniture; but, alas! they substitute, at least for the present, only one stimulus to ambition, only one reward (not always of merit) for successful toil, only one measure of social standard or recognition, which he who cares not for self may yet struggle to conquer for his children's sake,—gold. No one asks in New York, "Is he good? is he noble, self-sacrificing, intellectual, knowledgeful?" Oh no. The Manhattanites feel no need of all these things. They ask only one question, far more cognate than such trivial incidentals,—"How much money has he got?" Naturally enough, too; for why should they be solicitous about the existence of qualities in another, when they know by experience that their possession makes not the smallest difference in this community either to him or to themselves? And why should they *not* be anxious about the solitary attribute which they have learned to believe is of far more consequence than all the rest put together? "Exaggeration," says somebody. I think not; I think it plain, simple truth. Moreover, it is the opinion "fire cannot melt out of me" until I see changes in American society (the glimmerings of whose dawn, I acknowledge, may be now seen through the smoke of war) develop and mature into the light of full noon.

I have read, that in the noble old commonwealths of Greece and Rome it cost heroic deeds against the enemy, eminent virtue, transcendent ability, to raise one man above another, and that wealth had no share in it. I have read that, in the Middle Ages, when commerce was in its infancy, and men were either nobles or vassals, true knights disdained mere gold, and were honoured by the world as by their peers, in proportion to their bravery and self-denial. I am afraid that, so far, in America, we have not improved in these matters upon antiquity, or upon the days of chivalry. It is a dreary thing to say, but no less a true one, that money has come to be regarded with us as the sole basis and measure of social position and influence. The results of so refined and elevated a system are tolerably conclusive as proving its existence, and are to be found in American manners and society both at home and abroad. We are behind nearly every other civilized nation as regards the standards and essentials of recognized good breeding in most of the various strata of our society. American families, who have been taught that money is the only

god, bristling with *parvenue* airs and graces, squander and fritter and swagger about Europe, the laughingstock of every cultivated man or woman with whom they come in contact. This pervading gold-worship, which, although it exists in old countries, finds its level in their more complicated social adjustments, is fearfully potent in sapping the principles and corrupting the heart of a new one. It vulgarizes society; it crushes letters; it fosters the marriage of convenience; it degrades and casts down the graces of character and intellect, to set up in their stead the image of a coarse and sensual mammon. The constitution, indeed, says that men are born free and equal; but your gold-worshippers say that is only true until some men have swept together more dollars than the rest. A low fellow comes back from California or Nevada with a fortune swiftly amassed, by dint of luck or rapacity, from the pockets of others less fortunate. Straightway arise pœans of praise from the delighted throng, and the incense of their adulation tickles the nostrils of Crœsus without ceasing while his money lasts. But suppose a sudden crash in stocks, suppose some unforeseen accumulation of disasters, and suppose these new-got spoils of Mariposa take wings to themselves and fly away! I opine that nowhere in the world is Crœsus so quickly discovered to be a fool, or a knave, or both, as in New York; and that nowhere else can be found so shameless an ignorance of the fact that his faults were never discerned in his prosperity. It is an old, old story, I know, in other worlds beside the New, but more sharply pronounced, methinks, in a community where, the only title to respect or consideration being snatched from him, the unfortunate has nothing else to requite a measure of condolence, or to soften the bitterness of his fall.

Money-worship afflicts us in the kitchen in America as well as in the drawing-room. Every ignorant foreigner who seeks a home there is soon taught to become insolent and self-asserting, first by our theoretical equality, and next by our practical exception in favour of riches. The uneducated are as quick to see and appreciate this fact as are their superiors. They understand clearly that we do not respect, set up, crown with honour, brain or worth, unless we can make them in some manner specially useful for our private ends, political or otherwise. But they see that we adore wealth! They see us dancing merrily and dutifully before the car of its possessor, with loyal homage and admiring genuflexions.

What wonder that Bridget flounces past her mistress, gorgeous in rainbow frippery, and thoroughly satisfied that if her dress be sufficiently costly, *she* is "as good as anybody" can be?—or that John the coachman, in his "black suit" and pinchbeck jewellery of a Sunday, imparts the same sentiment to his fellows with the usual masculine addendum? We are constantly living and acting as if to establish the principle, that it is safer and better to bow down to Rothschild or Astor than to Plato or Bacon; we must not be surprised if servants and children, and all other imitative animals, profit by the example. When we persuade the young that there

is no country so great, so noble, so well-bred as their own, we may be cultivating patriotism, albeit at the expense of a respect for veracity; but there is no such saving clause, no such qualified compensation, when we teach them to love money for its own sake; we are then simply stimulating their greed and developing their selfish egotism at the cost of all that is most noble and chivalrous in the human soul. It is a sad thing to say, but I believe a strictly true one, that intellect is less respected and esteemed in America to-day than in any other civilized country. Perhaps, to define my meaning more exactly, I should qualify the statement, and write, intellect of the sort which cannot be made immediately available in the way of making money. That such a state of things should exist is, after all, not remarkable. It is the characteristic of a new country, where nearly all must labour, and few get time to think. In California and in Australia it is more apparent than even in the Atlantic States. The newer the country, indeed, the more natural, and therefore perhaps the more pardonable, such a sentiment becomes. But America is old enough now, as the phrase goes, to know better. It is high time a social condition should be superseded which reminds you unpleasantly of the old days one reads of, when the parson and schoolmaster, as well as the clerk and the scrivener, fed in the servants' hall, and were lodged with butler and coachman; but so long as most rich men, who have made their own fortunes, behave in a way which convinces you of their secret belief that a return to those particular old-fashioned usages would be highly proper and desirable, a change for the better seems unlikely.

On the other hand, the social prejudice against people in trade finds small favour in a community where almost everybody is concerned in it. So little known, in truth, is such a prejudice, that I believe the majority of Americans never seriously consider, if they have ever even heard of, the fact that trade has sometimes been regarded as ignoble, and its followers as mean. And yet the proportion of reason and logic on which that prejudice has rested was never more broadly illustrated and confirmed than among the trading masses of the American people during the present generation.

Let me here, and to avoid being misunderstood, put my meaning into unmistakable terms. I know how much good trade has done for mankind. I know that the vast and ever-increasing exigencies of modern commerce have called into existence the most extended machinery for the comfort and sustenance of the masses of the world's inhabitants which has yet been known in its history. I admit that, if to make men "happy, comfortable, and rich, with time for reading and time for reflection," is worthy or noble, there is more credit due to trade than to any other agency, either before the age of chivalry or after it. I go further, and acknowledge that commercial necessity has given birth to a great number of those deeds and incidents which have most thoroughly touched the hearts of mankind, and stirred imaginative natures to the highest flights

of which they are capable. To discover a shorter path to the Indies, Columbus steered the course which brought him to that new world of ours; and what more glorious or poetical than the associations which cluster around that memorable voyage? With a similar object were planned the expeditions in search of a north-west passage—those expeditions of Franklin and Kane and McClintock, so rich in interest, so heroic as examples, so sad in some of their conclusions. Commercial necessity, too, has led to the paths opening into the vast treasures of Oriental knowledge, which otherwise had remained perhaps for ever unknown to us. It is trade which built the Great Eastern and the Britannia Bridge. It is trade which extends its arms across the boiling Niagara, and which girdles the broad Atlantic. It is trade which brings down as servants the thunderbolts of Jove, and which carves itself a passage through the bosom of Mount Cenis. Hannibal and Napoleon scaled the Alps in pursuit of their vast schemes of glory and renown, but it remained for trade to consummate the mightier achievement of piercing their everlasting foundations.

I find, too, ideas of romance—images of vastness and of splendour conjured up by the recital of these achievements of commerce, these miracles of trade. Show me an instance, the grandest you can find in history, wherein the necessities of war or the ambition of a king has wrought some colossal labour, and I will surpass it with one yet more prodigious, called into existence by the exigencies of trade. What, too, endows most of the great charities and institutes of learning? What, for example, in America establishes Girard colleges, Astor libraries, Lawrence scientific schools, Cooper institutes? Not the bloodbought gold of potentates or feudal proprietors, but the trade-gained contributions of successful merchants. Thus the works of commerce, whether for art, for education, or for charity, make a never-ending epic, which chants melodiously to the world the surpassing blessings of peace.

Thus much in proof that my opinions respecting trade are not altogether prejudiced or *ex parte* ones; as evidence that, if ready to point out and stigmatize its drawbacks and littleness, I am yet not unwilling to do homage to its vast achievements, its undeniable and beneficent services to mankind. I find no fault with the uses of trade, but with its abuses; and affirm that these latter are more likely to become sharply prominent in a democratic society than in any other, and to increase in the ratio of its years of successful establishment; and that therefore it behoves the thoughtful and the educated, in a community like that of the United States, to take especial pains to combat and forestall its ill effects. It is not the effect of mercantile life as illustrated in the deeds and examples of Lawrences and Peabodys which is to be dreaded;—these are the brilliant exceptions, which can be emulated by few, and which, it is not unjust to say, are conspicuous from their rarity;—but it is the truckling, huckstering, shaving practices so eagerly followed by the great mass, and

which, in the absence of any other considerable goal for ambition than mere wealth, must continue to entice and suck down the majority to the seductive Maelstrom. It is the peddling, haggling, overreaching spirit, so universally, and not always justly, attributed to the conventional Yankee, which is so degrading, so offensive, and yet so contagious. People in America have questioned my facts, disputed my inferences, when I have said in private so much as this. They urge that in the mother country the dark side of trade is as lowering and repulsive as with themselves; I answer, not altogether so. For whatever the evils and the sorrows and the wrongs which exist in that old land, its people do still care for something besides the mere accumulation of gold; they do demand something more than its mere possession before according their respect. It is hard, however, to induce average Americans to believe or to concede such a distinction. Like Montaigne's secretary, they seem to think it impossible that a man should speak well of another country without hating his own; and their prejudice on such a score stiffens their incredulity. The difference between the money homage in the two countries—which appears to me so obvious as to amount to the merest commonplace, but to which my countrymen for the most part obstinately shut their eyes—seems to lie in this:—In England, where wealth remains in families for generation after generation, their representatives are tolerably certain to be at least educated and refined, and to constitute standards in such respects, if not in those of morality. If people there have fortune, then, it is safe to assume that, in the average, they are fit to mingle with good society. Such is not the case in America, where the *nouveaux riches* are notably in excess of the *haute noblesse*, and where, moreover, each starting fortuneless, a vulgar, ignorant, pushing fellow is about as certain to acquire wealth as a refined, educated, and deserving gentleman is sure to miss it. For the poor gentleman, indeed, there is no niche in America. I am afraid that he is very much opposed in his inherent nature to the existing social organization. The eagerness with which the poor scribblers and poets of New York strive to scramble and twist themselves into the society of the vulgar rich of that city—what is called in their current slang the shoddy aristocracy—is at once a sad commentary and a humiliating proof of the truth of what I describe.

In America fortunes are sometimes made in a day, and it is small wonder that the lucky ones give ear to the flatterers who make haste to convince them that it takes no longer to learn how to spend them. It is small wonder, in the all-pervading adoration paid to gold, that men should learn to believe that its possession implies a metamorphosis whereby the coarse and rude are changed in a trice to the gentle and refined. If there can be any mitigation of our regret over the horrors of war, it may well rest on the conviction that, in America, it will foster and revivify some qualities which have too long lain dormant there. The sacrifice of blood, pitiable as it is, cannot be deemed altogether in vain in a vast community

hurrying in a frantic mass to the worship of the most degrading of idols—a community which, if ever such a necessity were indicated, positively required a powerful convulsion from some quarter to clarify its atmosphere, and infuse more wholesome elements into its political and social condition.

WAITING.

WAITING for *him*—where the hoar oak arches
Lichen'd boughs o'er the distance blue:
Green tufts gem the brown feathery larches,
Hyacinth buds pierce the dead leaves through.

Waiting for *him*—where, golden-breasted
With summer blossoms of furze and broom,
Soars the grey granite, foxglove-crested,
Waves around it the fern's green plume.

Waiting for *him*—where, from dark crags leaping,
The swollen brook foams to the leaden mere;
And the fierce north wind, through the tree-tops sweeping,
Strews each path with the oak-leaves sere.

Waiting for *him*—in her cabin, dying;
Dim eyes, fix'd on the open door,
Nothing see, save the deep snow lying
White as a shroud on the moonlit moor!

EVELYN FOREST.

THE LANGUAGE OF ART.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

IDEOGRAPHY, or the representation of ideas by pictures, is most probably anterior to the art of writing. The first meaning of the Greek word γραφή is drawing, or painting; it afterwards meant writing, and in that sense is usually understood.

The origin of painting is supposed to be derived from sciagraphy, or the delineation of a shadow, but of this we know nothing except from tradition, and the poetical story of that Corinthian girl who, seeing her lover asleep by lamplight, the shadow of his profile cast upon the wall, traced it there with a piece of charcoal used to light the bronze brazier. The most ancient pictures we have seen are those of the Egyptians, who used drawings to express their ideas. This hieroglyphical and pictorial language, however unintelligible to the people, was perfectly well understood by the initiated.

It may be conjectured that the ancient Brahmin, the Druid, and the Egyptian priest, had all one common language, expressed by drawing and painting; for perhaps they attached a meaning to colours as well as forms, as the heralds of bygone times certainly did. This art was employed in the ornamentation of temples, tombs, obelisks, and other public monuments. Egyptian sculpture had also a mystic meaning; it was the unspoken language of the priesthood. And however strange these graven images and quaint pictures may appear to us, they were probably the profound language of men of science, who would only express their ideas to strangers of their own sect in this manner; for the knowledge of various languages, so common now, was very rarely acquired by the ancients; but the hieroglyphic was a masonic sign, and although a man could not understand a word you said, he could make himself perfectly intelligible by means of drawing.

I believe that all written language was originally pictorial; that the representation of a man was emblematical of reason and intellect; of a lion, strength and courage; of a horse, swiftness; a fox, cunning and deceit; a sheep, timidity; and so on, according to the well-known attributes of animals. And pictures, or carvings of inanimate objects, often seen on Egyptian monuments, although less intelligible to the lower orders of the masonic priesthood, were doubtless perfectly well known to the higher ranks of this mysterious fraternity.

Clavigero, the most authentic historian of Mexico, laments the loss of the Mexican pictures, which were destroyed by the missionaries in their zeal to eradicate the superstitions of the people. In fact, these pictures represented the history of the country. Everything of importance that had occurred in Mexico had been painted, and painters abounded there as scribes did at that time in Europe. The first missionaries, suspecting that superstition was mixed with all their paintings, attacked the chief

school of these artists; and collecting in the market-place a little mountain of these precious records, they set fire to it, burying in the ashes the memory of many most interesting events.

Now it is clear that such a language must be more or less cosmopolite. To illustrate what I mean:—go to some strange place in search of kangaroos, or any other wild animals; apply to the savage who knows their haunts: he cannot understand a word you say, nor can you make out his uncultivated speech; but show him a drawing of the creature, and most likely he will soon guide you to its abode. Perhaps the much-lamented and long-lost Dodo might be discovered in this manner. There is a picture of this supposed-to-be-extinct animal in the British Museum; it was painted from the one which was discovered by some Dutch navigators in the Isle of France. Who knows that this old picture may not lead to the discovery of other specimens of this amphibious curiosity?

Mr. Ellis, the Madagascar missionary, discovered some beautiful rare plants by showing drawings of them to the natives.

When Captain Cook was at Otaheite, some of the natives stole his quadrant, and one of them, who knew where it was, described it to the captain by a triangular figure composed of three straws, which led to the detection of the thieves and the recovery of the instrument. This is the most primitive style of drawing we can well imagine, and surpasses that of all the old masters in simplicity.

Drawing is to language what geometry is to arithmetic; for no power of numbers, and no kind of analysis, can describe exactly the square root of a surd, but it can be clearly represented to the senses of a savage by the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle. Every carpenter knows that three feet is the side of a square equal to nine feet; but no exact number will represent the side of a square equal to eighteen; it is the diagonal of a square equal to nine. The geometrical line is the *picture* of an incommensurable quantity.

The art of drawing is so simple, that it may be reduced to a geometrical figure. In describing a man, which seems to have been the first object of imitation, a circle represented the head, parallel straight lines the limbs, and angles the joints. These three elements contain the A B C of delineation. The next advance towards imitation would be naturally to use curved lines to imitate the various undulations of outline in the human figure; we then have the whole alphabet of art, for every variety of form is composed of lines, curves, and angles.

My object is not to inquire about the origin of art, for that is the province of the archæologist and antiquarian, but to discuss the meaning and utility of it as a universal language,—a language which may be used for the noblest purposes of civilization, but has been too often, like the human voice, degraded to the worst of purposes, being, like all God's gifts, liable to abuse as well as use.

Dr. Johnson said, in his dictatorial manner, "Sir, painting can illus-

trate, but it cannot inform. A little girl mistook a figure of Justice for a woman selling sweetmeats." Now we may ask why a child should be expected to understand allegorical pictures any more than metaphysics or mathematics. Without a knowledge of the attributes, it is evident that an allegorical figure must be unintelligible to any one. And, indeed, I do not know why Justice should always be represented with a pair of scales; several other emblems would be as expressive of equality as an instrument generally used for weighing food, &c. There is an old picture by Giotto, in which she is distributing rewards to the virtuous and punishment to the guilty; surely this is more expressive and dignified than the business-like balance which is usually adopted; why not make her resting on an equilateral triangle? it is much more emblematic of equal justice than the device so commonly depicted.

Religion has always been the corner-stone of the great fabric of civilization; and as the ancients used costly and colossal sculpture to excite reverence for the gods, so the Roman Catholic priests have employed the painted altar-piece to inspire religious devotion. The colossal grandeur of the granite idols of Egypt was well calculated to awe the superstitious multitude; and the exquisite and unrivalled beauty of Greek art to fascinate that refined and fastidious people, so sensitive to external impressions from architecture, painting, and sculpture. The extraordinary statues which Mr. Layard has brought from Nineveh are remarkably illustrative of the powerful language of sculpture. These huge monsters are the expression of abstract ideas. The winged, human-headed lion, or bull, represents the intelligence of man combined with the strength of the brute and the flight of the eagle. All these figures are typical of moral as well as physical qualities.

The Griffon of the Greeks is of Oriental origin. Centaurs, fauns, and satyrs, however repugnant to our taste, had a silent signification. The centaur evidently represents the combined strength and power of the man and the horse; a satyr is an intelligent goat; and the graceful faun seems to represent the somewhat paradoxical expression of an elegant and accomplished savage, for he could dance, sing, and play on the flute; his pointed ears and tiny tail are the only remaining marks of his quadrupedal origin; he is in the last stage but one of the perfection of our animal nature.

The Greeks had, as Gibbon truly says, the rare art of embodying the abstractions of philosophy. They derived their arts, as they did their learning, from the Egyptians, and embellished them with their natural taste. The very early Greek works are almost Egyptian in style. The next period produced works more nearly expressive of the human form, and more pleasing to the eye. Then came the immortal school of Phidias, who, without losing sight of the original meaning of his art, that is, the expression of an idea by the imitation of nature, stamped it with a majesty and sublimity only reached by Homer and Æschylus. The paintings of this golden age of art are unfortunately lost; we can only judge of them by

conjecture, or from the very dregs and copies discovered at Pompeii. The pictures found at Herculaneum and Pompeii are most probably reproductions of the celebrated ancient works now destroyed. However graceful and elegant, they are mere decorations, and consequently can give no idea of the wonderful execution of the old Greek painters, so much boasted of by their contemporaries. There is every reason to believe that the Pompeian pictures are not original, because the same subject is perpetually repeated in the same manner. The only works which appear to be original are the representations of wild beasts hunting down tame brutes,—scenes which occurred overy day in the amphitheatre. These pictures have a certain reality and power, but are totally devoid of Attic taste. The works of Zeuxis, Apelles, and Apollodorus are all lost, and we may lose ourselves in conjectures as to their merits. Much erudition has been wasted on this barren subject, for we cannot fairly judge of objects we have never seen. Reality is poetically blended with ideality in the best Greek sculpture, and we may reasonably suppose that the painting of the most eminent artists was not deficient in this fundamental principle of fine art.

Everything in nature was so beautiful in Greece! from the exquisite symmetry of the human form, developed in every muscle by gymnastic exercise, down to the very weeds that were trodden under foot. The acanthus, a mere Greek thistle, suggested the idea of the graceful Corinthian capital, as the lotus flower of the Nile had many ages before originated a similar and equally beautiful ornament to the massive columns of Luxur and Thebes. The Greek artist was surrounded with picturesque and poetical objects, and he had only to copy what he saw to produce a beautiful work of art.

Pure Greek sculpture, which was perfected in the age of Phidias and Praxitiles, gradually declined from that perfection, and degenerated down to the Adonis and Meleager of the Vatican, and the Antinous of the Capitol. The last named of these statues is so celebrated that I believe it is heresy against what is called "fine taste" to depreciate it; but, like the other two, and many others less known, this highly polished work appears to me totally wanting in the nobler qualities of art, and quite deficient in that masculine energy and vigour so essential to the beauty of a man. Again, the famous Apollo Belvedere is only an emasculated copy of some fine old Greek bronze; but the head is magnificent. The long-legged sister of Apollo in the Louvre (I mean the "Diane à la Biche") is probably done by the same artist, and is just as poor in truth and nature, wanting the characteristics of the female as much as her brother of the Vatican lacks those of the male.

If expression be the test of excellence, then the Laocoon is the finest and most complete piece of sculpture in Rome. It is, indeed, faultless in design and admirable in execution. I hardly need describe this famous group. The huge serpents have completely enfolded the younger boy in their pythonic knots; he is paralyzed and gasping for breath; his brother

is trying in vain to extricate himself, and looks up piteously at his father. The gigantic priest is straining every muscle to disengage himself from his fearful foe. This wonderful work expresses and embodies most perfectly the harrowing and sublime description of Virgil:—

> "Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos
> Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit."
>
> (With outstretch'd hands he strives the knots to rend,
> While to the stars his dreadful shrieks ascend.)

If grandeur of style and dignity of form be considered the criterion of excellence, then the torso of Hercules in the Vatican, and the Venus of Milo in the Louvre, are the only relics of Greek art to be compared with the noble fragments of the Parthenon in the British Museum.

What is meant by "style" may be illustrated by a comparison of the three well-known statues of Venus,—the Venus de Medici, the Venus of the Capitol, and the Venus of Milo. The Venus de Medici is a beautiful piece of workmanship, but the attitude is affected and coquettish; this, however, is principally owing to the wretched restoration of the arms, which are in the worst possible modern taste; the head, too, although antique, has been replaced, and probably does not belong to the figure. This statue is a very pretty specimen of the meretricious style. The Venus of the Capitol has none of these defects, and is just like a woman surprised at a bath: it is comely, natural, and unaffected. This is a fine example of the natural style. The Venus of Milo (so called because it was found in that island) is evidently the work of some great artist of the golden age of Greek art,—perhaps Scopas. It is a conception of the loftiest character; it realizes the divine idea and ethereal majesty of Venus. This work is in the grandest style of art, and unequalled by any other remaining female statue of the ancients yet discovered.

After the conquest of Greece by the Romans, the Greek artists were transported to Rome, and the refined Athenians instructed their rude conquerors in literature, science, and the fine arts. The best works after this period were most likely done by Greeks; for the Romans were a warlike and invasive people, and but little inclined to follow the quiet occupation of sculpture or painting. Their magnificent architecture was the offspring of Greece, and was probably designed by Greeks or Sicilians, and executed by slaves.

The indefinable qualities of taste and style are inseparably connected in art with the expression of an idea; but whether our language be addressed to the coarse or the cultivated, it is necessary not to over-polish the gem of expression, for a rough diamond set in iron is worth more than one half ground away, though surrounded with gold.

The bent of taste is always towards refinement, and many grand ideas are half obliterated in the process of polishing. Our great poet deprecates in his own art the tendency to—

"Add and alter many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten."

When the Greeks lost sight of the primitive simplicity of style which was derived from Egypt, their works soon lost the healthy vigour of nature, and dwindled down into mannerism and mawkish insipidity. Most of the works of the best age are lost, particularly the bronzes, and all the sculpture in ivory and gold. The dregs preserved in the galleries and museums are nearly all copies, or slightly varied repetitions, of fine statues which have disappeared. From the little which remains of pure Greek art we may judge of the treasures we have lost. Athenian sculpture was the accurate chronicle of the progress and perfection of Attic taste: the precious fragments of the Parthenon are left to prove that Greece had reached the zenith of civilization and refinement in the age of Pericles and Phidias—the age when the poet, the orator, and the artist held the same honourable position in public estimation.

Religion was the origin of art and poetry, exalted and refined the rude images of remote antiquity, and transformed them into god-like and life-like figures, which present to the eye palpable pictures of the imagination. A great artist must be a poet, and his art is the language of his thoughts. Phidias said that Homer had inspired him with the idea of his famous statue of Jupiter. Nature is the true source of inspiration; and poetry, in whatever language, is the true expression of nature.

The slavery of Greece was the slavery of art, and the voice of the captive was stifled in Rome. The free Greek who had produced the noble idealisms of the gods, was now obliged to apotheosize the Roman emperors; and he who had been accustomed to dictate was now forced to adulate. They must have felt the bitterness of captivity as the Israelites felt it by the waters of Babylon, when they said, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

Fine Art must be free; nor can it ever flourish in a country where it is treated as a mere mechanical profession, only practised by men who are obliged to work for the gratification and according to the taste of others. No great artist can express an idea at the dictation of any one.

Art was transplanted from Greece into Italy, and carefully cultivated there as an exotic by the few enlightened individuals who had acquired fine taste from a Grecian education. The rough, thorough-bred old Roman was a soldier and a senator, but had a great contempt for fine art, fine taste, fine poetry, and good manners. Has he not bequeathed it to some of his posterity who now call themselves Britons?

A great number of statues were manufactured in Rome in the time of the empire; but, except some of the Augustan age, they are very commonplace, and we are quite ignorant of the names of the artists who produced them. There is a beautiful gem amongst the rubbish in the long corridor of the Vatican; it is the bust of the Emperor Augustus, when a lad of

eighteen or twenty. It has the stamp of intellect, refinement, and energy—all characteristics of that remarkable man.

After the time of Augustus the poor Grecian exotic ceased to be cultivated, and a weedy sort of art continued to exist, which may be called the Roman school. The only taste left was for architecture, and that was gorgeous, florid, and imposing, but never calm and pure. Art, such as it was, continued to decline with the Roman empire, and, after the invasion of the Goths, was smothered in the universal chaos and confusion out of which arose the beautiful fabric of Gothic architecture and Christian art.

Coeval with the rise and progress of Christianity was the dawn of modern art. The pointed arch superseded the Roman hemicycle; it was emblematical of the new religion of love and peace: the branches of two adjacent trees meeting and intertwining their foliage together may have originated this beautiful construction. Architecture was pre-eminent in the Middle Ages. Sculptors and painters were only the workmen of architects. The artist who produced the Gothic image of a saint, and the mosaic worker who covered the walls with rude pictures, were only respectable decorators. But as the world became recivilized, painting and sculpture reassumed a more important position. Painting was more in request than sculpture, because the altar-piece of the Christian church replaced the statue of the god in the pagan temple; so that the first artists became painters, as in more ancient times they became sculptors. Phidias was originally a painter, and Michel Angelo a sculptor. Those two remarkable men were artists of the highest class, to whom every material was subservient for the expression of an idea, chalk or clay, paint or marble, ivory or gold.

Drawing is the language, chiaro-oscuro the poetry, and colour the music of painting; these three combined may express an idea even more completely than any combination of words that has ever been invented. But painting and sculpture, instead of being made intelligible to those who are uninitiated in the mysteries of execution, often require an explanation; and, in truth, some of the most precious pieces of workmanship are totally devoid of meaning. A picture should explain itself, and very often does not. It is very well for the connoisseur to talk mysteriously about tone, and colour, and composition, in artistical *argot;* but the ordinary observer, who is unacquainted with this jargon, wants some tangible representation of an idea. The old Italian missal painters began with the most simple description of natural objects, and their pictures require no explanation. These were the real masters of Giotto, for Cimabue was himself soon surpassed by the shepherd boy he so kindly instructed. The Prayer-Book painters were monks, who employed their spare time in this delightful occupation: it is to them that we must look for the origin of the religious school of painting in Italy.

Tuscany was the birthplace of modern art, and Florence the cradle of

painting. Giotto was the first great artist, and he adorned the church with pictures which had hitherto been confined to the Prayer-Book. He was the friend of Dante, who has thus eulogized him at the expense of poor Cimabue :—

> "Credetto Cimabue nella pittura
> Tener lo campo, ed ora ha Giotto il grido
> Si che la fama di colui oscura."
>
> (In painting Cimabue sought to claim
> The foremost rank, and win the greatest name,
> Till Giotto rose and soon obscured his fame.)

This wonderful genius created the first school of painting; he originated more than any one artist has ever done. Others have perfected more, but no one ever invented so much. He was two hundred years in advance of his age; and after that lapse of time we find no artist who is equal to him in expression, the most essential quality, in fact, the only sure foundation for a true school of art. He gave life and meaning to his figures; before his time all the simulacra of saints were just alike; there was a pattern, and painters copied it as women do their work patterns and samplers. To enumerate the works of Giotto would be to make a catalogue of the most extraordinary pictures of the Tuscan school. The mechanical skill and dexterity of Giotto are quite as remarkable as the higher qualities of imagination and poetry with which he was so eminently gifted. He could draw geometrical figures by hand so well that they were almost perfect when tried by rule and compass. It was a common proverb in Italy to say, "Tondo come *l'o* di Giotto" (As round as the o of Giotto). He stored his mind with innumerable images drawn from nature, and was thus enabled to express his ideas from memory and imagination, and to produce those beautiful ideal pictures for which he is pre-eminent. Some of his small paintings at Florence are the most perfect specimens of his powers of imagination and expression. The Last Supper at the convent of San Miniato is equal, if not superior, in expression of individual character, to the celebrated work of Leonardo da Vinci at Milan; and a very small picture in the gallery of the Academy, representing the Transfiguration by a single figure of Christ, is more striking and poetical than the famous great work of Raffaelle, which is really the least original, and the most academical and sophisticated of all the paintings of that great master.

Giotto appears to have originated all the beautiful works of art of his period. He designed the stately Campanile, one of the most elegant pieces of Gothic architecture in Italy. He also made the compositions for the figures on the bronze door of the baptistery of St. John, which was executed by Andrea Pisano. Gothic sculpture, from rude beginnings, now became developed into the most beautiful expression of our religion. This remarkable work of Andrea Pisano was the prototype of the exquisite

sculpture of Ghiberti, which was produced some years afterwards; the same of which M. Angelo said, "They ought to be the gates of paradise." The designs of the gates by Ghiberti are of small dimensions, in various compartments descriptive of the principal stories of the book of Genesis; executed in three sorts of relief, so as to represent perspective, like drawing. This mode of treatment may offend those who can see nothing beautiful in art that is not Greek, but Greek and Gothic may be equally beautiful to a man of refined taste; and as it shows a very limited appreciation of the beauties of nature to admire only a small part of the creation, so those who can only admire Phidias and Praxiteles, Æschylus and Homer, might destroy these glorious Gothic gates, and burn Shakspere!

I have been the more desirous of calling attention to the works of Giotto, because he founded a school of which the characteristic excellence is the expression of an idea in the most simple manner, colouring and chiaro-oscuro being made subservient to that great object. Subsequent schools have made us acquainted with the power of correct drawing, the fascination of colouring, and the mystic poetry of light and shade; but all these qualities will not compensate for the absence of an idea, the mere description of which is the indispensable requisite of a work of art.

Orcagna, the cotemporary of Giotto, was a remarkable artist; he was a poet as well as a painter. There are two of his very scarce works in the Campo Santo at Pisa, representing the Triumph of Death and the Last Judgment. Although wanting in mechanism, these pictures are extraordinary expressions of ideality and reality.

The Triumph of Death represents three kings on horseback gorgeously dressed: they are holding their noses at the sight of the dead bodies of their predecessors, which are exposed to view in their coffins. The horses are starting back with instinctive repugnance, and nothing can be more expressive of natural horror at the sight of corruption. Next to this appalling picture is a heavenly glimpse of Paradise. The figure of a woman playing on a lute is divinely beautiful.

The artists who succeeded Giotto seem to have thought more of showing their mechanical skill than expressing their ideas. The painters of swarms of meaningless Madonnas, and emaciated beggars intended for St. John the Baptist, would make a catálogue of obscure names, known only to those who are deep in the mysteries of what is now called pre-Raffaeliteism.

B*********.

MY UNCLE'S HONEYMOON.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

"HARRY," said my uncle one morning, as we rose from the breakfast-table, "Eva wishes to try her new mare. I cannot, you know, accompany her myself, neither will I trust her to the groom. Will you take great care of her if I put her under your charge?"

"Can you doubt it, sir?" I replied. "I suppose a horse can be found for me?"

"You will find your own old grey still in excellent condition," said Sir Harold. "Evelyn, my dear," he added, "you may trust yourself with Harry; he is a first-rate equestrian, I assure you."

The horses were shortly brought round; I assisted Lady Arlington to mount; and as she sprang lightly into the saddle I thought I had never seen anything half so graceful. Sir Harold, too, looked justly proud of his lovely wife as he watched our departure from the terrace.

The day was bright and clear, the air fresh and exhilarating, and our spirits rose as we cantered over hill and dale. I knew the country perfectly well, so was able to point out to Lady Arlington many beauties with which she had been previously unacquainted. As one splendid view after another revealed themselves in panoramic succession before us, we rode on, forgetting the lapse of time; and it was not until the groom respectfully reminded us that the road was more fatiguing in returning, being very steep, that we thought of turning our horses' heads homewards. The servant was quite right; Carlton Hall being situated on an eminence, the road towards it was entirely up-hill, and we were consequently much longer in regaining the park than we had calculated upon. It was not until we arrived at the lodge that we discovered, by the clock there, that it was much past the hour at which we had promised to return.

"What will Sir Harold say?" exclaimed my companion.

"Do you think he will be vexed?" said I; "surely it would be impossible for any one to be angry with *you*."

"Oh, he will not be *angry*, but he may be alarmed; and at least he has reason to think me very inconsiderate."

She was silent as we cantered up the avenue, and I was much surprised to see my uncle on the terrace, evidently watching for us.

"How uneasy you made me!" were his first words. "Do you know, Eva, how long you have been out? I really apprehended some accident with the new mare."

"I am so sorry," said the bride.

"It was my fault, sir," said I; "the weather was so unusually favourable, and the country looked so charming, that we were beguiled onwards quite imperceptibly."

"Well, well," said the kind old man, smiling, "say no more; it is enough for me that you are safe. And so the mare went well, did she?"

"She requires some management, sir, but is admirably suited to a courageous rider like Lady Arlington," I replied, as my late companion left the room.

That evening Sir Harold was not well; he had taken cold with his late walk on the terrace. I was sincerely sorry for having contributed to the cause of his illness; but I felt sufficiently punished when I found that my only amusement that night was to consist in watching the attentions of his bride. "She certainly makes an inimitable nurse," thought I; "this is the only point on which my father has been correctly informed." And I was highly entertained at the idea of his surprise when he should be introduced to my uncle's fair young wife.

The first Sunday after my arrival, Sir Harold's cold was still too severe to allow him to go to church. It was therefore settled at the breakfast-table that I should drive Lady Arlington thither in the pony phaeton. She proposed walking; but Sir Harold observed that the snow was too thick in the park, and the walk too long by the road. As I left the room to prepare for the drive, I heard Lady Arlington say,—

"I hope, dear sir, that I shall not have to speak to any one; it will be so very awkward."

"Rather inconsistent," thought I; "she did not appear to think an introduction to *me* at all *awkward* when I was a perfect stranger to her. Surely this young lady is rather capricious; but what is that to me? let Sir Harold look to it." Thus I mused until I returned to the breakfast-room. Lady Arlington was soon ready, and was attended to the portico, where the carriage waited, by her aged but still gallant husband. I followed them, and after assisting to place the lady comfortably in the luxuriously appointed little carriage, I sprang in, and, taking the reins from the servant, seated myself beside her. During the drive, my companion's animated and agreeable conversation made me forget her "caprice;" indeed, in her presence I could never for a moment remember the faults which, on reflection, I could not but lay to her charge. On arriving at the little village church we were conducted to the Arlington pew. It was almost as large as the vestry, and was surrounded by oak panelling and thick curtains, completely shrouding its occupants from the view of the congregation. We were very early, too, so it was not until after service that there could be a chance of any one obtaining a glimpse of the bride, who appeared to shrink from observation. It was this feeling, I imagined, which caused Lady Arlington to delay her departure until the last note of the voluntary had sounded, though the music was anything but attractive, and I should have been happy to escape from it.

After all, we were obliged to wait a few minutes for the carriage, which was only just in sight when we reached the old porch; so I begged

Lady Arlington to retire within the church until it came up, in case she should take cold. She did so, and in this situation we could not avoid overhearing the conversation of a group of the country people who were still lingering in the porch :—

"Well, she is a real beauty, and no mistake," was the first remark.

"And so *he* be the young squire from furrin parts; they do say he be half a furriner hisself," said another.

"Belike, that's cos of them dark moustachers," was the answer; "but *I* thinks they looks grand-like on a tall gentleman like he; and he is too handsome for a furriner."

Here Lady Arlington looked at me with a mischievous smile, but her colour deepened to that of the damask rose at the next speech, which was delivered in a loud and emphatic tone of voice :—

"Well, they be a 'ansom couple; and I 'ope the next time they comes to church together, they'll set the bells a-ringing."

"It is extremely cold here," said my companion, looking quite the contrary. "Shall we go and meet the carriage?" She moved hastily forward as she spoke, without noticing my proffered arm; and we drove off, followed by the curious gaze of the gossiping party in the porch.

Lady Arlington was unusually silent during the drive home. I made one or two ineffectual attempts at conversation. At length, in reply to one of my remarks respecting the music we had heard, she said,—

"It is so neglected here, you see; for though Sir Harold assists the rector in every way in his power for the improvement of the parish, he cannot be expected to take much interest in that which he does not understand. Now my father, being musical himself, has been of infinite service to our clergy at home with regard to the church music, and with a little of my assistance," she added, blushing, "we have trained a very efficient choir."

I longed to inquire where this "home" was; but, as if guessing my thoughts, she quickly changed the subject. Her remark, however, seemed to give me a glimpse into the future. I thought of the influence which, no doubt, would be exercised by the lovely speaker in the more enlarged sphere to which she had been removed. Then a fair vision rose to my "mind's eye" of a young couple domesticated in a place like Carlton, united in heart and hand, scattering around them a share of those blessings which their ample means and influential position would enable them to bestow. Then came recollections of my uncle's frequent and affectionate admonitions to me on the responsibilities of wealth and station, and I began to think I had made a mistake in neglecting them. It was now my turn to be silent, and I could not recover my wonted cheerfulness all that day.

It was some time before Sir Harold was well enough to go from home; the duty, therefore, devolved upon me of escorting Lady Arlington in her

walks, rides, and drives, exercise in the open air forming always one of our occupations for each day. The birds and flowers in the conservatory also required daily attention from their fair mistress, who generally accepted my assistance in these light labours. Sometimes I read aloud while she worked, and the evenings were invariably devoted to music. Thus we were always together, my uncle ever appearing delighted with our growing friendship.

"She has often wished for a brother," he remarked one day, "and now, I tell her, she has found one."

"I will try and fulfil your expectations, sir," I replied; but I mentally asked myself whether my feelings towards Lady Arlington resembled those of a brother; I could not then for worlds have defined them, but I know I never from that time felt so free from restraint in Lady Arlington's presence.

The days at Carlton continued to pass on smoothly and peacefully, and this happy but singular honeymoon was rapidly drawing to a close. Still I had discovered nothing more respecting the early history of Sir Harold's bride; it was so evidently his wish to conceal it, that I could not, without a positive breach of politeness, question either my uncle or herself on the subject; and the honeymoon being of course a time of complete retirement, I saw no one else at Carlton to whom I could apply for information. I recollected that, during one conversation on the subject, she had said, "Our rector has so much confidence in my father's judgment, that he does nothing of importance without consulting him."

Her father, then, must be the curate; probably poor: how was it, then, that the daughter was more highly accomplished than most ladies of rank? As these reflections passed through my mind one day, it suddenly occurred to me that I had guessed the truth. The musical taste of the father had probably discovered, in the daughter's fine voice and talent, a medium through which he might obtain an independence for the future, and with this view had caused both to be highly cultivated. I no longer doubted that this was her prospect when Sir Harold offered her one of almost boundless wealth, with a life of luxury and ease in its stead. I scarcely wondered at the choice of the young girl whose affections were unfettered; still how infinitely more noble would have been the refusal! I tried to think she had married to please her father; still, still I sighed when I felt obliged to own that one so pure was far from perfect.

The frost had now continued several weeks, and the cold was intense, but the weather being bright and cheerful, we never hesitated to brave it, either on foot or on horseback. In these expeditions my uncle was unable to accompany us, and his fair wife frequently most dutifully entreated him to allow her to remain with him; but he with singular absence of all selfish feeling, always declined her offers.

"No, my darling," he would say; "though you have brought sunshine into an old man's solitary dwelling, by becoming its mistress you shall

not, in consequence of your kindness, be deprived of pursuits and companions suited to your age."

Such speeches as these were frequent, and never failed to produce in me a very unquiet though indescribable state of feeling; but they had no such effect upon the young wife: she, who seemed naturally as gay as a lark, appeared more joyous than ever when he thus repeated his affectionate consideration for her happiness: it will, however, doubtless be allowed by the candid reader, that it was the solicitude of a parent rather than that of a ***husband***.

In the park, within view of the Hall, was a large sheet of water, now covered with ice of considerable thickness, and as smooth as glass. Here my uncle, with his usual kindness, permitted the servants with a limited number of the country people to skate, and it was one morning proposed that he should walk thither to see them.

There was a small pavilion completely embosomed in the thick shrubbery at one end of the lake, which was luxuriously fitted up in the Turkish fashion as a smoking-room. Here a fire had been lighted, and our luncheon prepared, that my uncle might view the sport from the low windows (which descended almost to the water's edge) without fatigue. Lady Arlington was the first to tire of this passive amusement; indeed, I believe, had she possessed a pair of skates, she would have willingly joined the party on the ice; as it was, she contented herself with walking briskly round the lake with me, whilst she made her lively observations upon the rural skaters. At the end of the lake, opposite the pavilion, it appeared that the ice was not considered so safe as elsewhere, and a staff, to which a gay streamer was attached, was fixed there as a warning of danger. Suddenly a fine little boy flung his ball upon the forbidden spot, and rushed eagerly after it. A chorus of screams attracted Lady Arlington's attention to his danger. Without a moment's hesitation, and before I could guess her intention, she sprang after the child, caught him in her arms, and bounded with the agility of a gazelle over the cracking ice, when, just as she had nearly regained the bank, the treacherous surface gave way beneath her feet! Exerting her utmost strength, she threw the child from her: *he* was safely received in his mother's arms, but his courageous preserver had vanished! I know not how the succeeding moments were passed; I know not how I rescued her; but I know that I held her insensible form in my arms, and that I would not give her up. I recollect that many persons pressed forward offering to relieve me of my precious burden, but in husky tones I declined all assistance, and desired them to hasten to the house, to prepare the servants for what had happened. My intense anxiety seemed to give me strength, and in an incredibly short space of time I reached the Hall. The old housekeeper, whose grandchild had been saved by Eva, had also done her part quickly, and was ready, with Lady Arlington's own maid, to receive her. I laid her on a sofa for a moment to rest, and restoratives were administered, which almost im-

mediately produced signs of returning animation in the countenance of our fair patient. Transported with joy, I desired them at once to show me to the chamber in which she was to be divested of her dripping garments; and again raising her in my arms, I carried her thither, and then left her to the care of her anxious and zealous attendant. As I was returning down-stairs I met my poor uncle, of whom I had not once thought during the confusion; he was mute with alarm, looking the question he could not speak.

"I am happy to be able to tell you that she is already recovering, my dear sir," said I, "and I trust a few hours' rest will restore her to you in perfect health."

He pressed my hand fervently, and passed me on his way to her chamber. Our *tête-à-tête* dinner that evening passed off very slowly, our solicitude being only relieved by the favourable answers we received to our frequent inquiries respecting the state of the invalid. Our only subject of conversation was the accident of the morning, until I grew weary of Sir Harold's repeated expressions of gratitude to me for having preserved a life so precious to him. To *him?* And was it not infinitely precious to *me* also? Why could not I enter into his joy? I felt bewildered and oppressed. My uncle, naturally supposing me to be fatigued with the exertions I had undergone, begged me to retire as soon as I felt inclined to do so. I gladly availed myself of his permission, and having gained the solitude of my chamber, I locked the door, telling my astonished valet, in answer to his knock for admission, that I should not require his services.

When I found myself really alone I threw open the window. I felt not the cold, intense as it must have been, the ground being thickly covered with snow, but the frosty air failed to cool my fevered brow. I endeavoured to collect my thoughts, and the result of my self-examination filled me with horror and dismay. The night air now chilled me, and a universal tremor seized upon my frame. Mechanically I closed the window, and, drawing my chair towards the fire, gave myself up to my miserable reflections.

My eyes were opened! What had I discovered? I had learned from the event of the morning the real nature of my feelings for the woman whose life I had been the means of preserving. Yes, I now knew that I loved, madly loved, Eva, my uncle's bride! My dear, kind, trusting uncle, who, with such unbounded confidence in my honour, had trusted his young wife to my care and protection, and even thought himself my debtor! I felt as if suddenly awakened from a dream of delight to some terrible reality. I alternately blamed myself and my untoward fate for my present wretchedness. Why had I wasted my time in the pursuit of frivolous pleasures abroad, while such a prize was perhaps within my reach at home? I recollect I was vain enough to think I might have been the successful competitor had I entered the lists with Sir Harold.

Again, why had I never met with the woman I could love until I beheld her in the wife of another; that other my own near relative—my second father,—one whom I had every reason to regard with feelings of reverence and affection? I was appalled at my mad and wicked folly. How was I to act in this cruel dilemma? Under these trying circumstances but one slight consolation presented itself. I *alone* was the sufferer; neither my uncle nor his too charming bride could *then* entertain the slightest suspicion of my mad passion, and it was my imperative duty to keep them in their blessed ignorance. This could only now be effected by my immediate absence, and I resolutely determined that, whatever it might cost, I would tear myself from the place which had become my Eden, alas! alas! without my Eve! This resolution, however, was not so easy to carry into effect; it now wanted but three days to that which had been fixed for our journey to London. It had been arranged from the first that we should all travel together in my uncle's carriage; and what excuse to make for taking my departure before the rest I could not well imagine: no plausible one suggested itself to my distracted mind. I thought of "letters requiring my immediate presence on business;" but that would not do, as my uncle always opened the post-bag and distributed its contents himself. My heart sank within me. I spent the whole of that miserable night pacing up and down my chamber, and racking my brain to find some plausible reason for absenting myself from Carlton, to no purpose. Morning found me still in perplexity; then, weary and heart-sick, I threw myself upon the sofa without undressing, and there fell into an uneasy slumber.

I was aroused by a knock at the door, and rose to open it to Adolphe, who had come at the earliest moment he dared, to offer his usual assistance at my toilette. He started back, not less astonished at my pale and haggard countenance than at seeing me still in my evening dress.

"But Monsieur has lost all his fresh colours; he is pale like a dead," he exclaimed; and then followed a multitude of anxious inquiries as to my supposed ailments, to which I did not attempt to reply, but he chose to fancy that I looked an affirmative when he suggested toothache.

As this appeared to satisfy my very voluble domestic, I let it pass; and when he remarked that no country dentist could possibly do me any good, I caught at the idea, and told him that I should most probably be obliged to hasten my departure from Carlton in consequence. This suited Adolphe exactly, as he had for some time been heartily sick of the old-fashioned servants, and the quiet doings at the hall. It was speedily reported all over the house by Adolphe that his master had passed a terrible night with the toothache, occasioned by his immersion in the water, and that it would be absolutely necessary for him to go to London immediately for advice. I heard the account first from my uncle, who came to my room in great anxiety to inquire into the truth of it. I felt greatly

embarrassed in his presence,—duplicity and concealment were so new to me, that I felt sure that I should act my part very badly. In reply to his inquiries I stammered out,—

"I am certainly far from well, sir; and as I cannot rest, I am really no companion for any one; and as that is the case, I thought of going up to town to-day."

"Well, well, Harold," said my uncle, "do not be so hasty; the dentist may not be required after all; and I am sure Eva will be distressed beyond measure to hear that you are suffering so much from the cold bath she gave you. However, you shall hear what she says herself."

"No, no!" I eagerly exclaimed. "I do not wish to make the least fuss about the matter. Pray let me leave quietly, and of all things do not trouble Lady Arlington about me in any way." This I added almost bitterly.

My uncle looked surprised, and remarked that my illness must be severe to make me forget to inquire after Eva. Shocked at my apparent want of feeling, and detesting myself for the deceit I was practising, I actually groaned aloud. This appeared quite alarming to my uncle, who attributed my anguish to the offending tooth, and he exclaimed,—

"Oh, it will never do for you to remain here any longer if you suffer so much. I will go and consult Eva directly. I have no doubt she can arrange to go to town a day or two earlier."

With these words he departed, leaving me half mad with the consciousness of having acted a lie, and after all to no purpose. To add to my discomfiture I recollected that I had not, after all, informed myself of the state of Lady Arlington's health, and thought my uncle had reason to be seriously offended; for though my frequent inquiries of the previous evening had been answered satisfactorily, I felt sure she could not yet be sufficiently recovered from the shock she had received to leave her room. I determined therefore to dress at once, and go down to Sir Harold as soon as possible, to make up for my neglect. I found him seated at the breakfast-table. He very kindly expressed his surprise and pleasure at seeing me down-stairs, and I was on the point of inquiring after Lady Arlington, when, to my infinite astonishment, the object of my solicitude entered the room,—paler indeed than usual, but more delicately lovely. I rose as she advanced towards me, and I believe almost retreated as, holding out both her hands, she said earnestly,—

"Dear Mr. Arlington, pray accept my most grateful thanks for the service you rendered me yesterday. I fear you have suffered much more from the accident than myself, but pray do not think of leaving us to-day."

Her beautiful eyes were raised to my face as she stood awaiting my decision. I tried to answer; but not succeeding in making myself intelligible, she continued,—

"Now do be persuaded by me. I do not think you *ought* to leave

the house under the circumstances, and I shall think that *I* have been the cause of making you seriously ill if you persist in going to-day."

My resolution began to waver; still I knew it was my duty to be firm, and thanking her warmly for the kind interest she expressed for me, I begged to be allowed to adhere to my first proposal.

"Well, then, Harry," exclaimed my uncle, somewhat impatiently, "we will *all* try and go to-day. The fact of the matter is, Eva, he is the vainest fellow on earth. He is so fearful of injuring that fine set of ivory by the slightest delay, that he longs to be off for professional advice."

"Rather than Lady Arlington should entertain such an opinion of me," I replied, with much vehemence, "I will endure, if *possible*, more than I have already undergone."

I was much vexed, but I felt it to be impossible to allow the whole household to be inconvenienced by me.

"Very well, then," said my uncle, "it is now finally settled that we all travel together on Saturday as we at first arranged." Then, turning to Eva, he continued,—

"No doubt both you and Harry will be more fit for the journey by that time, eh, darling?" at the same time kissing the fair hand which rested on the back of his chair.

I need scarcely say my temper did not improve. After breakfast I was glad to escape to my room, from the window of which apartment I had the satisfaction of seeing the wedded pair set out for a drive. The whole of that day I remained in solitude, true to my resolution. I would not trust myself alone with Eva. I could not well avoid joining my host and hostess at dinner. They had, however, all the conversation to themselves, and after Lady Arlington had left us I took the first opportunity of retiring. The next morning I felt more composed, and should perhaps have continued in a more tranquil state of mind but for the following letter from my father, which I received at the breakfast-table:—

"DEAR HARRY,—Your uncle informs me that you are all coming to town to-morrow. I shall be delighted to see you, and intend meeting you at Grosvenor Square. I am naturally anxious to see Lady Arlington, and I wish to lose no time in introducing you to your fair cousin, who will be in town with her father on their way to Mordaunt Abbey. They propose to pay your uncle Arlington a visit *en passant;* so, if agreeable to him, we shall all meet at his house to-morrow evening. With regard to your cousin, I will only remark that she is more than ever a favourite with me. She reminds me forcibly in character of your dear mother; in person she also resembles her, but possessing even more beauty. If you continue callous to such attractions, you are, my dear Harry, very unlike

"Your affectionate Father,

"*Portland Place.*" "GEORGE ARLINGTON.

"I think they are determined to drive me distracted between them," I muttered to myself, though I was compelled to inform Sir Harold and Lady Arlington, with apparent coolness, of the general purport of the letter.

I felt perfectly savage with my father for worrying me at *this* time about my cousin. "I dare say she cares as little for me as I do for her," I thought. "Why cannot the old gentleman let us alone?"

Again I passed the day in my own apartment until summoned to dinner, when I was compelled to keep up the farce of indisposition to account for my seclusion. My kind friends were both full of sympathy for me, and endeavoured to make me feel as much at my ease as possible, by keeping up a cheerful conversation without calling upon me to join in it. I had intended to make my escape from the dinner-table to my own room as before, and my uncle having settled himself to his nap, I was leaving the room for that purpose; but the drawing-room door stood ajar, and as I was crossing the vestibule into which it opened I was seen by Eva. She called me; I turned, and saw her bending over a large portfolio of music, a quantity of which also lay scattered on a table before her.

"Oh, do come here, Mr. Arlington, for one moment. I have been looking everywhere for the duet we were practising the other night. It is my greatest favourite, and I wish to take it to town with me."

I reluctantly obeyed, and, joining in the search, at length succeeded in finding the "missing treasure," as Eva called it. Then I could not do less than help her to restore the disarranged music to order, and the occupation was so agreeable that I insensibly assumed my usual cheerfulness. At last I so completely forgot my indisposition, that it was no wonder my companion did so likewise, and asked me if I could manage to take my part in the duet we had just found. It was also *my* favourite,—"Idol mio, che pur sei," from the "Didone abbandonata." And the Carthaginian queen herself could not have looked more lovely when appealing to Æneas, than did Eva as she made this simple request. Could I refuse her? No, it was impossible! We sang. To my excited fancy it almost appeared, as she sang those passionate words, that she addressed them actually to me; and I imagine it very possible that I involuntarily threw more tender feeling into my voice than usual, for when we had concluded she turned to me and exclaimed,—

"How beautifully you sang that to-night! It was really quite perfect."

Her radiant countenance, her spontaneous praise, and the ever-powerful influence of the music, all combined to throw me off my guard. In the overwrought state of my feelings I lost all self-command, and seizing both the fair hands which were still lingering on the keys of the pianoforte, I pressed them to my lips, and said hurriedly,—

"Forgive me, Eva. I must leave you. We can *never* sing together again. Make some excuse for me to Sir Harold. I cannot see *him* again to-night."

Then, rushing impetuously from the room, I nearly overturned the astonished footman, who was at this moment crossing the hall with coffee

It was long after I reached my own apartment that I first became capable of reflection; when, indeed, that capability returned, I was tempted to wish it had departed for ever, so utterly miserable did the retrospect of the last hour render me. I feared that I had offended beyond forgiveness the being I could have worshipped! I recollected that I had for the first time addressed her by the familiar name of Eva! And I could scarcely doubt that, innocent as she was, she must have rightly interpreted my extraordinary conduct. I wondered whether she would inform Sir Harold, or whether, as we were so soon to part, she would pass it over in silence. With feelings like these, it will easily be imagined that I dreaded meeting her in the morning.

We were to leave Carlton at a very early hour, that the journey might be performed in one day. The morning was raw cold and gloomy when Adolphe roused me from my unquiet slumbers to prepare for departure. I breakfasted in my own room, and did not leave it until I was told that the carriage was ready, and waited only for me. When I reached the Hall I saw Sir Harold in the portico, apparently giving some last directions to the head gardener. His wife was standing beside him, her graceful form enveloped in furs and velvets; a thick lace veil concealed her face. I had therefore no opportunity of judging from her countenance of her feelings towards me. With a palpitating heart I went forward to wish her good morning, and my hand trembled violently as I assisted her into the carriage. I then gave my arm to my uncle, who seated himself beside her; and I had the very doubtful pleasure of sitting opposite the happy pair. I fancied that even the servants who were assembled in the hall to take leave of their master and mistress were amused at my expense. Sir Harold's first words as we drove off were,—

"I was quite relieved, Harry, to hear that you were able to travel this morning, as from Eva's account you must have been worse again last night. I was quite disappointed at finding her alone, and the music all over, when I left the dining-room." Then, without waiting a reply, he continued to make his remarks upon my very sudden indisposition, and its undoubted cause being a violent cold.

"You remained too long in your wet clothes, Harry, after your plunge. Eva is no worse, you see," continued the tiresome old man, "though she was rather longer in the frozen lake than you were."

"Lady Arlington is most fortunate, sir," I replied, "in being less sensitive than myself."

I thought her voice was slightly tremulous as she said,—

"You mean, Mr. Arlington, that I was fortunate in having been better cared for."

Soon after this, in spite of my uncle's jokes and frequent attempts to promote conversation, we all relapsed into silence. Lady Arlington took up a book, with which she appeared to be wholly absorbed; and Sir Harold, fatigued with his early rising, was soon overpowered with sleep. In this

rather unsociable fashion we travelled until we reached Northampton, where we were to remain an hour for refreshment. As we placed ourselves at table, Lady Arlington for the first time raised her veil. I saw at a glance, as she did so, that her colour was considerably heightened; but the warm flush rapidly subsided into the unusually delicate tint which her cheek had borne since her accident; then, quickly recovering her self-possession, she presided at the repast in her usual graceful manner. I could detect no difference in her demeanour towards me, excepting that she was more silent than usual; and that she could not well avoid, as I never addressed her unless compelled by common courtesy to do so. Sir Harold, refreshed by his long sleep and a very good luncheon, became more talkative than ever, which was inexpressibly irritating to me; and I felt that I would have given worlds to change places with Lady Arlington's maid, who was doubtless much happier with Adolphe on the rumble. We resumed our journey, however, in the same order as before, only this time I took up a book, leaving my companions to amuse each other. At the time I had not the slightest idea of the subject of the volume which I held in my hand, but I afterwards found that it was a treatise on cookery, which had been sent by the housekeeper at Carlton to the good lady who officiated in the same capacity in my uncle's establishment in Grosvenor Square. As Sir Harold and his companion conversed cheerfully together, I became more and more gloomy. I fancied that Eva looked even happier than usual, and I thought that I could have more easily forgiven her anger, or even her scorn, than this imperturbable serenity.

"Perhaps she even triumphs in having excited a passion she is incapable of feeling," was my bitter thought; and throwing aside my interesting book, I leaned back in my corner of the carriage, without attempting to disguise my ill-humour. My companions either did not or *would* not appear to notice it, and I was allowed to indulge in uninterrupted meditation until the end of the journey.

At length the carriage dashed into Grosvenor Square, and the four smoking horses were pulled up before my uncle's house. I jumped out first, and having assisted my companions to alight, followed them into the spacious and well-lighted hall. We were conducted into the library, a large but most comfortable-looking apartment, with its closely drawn velvet hangings and blazing fire; a well-spread table, too, added not a little to its attractions for the winter traveller; but I only saw additional annoyance in these preparations for a social evening, as I wished to be alone. As we entered the room my father advanced to meet us, receiving us with the most affectionate cordiality. I looked round uneasily for the rest of the party, but for the present he was alone. He shook hands first with Sir Harold, then with me; and then, to my infinite astonishment, without waiting to be presented to Lady Arlington, he caught her in his arms and gave her a hearty kiss. I must have looked thunderstruck, but

Sir Harold only laughed; and as for the lady, she actually smiled as serenely as before.

"Will nothing rouse her?" thought I. "Well, I shall certainly in time be disenchanted."

And I sighed so profoundly, that my father's attention was attracted towards me.

"Why, Harry, what is the matter with you?" he said; "you do not participate in the happiness of this meeting."

"I am not at all well, sir," I replied, "and I wish to go home as soon as possible. I only wait here, by your own express desire, to see my uncle Mordaunt and his daughter, and I do not wish to appear rude to them."

My father and Sir Harold exchanged significant smiles, and before I had time to conjecture their meaning, the former took Lady Arlington by the hand, and placing it in mine said,—

"Thus, Harry, I fulfil my long-cherished desire; at length I have an opportunity of introducing you to your cousin: in our beloved Evelyn you see the daughter of your uncle Mordaunt."

Amazement deprived me of utterance, I was completely overwhelmed by the revulsion of feeling caused by these words. I looked from one to another for an explanation, and then my wandering eyes met those of Eva. It was but for one brief, one intoxicating moment; yet that glance thrilled me to the soul, it gave me the transporting hope that my love was not in vain. Yes, there she stood before me in her surpassing loveliness, with roseate blushes, and eyes glistening like stars amid their happy tears, trying now to release her hand from my fervent grasp. I was compelled to relinquish my newly gained prize, and its fair owner quickly escaped from the room. Breathless with agitation, I leaned against the high chimney-piece for support. In so doing, I remember that my arm came in contact with an alabaster statuette of Cupid, and threw it down. As I mechanically stooped for the broken pieces, my uncle exclaimed,—

"What an unlucky omen for you, Harry! you have destroyed love."

"Do not, I beseech you, sir, keep me longer in suspense; you shall laugh at me as long as you please when you have explained all that is now so perfectly incomprehensible to me."

"There has been some masquing here, you perceive," said my uncle, "so sit down and listen patiently while your father unfolds the mystery."

I obeyed, with what degree of *patience* I leave to the imagination of the reader. As we seated ourselves round the fire my father thus began:—

"I need not remind you, Harold, of the views we entertained for you when you first went abroad, nor how you disappointed them; you know that for a considerable time both your uncle and myself employed every argument we could think of to induce you to return home, but in vain. At length Sir Harold—kind and indulgent as he is—became seriously dis-

pleased; his health had greatly suffered from an attack of gout, with which he was laid up at Cheltenham."

"I never heard of that," I exclaimed, "indeed I did not."

"I know it," continued my father, "Sir Harold would not *then* allow me to write to you; he said that if he could not have your society when he was able to enjoy it, he would do without it altogether. Well, it so happened at this time that your uncle Mordaunt and his daughter were also at Cheltenham; as a matter of course they called to inquire after the invalid. He was much pleased with them, and during his convalescence they were his constant companions. Eva's society at last became so necessary to Sir Harold, he was so delighted with her, that he could not bear the idea of parting with her. From this time I was more than ever anxious to effect an introduction between you and our charming favourite, but the slightest allusion to your cousin seemed always to strengthen your resolution to remain on the Continent."

"Too true, indeed," I observed, and my father continued,—

"Sir Harold being sufficiently recovered, we all began to talk of returning to our respective homes, his reluctance to part with Eva being now our only inducement for remaining at Cheltenham. She was rapidly taking your place in your uncle's affections, but he still talked of you with much solicitude; and one day, after regretting as usual your lengthened absence, he exclaimed, 'I believe nothing short of my death or marriage will ever bring him home. In either case his presence really would be necessary, on account of the disposition of the property.' This remark suggested to us the little drama in which you have been an unconscious performer. We did not impart our ideas to your uncle Mordaunt, merely entreating him to spare Eva for a short time to visit Sir Harold at Carlton; and as she appeared to have no objection to the proposal, he kindly gave his consent. Our chief difficulty *now* was to gain the young lady over to our plan, which we should never have succeeded in doing had she known our *ultimate* object. As we represented the case to her, she readily understood our anxiety to reclaim 'her wild cousin Harold,' and promised the assistance required."

Here I impatiently interrupted the General by inquiring if it were possible Evelyn still regarded me in that character. I assured them my conduct did not justify it.

"I know that perfectly well, my dear boy," said he; "I had friends in Paris where you resided longer than elsewhere, and in answer to my frequent inquiries I received very satisfactory accounts. I heard of you only in the best society, and where good music was to be heard; indeed, we had no fault to find with your mode of living *there*, but we knew your *duty* to be *here*."

Here Sir Harold remarked, that had it been otherwise, I should never have seen Eva. "No," said he, "her happiness is as dear to me as your own; and if you are to be its guardian—as from all I have observed at

Carlton I expect you will be,—may you ever prove worthy of such a trust."

Completely softened, I entreated the forgiveness of both for all my past folly and neglect, adding, "Believe me, I have suffered for it: at one time I thought my punishment greater than I deserved; *now* I am sure my reward will really be so, should I be blessed as my uncle predicts. Still, I cannot at all understand how you succeeded so completely in deceiving me; the very servants might have betrayed the whole plot."

My uncle laughed heartily, and said,—

"Ah, we trusted our case only to my old housekeeper at Carlton, and she managed the rest. I must confess, however, that I did not expect to keep up the farce so long,—nor should we, had not a certain little god assisted me, by making you *blind* to all outward impressions save one."

"Well, I must see Eva immediately," said I, rising; "where shall I find her?"

"Most probably she is in the drawing-room," replied Sir Harold, "with her father, telling him the particulars of her visit to Carlton; but I do not think he will hear *quite all* unless you go to her assistance."

I left the room as he ceased speaking, and flew up-stairs. I had scarcely reached the drawing-room door when he called out, "Pray go home at once, Harry, you know you are not at all well;" but I made no answer. The time had at length arrived when I might speak without reserve to my Eva, and my heart was too full of her beloved image to attend to my uncle's jokes. I ventured to push open the door, and entering the drawing-room I beheld *her* in whom my every hope was centred, alone and apparently in tears. I hastened to her, and seating myself on the sofa beside her, I gently drew her towards me, and calling her by every endearing name, I entreated her to tell me the cause of her emotion. Disengaging herself from me, she said, with some hesitation,—

"I am sorry to say papa is not pleased; he says that he is sure that *you*, too, will disapprove of the part I have been acting."

"I disapprove! My dearest Eva, what right have *I* to judge?"

"But you can *think* I have done wrong; I shall be so grieved; and it was really not my fault: both Sir Harold and your father made me promise not to spoil their scheme."

"They were quite right, my dearest; I deserved all they made me suffer."

"Ah, then it was I repented of my promise, I felt so sorry, and——"

"Well, my Eva, and what?"

She bent down her graceful head and remained silent.

"Tell me, my love, am I right? You would have consoled me if you had dared?"

A sweet smile played round the rosy lips; the tears were gone.

"Come, dearest," I continued, "you will at least tell me one thing; how could you be so provokingly happy during those days of misery to me?"

She now looked up and very softly whispered,—

"You forget how differently we were circumstanced."

"I do not yet see your meaning, my Eva," said I, longing to hear her say more.

"Well, then, Harry, I must say you are very dull. Cannot you *guess* that the same discovery which made you so wretched might possibly be the very cause of my——that is to say, I knew all the time that there was no real obstacle to your——"

She hesitated for a word.

"Well, Eva?"

"To your attachment."

"Attachment, Eva! Good heavens! what a word to express feelings such as mine! Say rather my adoration!"

She gently reproved me for the fervent expression, saying,—

"Harry, you must not make an idol of me."

"I know," I exclaimed, "that it is wrong; but you must make some excuse for one who is almost delirious with sudden joy; recollect, for the past wretched fortnight I have believed you to be the bride of another. I only wonder that belief did not drive me mad; even now I shudder at the thought."

"You are really quite incorrigible, Harry," she replied; but she looked so sweetly forgiving, that I entreated her to tell me if she now really participated in my happiness.

"Indeed I do," was the frank reply. *This* was a moment of unutterable rapture, of which I attempt no description. Approaching footsteps startled my newly affianced bride, and quick as thought she darted to the opposite side of the room. It was her father who entered, and after our first greeting was over he exclaimed,—

"What, have you two been quarrelling already, that I see you so far apart?"

"No, sir," I replied, leading his lovely daughter towards him, "we only wait for your consent to become the nearest and dearest of friends."

"Ah, I rather think that has been already settled," he said; "but I suppose you know that I do not quite approve of the proceedings at Carlton; my Nelly was certainly rather entrapped by Sir Harold. However, I am willing to hope that 'all's well that ends well.'"

Eva and I exchanged looks of joyful confidence, and it then occurred to me for the first time to inquire if the name which had now become so dear to me were her real one.

"It really is," she replied, smiling; "but as my father has always called me 'Nelly,' Sir Harold rightly judged that you would not identify the name of Evelyn with that of your cousin."

I felt much amused as I reflected how entirely I had ignored the very existence of that cousin who was now all the world to me.

The social meal at which we were now called upon to assemble would

have been protracted to a most unreasonable hour, had not Eva's languid looks proclaimed how much she was feeling the effects of the fatigue and excitement she had undergone. She had scarcely *spoken* to any one when her father advised her to retire to rest, but there was an enchanting softness in her *manner* which was to me more eloquent than words. We all now prepared to separate for the night, and before we did so it was arranged that we should meet at my father's the following day, "where," said Sir Harold, "the General's choicest Moselle shall be drunk to the health and happiness of our betrothed pair."

With restless impatience I counted the hours that must elapse before my next meeting with Eva. Yet I was compelled to wait until the following evening, as her father had insisted that she should not be disturbed until she was completely rested. I was repaid for my forbearance when she entered the drawing-room at Portland Place more blooming and lovely than ever, all traces of fatigue removed, and with an indescribable expression of innocent happiness illuminating her features. The only addition to our family party that day was Evelyn's oldest friend, Mrs. Stanley. This old lady was the kindest of human beings; she had resided with Eva from the time of her mother's death, superintending her education, and devoting the best years of her life to her interesting charge, whom she had hastened up to town to meet, and whose affection for this second mother amply repaid all her care. Sir Harold had announced his intention of at once settling everything relating to his adopted children, as he called Eva and myself. Accordingly, as soon as the servants had withdrawn after dinner, and before Eva could escape, he began.

"In the first place," said he, "I entirely disapprove of lengthened courtship at *any* time, but in *this* case it would be absurd." Here he was interrupted by my uncle Mordaunt, who contended that our acquaintance had been too short for us to think of marriage yet.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Sir Harold, "they are better acquainted with each other than we are with either of them, you may be sure; besides, sir, it was love at first sight—only I believe they would have remained in blissful ignorance of the fact but for my *Lady Arlington's* frolic on the ice" (here he made Eva an ironical bow): "then, indeed, by almost losing her life she found a lover."

Eva here signed to me to open the door, and quitted the room, followed by Mrs. Stanley.

"Come, sir," said my uncle, "you return to your seat, and hear your fate determined."

I obeyed, and he returned to the charge, scarcely allowing the others to give an opinion; in fact, he was so elated with the success of his machinations, that he thought no one so fit to arrange the rest as himself. As to my father, he only quietly remarked that there could be no possible objection to our marriage taking place as soon as the necessary preparations could be completed.

"You forget, Sir Harold," said he, "that they will occupy a considerable time; the lawyers, for instance, are not apt to hurry themselves."

The person most interested was not consulted; but I did not complain; my thoughts were (as they remarked) certainly pre-occupied, yet I had the prudence to agree with my father's views with regard to the lawyers. I thought that my Eva's interests ought not to be risked even to please my romantic uncle, whose proposals were in other respects acceded to by us all, subject, of course, to the wish of Evelyn; and as I took the earliest opportunity of escaping from the drawing-room, I soon pleaded for and obtained her concurrence from her own rosy lips.

Bright was the sunshine on the face of nature, but not so bright as the sunshine within my heart, when on a fair April morning I called Eva my own—"my wife!" A *real* honeymoon was passed in Paris, and we returned early in June to Carlton to participate in the rejoicings which Sir Harold had prepared in honour of our marriage. It was his pleasure to celebrate the event in the old English style: the tenantry were feasted in the park; every family of distinction in the county was invited also to this *fête champêtre;* and the day terminated in a ball, at which both Sir Harold and my father insisted in dancing with the bride, whose beauty was, if possible, enhanced by the simple elegance of her bridal dress, and the wreath of jewelled blossoms which encircled her graceful head. Her father gazed upon her with undisguised admiration and delight, having now become quite reconciled to Sir Harold's plot.

Ten years of almost uninterrupted felicity have elapsed since the occurrence of the events I have related. Good old Sir Harold has indeed gone to his rest, but he lived to witness much of the happiness of which he had been the originator. Fair children are now blooming with the flowers at Carlton, and I own that I am even more in love with their mother than when she was the bride of "My Uncle's Honeymoon."

A. M. C. H.

NOTES OF A HUNTING TOUR IN 1864-5

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUBREY MARSTON."

IN TWO PARTS.

Part I.

Among the time-honoured institutions which influence the social life of England beneficially, and deserve the name of national, we are still fortunate in being able to reckon fox-hunting as one of the most prominent and popular. Every man who searches for cause and effect in that which most powerfully promotes the public weal, has his favourite theory. A lawyer, perhaps, would prefer to rely on the efficacy of trial by jury and privilege of free speech; a politician would doubtless take his stand on the hustings or the floor of the House of Commons; or a yachtsman pride himself, while pacing his little deck, on the saving merits of "a wet sheet and a flowing sea" among the chops of the Channel; but the hunting man is no less fully entitled to put in the claims of his craft to the honour of being ranked as one of the great influences which have tended to mould the habits and character of Englishmen for centuries,—an influence which still flourishes in full vigour in this year of grace 1865.

This noble sport, just as it levels all distinctions of rank without lowering any, has excited the enthusiasm of even the gravest thinkers, who at the same time certainly could not be said to be ranked amongst its friends and supporters. The learned Dr. Chalmers, in one of his high oratorical flights, has immortalized the hunting-field by a piece of word-painting worthy of Beckford, in which he describes the chivalry of England assembled together on the greensward under the shade of primeval oaks, and breathing the fresh air of morn. He is obliged to confess that the sight of such an array is calculated to intoxicate the senses and confound the reason of the man who comes predetermined to denounce the sport. No wonder, then, that men of every shade and calling are still found enrolled among its patrons and followers. Up to a year or two back the Rev. Mr. A—— not only kept a pack for the amusement of his shire, but allowed his name to appear regularly as a master of hounds in the advertisements of the week. Doubtless he did so from high grounds of morality and the love of his species, as well as from a sense of national pride. We have become a little more strait-laced of late on the score of clerical cut-aways, it is true, but let us not forget that not only Royal beauty now freely lends the sanction of its presence at the meet, but even the Heir-apparent risks a fall for the honour of the sport. The Prince of Wales is an admirable hunting weight; he rides boldly and judiciously, and, as a spirited young Englishman, is not likely to keep such good qualifications in the shade; and here we find a further illustration of the

truth that the great charm of the hunting-field is that it brings together every class and pursuit on terms of courteous equality and joyous fraternity; and consequently, where the best men meet on a footing at once so rational and natural—of generous give and take,—such a course of training is found to be the best school of urbanity in the world.

But fox-hunting, say its detractors, is on the decline in England. They tell us that we must go back to the days of the stable in the time of Sir John Vanbrugh, or call up the memory of our Squire Westerns and Tony Lumpkins, in order to realize the genuine, unsophisticated British vulpecide. Fortunately for the cause of good breeding, these gentlemen are quite right. Our Squire Western has utterly disappeared, though we cannot help thanking Fielding for having transmitted his portrait to our times; and as for that unwieldy Tony, with his view halloo—always given when not wanted,—had he shown himself in the field in these days of rapid flights, it would not have required so keen a wit as Goldsmith to point a moral; but every sixth-form Etonian or Christ Church freshman would have had his individual joke on Mr. Lumpkin's performances in the field; for it is clear that he must have been quite as great a blunderer *on* the saddle as *off* it. No, the noble science is not on the decline because the "roughs" of former days no longer hold sway over it. The sport has become more refined, artistic—perhaps rather too much so,—yet it certainly affords as much pleasure as ever to him who will venture to woo it manfully, remembering always Mr. Jorrock's sound reflection, that "hunting has all the excitement of war, with only five-and-twenty per cent. of its danger."

At the same time we are by no means prepared to give unqualified praise or the palm of superiority to the doings of these times. Perhaps fox-hunting may be said to have been in its perfection in the days of Thomas Assheton Smith—a veritable genius of his order, a man whose talents were as truly distinctive in the hunting-field as those of the great captain, his contemporary, in the midst of those fields of life and death where empires instead of foxes' brushes were the stake. The desperate, hard-riding man may, indeed, be said to exist no longer, even in Leicestershire; and though Mr. Tailby has a splendid following and the boldest men out, who flinch at nothing—even to committing trespass on iron roads by risking their own necks or the limbs of their horses, in crossing the steepest railway incline,—he has still no Assheton Smith.

The fame of this unmatched sportsman and perfect gentleman induced the writer to give his country—the Tedworth—the first place in the order of his visits to remarkable hunting districts during the past season. The Tedworth country, however, is about the last one a tourist would select for the purposes of information and experience. Since the days of Assheton Smith, the hunting has here gradually declined. Not all the acumen and knowledge of his profession of Carter, and the patronage of such men as the Lord Chief Justice of England, have been able to bring back the sport to the condition in which its respected master left it. Pleasant sport and

good runs they may occasionally have; but the glories of Tedworth are no more, for few of the field in these days are so keen as to tire three horses in a run, and offer a kingdom for a fourth, which Carter, whilst recounting the feats of that *facile princeps* of fox-hunters, affirmed his late master had done on more than one occasion.

The Tedworth country certainly strikes the eye of the hunting man as somewhat out of place. Being entirely of chalk formation, it is by consequence remarkably open, without a fence of decent proportions, and hardly an inch of turf. The enclosures, it is true, are large, and the hedges so stumped and scrubby that they scarce seem to divide the fields; so that the country has the appearance of open down divested of its green turf, laid out in noble sweeps of hill and dale, which the rider on his thorough-bred may skim as swiftly as Ferran or any of the other fabled knights of the Orlando. The chalk, indeed, seems almost too poor to afford nourishment for the growth of thorns, and the saying is literally true, that any one "might here ride across country on a broomstick." The writer rode across the fields from Tedworth House back to Andover, a distance of nine or ten miles, without meeting any obstruction sufficient to discompose the dreams of a philosopher engaged in pleasant meditation. But it is not to be denied that the runs in the days of Assheton Smith were often wonderful in this district, both for pace and length of time. The country, too, has a pleasing, romantic aspect, and the air is particularly bracing. One may almost fancy this or that park or deserted down to be the manor of the public—every man's land, in short,—and those dense, shady woods still the secluded Arden of some Southern Robin Hood or Little John. For my own part, I should infinitely prefer it to the flat, monotonous vale as a place of residence, and be content to bide a meeting with the sturdy outlaws in Lincoln Green, feeling confident that if bold Robin were alive in these days, he would bid us pass on in St. Hubert's name, and spare the scarlet even if he robbed the clergy.

Unfortunately, unmistakable indications of the approaching reign of King Frost caused a very small muster and a blank day at the Tedworth; but my ride over the ground enabled me to judge of the merits of the district for fox-hunting purposes; and I feel quite satisfied that it is only a genius like Assheton Smith who could have made a tolerable hunting-ground out of it: and though it is not to be denied that the runs may still be "clippers," and possibly the most rapid of any in the kingdom, there is certainly a want of variety and difficulty in the fences which would provoke many a "pooh! pooh!" from a Leicestershire man. It may be observed that the merits of the pure thorough-bred in the hunting-field would here, and here alone, be capable of being tested. It is speed that is required; all other qualities are subordinate, and the Leicestershire or Cotswold hunter had better be left at home till wanted.

His redoubtable majesty of "thilke frosty region," as old Chaucer hath it, having at length shown undoubted signs of an ungovernable

tendency of disposition to have it all his own way, despite the prayers or imprecations of the hunting men, I resolved to avoid being shut up for a week or ten days in the Tedworth country, which would have been as dull as being frozen in at the South Pole. So I took my way over Salisbury Plain, past the rugged, moss-grown pile of Stonehenge—standing like a group of *diables boiteux*, weird-like on the solitary heath, and recalling the memories of the gloomy era of the Druids, the "Commentaries" of Julius Cæsar on the Gaulish superstitions, the enchanting music of Bellini's "Norma," with the doings of naughty Pollio, and a host of legends besides. I steered directly for the west, not taking leave, however, of the enchanted circle without plucking a lichen as a remembrance of having visited the most ancient, and perhaps once the most venerable structure ever raised in Britain.

My intention was to push on for the Duke of Beaufort's, and have a day or two in the Badminton country, weather permitting. I accordingly lay in wait at Chippenham for the night, but no chance of a break-up being visible, I transferred my quarters to the more pleasant and sociable locality of Cheltenham, to be prepared on short notice to join the Cotswold when this sullen exemplar of absolute sway in the upper regions should relent of his durance. At length, to the surprise of everybody, when some men had gone up to town, others sent away their horses, and a few even talked of selling, lo! *solvitur acris hiems!* his hyperborean majesty suddenly relaxed his numbing gripe, abandoned the field, and left it open to all competitors.

When the merits of the different hunting-fields in England shall be summed up—and we cannot allow that merely riding to hounds constitutes the sole enjoyment—it will be admitted that the Cotswold at least possesses the advantage over all others in romantic interest and variety. It impossible for a man possessed of tolerable lungs to ride up to any of the meets in the neighbourhood of Cheltenham without being charmed with the enchanting scenery which greets the eye at every turn, as well as feeling a new flow of health and spirits braced as he mounts upward to the wold, which lies at an elevation of some 800 or 900 feet above the plain below. The Cotswold district is essentially of a Highland character, a prominent and well-defined ridge of the oolitic formation extending for thirty-five miles across the island in a south-westerly direction. The summit is a table-land, diversified by hills and valleys, and woods of enormous extent, the remnants of ancient forests, many of which are still uncleared, and abound in magnificent specimens of oak of great age, beneath which the hunting men are wont to take shelter when vainly drawing cover on a stormy day, or to exchange the contents of their flasks after a warm burst. The villages, as well as the farmhouses in this district, are all situated in the clefts of the hills, with the venerable spires of their churches peering up, affording a marked contrast to those of Leicestershire, which are chiefly on the summits of eminences, the church in the latter county often afford-

ing a landmark to indicate the line of chase, as Master Reynard seems to run directly for the most distant church, as if he meant to claim "benefit of clergy." Nor are the rides back, after the sports of the day are over, less attractive to the hunting man. The magnificent valley of the Severn lies outstretched before him like a map; the Malvern Hills bounding the horizon, with the white villas of Cheltenham in the foreground, surrounded by ornamental lines of shrubbery, reminding him of the aspect of many parts of Italy, particularly of the Campania of Rome, with Tivoli, Frascati, and Soracte in the distance. It is this district which Shakspere notices in his play of "Richard II.," when he introduces Bolingbroke and Northumberland on their march through the wilds of Gloucestershire:—

> "These high, wild hills, and rough, uneven ways
> Draw out our miles and make them wearisome;
> And yet our fair discourse hath been as sugar,
> Making the hard way sweet and delectable."

The ways are sweet indeed, but no longer rough or impassable. Fine roads traverse the district in all directions. The line of the ancient Roman foss-way is still preserved, and Ermine Street, in some places, runs for miles as direct as the flight of an arrow, testifying to the geodesical qualifications of the former masters of this island. Yet, in the time of Shakspere, the Cotswold Hills had probably much of a savage and unexplored character. In these days the improved system of husbandry has created a surprising revolution. Extensive farm homesteads, betokening comfort and abundance, and stacks of grain of enormous size, show the scale on which the farming is conducted. Still the Cotswold men are a distinct people from those of the vale, and have much of the hardy character of the mountaineer, both in manners and physique. There is a blunt honesty of address, and a frank openness of countenance, which one might in vain search for in regions of more artificial culture. The hill farmers, also, are tremendously conservative and patriarchal, and are moreover rigid preservers of foxes, though they may have half an acre of wheat trodden down, or lose a few lambs or barn-door fowls in the course of a season, through the visits of that artful dodger Reynard, whose high privilege it is to be allowed to meet his end only after the approved fashion, and who, in this woodland district, be it observed, is a much larger and more formidable animal than he is in Leicestershire, where the gorse is his chief or only protection. In fact, it is a saying on the Cotswold Hills, that a gorse fox is never good for much; and if you want an animal that will run long and gallantly before the hounds, you must take care and start a woodland one.

The nature of the ground and the character of the fences also differ much from most parts of England. The Cotswold ranks as the finest and the most extensive stone-wall country in the island. Some good horsemen have a singular prejudice and dislike of a stone wall, but it is perhaps the easiest and the safest of all fences, and good practice-ground to beginners, as the use of hands and your bridle rein is here more required. If

the wall is high, and your horse does not clear it, the stones on the top are sure to give way, and you get over by merely displacing a few. In the course of a large field passing over the same point, as is frequently the case, a gap is formed in the wall, which soon becomes a complete ruin,—often, however, more embarrassment to a restive horse to scramble over than if he took it in full flight. One great advantage of a stone-wall country over other districts is that the "off-taking" is always sound, and the ground hard and firm on both sides. The drop-leaps, however, into lower fields, require a little address, but the art of throwing the body back, so as to preserve the proper balance and prevent the weight falling on the shoulder of your horse and so bringing him to his knees, is very soon acquired. It is almost needless to observe that it is necessary to ride at a stone wall in a very different fashion from that in which you would propose to clear a hedge and ditch in Leicestershire; in the former case you must check the speed of your horse as he nears the wall, so as almost to pull him up, when, on receiving a hint from the bit, he throws himself easily over by a hitch of the hind quarters, describing a curve in a slight degree diagonal to the line of wall. This motion is particularly graceful to watch in a line of horsemen as they pass over, and differs from the plunging rush at a fence, peculiar to Leicestershire or the vale country. In the latter ground you must unhesitatingly charge the fence, and, remembering that it is likely to be a very wide one, push your horse at it with sufficient speed, so as to enable him to clear the whole and land you safely in the adjoining field—*mem.*, in the *saddle*, of course.

It is to be noted that accidents are of very rare occurrence at stone walls, but when they do happen, as from a horse striking a high one with his knees, the fall is a complete somersault, both for man and beast, the latter not unfrequently breaking his back in the air before he reaches the ground. Speaking of falls, an experienced hunting man in this district, commending the stoutness of my stirrup-iron, coolly assured me it was of great advantage, as, if the body of the horse by any chance fell on my foot, the iron would not require to go to the smithy!

The style of hunter required for the Cotswold Hills is necessarily very different from that suitable for a flat country; the hills being at times very abrupt, a stout-legged horse with strong quarters is more handy. Such are the horses on which the huntsmen and whips of the Berkeley Hunt are mounted. Great speed is not required for any length of time, though the "spurts" on the Cotswold, while they last, are the fastest of anything of the sort in England. When the hounds catch up a warm scent over the turf, they go at a racing pace. In such "spurts" remarkable incidents often occur, owing to the *ruse* and cunning of the hunted animal. During a run of the present season the whole field were coursing away in racing fashion, *en masse*, over a wide tract of green turf, the hounds altogether along the edge of the wood, when suddenly Master Charley gave a wheel to the right-about, determined to run his foil back

again over the same ground. The effect of this manœuvre was to cause the hounds and horsemen to turn instantaneously in line, presenting a front with all the precision and regularity of cavalry acting upon the word of command. This district, like most others in England, abounds in gates which must be opened, as no one ever thinks of taking them in full flight. Courtesy, and the customs of the chase, oblige all men to push or keep the gate open for the next comer, provided he be not too far off to lay hold of it. The gates on the Cotswold are more difficult to manage than those of Leicestershire, where I have seen some men raise the bar of a gate and swing it back with their hunting crop with as much ease as if they were turning the key in an ordinary lock, and in less time than a countryman could have done it on foot. The master of the Cotswold hunt, among his many excellent qualifications, is a capital opener of gates, and not unfrequently is courteous enough to do this good office for some freshman who has done him the honour to follow his hounds, thus imparting a lesson both of urbanity and useful information.

After all drawbacks, it must be confessed that the pleasure which attends the sport in this district is second to none in the kingdom; though the country in most places is too "banky,"—that is, too steep and abrupt, and the woods too extensive. The meets, however, at Pewsdown and Star Wood, where nothing but an unbroken line of stone walls stretching over a gently undulating country is preserved to the view, are great favourites with the lovers of the sport. This is the choicest part of the Cotswold, and perhaps, from its unique character and the rapidity of the pace, is unsurpassed by any other hunting-ground. A great number of cavalry men are generally to be found here, either as pilgrims to the wilds of Gloucestershire or members of the hunt; and there is a neatness and dexterity about their horsemanship generally which strike the judicious observer. But the followers of the chase are by no means confined to this order. On the last day which the writer did himself the honour of a visit, after killing a fox directly in front of the porch of a solitary church among the hills, a gentleman on horseback, in a black coat and buckskins, but of a grave and sober aspect, who had ridden well in, was appealed to by the field to show them the shortest way home—and very naturally too, for the sportsman in question was no other than the rector of the identical parish in which we stood, and Master Reynard had apparently shown himself inclined (though, as ill-luck would have it, too late) to become a parishioner and place himself under the protection of the church.

The neighbouring pack—the Berkeley—has the advantage of possessing one of the most experienced huntsmen in England, still in the full vigour of health, after braving for nearly forty years the wear and tear of a hunting life. Many will remember the pleasant days they have spent with Harry Agris in the topping sway of Lord Fitzhardinge, when Cheltenham alone could send to the field two hundred men in scarlet. Since those days of splendid shows and brave performances the uniform

of the hunt has been changed, and certainly not for the better. The yellow plush has a glaring and servitor-like appearance on the back of the sportsman; and when donned by gentlemen is utterly out of character in the hunting-field. And here it may be submitted, that scarlet of all colours is the best for a modern Nimrod wherewith to invest himself. It shows, at a much greater distance, like a blaze of fire, and in a murky day enables you to catch the direction in which the leading men are going—a hint which is often required, particularly if you happen to get on the wrong side of a large cover, and the fox gets away unexpectedly. As for green, though it has a rich appearance, it is perhaps the very worst colour possible, being almost invisible at one hundred yards distance. It might also be affirmed that the privilege of wearing a cap ought to be accorded only to the huntsman or the master, as it would thus serve to show the tail of the hounds. Every day we see gentlemen, of no particular qualifications as horsemen, throng into the field with this very unbecoming head-gear; who are continually being mistaken for whips, and as a matter of course have now and then some blunt questions put to them, which they are discreet enough not to attempt to answer. It is true, a cap may be more serviceable in going through a close thicket; but a low-crowned hat, such as that worn by the members of the Beaufort, would probably be quite as efficient and more workmanlike.

The Berkeley Hunt has the advantage of possessing two sorts of country entirely different,—one on the hills, and the other in the vale. That in the neighbourhood of Dursley, in the Vale of Gloucester, is one of their best meets, the land being laid out in grass fields, and the fences light. This advantage of possessing a country of two sorts is important, independently of the variety, as it tends to perfect the style of riding. The best man, accustomed only to stone walls, would ride indifferently in Leicestershire; because, in the first, good horsemanship depends rather on neatness and tact, while in the second it is necessary to push your horse boldly, and sometimes, as the saying is, "to ride for a fall." Yet some most excellent runs are to be witnessed in the Vale of Gloucester, and the master of the hounds, the Hon. Colonel Berkeley, shows himself on all occasions a keen sportsman, of such remarkable tenacity of character that he never abandons a fox that can be killed, and in handling his hounds flinches from no labour in the field.

A pilgrimage to Melton in the early part of the year formed part of the programme of my tour. Melton! a name which has become a household word in "merry England," conjuring up traditions and memories of "deeds of derring-do" in the hunting-field, and some frolic exploits out of it, which stir the blood of young aspirants in these days only to hear them recounted,—daring deeds such as, alack! are no longer to be witnessed in any field. Times have changed, and so have the men in them. The coaching days of old England nourished a robust and hardy vigour of character, for which at present there is no longer a training

school. Men travel to their hunting-boxes by rail, as fast, it is true, as the fleetest steeds could bear them, and drive in their dog-carts to cover. Shades of Meynell, Warde, and Assheton Smith! what would you say to that—you who thought it nothing to ride five-and-twenty or thirty miles to cover, and hunt afterwards until dusk? That hard-riding men and bold are still to be found congregated in Leicestershire, of all counties in England, no one will dispute; but the old spirit of competition and keen rivalry in the hunting-field is gone, and may be said to have died with Assheton Smith. Still, it is a source of pleasure to see in the same fields in these days men who have contended with the spirits of former times, and prove themselves, too, as keen sportsmen and as fine horsemen as the best of the younger school. Among them might be mentioned Lord G—— and the Earl of W——, whose enthusiasm for the chase will probably only end when they can no longer sit in the saddle.

TWO GIFTS.

I PLUCK'D it in the oak-shade,
Steep'd in morning's silver dew;
But I dried it with my kisses,
And I send it, love, to you.

I found it in the streamlet—
Pretty, tiny, tinted shell;
Take it, sweetest; it is charmèd
By a heart-wove magic spell.

Listen! it will softly murmur,
"Thou wilt never be forgot!"
And the blue-vein'd flower will whisper,
"Love of mine, 'forget me not'!"

T. H. S.

COLONEL VAN HALEN AND THE WIDOW.

A REMARKABLE episode of the great Peninsular War, which tells how Madam Nunez, a young and sprightly widow, contrived, in conjunction with her lover, Colonel Van Halen, to bamboozle two distinguished French generals, bring about their unconditional surrender, together with three thousand veteran soldiers, and frustrate the tactics of no less a personage than Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albufera, presents a striking illustration of the strange agencies by which military success or defeat is sometimes determined. The story, in itself an interesting one, moreover aptly introduces an anecdote of Captain William Light,* "artist, musician, seaman, soldier," which, told by General Sir William Napier, stirs the English heart as with a trumpet.

Early in 1814, Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, and commander-in-chief of the French armies in Spain, after as valiantly as vainly attempting to arrest the victorious march of Wellington upon the "sacred soil" of France, was fain to accept the alternative of concentrating the *débris* of the broken imperial armies, in the hope, if not with the expectation, that, with their feet upon the so-called sacred soil, the fainting courage of his soldiers would sufficiently revive to enable him to oppose an effective resistance to the deliverer of the Peninsula.

To that end he had directed Marshal Suchet—commanding in Catalonia, and celebrated for the wanton destruction of Tarragona and wholesale massacre of its unarmed inhabitants, if for not much else, upon a grand, imperial scale—to withdraw the garrisons of Lerida, Tortoza, Meguinenza, Manzan, and, combining them with the large French force in Barcelona, to effect his junction with him, Soult, by a specified time and by a specified route.

The hurried flight of the French armies afforded Colonel Van Halen, a Spaniard of Flemish descent, an opportunity he had passionately longed for since the unwilling conviction had been forced upon him that the days of French domination in Spain were not only numbered, but restricted to a brief and swiftly narrowing span. Van Halen had been an ultra-Afrancesado, which means that, blinded by the dazzle of an unexampled success, he firmly believed that Napoleon was immoveably seated, far out of fortune's shot upon that Olympus' height which his marvellous military genius and pitiless ambition had enabled him to attain. So believing, Van Halen had not for a moment hesitated to range himself on the side of the intrusive King Joseph, nothing doubting that that *must* be the winning side,—the sole consideration which in the slightest degree influenced him. Time, the great teacher, proved that treason to Spain had

* In after years Colonel Light, and Surveyor-General of Australia.

been a terribly impolitic move. Van Halen found that, unfortunately for himself, he had beheld only the brazen front and iron hands of the colossal conqueror, not seeing or suspecting the feet of clay till the imperial robe was rent asunder by the sword of Wellington.

The colonel's position, thus sharply defined by inexorable fact, was an extremely unpleasant one. An Afrancesado, he too well knew, was regarded by his countrymen with even a fiercer hatred than a Frenchman proper; and should he fall into their hands in the day of vengeful triumph, his fate would not be for one moment doubtful. Should he escape that terrible hazard, the prospect of being trundled out of Spain with the fleeing armies was a dismal one, involving, as it necessarily did, the loss of rank and pay, as well as forfeiture of a very considerable inheritance, to which he would otherwise succeed at the death of an aged relative.

"Still," remarks M. Quiros, in his "Sketches of the Catalonian Campaign"—"still, though the grand game had for him taken a pestilent turn, Van Halen, being a man of ingenuity and courage, did not despair of rising a considerable winner from the table, whatever might befall the great players. He held promising cards. He was not only on Suchet's staff, but was implicitly confided in by the marshal, to whom he had been warmly commended by the Duc de Feltrey, Napoleon's military secretary for the affairs of Spain, and by King Joseph himself, to whose Court the handsome, accomplished colonel had at one time been attached. In fact, Suchet concealed nothing from him except his cipher; and this simply because it was a regulation *de rigueur* in the French service, that the key to the cipher should on no pretence whatever be made known, except to such officers as a marshal or general might have to hold communication with by letter. Suchet violated the spirit, though not the letter of the prohibition, by disclosing to Van Halen a device he had adopted of making it doubly, trebly sure to his lieutenants that the presented message was genuine. This was to place in the letter a small piece of light-coloured hair, which, the paper being opened by any one unaware of the trick, would fall unobserved to the ground,—whilst its absence would, to the initiated French officer addressed, be conclusive that the cipher-letter was a forgery. It is clear, therefore, that should an opportunity occur of expiating his treason towards Spain by a striking, *fruitful* treason against France, Van Halen possessed peculiar facilities for availing himself of such a chance, and would not be at a loss for means of adding to those facilities.

"The supreme difficulty," continues Señor Quiros, "attendant upon delicate enterprises requiring an accomplice, and in which one false step, the slightest indiscretion, consigns the traitor to swift destruction, is to find a thoroughly *reliable* as well as astute ally. In that respect Van Halen was extremely fortunate. Francesca Nunez—a pretty, clever, audacious young widow, upon whom the Cestus of Venus hung but

loosely—was devoted to the irresistible colonel, whilst her hatred of the French was as genuinely *Basque* as she was herself."

Thus, then, it stood with Van Halen, when Marshal Soult's order was received at Barcelona, and Suchet, though with some reluctance, commenced the necessary dispositions for carrying it into effect. Fortunately for the success of Van Halen's scheme, the rough outline of which had for some time zigzagged, paled and brightened in his excited brain, the Duke of San Carlos passed the French outposts immediately after the command to evacuate Catalonia reached moody, discontented Suchet. The Duke assumed to have the power, in conjunction with others, of negotiating an armistice. Suchet, between whom and Soult there was no very friendly feeling, eagerly welcomed the proposal, and, to carry it into effect, left Barcelona with the Duke San Carlos, stating that he would probably be absent a week.

This was Van Halen's opportunity, and he seized it with the spring and clutch of a tiger. A few hours sufficed him to thoroughly elaborate his scheme, with the assisting counsel of Francesca Nunez, whose ardent zeal was kindled to flame by Biscayan hatred of the French, and her passion for Van Halen,—marriage with whom was the promised guerdon of success.

The few pieces on the military chess-board with which the conspirators proposed to play their terribly hazardous game were placed as follows :—

General Isidore Lamarque commanded immediately at Lerida, and officers subordinate to him at Tortoza, Meguinenza, and Manzan, the garrisons amounting in the aggregate to three thousand seasoned soldiers. These places were observed, not invested, by irregular corps, commanded by D'Erolles and Campans, which, though more numerous than the French, were hopelessly unequal to cope with them in the field.

That, however, did not greatly signify, as the Anglo-Sicilian corps, commanded by Sir William Clinton, after having repaired Tarragona, was approaching Barcelona, in which city, however, were over twelve thousand French soldiers *d'élite*, bucklered by the ramparts and cannon of Fort Monjuich.

This formidable Barcelona garrison did not figure in the programme arranged by Van Halen, whose clever game was to induce the troops under Isidore Lamarque, by means of forged directions, purporting to be written by Suchet, to abandon the strong places held by them at a given time, and march in a precisely indicated direction, at a point in which they would join Suchet and the Barcelona garrison. The cipher-letters would, moreover, apprise Lamarque that, by a convention concluded between Suchet and the Spanish and English commanders, no attack would be made upon the French retiring forces, provided they left their field artillery behind. Should the French generals fall into the snare, they and their troops once well entangled in the mountains, their surrender at discretion would be

a matter of course, as well as Van Halen's reconciliation with his countrymen, and the important consequences to himself thereto attached.

Obviously the first thing to be done was to obtain Suchet's cipher, which little matter was easily settled by breaking open the marshal's *écritoire*. The letters were then prepared—the small pieces of light hair not being forgotten,—placed each in a quill, and confided to Madam Francesca Nunez. She was also to be the bearer of verbal, but in the phraseology used, thoroughly well-authenticated advices to the Spanish generals, who were moreover requested to place themselves in communication with Sir William Clinton, in order to obtain his counsel and concurrence.

Thus furnished, the fair and fragile Francesca set gaily forth upon her mission, and successfully accomplished it. Upon the arrival of Colonel Van Halen at Tortoza or Lerida with Suchet's latest instructions, the march of the French troops would forthwith commence. One circumstance the wily widow could not report, not being cognizant thereof. Sir W. Clinton, upon being consulted, indignantly refused to mix himself up with the affair. He waged *honest* war—not one carried on by means of forged letters. Still, though he would have nothing to do with the plot, he would cross the Llobregat with four or five regiments; and if a French force presented itself within his reach, as it probably would if the calculations of the Spanish generals were not falsified by the event, he should certainly attack that French force, as he would be in duty bound to do, by whatever scheme or chance the enemy might have been lured into such a position.

Of course this was all D'Erolles and Campans required. They, with Van Halen and the widow, could manage the plot better without than with Sir William; and since he, if necessary, would do the fighting part of the business, the arrangement was perfect.

The widow having done her part, it behoved Colonel Van Halen to boldly enter upon *his rôle* in the tragi-comedy. He was not a man to fail himself at such a crisis, and accompanied by an escort of some dozen cuirassiers, he took the road to Tortoza on the morning of the 13th of February, 1814. An ambush, as previously concerted by Campans and Francesca Nunez, encountered him in the first mountain gorge he and his escort entered. The cuirassiers were slain; and with six Spanish horsemen, clothed in the uniforms of the betrayed Frenchmen, Van Halen pushed vigorously onwards. He reached Tortoza safely, and sent in a message to the commandant requesting to know precisely when he would be ready to march. General Robert, it seems, had, for some cause or other, become suspicious of the genuineness of Suchet's missive, and his reply was a request that Colonel Van Halen would enter the place and confer with him, General Robert. Van Halen declined the polite invitation, alleging that he was bound to see General Lamarque at Lerida without delay; and he at once rode off with his followers. "The fact," remarks Suchet in

his Memoirs, "that Van Halen would not trust himself in Tortoza ought to have convinced General Robert of his treason."

Finally, Colonel Van Halen succeeded in convincing Lamarque that it was his duty to obey Marshal Suchet's peremptory order, however opposed to his own judgment the prescribed *rôle* might be. The French columns marched early on the morning of the 15th, closely followed, as arranged, by D'Erolles' and Campans' military rabblement, and bearing off with them a rich military chest. Lamarque had, moreover, positively refused to abandon the artillery to the Spaniards. At dead of the first night of the march, a *chef de bataillon* of the 42nd regiment awoke General Lamarque to tell him they were betrayed.

"Rest assured," he said—"rest assured that we are betrayed, and shall soon find ourselves in presence of quite 'other soldiers' than the Spanish *canaille* swarming about us. We may yet quietly effect our escape whilst the Spaniards are asleep and scattered about the place. Let us leave behind our artillery and baggage. We can gently awake the soldiers, and make the best of our way to mountains in the direction of Vich and the frontiers of France. Our regiment knows the country well, and when we shall have had a five or six hours' start, nothing can any longer arrest our progress."

The *chef de bataillon's* warning voice was unheeded. The march of the French columns was resumed at daybreak; and whilst the sun was yet high in the heavens, the sheen of the English bayonets glittered in the distance, and a British mounted officer galloping up informed Lamarque that he could proceed no further. General Sir W. Clinton, it was added, referred him for an explanation to the Spanish generals D'Erolles and Campans.

Resistance was out of the question, and the French surrendered to Campans; Sir William Clinton obstinately refusing to have anything to do with an affair which, but for him, might have had a very different termination. This was unfortunate, as, had he technically been a party to the terms of surrender agreed upon, he would have had a right to intervene in prevention of the scandalous violation of those terms by the Spaniards.

The success of the *coup de traître* was complete, and General Campans, in a flaming order of the day, boasted that *he* had captured a French corps of three thousand men, including two general officers, twenty pieces of cannon, a vast quantity of baggage, and a rich military chest.

The loss to the French commander-in-chief was a heavy one at that juncture, particularly as Sir W. Clinton and his allies, having no longer to observe Tortoza, Lerida, Meguinenza, Manzan, were enabled to effectually prevent Suchet from joining his chief.

Marshal Soult was in sore and pressing need, too, of such help as fifteen thousand soldiers *d'élite* might have rendered him, and at no time more so during his harassed retreat upon France than about a fortnight after

Lamarque's surrender, when, hotly pressed by Wellington, he was marching through the sandy plain of Ger, covering and masking his movements by a numerous rear-guard. One corps was posted on a hill thickly covered with trees, the end of which abutted on a high road.

It was of the utmost importance that the English general should ascertain what force was on the other side in his immediate front. All who attempted to ascertain that fact were killed or driven back by the fire of skirmishers. At last Captain William Light dashed forward, as if he would force his way through the *tirailleurs*, but had hardly reached the wood when he was seen to drop the reins, and fall back in his saddle badly wounded, and scarcely able to sustain himself, his horse continuing to gallop onward. The skirmishers, believing him to be mortally hit, ceased firing, and in the position described the daring soldier rode along the front of the French infantry on the other side, counting them as he passed. That done, Captain Light sprang upright in his saddle, grasped the reins, and, spurring his horse to his fullest speed, galloped, without being touched by their hasty fire, past the skirmishers, who thought they had killed him, and riding up to Wellington exclaimed, "My lord, there are but five battalions on the other side of the hill." The wood was consequently at once forced, and Soult received the blow at Tarbes, which he might else have avoided. But for Van Halen and the widow, it is quite clear that Captain Light might have had to report that there were thirty instead of five battalions on the other side of the hill.

Colonel Van Halen, thoroughly reconciled—indeed, a sort of hero with his countrymen—was not long afterwards raised to the grade of general. I do not find it stated that he fulfilled his promise of marrying the widow; and, in the absence of positive information, I strongly incline to believe he did *not*.

CHARQUI.

THE roast beef of Old England is a food so excellent in every way, that for our part we do not marvel at any of the eulogiums that have ever been lavished upon it. Altogether considered, perhaps, these isles—in the double respect of climate and of fodder—are better adapted than any other tracts on earth's wide surface to the breeding of high-class horned cattle, and the production of first-rate beef. Had the case been otherwise, British national cookery would probably have advanced beyond the primitive and often inefficient processes of roasting, boiling, broiling, and frying, which mostly exhaust the art repertory of British woman cooks. The late Lord Macaulay was in the habit of saying that the fuel system of a country determines its prevalent methods of cookery. To the prodigality of wood here amongst us, at one period of our history, and of pit-coal since, the great historian would refer the general scheme and genius of British cookery. Doubtless the fuel supply of a country—a civilized country at least—does exert an influence as specified by Lord Macaulay. Our present system of cookery, however, has been brought about through the influence of two concomitant circumstances at least, and of which his lordship took no account: the first of these is the natural excellence of British oxen; the second, the genial, temperate condition of climate, through which it becomes possible to hang beef and other meat until the fibre has become soft enough to lend itself congenially to British rough and ready methods of cookery.

Whenever a born Briton insists on retaining his plain cookery processes in climates not admitting of preliminary *attendrissement* by hanging, he generally fails in those matters of plain roast, and boiled, and broiled, to which he is so addicted. Fully acceding to all the praises that have ever been lavished upon roast beef, yet the chronicler would be prejudiced indeed who—led away by false notions of patriotism—should fail to perceive drawbacks that lessen the majesty and dim the glory of this most excellent blood-former. British national food is of a sort that stands no compromise: it needs the best of raw material out of which to be elaborated, or else it is execrable. Leg or neck of beef contains just the same amount of nutritive matter as rich rounds or sirloin,—favourite parts for roasting and boiling. Whether a neck or a leg of beef shall or shall not minister to the needs of eating in an equal degree with fine cuts, as they are termed, will be wholly dependent upon the way of preparation. Probably no British subject in anything like easy circumstances has ever yet tried the experiment of roasting neck of beef, or for that matter, leg of beef either. It is not difficult to imagine what they would be, however—abominable. Salted and boiled—another national speciality—they would not be much better; in point of fact, the only available manner of dealing with these and other rough cuts, as they are called, must involve some

variety of the process known to chemists as "*digestion*," which may be regarded as almost synonymous with what English people call "simmering." Founded on this process of slow heating, or "*digestion*," is perhaps nine-tenths of every national system of cookery save our own. It lies at the foundation of every soup, stew, ragoût, by whatever name denominated; and the names are legion.

Now the first circumstance that strikes one in relation to cookery processes founded upon slow heating, or, as chemists term it, "*digestion*," is this:—whereas it is the most economical series of all cookery processes, one best adapted to subserve organic digestion, the best adapted therefore to the circumstances of the poor; nevertheless it is almost exclusively restricted to the culinary practice of the rich. For the English artisan to taste soup, home-made, is rare. The English agricultural labourer—except in the west of England, and only then when boarded and lodged in a farm-house—never partakes of soup. Now this is only equivalent to saying that the English agricultural cotter never, as a rule, partakes of the sort of food most fitted to his condition: fitted in the true physical sense of getting the maximum of work out of the minimum of material.

Coming to the causes which effect this *quasi*-banishment of soup and cognate processes of cookery from the English labourer's hearth, and mostly from the hearth of the British artisan, they will be found to lie on the surface. Such is the prodigality of English fuel, that the wide open hearth or grate coal-fire has become nationalized amongst us; and it is a form adapted in the least degree to the exigencies of slow-heat application. The French peasant, using mostly wood where wood is scarce, was driven from a very early period, and well for his comfort and economy, to invent the *pot au feu*. Nothing comes amiss to that *pot au feu*. Viands the toughest, vegetables the hardest, birds the smallest,—all simmer down into a soft confection, half stew, half soup, most congenial to the purposes for which food is taken, *i. e.*, to form flesh and impart animal heat through respiration. The English peasant can never afford what we call "*prime cuts*," yet his wife cooks all the scraps of meat she buys, prime-cut fashion; that is to say, when she cooks at all: but more frequently she performs upon it an operation, to designate which by the name of cookery would be to insult gastronomic science. She more frequently tortures it in that instrument of evil import, that emblem sacred to nightmare, the frying-pan!

The value of good eating is by no means well understood. The gastronome, well to do in the world, too often regards it in the sense of an art to solace his appetite through the sense of taste; paying little heed to the utility of what he eats, considered as a means necessary to the support of a healthy vitality. The poor man, not having the power to be so fastidious, aims at what he calls *filling himself;* thus obviating that consciousness of a vacuum, which philosophers prior to Galileo considered so repugnant to nature, and which is unpleasant in the highest degree when felt in the stomach. Now English labourers, poor as they are,

might do better in the matter of eating than this. They might, at the expenditure of an equal sum of money as now, or indeed less, live better, quantity and quality alike; but in order to do this they must abate somewhat of their prejudices; consenting to eat animal viands different to look at from what they have been accustomed, though every whit as nutritious.

The circumstance must have often struck thoughtful people as at once strange and to be regretted, that bovine life, so teeming in the vast grassy expanses of South America, was not made available, as it readily might be in these days of facile ocean transport, to the needs of our hard-pressed population at home. To speak of beef as a nuisance does violence to all one's common impressions of that commodity; nevertheless the term nuisance literally applies to the carcasses of horned cattle in many parts of South America.

In many regions of the pampas and llanos of that vast continent, cattle have long been slaughtered for their fat and hides alone. Good beef has been given over to the condors; and when these winged gluttons have filled themselves, the bones remaining, when dried by sun exposure, become the only fuel which the gauchos, or wild herdsmen, use for cooking their steaks. The North American grass-lands—the prairies—and tracts corresponding to the pampas or llanos of South America, were well tenanted by indigenous horned animals—bisons, improperly called buffaloes—when the Spaniards first set foot on the new continent. The magnificent grass-lands of South America were devoid of these animals, and indeed were sparsely tenanted by large animals of any sort. Wild horses and wild oxen have increased prodigiously all over these plains. Any number of either may be had for the trouble of catching; and, referring solely to the horned cattle, this circumstance explains the phenomenon of beef at threepence per pound in the British market.

Charqui (whence comes our English word jerked), when prepared as usual in South America, is not very agreeable to look upon. For that matter, no sort of foreign meat is pleasing to the eye of Englishmen; accustomed as they are to see the neatly cut and trimmed joints of their native country. Nowhere, indeed, out of these isles is the butcher's art understood and followed as British butchers understand and follow it. On consideration, however, it will not fail to be apparent, that in countries where large joints, as we call them, never come upon the table; where animal food is served up under the form of made dishes, the butcher's handiwork of neatness represents labour thrown away.

Charqui, as the rolled South American beef recently introduced to the British public is called, appears under two forms; the results of two different modes of preparation. In either case the beginning is similar. The flesh is cut away from the bones in long ribbon-like strips, then salted; but each sort is salted to a different degree. *Charqui dulce*, or sweet charqui, is slightly sprinkled only with salt, then sun-dried, and rolled into the form of a hard cylinder. The other sort is more fully salted—*corned*, as

we should term it,—then withdrawn from pickle; the excess of moisture squeezed out; finally, the meat rolled similarly to the *charqui dulce*. Both sorts have been brought here on trial; and hitherto popular appreciation has rather inclined to the fully salted variety; though, weight for weight, it is not so nutritious as the *charqui dulce*, and hence not so profitable.

Prejudice has followed charqui on its travels. Being different in appearance to any sort of meat our public have been accustomed to, we have heard very opprobrious names bandied about in relation to charqui. It has been called *horse-beef*, for example. Now if horses were more plentiful, in the South American llanos and pampas, than oxen, there might be some probability in the imputation; but inasmuch as they are not, neither are horses so easy to catch as oxen, our people may solace themselves with the complete assurance that no horse-beef from any South American source will be foisted upon them. British hippophagists will therefore have to content themselves as heretofore, whilst remaining at home, with such horseflesh as they have long been accustomed to, in the form of reindeer tongues and the so-called beef sausages.

An Englishman need not travel far away, however, to indulge any taste for horseflesh he may have, less surreptitiously. Throughout nearly the whole of Germany horseflesh is eaten openly, and without repugnance. Any person curious in this matter may constantly find the market price of horseflesh quoted along with ordinary butchers' meat in the Cologne newspapers. In France, too, horseflesh is consumed for human sustenance, though perhaps not to the same proportionate extent as in Germany. Assuredly nothing can be adduced against horseflesh on the score of salubrity; but an objection lies against it other than of mere sentimental prejudice. It is peculiar in taste, somewhat sweet, and very coarse.

Since the introduction of charqui among us, various letters have appeared in the newspapers relative to specific methods of cooking it. If the writers, instead of detailing mere processes, had expatiated a little more on principles, they would have done better service to the good cause they sought to advance. We will now endeavour to supply this deficiency. In the first place, the fibre of South American beef is naturally much harder and tougher than that of highly bred English cattle. Secondly, the methods of its preparation add to the hardness and toughness. These qualities, although fatal to the very being of British roast beef, count for little or nothing when—abandoning our cherished national processes—we fall back upon the resource of stew-pans and soup-pots. Charqui does not admit of being roasted: *that* being a method of cookery altogether out of the question. Neither can it be boiled, as corned beef is boiled, with any sort of satisfaction. It must be subjected to some form of slow simmering or digestive cookery; fashioned into one of the almost innumerable varieties of soups, stews, or ragoûts, that a cook, who merits

in any degree that honourable attribute, will know how to elaborate. But in addition to any mode of cookery, and preliminary thereto, charqui of either kind should be well steeped in tepid water for at least three hours, and the water thrown away. By this treatment a certain musty taste, almost inseparable from the mode of straining it, is got rid of, and the meat rendered more similar to what it was before it had undergone stowage in the hold of a ship. If a little vinegar be added to the water of steepage, only just enough to sharpen it to the taste perceptibly, all the better. We believe that the immense resources of South American beef are not half imagined, at the time being, in Europe. It does not follow that we are always to have it imported under the form of charqui, either *dulce* or *salsado*. South America would be one of the best possible fields for the production of those canister provisions which are so much approved: neither is there any sufficient reason why pemmican, the form of animal diet so much esteemed by Hudson's Bay fur-hunters and arctic explorers, should not be prepared there in large quantities, then imported and made available to the dense populations of Europe. Other modes of food preparation more elaborate still, and to be noticed by-and-bye, are also well adapted to the conditions of South America.

Pemmican may be described as animal muscular fibre, either sun or kiln-dried, then ground to a powder and intimately mingled with animal fat. From a consideration of the nature of this material, it will be seen to comprise all the available elements of animal food:—nitrogenous material for blood and flesh formation; adipose material for ministering to the respiratory function, and thus liberating animal heat. Baron Liebig, too, during the past seven or eight years, has been assiduously turning his profound chemical knowledge to account in a way that can hardly fail to make the South American animal food resources available, to an extent even greater than could be accomplished by any previously known mode of preparation. Some years ago the great German chemist published the fact that the most efficient means of extracting the nutriment from animal fibre consisted in treating it with hydrochloric acid, and thus producing an essence. His first experiments were suggested through a domestic circumstance—an illness in his own family; and the results were found so beneficial, so satisfactory in every way, that the essence of meat has now been incorporated amongst the accredited medical agents of the Royal Bavarian pharmacopœia, and, we believe, of certain other German pharmacopœias; though this is a point on which we cannot pronounce with certainty.

The nutritive power of this meat essence, according to French as well as German accounts which have reached us, is extraordinary. It may be that considerations of pleasure from eating would interpose a bar to the general employment of any concentrated meat essence, a teaspoonful of which possesses, according to testimony, as much nutritive virtue as a good beefsteak; but, considered as an adjunct to military equipment and

hospitals, the virtues of this new concentration are hardly to be overrated. A French military surgeon testifies that a single glassful of a mixture of this essence with wine, administered to a soldier wounded upon the field of battle, exercises an influence which may well be called magical; and when the point is remembered that solid viands could not be swallowed by one thus circumstanced, even were they procurable, the value of Liebig's meat essence may be readily inferred. We stated that the liquid in question has been introduced into the Bavarian pharmacopœia. It is sold in Bavarian apothecaries' shops at the seemingly high rate of two shillings the ounce, having been prepared hitherto in Germany exclusively from home-bred cattle. Notwithstanding the high price of it, however, Liebig states that the Bavarians have discovered the economy of using it; and that they now constantly purchase it at the apothecaries' without a prescription,—thus demonstrating that they obtain it in deference to their own convictions of its intrinsic utility.

The most important point remains to be communicated. Liebig has recently announced that a German engineer, resident in South America, having heard of the essence of meat, placed himself in communication with the discoverer of the process, with the intent of manufacturing the liquid essence in the New World. Specimens of the manufacture have been sent for inspection to Liebig, who testifies to their excellence; hence we may soon expect to find the selling price of this valuable material brought within the means of people of small incomes, to be used as an article of domestic economy. Does the reader fully picture to himself those almost interminable wastes of level grass-lands to which the terms "*llanos*" and "*pampas*" are given? Does he behold with the mind's eye a vision of those vast regions, and the teeming herds of wild oxen and horses which roam ownerless, so to speak, over them? We will endeavour to reproduce this scene,—one that displays a phase of life altogether peculiar; one to which there is nothing similar in any part of the Old World. We have to imagine an unbroken waste—hundreds of miles in extent—of waving grass, without a tree, almost without a shrub; a region bare of habitation,—one in which man is rarely seen; but one in which he no sooner comes than the power of his dominion is made manifest. Yonder gallops a horseman; he is mounted upon a steed seemingly as wild as those of yonder herd. These wild horses no saddle has touched; neither has the cruel Spanish bit passed between their teeth, nor long spur-rowels torn their flanks. Seemingly as wild! ay, so he is. That steed may only have been just captured. His native fire is not yet fretted out of him: but the time will come, and that speedily.

The *gaucho*, or wild herdsman of these grass wastes, is a very Arab for horse exercise. Ever on horseback—a very centaur; yet, strange as it may seem, he cannot be said to own one single horse to his own private account. Depend upon it, there is not, as with the Arab of the desert, any great love between the gaucho and the steed which carries him. The

Arab never ill-treats his horse, but is always kind to him; between the two a friendship arises, only ending with the death of one. Nothing of the sort between the gaucho and yonder wild, bleeding, foaming courser, on which he speeds like the wind. When the gaucho wants a horse, he catches one; then, as for taming—breaking in—he follows a practice very summary in its operation, and very effectual. Once on the back of his steed, he allows the animal to gallop away until such time as the wild steed becomes convinced of the unpleasant fact that the gaucho is his master. The gaucho's appointments are peculiar. As for boots, when he wants a new pair in the grassy waste, he finds them. The art of bootmaking, as practised by him, is most simple. He skins the leg of a horse or cow, and sliding it over his own leg, there is a boot seamless and soleless. But what needs the gaucho, who spends the best part of his life on horseback, a sole to his boot? An English Nimrod might feel unpleasantly conditioned without boot-soles, because English stirrups are rough to stand upon. The gaucho's stirrup appointments are on another system quite. We have seen that, according to the primitive and peculiar system of bootmaking by him adopted, there would be an opening left at the toe of each boot. Now the gaucho does not close that aperture; does not *seek* to do so. It is necessary that his two great toes should come out. Trained from infancy, these members, so useless to people who wear civilized boots, are to the gaucho most valuable. His stirrups are small. He could not thrust his entire feet into them. He never tries; the great toe of either foot being his *point d'appui*. Thrust into the leg of one of these boots, the gaucho carries a long knife, an instrument useful for more than one purpose. For cutting the throat of an enemy, or doing butchers' duty on slaughtered beasts, the long blade is equally handy. It remains to be told, however, that the long knife is employed in fewer affairs of murderous or warlike character than—judging from the gaucho temperament—might be anticipated. The knife, indeed, is not the weapon of war or murder upon which the gaucho mostly relies. He owns two superior—the *lasso* and the *bolas*. To the gaucho, the lasso and bolas are what a Greenlander's harpoon is to him, or a rifle to a Hudson's Bay trapper. For the purpose of attacking an enemy, a gaucho would more probably use the lasso than the knife. The dexterity with which he swings the noosed hide-rope bearing this name, amounts to a veritable feat of legerdemain. Frequently, in the progress of the civil wars which have become chronic in the South Republics ever since they threw off the Spanish dominion, adverse sentries have been caught in the lasso noose of some gaucho passing by, and then dragged to death. On certain occasions the gaucho will prefer a cast of the bolas to the lasso noose. In either case the same address is needed; the bolas merely consisting of three metal balls fastened to one extremity of a rope of hide, the other extremity of which is attached to the saddle-girth.

In the old coaching days, as certain roadside historians aver, it was

not unusual for Jehus to help themselves to any choice specimen of poultry they might meet with in their way, by adopting an expedient not very dissimilar in its nature to the bolas casting of a South American gaucho. It was not unusual for a metal button to be tied to the thong of the driving whip, whereby the neck of a goose wandering handy, was encircled as by a serpent one moment, to be drawn up the next to the coach-box, and thence, at convenience, to the boot. Without the bolas and the lasso, horned herds might wander over the llanos and pampas of South America under no apprehension of contributing to the food of man. The gaucho nooses his beeves when he wants them; and so enormous is the number of horned cattle running wild over those grass-covered plains, that the only expense of the flesh, when turned into charqui, is such as is involved in the time and trouble of catching, of curing, and of transport.

Having accredited the lasso with its usual function of capturing unto death, it is only a matter of common justice that we also state it to have been occasionally used to snatch friends away from unpleasant situations. Awhile ago, when a fire occurred in the church of Santiago in Chili, and many hundreds of people were consumed, the circumstance may be borne in mind that a few were saved from destruction,—torn from out the very flames by means of a lasso, dexterously projected into the massive doorway of the flaming church, by a herdsman who chanced at the time to be passing by. People, mostly women, had thronged to the door of the burning church, and in their unavailing struggles to escape had got impacted. There they lay in a dense throng; and they would all have died but for the chance that a gaucho, lasso in hand, happened to pass by. He made a cast, and catching a group, spurred his horse away, and thus drew them bodily out. He made another cast, and with a similar result; but by the time he had returned for a third cast, flame-tongues were darting from the doorway; and those whom he would have saved were dead.

Transporting ourselves now from South America to these isles, contemplating the multitudes of ill-fed people to whom this new food accession would be a boon if judiciously utilized, we are constrained to advert once more to the stubborn prejudice in the matter of food entertained mostly by the very classes who should be the first to profit by it. To clear away prejudice absolutely from our consideration, relative to what we eat and drink, would be obviously impossible, if not impolitic; or rather, might it not be more proper to "sentiment" instead of prejudice?

Any attempt to regulate the *ingesta*—the materials of food and drink—by reference to the chemical constituents of the same, is altogether out of the question; so absolutely out of the question that one well wonders how so much account is made of the sort of evidence in scientific food reports. If any one doubts the validity of this position, the doubt can only be referable to the non-exercise of sufficient thought and reflection. Chemistry, if alone referred to, would lead us to some conclusion very unpleasant when sentimentally regarded. If chemistry, apart from sentiment, be

alone heeded in this matter, then does it follow that the Maories in times gone by, and the New Caledonians in times present, are justified in adopting a certain peculiarity of diet which rebels against the sentiments of civilized people? Recognizing the force of sentiment in the matter of eating and drinking, the philanthropist who means well to the food-pressed multitudes around him will never be led into taking the extreme position of foisting surreptitiously meat or drink which by its nature might be repugnant to educated human tastes. This we admit; but admitting it, we desire to express the opinion that those who are responsible on extraordinary occasions for the feeding of the poor, very inadequately perform that duty, and for reasons easy of explanation. What we would signify by extraordinary occasions may be thus made intelligible. All the year round in pauper unions, and at uncertain times—mostly during winter elsewhere—thousands of the population from amongst the lower social grades having irregular means, avail themselves of sources of charitable food dispensation. We are pleased, as is natural, to know that means of alleviating necessitous hunger exist; every philanthropist would be pleased to know it; but the thought has often occurred to us that British sources of eleemosynary food distribution are not rendered half so subservient to the needs of the poor as they readily might be. It has often occurred to us that the mere dotation of food, though fulfilling an immediate need, is not so valuable as judicious instruction in cookery would have been, whereby the extreme condition of pauperism might have been avoided. In winter-time there is hardly an English village of any importance in which private benevolence does not manifest itself in the establishment and maintenance of a soup-kitchen. Now a soup-kitchen is excellent in its way. We would be amongst the last to check that form of benevolence; if, however, the humane promoters of these establishments would make them schools of cookery for the poorer orders, the very classes intended to be benefited, how much more fully would the benevolent intent be fulfilled! In this way, not only would prejudices tend to be broken down by the fact of poor people seeing that use was made by their social superiors of materials which, though unexceptionable, they in their own cottages would not touch, but an available means would be taken to insure the education of good female cooks. Until some such organization as this shall be established and carried out, England will probably fail to realize the full benefit she might derive from South American beef.

W. H. G.

NICOLO MACHIAVELLI

BY WILLIAM RUSSELL, LL.D.

MACHIAVELLI is one of those sovereign names which stamp themselves indelibly upon the memory of mankind. Let us look closely at that colossal frame, endeavour to read aright the numerous superscriptions written by enthusiastic friends and foes, in honour, in vilification of his memory. Yes, let us look closely at this great—intellectually great Italian, as he pictures himself to the world in his writings. It is a great lesson. Shakspere, with a dissecting-knife forged in the armory of God, could scarcely have laid bare with geater truth and power the inner workings of a human soul, than has Nicolo Machiavelli, in the graphic pen-portraiture he gives, to a considerable extent unconsciously, of his own grand, mean, elevated, servile self. Lord Chancellor Bacon was, I believe, his first apologist; Cardinal Pole his first English censor. One easily understands the Chancellor's sympathy with Machiavelli's subtle, unscrupulous intellect. The Cardinal reads the astute Italian's memorable work —not quite correctly named "The Prince"—by the light of the gospel,— a crucial test which few works can bear.

Lord Macaulay, whilst contemptuously rejecting the sophism of Bacon— often since furbished up and re-lacquered,—that Nicolo Machiavelli was in truth a great moral teacher, who veiled his purpose of instructing princes how they might most easily make themselves hated and contemptible, by the mask of a subtle irony, excuses the famous Florentine, by the plea that his execrable ethics simply embodied, set attractively forth, the opinions, the moralities, of his age and country. Machiavelli says the great essayist is to be judged, not in his individual character, but as a "representative man." In illustration of this theory, Lord Macaulay says that "in the present day Italians admire, sympathize with, Iago— not Othello—in Shakspere's marvellous tragedy. They worship *power*, irrespective of the uses to which power may be put,—bow down in admiration of a magnificent intellect, though the devil, not the Creator, guide and govern it." Italian writers have given plausibility to this imputation by the sickening slaver they lavish upon the genius of Machiavelli, irrespective of the aims which genius should aspire to achieve. But Italy has no claim to pre-eminence in the idolatry of FORCE. The Latin peoples, without exception, worship at that shrine. They all inherit, cherish, illustrate, the dominant idea of pagan Rome, —that to triumph over, conquer, crush, rule nations, is to be really GLORIOUS.

The French Academicians would probably see nothing, in the phrase "Suffer and be strong," but a rhetorical flourish without meaning or applicability. No doubt the Christian idea has, to a vast extent, modified, mildened, that blasphemous one of old Rome; but one need not waste

words to prove that though, perhaps, showing its gray hairs, the heathen principle has always existed, still exists, in vigorous life, not in Italy alone, but throughout Europe, especially Latin Europe. The guiding, controlling passion of Nicolo Machiavelli—principle, in the general acceptation of the word, I shall easily be able to show he had none—was by force, fraud, any means, however iniquitous, to constitute a United Italy, bind together the fasces of its nationality by blood, dexterously, cunningly shed, if the purpose could not be otherwise obtained; and that United Italy was to place itself under the absolute governance of a prince who, no matter by what means—force, falsehood, treason, subterfuge,—would render Italy, as personified in him, strong, powerful. As to the individualities making up the grand national aggregate,—their liberties, their well-being, their guarantees for personal freedom, the famous Florentine held of no more account than as so many blocks of fuel, by the consumption of which a brilliant Italian Pharos might be kindled and sustained to dazzle and astound mankind. I reassert that Lord Macaulay is wrong, manifestly wrong, when he strives to excuse the atrocious doctrines of Machiavelli by representing them to be mere photographs, fixed by the light of a great intellect, of Italian opinion, Italian morals. Nicolo Machiavelli's writings are the embodiment of the maxims of universal heathenism. Even moral Montaigne wrote that "le bien publique demande qu'on trahisse, qu'on ment, et qu'on massacre" (the public good requires men to betray, to lie, to massacre). Our Hobbes, in his "Leviathan," draws near the Italian, though with cautious steps. And is it not indisputable that Thomas Carlyle devotes his unrivalled pen to deify power, success? Such teachings are, after all, but feeble paraphrases of the text, "All these things [power, dominion, "glory"] will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." We Teutons are still tainted with the old heathen leprosy, but not so deeply, I hope, believe, as the Latin race. Will any one presume to say that the man of the 2nd of December—supposing the scene of his inexpiable crime to have been London, England—would have obtained the adhesion of any but the vilest of the rabble?

Nicolo Machiavelli—whom history has immortalised by making his sire-name the synonym of a creed which teaches that fraud, lying, the remorseless carrying out of an unscrupulous egotism, are the true elements of successful prince or king-craft; whose abbreviated baptismal "Nicolo" has furnished us with a sobriquet for Satan—was born on the 3rd of May, 1469, in the capital of Tuscany, Florence the beautiful, founded by Sylla, embellished by Roman treasuries, destroyed by Poller, rebuilt by Charlemagne, oppressed, adorned, made sensuously glorious, by the Medici. In the church of Santa Croce, thanks to the prodigal ostentation of an English nobleman, the late Earl Cowper, Machiavelli's monument now attracts the gaze, challenges the verdict, of the spectator with as bold a front as do those of Michael Angelo, Galileo, Alfieri! Ay, and the

lurid light of Machiavelli's crown of infamy will be co-eternal with the divine lustre which encircles *their* majestic brows.

Machiavelli's pedigree, judged by Heralds' College ethics, was a splendid one. He could prove, by rules of ratiocination which ignore disturbing quantities, that his ancestors, as early as the ninth, and well-nigh to the close of the twelfth centuries, were Marquises of Tuscany, sovereign suppliers of Condottieri. Ferocious swindling scoundrels, it might be, but noble, undeniably noble, of purest blood,—a race whose arched feet (Lady Hester Stanhope's test of true nobility, by the way),—whose arched feet a pail of water might be dashed through without so much as damping the noble sole! Unfortunately for those great marquises, the rise of the Italian cities, degenerating with plebeian proclivity into republics,—the wealth scattered in their passage to Palestine by the crusading hosts,—and, before all, the invention of gunpowder, dimmed, eclipsed, finally extinguished, or nearly so, the feudal magnates of Italy.

It thus happened that Nicolo Machiavelli, though of illustrious lineage, was by no means born in the purple of riches. His father, Bernard Machiavelli, was a jurisconsult of some talent; but there is no mint which will upon demand coin talent into current money. Nicolo's mother's maiden name was Bartolomeo Nelli; she could also boast of a grand ancestry, was a poetess moreover, but not blessed with the treasures which, though they have a pestilent propensity to make unto themselves wings and fly away, are, whilst in the chrysalis state, pleasant possessions. Nicolo Machiavelli was, consequently, born, reared to self-helping youth and manhood, in comparative if not absolute poverty. It is only fair, whilst estimating the character of Machiavelli, to keep this potent fact in mind. Circumstance is a strong god. It is even doubted that his education was of a first-class character. But his was an intellect which required but little cultivation to bring forth abundant fruits after their kind. Machiavelli's first important plunge into the business of the world was his acceptance of a clerkship in the office of Marcello Adriani, "Chancellor of the community of Florence." He quickly made himself understood, felt; his mental superiority, his unscrupulous energy, were patent to every one who conversed with him but for a few minutes. Evidently he meant to win the game of life,—fairly, if it might be so, at all events to win. Nicolo Machiavelli had not reached his twenty-third birthday when he was appointed secretary to the council of ten entrusted with the direction of the foreign affairs of Tuscany. He was now fairly launched upon his true career. In order to appreciate the influences which guided the young Florentine in his ambitious path, it is necessary to glance at the then political, social, military position of Tuscany.

The Medici had been driven from Florence, and a so-called republic established, of which Sadoreni, a weak, well-meaning man, was chief *gonfalonier*. The few troops of the state were Condottieri and other mercenaries, whilst the Tuscans themselves were split into hostile factions;

the rabble especially being vehemently desirous of the return of the Medici,—just as the same class of Neapolitans in the present day are said to be anxious for a Bourbon restoration. Florence was surrounded, hemmed in, menaced, insulted, by hosts of enemies. It was necessary, at any sacrifice of national dignity, to keep friends with France, by whose assistance alone could the Florentine territory be rescued from the ravages of Switzers, Spaniards, Lombards, Germans. Cæsar Borgia, of infamous memory, son of Alexander the Sixth, sustained and encouraged by that pontiff, went ravaging the Romagna with his brutal banditti, and was known to be especially inimical to the Florentines. In Machiavelli's own language, "Italy was desolated by the barbarians of continental Europe, disputing over the spoils; whilst the horses of twenty armies trampled her crushed carcass, begrimed in its own blood." In the sincere opinion of such a man as Machiavelli, nothing could give peace, safety, to a country so situated but scientifically worked-out fraud, guile, duplicity of all shades and degrees.

The magistrates of Florence were not slow to discover that, from their point of view, they had got the right man in the right place, and he was almost incessantly employed in diplomatic missions, till the virtual downfall of the republic consequent upon the restoration of the Medici. He was, upon the whole, a successful representative of his country; but it is chiefly by the details of his conferences with Cæsar Borgia, Duke Valentino, that a strong light is thrown upon Nicolo Machiavelli's true character. He was sent to flatter, deceive, amuse Cæsar Borgia, and, if possible, to penetrate the secret designs of that sanguinary ruffian. In Cæsar Borgia the astute Florentine met with his match in duplicity and craft. Duke Valentino, whilst professing great admiration of the Florentines, suggested that he should be invested with the command of their forces, a request which Machiavelli parried by declaring that such a post was unworthy of a chief who ought to be the ruler of a great United Italy. And that Cæsar Borgia would ultimately be able to accomplish that cherished dream was Machiavelli's earnest hope. His savage, remorseless temper eminently fitted him, in the Florentine's opinion, for such an enterprise. Machiavelli records, with admiration, the cutting in halves at night in the centre of a public square at Cerena, by order of Valentino, of one Remini, his confidential agent, to whom a few hours before he had bidden temporary adieu in terms of warmest friendship. "The act proves," exults Machiavelli, "that Cæsar could as easily unmake as make his agents whenever it became expedient to do so." This eulogistic commentary was surpassed by his vehement admiration of a still more atrocious deed, or more correctly, series of deeds, committed by his ideal hero, and the "words of wisdom" by which the Borgia justified his infamous treachery, illustrative "of the true principles by which alone a new ruler could establish his power." Villetto, Oliveretto, Orsini, rivals of Cæsar Borgia, were invited to a conference at Sinigaglia to amicably adjust differences. They walked into the trap set for them, were instantly arrested on their arrival: two were strangled in

prison the same night; Orsini was held in safe custody till Cæsar Borgia heard that his father, Pope Alexander, had seized Cardinal Orsini, and then he was murdered. Nicolo Machiavelli could scarcely find words in his fluent vocabulary to adequately express his admiration of Cæsar Borgia's masterly policy, and urged the magistrates of the "republic" to immediately send "a principal citizen" of Florence as ambassador, to congratulate the Duke Valentino upon his successful stratagem. Six days having passed, and no "principal citizen" appearing, Machiavelli wrote home, stating that he was much grieved and surprised at the neglect of the Florentine authorities. "It would have cost you," he wrote,—"it would have cost you 200,000 ducats to get rid of Villetto and destroyed the Orsini, and the work might not then have been done so well!" This infamy is branded in his own handwriting upon the memory of Machiavelli —a man whom, because he was a great genius, Lord Bacon defends, Lord Macaulay excuses, and in whose honour Earl Cowper erects a statue;— upon the principle, I presume, that the devil should be honoured for his burning throne!

All that skilful finessing—if finessing be ever really skilful, which I take leave to doubt—availed nothing in the end to Florence. The hope of Machiavelli that Cæsar Borgia would unite Italy under the sovereignty of the Dagger—if a less trenchant *régime* would not assure success— failed totally. Alexander the Sixth died, self-poisoned, unwittingly, by a drink prepared by his Holiness for a cardinal; and the next Pope but one —Julius the Second, who died after having worn the tiara a few days only—arrested Cæsar Borgia. Turning suddenly round upon the ruined bandit, Nicolo Machiavelli despatched a pressing message to Florence, advising that the Borgia's banditti should be disarmed when passing through Tuscany. This was no doubt a right thing to do; but the advising it to be done by Cæsar Borgia's intimate and admirer does not much redound to the moral grandeur of Lord Bacon and Earl Cowper's hero.

In September, 1512, Guillelmo and Giovanni de Medici were restored to power by the Spaniards. Machiavelli, to whom had been entrusted the defence of the city, made his escape; was not long afterwards—about a twelvemonth—seized upon suspicion of having conspired to overthrow the Medici, and put to the torture. How did the great Florentine stand that test of heroism? Like the true spaniel which he was, he fawned upon and licked the hand of his tormentors. There is a sickening sonnet extant, addressed to Guillelmo de Medici, piteously bewailing his sufferings, aggravated by threats that he would certainly be hanged, and abjectly imploring mercy.

It had the desired effect. One of the Medici, Leo the Tenth, who claimed and exercised supreme rule in Florence, and had not long before ascended the papal throne, pardoned him, and Nicolo Machiavelli forthwith betook himself to a place of his a few miles from Florence; which

though by no means magnificent in itself, was charmingly situate, the locality being the far-famed Vallambrosa, which, as some allege, suggested Milton's description of Eden.

There Nicolo Machiavelli cultivated literature, the art of begging, and the game of tric-trac, which he played almost daily at a low public-house, his partners being a butcher, a miller, and two lime-burners. The stake was seldom more than twopence, but the abuse, the disputes, which the vicissitudes of the game excited, says Machiavelli, might have been heard at San Casuano. It is not fair to give this anecdote without the excuse of its relater,—"I give a free rein to the perversity of Fortune, submitting patiently to be trampled under her feet after such fashion, in order to ascertain if she will not be ashamed of it."

It was in this retreat he wrote, or rather completed, his comedies, "The Mandragora" and "Il Clizia." M. de Voltaire says that the "Mandragora" is worth all the comedies of Aristophanes. That may not, to a student of Shakspere, be very high praise; still, one must except to the judgment as to dramatic genius of a mere master of *persiflage*, who wrote "Regulus," and was surprised that a nation which possessed Mr. Addison's magnificent tragedy of "Cato" could tolerate "Lear," "Macbeth," "Hamlet." Lord Macaulay, too, speaks highly of the "*Mandragora*," insinuating a timid comparison between the Florentine and Shakspere as to dramatic powers, excusing the *poverty* in diction and humour of Machiavelli's comedy by a strange paradox. "Tragedies," says Lord Macaulay, "are spoiled by eloquence—comedies by wit." Now this, in a very confined sense, is partially true. When Dr. Young mouths out frothy verbiage through the lips of Zanga, Congreve spouts Congreve in "The Mourning Bride," Sheridan patters Sheridan, in the, for all that, capital comedy of "The School for Scandal," dramatic reality is no doubt sacrificed. But are not Lear's curse, Mark Antony's oration, Hamlet, Macbeth's soliloquies, *dramatic* eloquence? And wit!—Does that of Rosalind spoil "As you Like it"? Beatrice's, "Much Ado about Nothing"? Falstaff's, "Henry the Fourth"? A majestic shade is that of Lord Macaulay, not to be approached in thought with irreverence; still one may be permitted to wish that it could revisit earth, if only to correct his essay upon Nicolo Machiavelli by striking out the passage I have cited. And with all respect to the *dicta* of great critics, we presume to assert most confidently that the "Mandragora" of Machiavelli is rubbish,—in the same qualified sense that the plays of Dryden (one of whose characters seems to have been borrowed from the "Mandragora"), the tragedies of Addison, Johnson, Sheridan, are rubbish, fit only to be swept into—if there be such a limbo—a dramatic dust-hole.

Machiavelli wrote other things of not much more value: amongst them, an imitation, and a bad one, of "The Golden Ass of Apuleius," and of "The Art of War." In the latter work he pronounced the invention of gunpowder to be a matter of not the slightest consequence!

Ah, yes, but Nicolo Machiavelli could not endure—even with the aid of tric-trac, &c.—comparative poverty, banishment from the gilded, perfumed saloons of Florence. He longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt with bondage. Were not the Medici re-established? Were they not the dispensers of gold, of dignities? What, closely looked at, was the republic which he had so enthusiastically championed but a collapsed wind-bag?

Again, and again, and again Lord Cowper's hero wrote, soliciting employment under the triumphant Medici. "I wish," he wrote to an intimate friend,—"I wish the Signori Medici would employ me, if only in rolling a stone. They ought not to doubt my fidelity; my poverty is a proof of that." The most humble, energetic of suppliants was Nicolo Machiavelli. Spat upon, he acknowledged the favour with meek courtesy; smitten on one cheek, on his knees he tendered the other, at the same time holding out his hand for the reward of his ignominy.

All would not do, and this giant of genius bethinks him that his craving after riches, ease, influence, might be attained by teaching the Medici how they could most safely and surely tyrannize over the peoples subject and to be subject to them, how forge from the sword of the republic a kingly sceptre of iron. With that end in view, he wrote his "Prince," the work upon which his fame or infamy entirely rests. He dedicated it to a son of Lorenza de Medici, and though not regularly published till after his death, many copies were privately distributed. It was at last given to the world by order of Clement VII. Popes, however, cannot be deemed infallible in such matters, forasmuch that the Church of Rome has solemnly declared "The Prince" to be an accursed book.

Unquestionably the work of a subtle, wide-grasping intellect, it soon obtained eager audience of the class to whom it was addressed. It resembles in nothing the eloquent, amiable, puerility which Fénélon published in "Télémaque" for the instruction and guidance of the French Dauphin. Its politics belong to the school of Aristotle, not of the Archbishop of Cambrai, if, indeed, that good and great prelate can be said to have had a school which really knew anything about politics. Brother Colonne, an Augustan friar, and preceptor to Philip le Bel, translated Machiavelli's book for the benefit of his pupil, and it was done into Spanish for the edification of the Infante Don Pedro of Castile, bringing forth fruits, after their kind, in both royal families. It is impossible, in this brief sketch, to do more than glance at one or two of the salient points of the work. The author is avowedly anxious to encourage the Medici in their views of one day ruling despotically over a United Italy; and in discussing how a new ruler can best establish his power, he highly extols Cæsar Borgia's political art. Then, as to cruelty and clemency, whether better for a prince to be feared than loved, Machiavelli inclines to the opinion that it is, upon the whole, better to be loved than hated; but the main, the essential condition is to be "feared." "Inspirer la peur," once exclaimed Napoleon the First

—after Machiavelli;—"voilà la vrai force d'un gouvernement digne du nom "—a maxim, as we all know, strictly followed out by "le neveu de mon oncle." The Florentine is not, however, an advocate of cruelty merely for cruelty's sake. He thinks the prince should, in his own interest, refrain from doing some things. It would be impolitic to outrage women; and property, he recommends, should not be confiscated even in cases requiring capital punishment, "because men forget the death of a father much sooner than the loss of an estate."

With respect to whether a prince should keep faith with his subjects, "why, everybody," the writer says, "knows it would be better to keep faith if no inconvenience were likely to arise from doing so;" but wonderful things had been done by princes who kept faith with no one. Subjects being, as a rule, persons who would not keep faith with the prince, the prince—who, to be a master of his craft, ought to be a compound of the lion and the fox—should not keep faith with them!

The foregoing passages furnish the key-note to a theme handled throughout by the Florentine with Satanic skill and power. The book is an illustration of Machiavelli's own broken, defeated life, which had no other object but the attainment of wealth, influence, and—for let us be just—the emancipation of Italy from the brutal rule of the foreigner, if that emancipation were not inconsistent with his own interests. Feebleness, deficiency in power, avoidance of violence and wrong, if violence and wrong were expedient, were with him the inexpiable sins of princes. This contempt for amiable, conscientious rulers was supreme, measureless. Witness his rhymed epigram upon the *gonfalonier*. Sodoreni, who, because of a lack of cruel energy, according to Machiavelli, was ousted by the Medici from the office of chief magistrate of Florence, and driven into exile. It was this, freely rendered:—"When, the last hour having struck for Sodoreni, his soul fled to hell, Satan exclaimed, 'Poor weak soul, why come to my dominions? Depart to the limbo reserved for the newly born unbaptized innocents.'"

This is the Nicolo Machiavelli whom writers, even of the present day, are endeavouring to rehabilitate, to use an expressive French word, in public opinion. But that should hardly excite surprise. Isaac, the elder Disraeli, blotted many pages of paper in the endeavour to prove that the drivelling despot, James the First, was in very truth a second Solomon. Benjamin, son of Isaac, once pronounced Louis Philippe to be Nestor *redivivus*. M. Louis Blanc is busy, or has been busy, rehabilitating Robespierre; and it is quite possible that clever pens are now engaged in proving that Alexander the Sixth, and his son, Cæsar Borgia, were models of priestly sanctity and self-sacrificing heroism.

Nicolo Machiavelli died 7th May, 1527, after taking an overdose of medicine, concocted by himself, the ingredients of which he had regarded as a sort of *elixir vitæ*.

RECORDS OF AN OLD POLICE COURT

BY W. H. WATTS.

No. VI.

THE total disappearance of a class of cases once peculiar to the Marlborough Street Police Court, known as "aristocratic disorderlies," has for ten or a dozen years last past given rise to no little conjecture and speculation. Writers on statistics, who like to find a solution for every social problem, maybe inclined to place this circumstance to the account of a change for the better, which the "spread of education and the march of intellect" have effected in the habits and pursuits of the "upper ten thousand." Others, who profess to be able to see deeper into a millstone than the million, will doubtless assert that the regulations issued from Scotland Yard to the police are sufficient to account for the change. That the police are chary of apprehending delinquents of known position, or, if they do apprehend them, that they wait for the consent of the higher authorities before they proceed to place the charge on the police sheet—whatever the cause, certain it is that for at least the last ten years—although the Haymarket resorts have been nightly crowded, and among the crowd has been seen the customary sprinkling of old and young high-born *roués*—no important charge arising out of nocturnal debaucheries at the West End has been brought to Marlborough Street Police Court.

There is no doubt that the system recently adopted, I presume under authority, at the West End stations by acting inspectors has had a good deal to do with this state of things. If a charge is taken to the station, the inspector usually goes fully into it, hears evidence *pro* and *con.*, examines and cross-examines witnesses with the pertinacity of an Old Bailey judge, and, in fact, does all but convict or acquit the culprit. This preliminary inquiry affords a sort of *locus penitentiæ* to the repentant plaintiff who, in a momentary fit of anger, may have called in the aid of the police to take some aristocratic offender into custody.

Many grave charges have in this way begun and ended in a police station. The proportions to which the new police system has grown of late is very little understood by the people at large. I do not purpose just at present to go very minutely into this subject. It is, however, a most important matter, and a personal experience of nearly forty years enables me, in some respects, to deal with the old and new systems with something that approaches to the weight of authority.

There can be no question, however, that what, for want of a better phrase, I will term "West End debauchery," has undergone of late years a great and radical change. We have now no such lawless associations of young men of family and fortune as existed under the leadership of the Waterfords and Waldegraves of thirty years ago. We have no such head-quarters of riot and recklessness as were to be found at Limmer's

Hotel; at the "One Tun," Jermyn Street (Mother Emerson's); at Coventry Court; at the Piccadilly Saloon; at Mother H.'s, in Brydges Street; and at the Finish. All these once noted resorts have disappeared, with the exception of Limmer's, which is in character now as sedate and respectable as any of the most exclusive of the West End hotels. With the localities I have named have also disappeared that phalanx of roisterers to whom watchmen and police courts were as familiar as their own mansions. The Waterford exploits would alone fill a volume.

I recollect well the time when scarcely a day passed in which some mad prank, some case of general riot, some complaint of fight with the police the previous night, did not furnish a topic for conversation, and in most instances for magisterial interposition. It was a difficult task for magistrates to do their duty impartially and resolutely in those days; but I am bound to say, that whenever an opportunity fairly occurred, no magistrate ever hesitated at putting the law in force. Warrants and summonses innumerable were issued, but they mostly came to nothing, for the aristocratic culprits were always ready to compensate, promptly and liberally, for damage done to property or to persons in the pursuit of their nocturnal revels. Indeed, when it became generally known that the Waterford "rowdies" were as ready with their purse as with their fist, publicans were rather pleased than otherwise at a visitation which, though it endangered their licences, seldom failed to bring them a princely compensation. It was no uncommon occurrence for the noble Marquis and his followers to enter a public-house, bar the doors, set all the spirit taps running, demolish the gas and fittings, and leave the place a perfect wreck. The police were impotent to afford assistance, even had assistance been desirable, because at that time, being prohibited from entering public-houses, no matter what outrages short of murder were taking place, they could only take into custody offenders when ejected from the house. Now and then it happened that the noble revellers would sally into the streets, and as a disturbance was sure to be the result, the police could not avoid coming into action; but confronted by young, strong, and resolute men, the task of taking any one of the offenders into custody was difficult and dangerous.

A riot that occurred in Conduit Street—it was on the night of the Derby day, when, as may be conjectured, none of the Waterford party could have been accused of strict sobriety—assumed such serious dimensions, that a detachment of police from the Vine Street station was sent for to assist their brother constables, who had been fairly overpowered, and were being chased round Hanover Square by their victorious assailants. This accession of strength reversed the tide of battle; the assailants became in turn the fugitives, and were obliged to take shelter at Limmer's. Here the fight was renewed; and as several constables had been severely beaten, the superintendent, who made his appearance while the fray was at the hottest, directed the police to force

their way into the hotel, and to bring out all those who had taken the most active part in the disturbance. Truncheons were drawn and freely used; they were torn from the hands of the men, and used with equal vigour on them. After a tough fight of half an hour, in which rattles and bull's eyes were demolished or converted into weapons of offence, about a dozen of disorderlies were captured and lodged in the station.

One incident is worth relating. A constable named Gray, having lost his truncheon, returned to the hotel to reclaim it, after order had been somewhat restored. The truncheon was in the hands of Captain P——, and the demand for its restoration having been made, Captain P—— rushed on Gray, and felled him senseless to the ground by a blow on the head. "D—— you, P——!" said the Marquis of Waterford, who never countenanced anything unmanly or mean, "do you call that fair play?" seconding his indignant remonstrance by a knock-down blow. Let me, in extenuation of what may seem a cowardly act, relate that no one was more concerned than Captain P—— himself, when he came to his sober senses, at the injury he had inflicted on the constable. I had the particulars from Gray himself, who said that Captain P—— not only gave him a handsome sum of money as soon as he came out of the hospital, but never met him on or off duty afterwards without presenting him with one or two sovereigns.

It happened occasionally that these mad frolics came to a not very creditable termination. On one occasion in particular a very serious result had nearly occurred. In Buckridge Street, St. Giles's, the lowest part of a low neighbourhood, a publican known by the name of "Stunning Joe Bankes" had a tripe supper once a month, at which the Waterford party were frequent guests. The son of a wealthy market gardener in the neighbourhood of Chelsea was desirous of being admitted to these curious feasts. It was arranged that he should be formally proposed and elected, and the next tripe night was selected for his admission. There were present, among other lords, Waterford, Waldegrave, Beresford, and Loftus; Captains Duff and Pitt; one of the Sheridans; a member of the Lushington family; and several others of lesser note. The candidate was introduced and inducted into the seat of honour. The election having been concluded, the new member rose to return thanks. He had hardly got upon his legs before each of the company, who had been previously provided with a large bag of flour, produced their bags, and in an instant the unlucky aspirant for aristocratic associations was smothered and nearly choked by the mass of flour with which he was pelted from all parts of the room. Being a young man of more spirit than prudence, he struck out right and left at his assailants, and having given one of the company a severe facer or two, he was prostrated by a blow from a water-bottle thrown at his head. For some time it was doubtful whether this blow would not be the last the unfortunate young man would receive. Medical assistance was sent for, and the indications were so alarming that it was

thought advisable to send him at once to the Middlesex Hospital. Here he remained for two months, at the end of which time he was discharged convalescent, but with an ugly scar running right across the forehead. Legal proceedings were taken; by the help of friends, however, the matter was compromised and hushed up. This was the last specimen of that kind of practical joking carried on at the tripe gatherings of "Stunning Joe Bankes" which came under my notice.

I have mentioned the Marquis of Waterford, as giving the name to and acting as the recognized chief of that company of wild spirits which occupied a large share of public attention thirty years ago. I believe, however, the general public, who took their impression from what they saw in the public papers, and from the Haymarket traditions, formed a very erroneous estimate of this young nobleman's character. My own impression is a favourable one. I believe there were the materials for a distinguished man in the Marquis of Waterford. High birth and courage, a fine person, overflowing spirits, and sixty thousand a year were his temptations. It gave him the mastery over young men of vicious and reckless character, and led him into situations that I firmly believe were distasteful to his better feelings in moments of sobriety. He was the highest specimen of that unsurpassed but limited class, the "Irish gentleman;" and had he turned his unquestionable talents into paths of ambition, he would, there is little doubt, have made his mark on his time. I recollect an incident that gave me a favourable, and possibly a true insight into his character. Among the night charges on one occasion were the names of Waterford and Waldegrave: the first charged with driving his cab through Coventry Court (where there is no carriage way), and doing damage to sundry persons and their property; the latter with being "drunk and incapable."

The pair of worthies were allowed to remain in the magistrate's private room until their names were called. When the time came round, Lord Waldegrave was the first who emerged from his retreat. As he passed into the court it was evident the effects of the last night's or the early morning's debauch had not abated. He made his way unsteadily to the front of the bar; his fishy eye and haggard and seedy look told a tale of merited suffering, and his whole appearance strongly contrasted with that of the Marquis, who, having been bailed out, had refreshed himself with a bath, completed a toilet that gave him a freshness and alacrity which showed the vigour of a constitution which in such a brief space of time could throw off the prostration incidental to an over-indulgence in drink. The noble Earl, having nothing to answer beyond a charge of being drunk, was told by Mr. Dyer, the magistrate, to pay the usual fine and go away. The noble Earl shambled off, but his progress was arrested by the toe of the noble Marquis, designedly placed in his way so as to cause him to stumble, and nearly to pitch on his face on the floor of the court. This incident did not escape the notice of the magistrate, who sat quietly writing, keeping his eyes on the paper before him. Mr. Dyer was the last person to whom

a designed affront could with impunity be offered. Calm, dignified, and venerable, his white hair combed from his temples and hanging down his back, he sat the very impersonation of a firm and upright judge. His proclivities, it must be told, were in favour of rank; he was an aristocrat in appearance and in mind, disposed to regard with something like indulgence the escapades of those high-born disorderlies who not unfrequently came before him,—possibly because he recollected that his own son, who was also a magistrate, occasionally bore a part in nocturnal revels anything but creditable—a son who afterwards occasioned him shame and humiliation in a matter which subsequently became the subject of an official inquiry, and to which it will be unnecessary more particularly to allude.

The next charge being that in which Lord Waterford was the principal, his lordship took his place before the bar with almost insolent *nonchalance.* The witnesses—for there were several—proved that his lordship, in spite of the remonstrances of the police, drove his cab down Coventry Court, making in his progress a perfect wreck of the cups and saucers and table of a coffee-stand at one corner, and knocking over and demolishing at the other a potato-can and its proprietor, besides bringing down a lamp which stood before a public-house in the court.

"Have you anything to say in answer to these charges?" inquired Mr. Dyer.

"Say? oh, why, I suppose the less I say the better," replied the Marquis, carelessly. "I must, however, deny being drunk; I was as sober as your worship doubtless was after dinner yesterday."

"Have you any witnesses you would wish to call?"

"Yes; I should like to call my horse, if your worship has no objection."

Mr. Dyer laid down his pen; the gleaming eye and crimson cheek showed that he was strongly moved.

"The unbecoming conduct, Lord Waterford," said he, sternly, "which a person of your years has displayed to a man of mine I will not condescend to notice; but the insult you have dared to pass upon me in my public capacity I cannot and will not pass over. The rank and position you bear ought to have taught you more respect for the laws of your country which you disregard and defy. I decline to decide upon the charge before me until I am assured that you entertain a better sense of what is due to a magistrate who sits in a court of justice as the representative of his sovereign.—Officer, put him back until the business is over."

The manner and bearing of the Marquis changed instantly.

"It shall not be necessary, Mr. Dyer," said he, with dignity. "I beg at once to offer to you, as a gentleman and a magistrate, the most unreserved apology. My rudeness is perfectly indefensible, and I am quite ready to submit to any penalty you may impose."

Mr. Dyer resumed his pen and placid bearing. "You will pay 40s.

for the public offence. Those parties who have had their property destroyed will get ample compensation in the county court, and I leave them to their remedy if they choose to seek it."

The fine was paid, and when his lordship left the court the baked-potato merchant and the coffee-stall keeper had reason to bless their stars for their rough introduction to the acquaintance of the Marquis. A handsome brass-decorated new potato-can and a five-pound note satisfied the one; and a substantial new table, coffee-boiler, and complete service of crockery very soon made a little fortune for the other.

Having alluded to the extraordinary powers gradually claimed and exercised by the authorities at Scotland Yard, a brief notice of some of the salient points of the police system may not be without its interest.

The establishment of the new police and the alteration in the poor laws were bold acts on the part of the Government of the day, because they took from the people the right of appointing and paying their constabulary, and from the ratepayers the right of taxing themselves and looking after their poor; and also because they recognized the principle of "centralization and bureaucracy" so much in vogue on the Continent, and so much disliked on this side of the Channel, because assumed to be incompatible with constitutional rights and with the extension of that "local self-government" so strenuously insisted on in the present day. But Sir Robert Peel, in his Police Bill, was greatly assisted by the vivid recollection, on the part of the public, of the proved inefficiency of the civil power to deal with mobs, and by the wise jealousy entertained of interference in such emergencies on the part of the military authorities. The "Burdett riots" in 1807, when the military fired on the rioters, killing several; the "Spa Fields riots," when the mob broke into Mr. Beckwith's gun and pistol warehouse on Snow Hill, on which occasion young Watson shot a gentleman named Platt; the disturbances at Queen Caroline's funeral,—all being fresh in public recollection, prepared the nation for a change that otherwise might have been thought too hazardous for a Government to attempt. When the new police was established, of course a large proportion were young men from the country, totally ignorant of London life, and very imperfectly instructed in their powers and duties. Their ability to deal with a London mob was, however, very soon tested. The "Calthorpe Street riot" and fight, in which the new police very soon got the mastery, had well-nigh shipwrecked the new system; for there was no question, which public inquiry afterwards established, that the police acted with more than necessary violence, and showed throughout a thorough want of tact and temper. But the service they rendered to the metropolis, and the wholesome terror they struck into a demagogue-led mob, composed of the worst characters and the most frantic politicians, were allowed to plead in their favour, and after a caution from head-quarters, the new police were permitted to complete and consolidate their organization.

I have already stated that the new system had many advantages over

the old; it is, however, but fair to say that the old had some advantages over the new. The new police very soon made the public streets safer by night and by day than they ever were under parish watchmen and street-keepers. The new police broke up confederations of thieves, which had defyingly existed in various parts of the metropolis, and which the old police and parish arrangements were wholly unable to cope with. This was an immense benefit gained. Next they purified such localities as the Mint, Kent Street, Carter Lane, Friar Street, Wentworth Street, George Yard, St. Giles's, Husband Street, Peter Street, Duck Lane, Cato Street, Calmall Buildings, and dozens of other haunts of vice, lawlessness, and crime, in which, if an unwary traveller set foot, either during night or day, certain robbery, and possible murder, would have taken place. But though they effected this good, they created an evil in another direction. Burglaries and robberies of all kinds increased, the perpetrators of which almost invariably escaped detection. It was soon found out there was a radical defect in the new system. The police did not know how to go professionally to work; the thieves would not work with them; the police were crippled for funds to fee those who alone could give information, and were snubbed in Scotland Yard if they adopted any of those means which the old police resorted to in order to procure witnesses, and to get up a body of evidence sufficient to convict offenders. The clumsy plan of disguises was resorted to; but this was so roughly carried into operation, and so oppressively directed against publicans and other tradesmen, whose business was to some extent regulated by Act of Parliament, that it was speedily put down by the remonstrances of the press and by the pressure of public opinion. The appointment of "detectives" was in better taste; this useful body very soon helped to re-establish the character of the new police for efficiency, and to fix it firmly in public estimation. But the detective system, I still assert, is inferior in some respects to the old system of special police staffs attached to police courts. One reason is, that the old officers were generally of a better class, had more general experience, possessed larger funds, and were permitted a wider field of action, being sure to have the protection of their own magistrates if, in the capturing or ferreting out of offenders, they overstepped those strict limits which it might be conceived were proper for a police officer to observe.

For some years the Scotland Yard Commissioners and the police magistrates worked harmoniously together. Of late years this has not been quite the case. The police authorities have incessantly encroached—there is but too much reason to suspect with the connivance and approval, if not by the command, of the Home Office,—and magistrates have tacitly relinquished a portion of their just powers, possibly because unwilling to come into unseemly collision with the authorities at Scotland Yard.

Public attention has recently been fixed on the doings of the police, and no doubt the public at large would like to know the extent of powers in their legal possession. This is a delicate and a difficult subject.

The police are rightly entrusted with the maintenance of good order and the removal of obstructions in the public streets and thoroughfares; but when they stretch their power to such lengths as forbidding boardmen to walk about with their boards, dispersing a meeting at Primrose Hill, or disallowing an assemblage for any purpose, sacred or profane, in the parks, then it becomes necessary to ascertain if they are not somewhat exceeding their powers. Latterly the police have got under their complete control the whole body of licensed victuallers and refreshment-house keepers of all kinds. The Legislature has given this power under the "Closing Act," it is true, but the power is a very large one, and if not carefully watched will be found to lead to great abuse. Policemen are but men, their pay but scanty, their situations precarious, and it would be too much to expect that all are so pure as to decline to make a little money when favourable opportunities present themselves.

The police body and their Scotland Yard masters are by no means on good terms. The system being too despotic, the result is that constables do their duty loosely, and sergeants and inspectors are afraid of assuming any responsibility. The public interests are thereby greatly prejudiced. There is also much dissatisfaction among the police force at the treatment they experience when summoned to Scotland Yard. They assert they are rudely treated, hardly allowed to speak a word in their own defence, and frequently fined for the pettiest kind of offences. Then, again, they complain that their pay is insufficient, that promotion does not always follow merit or long service; and that when they conclude a case successfully, in which a reward—say of £50 or £100—has been offered, they get only such a proportion of the amount, frequently insignificant, as the Commissioners may please to award to them. Be these complaints well or ill founded, the fact is indisputable that the force, since its first establishment about thirty-five years ago, has been upwards of four times replaced, and that many of its best men have thrown up their appointments in disgust. It would certainly be as well if the police powers and regulations were more clearly defined and published; and it would also be of advantage if magistrates would in all cases act with firmness and independence whenever their power is slighted or encroached upon. It will be a disastrous day for the people when the power of the police shall have become too great, and that of the magistrates too contracted.

Since the above was written, a complaint has been made by Mr. Edward Lewis, solicitor, of Great Marlborough Street, against the police for improperly detaining at the station-house a person charged by a lady of title with robbery, instead of bringing him at once before a police magistrate.

This corroborates the observation I made at the commencement of this article.

WRECKED

BY THE AUTHOR OF "UNCLE ANGUS," ETC.

"It is an awful night," I said, shuddering all over, as I heard the roar of the surf, the hideous wailing of the wind, and the dash of the rain against the window. We lived on the coast of Cornwall, in the prettiest village ever cradled on its silvery sands, or bathed in the blessed sunshine—thrice blessed because of the fearful storms that darkened our horizon at times. My husband was out in the storm; he was the favourite physician in the village, because he was skilful, never pressed for his pay, and endured stormy nights and other hardships like a good-natured hero.

I could not go to rest this terrible night while Angus was away. He was always *my* Angus, though he was "the Doctor" to many others. I sat cowering over the fire, with my infant nestled in my lap in all the sweet peace of babyhood, wishing and longing for my husband. My heart was sinking with fear. I was sorry that he was a physician. If he had been a farmer, a teacher, a clerk, a tradesman, or a mechanic, he might have been in his bed now, and so I vainly regretted that *what might have been* was not. Very foolish I was, like many others. At last I heard his steps, and the outer door opened, and the blast blew him in, as it seemed, and with difficulty he shut the door. He came up-stairs, and exclaimed, "Not in bed, Mattie? It is past midnight. Lay that little man away, and make haste after him. You should have been asleep two hours ago."

Angus spoke cheerfully, but there was a tremor in his voice, as if he were frightened, and did not wish me to know it. I looked up at his face. It was pale—as if he were dead.

"What is it, Angus?" said I.

"What is it? why, the hardest storm that ever blew great guns on our coast."

"But something troubles you, Angus. Is old Mrs. Pratt going to die?"

"No, not till she is a hundred years old. Make haste, Mattie, and go to bed. Dick will wake and cry presently, and the storm is bad enough without his storming."

I still looked into his pale face, and at that moment a dreadful sound struck my ear. Angus started to his feet.

"You heard it," said he.

It was the gun of a ship driving on the breakers, almost at our very doors; for we lived close to the sea, and on the most dangerous part of the coast.

"I saw her in a flash of lightning just before I came in," said Angus. "She was driving right on the rocks. Go to bed, Mattie dear, and I will call John, and go down for Higgins and Dort, and see if anything can be done."

Higgins and Dort were fishermen, and had boats, and ropes, and a great many things that might be needed in such a time as this.

"Angus," said I, "don't ask me to go to bed. Can I sleep while those poor creatures are in peril? Can I forget that you might be on board that ship?"

My husband called John, our man-of-all-work, again put on his storm garments, and silently kissing me and the baby, he went out. Again the booming gun sounded. It was much nearer now, or else the roar of the storm was somewhat hushed. I warmed some milk for my baby, for I knew I was too much frightened to nurse him. He waked hungry, and I fed him. He slept again, and I tried to look out into the pitchy darkness. I heard only the roar and crash of the storm. All is over with the ship, said I to myself. I waited for my husband, and for the morning, and longed to hear again the sound of the gun. I waited in vain for all. The morning seemed indefinitely postponed. It was early autumn, and the weather, though chilly, would not be fatal to the poor sailors, as the cold often is on our terrible shore. Day dawned at last, and when it was light enough I examined the beach with my husband's spy-glass. After a time I made out the ship, wedged in among the rocks, and the waves rising like hills and mountains over and against her. Meanwhile my husband and others were on the shore. I should have been with them but for my baby.

A barrel was sent ashore with a line wedged in at the bunghole; when this was secured, a hawser was fastened to the line and drawn ashore by means of it. This hawser was drawn away from the breakers as much as possible, and firmly secured. One by one the men ventured upon this support. All came safely to the shore but the captain. He was the last to leave the ship, and by some means he lost, or never gained, the support of the hawser, and his lifeless body was thrown ashore at some distance from the point where the men were received. A young man, who had been the last to leave the ship before the captain, was passing to and fro on the beach in an agony of anxiety, when the body was thrown high upon the sand, almost at his feet. With a wild cry, he seized upon what had been, a few minutes before, the animated master and preserver of them all. My husband was beside him. A fisherman brought a piece of sail, and they laid the body on it, and four men bore it to our house. The young man gave some directions to the sailors, and then followed the sad *cortége*. It was a miserable end of my suspense, but I was relieved. The rescued crew went on to Plymouth, after they had been provided with dry clothing and breakfast by the villagers, who supplied their wants with great kindness, and afterward gathered up their coffee and oranges, as they came ashore, with as much diligence as if they had had a bill of sale of the cargo.

A strange feeling thrilled through my heart as they brought the captain of the *Midas* to our house. I did not feel as if a corpse were being borne over our threshold.

"Angus," said I, "he is not dead."

"He is dead, my dear," said my husband, solemnly, at the same time drawing me away from the body.

The men placed their burden gently on the floor, and then they lingered, as if loath to leave.

"His friend and I can do all now," said Angus, very thankfully;—"and, Higgins, you and Dort must go and see if you can't save some of the cargo that will be driving ashore. They will call us pirates or Arabs if it is appropriated, as the cargo of the *Mary Anne* was."

"Men don't consider it stealing to pick up a bag of coffee or a box of oranges on the sea-shore," said Higgins. "They would not take a cup of coffee or a single orange out of a shop, for their right hands."

"I know," said Angus; "but you must tell them that somebody owns that cargo."

"We will see to it," said Dort, and then they all went away.

The young man had held his hand on the captain's heart, in the vain hope to discover warmth or motion.

"Angus," said I, "will you not put him in my bed? There is a fire in my room, and we must try to bring him to life; I am sure he is not dead."

Angus seemed out of patience with my unreasonable pertinacity; still he made a very thorough examination of the body, but failed to discover any signs of life. Then he turned to me, and said, "My dear, I will do everything just as if I were as sure that he is alive as I am that he is dead."

He called John, and assisted by the young man, whose name was Wilson, they carried the captain to my room, where they took off his clothes, and laid him in my bed. Two women came in. I gave my little Richard to one, and employed the other in preparing the breakfast; and I devoted myself, with my husband and Mr. Wilson, to the endeavour to resuscitate the drowned man.

We raised the head on pillows at the back of the bed, and let the legs and feet lie over the front side of the bed in a pail of warm water. I laid flannel cloths on the chest and stomach, wrung out of hot water, or hot vinegar, or hot spirits, for I used all in turn, and Angus and Mr. Wilson and John rubbed the apparently lifeless body. All the time I felt sure the captain was alive, and I was impatient that I could not make Angus believe it too.

"My poor Mattie," said he, "the wish is father to the thought."

Mr. Wilson hardly spoke; he worked incessantly, never stopping to take anything but some wine and water, when he was nearly fainting with exhaustion. Some of the time he was rubbing the body; again he was inflating the lungs with the bellows; and then he was fomenting with the warm flannels and spirits. At the end of six hours he sat down, and seemed despairing. He sat with his face buried in his hands, and then he rose, and flung himself on the bed beside the body. He clasped the cold form to his bosom, and exclaimed,—

"Oh, my friend! how can I ever tell Annie and Lizzie that I left you to drown!"

Then he wept long and bitterly. My husband led him out of the room.

"It is all over, Mr. Wilson," said Angus. "Take a morsel of food, and go to bed; you are worn out; we will do the rest."

While they were gone out I examined, probably for the fiftieth time, the space over the heart. There was a scarcely perceptible warmth. Still it *was* perceptible. I ran down-stairs to tell my husband. He was standing by Mr. Wilson, whose arms hung beside him as if they were palsied.

"There is warmth about the heart," I cried.

Wilson sprang to his feet as if he had been electrified. My husband looked at me with tender reproach, as much as to say, "Your hope is false and foolish;" but he did not speak, and we went up-stairs. He examined the heart with his hand and his ear, and then bade Mr. Wilson do the same, saying, "*There is life.*"

Hope seemed to have animated Wilson with a new life, but my husband would not allow him to do anything.

"If you will take some toast and wine, then you may work again, Mr. Wilson," said Angus.

I brought the food, and the young man ate, and then they again began their labour of love. The warmth at the heart increased, and then there was a faint fluttering, and in an hour more we were rewarded by the first struggling breath of our patient.

I never saw such joy as that of the young man when he knew that his friend was alive. Soon he was breathing steadily. He was not as much bruised as we had supposed at first, and he seemed strangely well when he became conscious. He took a cup of hot wine and water, and said,—

"Let me go to sleep, Wilson, and I will wake as good as new. All hands are safe, you say, and I can afford to turn in and sleep till to-morrow or next day."

He smiled a good-natured, happy smile, and went to sleep.

"Now, Mr. Wilson," said I, "can't you follow such a good example?"

He lay down on a couch in the room with his captain, and I went away to my baby, as happy as I could be. Why cannot we be as happy when all our friends are alive and well, and saved from the endurance of sorrow, day after day, as when a stranger is rescued from death? How near and dear these strangers seemed to us, though we had known them not yet a day! We sent word to Higgins that the captain was alive, and he and Dort came up, and with a quiet joy shook hands with us, seeming afraid to speak above their breath, lest they should awaken the sleepers. They spread the news, and the next morning a great many came to offer their congratulations.

The captain tried to rise early, but his head failed him.

"The more haste, the worse speed," said he. "I meant to see home and wife to-day, but they will keep till to-morrow."

And he quietly laid his head back on his pillow.

"You are a jewel of a man," said my husband. "I expected you would be down on your luck, and scold, because you could not go home the day after you were drowned."

"I am very thankful for the chance of going home at all. All seemed so near, as if I were at my own door, when the storm struck us. But as I can't go to Liverpool to-day, the next best thing is to go to sleep."

We left him to the sleep he so much coveted, and went down to the parlour with Mr. Wilson, who had very little of the captain's patience,—I suppose because he had not been drowned.

"You have been very kind, my friend," said he, "and before I leave you I wish to tell you something about myself. Three days ago I was going home with a heart full of hope. Now my hopes are gone, or indefinitely postponed; but I am happier than when I was hopeful. If I had been left to the terrible sorrow of going home with Captain Martell's body instead of his living, happy self, then I should have known trouble.

"Two years ago I begged my mother to let me go to sea. She is a widow, and I am her only son. She was not willing that I should be a sailor, but finding that I could not be happy at home, she consented to consult Captain Martell about me, and take his advice. Of course he advised her to submit to fate, and took me on his own vessel. Our first voyage was to China in the good ship *Midas*, that is beating herself to pieces out there on the rocks. We had a fine voyage, and came home laden with tea and silks. I was twenty years old when we reached home. I stayed at the captain's house a day and night before I left for my own home, which is some distance from Plymouth. On this visit, at my captain's, I first saw his wife's sister, Annie Lawrence. I lost my heart to the dear girl. Annie was a lady, and her father was wealthy, and she had many suitors. She was eighteen years old, and had set her heart against the sea.

"'I will never marry a sailor, though he were captain of a golden ship,' said Annie. 'I would sooner marry an apothecary, and live at the back of the shop, and smell assafœtida all the time.'

"Captain Martell laughed. 'I remember,' said he, 'my wife said the same; but she got over her prejudices when she found that I could not be coaxed or driven.'

"My mother had a good property, and she put half of it in my hands to make ventures in our ship, and for a year past I have been trading with Captain Martell to the West Indies, and adding to my capital very rapidly. Just before our last voyage I felt determined to have a last word with Annie about the sea. She knew very well that I loved her better than all the world, though I had never told her so.

"You may think it strange that I should tell you all this, but you seem just as if you were my brother and sister. The night before we sailed was a lovely summer evening, and Captain Martell and his wife, Annie and I, were sitting in an arbour in the garden; for though the house is close to the town, they have a pretty garden. We were all very merry, probably because we were not happy.

"Mrs. Martell seemed to know that I wished to speak to Annie, and she drew her husband away, and left us alone.

"'Annie,' said I, 'are you in earnest when you say you will never marry a man who goes to sea?'

"'I am,' said she.

"'You know, Annie,' said I, 'that I am now second mate of Captain Martell's ship, and that when I am twenty-one, which will be next month, I shall be first mate.'

"'Is that anything to me?' said she, almost harshly.

"'Annie,' said I, 'I love you, and if you have any regard for me, it is something to you.'

"She buried her face in her handkerchief, and wept passionately, terribly.

"'Oh, Ralph,' she said, 'you don't know how miserable I am. I have everything to make me happy, people say, but I am miserable about the sea. I was wretched about Captain Martell before I knew you, but since I came to be your friend—'

"'To love me, Annie,' said I; 'do say that.'

"'Well, ever since the first day I saw you, and thought of your going on the hateful, treacherous ocean, I have dreamed about you every week, I verily believe. And I have always dreamed that you were wrecked, cast away on some dreadful breakers, and always you and Captain Martell were drowned. I have seen your bruised and bleeding bodies on the rocks and sands, and beaten about among the breakers, full fifty times. Oh, who would love a sailor, if it were possible to avoid it? Oh, if you could escape from the sea! But you cannot. Captain Martell is your Fate; he will never leave the sea, and you will never leave him; and the end will be as I have seen it in my dreadful dreams so many times. And then what will become of Lizzie and me?'

"Again she wept passionately.

"'But, Annie, will you marry me if I leave the sea? I must go this voyage.'

"'You will never return alive,' said she; 'you and Captain Martell will be drowned. I saw you both last night, wrecked and cast ashore *dead.*'

"'Annie,' said I, 'if I return alive from this voyage will you marry me?'

"Her only reply was, that if we made the voyage, we would both be drowned.

"I left her the next day in a great sorrow, and now I am going back to

her penniless, for all my property was in the ship. How can I marry and be dependent on my wife?"

"It is better than being wrecked and drowned beside," said Angus.

"Better, but it is not well," said Ralph Wilson.

In the afternoon Captain Martell was able to get up and be dressed. In the evening he came down-stairs.

"I shall be as good as new to-morrow," said he. "I wonder if the people here will gather the pieces of my poor *Midas;* if they do, doctor, save a piece for me big enough to make a cane. There is one comfort,—we were insured, vessel and cargo."

"Insured!" exclaimed Wilson, "vessel and *cargo?*"

"Exactly. I should not have insured our cargo, but Annie begged me to do it; she said you would be ruined if we were wrecked, and that it would be hard for a young man to lose an independence just as he had gained it."

"Then she did not *quite* believe that I would be drowned," said Wilson, smiling.

The next day Captain Martell and Ralph Wilson went home. Some weeks after, my husband received a letter from Mr. Wilson. I give an extract:—

"I am married to my dearest Annie. Captain Martell and I are going into business together. We are going to be wholesale traders in coffee, tea, tropical fruits, &c. I promise Annie to give up the sea, and she promises me to give up dreaming.

"I wish you could have been at the wedding, but I knew that baby could not be brought, and would not stay at home, so you did not get an invitation. Next summer we shall come to visit you, even if you do not invite us; meanwhile, you will accept our love and the assurance of our deepest gratitude. We shall always pray heart-prayers for you. We are four of the happiest people in the world, and you were the means of all our happiness."

Besides this letter, we got wonderful Christmas gifts from our friends; and from that time to this they have visited us every summer, and we have visited them every winter.

ANGELIQUE.

I.

LIST how silent glides the river,
   How monotonous its flow,
Sobbing round the reeds for ever,
   Where we wander'd years ago;
         Then so gladly,
         Now so sadly,
For I know how frail and weak
Are all love-vows, Angelique!

II.

How I loved the bright reflection
   Of those arch, averted eyes,
As I whisper'd my affection,
   Eager for your low replies!
         In the quiver
         Of the river
Sought I once their mute gaze meek;
Now I shun them, Angelique.

III.

By those glossy golden tresses,
   Those blue eyes, that marble brow,
Lips that kiss'd such cruel kisses,
   Vow'd so sweetly that false vow,
         (And whose coral
         Points a moral,)
By the rose-blush of that cheek,
Give your heart back, Angelique.

IV.

Oh! if once I could obtain it,
   No more mercy would I show!
In love's agony, I'd strain it
   Next to mine—then let it go,
         Watch it shiver
         Down the river,—
To mine ears its drowning shriek
Would be music, Angelique!

F. C. W. B.

WORKING IN THE DARK:

A Romance of the Black Coats.

BY PAUL FÉVAL,

AUTHOR OF "THE DUKE'S MOTTO," "BEL DEMONIO," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.

COCOTTE AND PIQUEPUCE.

No indiscreet gaze endeavoured to make out the poetry of the taciturn traveller: the movement of his fingers could only just be seen by the moonlight which shone in at the door of the carriage. But certain it is that he was writing under these difficult conditions, and that this is a talent possessed by poets.

"Besides," continued Adolphe, who grew animated as he described his system of precautions, "I have supposed the doors to be open, but things are by no means so convenient. To open the door of the house, which is as solid as iron, the *concierge* must be called, who is an ancient gendarme, and whose son is a drummer in my company. The door of my antechamber, opening on to the passage, has three locks, two of which are secret ones, and two safety bolts, all supplied by the firm of Berthier & Co. In the antechamber I make up a bed for my dog Médor. I have never made the acquaintance of Cerberus; but I should not be inclined to bet upon him against Médor. One can hear him bark from my office as if he were under the table;—and why? Simply on account of an ingenious acoustic apparatus, leading into the office, and contrived by myself. Ha! ha! rather awkward for Cartouche! The door of the office opens with a latch, and is only guarded with a quadruple iron bolt, but the fastening of the safe is a lock of Berthier & Co., with all the latest improvements. I wear the key round my neck day and night. I sleep on one side of the safe; the room belonging to my wife is on the other, and our lad, a strong young fellow whom I chose on that account, also sleeps in the office. Madame has her pistols, I have mine, and the lad has two pairs. Eh, Messieurs the Black Coats, what do you think of that? As for the windows, closed up like a shop-front, they are all barred with iron. All the chimneys have iron gratings. Explosive shells are the only things we have to fear."

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the lady of property. "I'd as lief live with the Bedouins!"

"We are more lucky in this part of the country," said the agent.

"Monsieur," added the polite gentleman, "has built himself a fort in the middle of the Black Forest."

The expression was generally approved. Céleste, whose heavy eyelids were beginning to close, received, for the fifteenth time, an admonition relative to the fish. The taciturn traveller continued his writing in the dark.

"But you must consider," resumed Adolphe. "I am not a donkey, but I carry relics. I have had in my charge the fortune of the old Colonel Bozzo, the grandfather of the Countess Corona, and I hope you may some day possess as much money. In a few days I shall have, before we make up our accounts for the month, the marriage portion of Mdlle. Blanche. . . . Eh! eh! the late Lacenaire would not have taken two millions down for the prospect of such plunder as might be discussed with me, on that day, with pistols and poniards!"

This allusion to the marriage of the only daughter of the opulent banker turned the conversation in another direction. The Baron Schwartz was not very much liked in that part of the country, but an immense interest was taken in his least actions. Although the pretty Blanche was still almost a child, her dowry of two millions had produced its effect; it was double that given with the daughters of the King Louis Philippe. Two millions! There had been some talk of a duke; a duke for the heiress of this Alsatian, born under a cabbage at Guebwiller. It had been some talk of the nephew of a minister, and also of a godson of the King.

But who was to replace the duke, the nephew of the minister, and the godson of royalty? M. Champion, more and more proud of his importance, mentioned the name of M. Lecoq, with emphasis.

You might perhaps have expected that this announcement would be followed by general disappointment. But it was not so. On the contrary, there was one of those silences which denote that a great effect has been produced. No one inquired who was this M. Lecoq. We may therefore suppose that every one here knew him at least by reputation.

The agent coughed, Madame Blot spread out her splendid silk pocket handkerchief, Céleste kept a tight hold of the fish. The taciturn individual returned his paper and pencil to his pocket. The pleasant gentleman alone murmured,—

"There are some curious kinds of animals in the forest of Paris."

He was right. Paris contains the most curious individualities in the world. The depths of the sea, unveiling one by one their mysteries, from time to time throw up upon the shore some apocalyptic creature, which during six months creates a sensation amongst the scientific. Paris is deeper than the sea; Paris contains living beings, baptized, and even enjoying the franchise, which are more wonderful than the great sea-snake. These prodigies, denied by some and supplying others with the material for gossiping, possess here and there, and according to the quarter, various legendary reputation. Their name, in itself, is for the most part commonplace—Martin, Guichard, or Lecoq. But glory, with

a lining of mystery, may give to the simplest syllables a startling sonority. The name of M. Lecoq was doubtless a case in point; for it produced the effect of the *quos ego* of Virgil. After this the conversation flagged and did not recover.

Upon the *impériale* Echalot and Similor, *Arcades ambo,* were discoursing the sentimental eclogue of their dreams. It is strange what simplicity may sometimes be allied, in these savages of the great city, with a complete absence of all moral sense. With all their faults, they were two gentle and kindly creatures, full of childish illusions, and irresistibly impelled towards that chimera which they termed liberty. Liberty, from their point of view, was complete freedom from any kind of trade or any regular calling. They designated themselves under the vague term of artists. Artists of what art? They did not themselves know; and what matters?

They expected something to "turn up;" they wanted to get on in life! And however modest might be the object of their ambition, they had none of the qualifications necessary to attain it. Bastard sons of the theatrical fairy-land which murders common sense, and throws the veil of idiocy upon the face of reality, they were pursuing I know not what ideal, so extravagant, so impossible, that the reader could never guess at it without some aid.

"One often hits upon such things," said Similor, with a little luck. "Some one, for instance, comes to us with an infant, to be quietly disposed of in order to prevent the dishonour of a noble family . . . this often happens! Well, we carry off the young 'un, we have the good heart to spare its life, and we put it with Saladin."

"He would, at all events, have some mark upon his linen," suggested Echalot.

"Or a little gold cross belonging to its mother, and tied round its neck."

"Or a locket with a gold chain, or something of the kind."

"Then we carefully preserve the object, for fear the young 'un might lose it in his play; and when at length we discover the distracted mother, it's a proof of the child's identity, and we claim the splendid reward."

The mouth of Echalot was watering; he glanced sadly towards Saladin, who was sucking at the bottle.

"Yes, such things have happened," murmured he. "It's a pity we know the source of this young 'un of yours."

"Ah! but wait a bit," said Similor, with disdain. "The infant in the prologue is the officer in the piece, the father being dead. It's the same actor that plays both. I should prefer the discovery of a secret, through which a person in easy circumstances might be made to fork out every day if required."

"That's one of the easiest," replied Echalot. "If you refuse me, I divulge!"

"And he cuts up quietly, although he may gnash his teeth a little. That's what I'm looking out for in the quarter . . ."

"We would go halves, and provide for the little one."

"A kind of perpetual annuity would suit my book, enabling me to live a quiet, respectable life, esteemed by all the neighbours, amongst whom there would be a lovely heiress who might give me her hand in marriage . . ."

Echalot, who was listening with a smile, and open-mouthed, suddenly grew sad.

"Traitor, you would have the heart to get married?" said he. "There be an end to all friendship at once."

Similor did not enter into a discussion upon this point, but began drawing a vivid picture of the comforts and delights which may be obtained with the money of a dentist, "whom one has detected in the culpable habit of administering chloroform to individuals of the fair sex in the solitude of his study."

Below, in the *coupé*, the personage whom we know under the name of M. Bruneau was listening to the last words of the recital of Edmée Leber. The young girl, half reclining, was exhausted with the fatigue of talking. The lantern of the *diligence* dimly lit up her pale and wan features. Her eyes were now free from tears.

M. Bruneau remained cold and impassive. His eyes were bent upon vacancy with a fixity of expression which was peculiar to them. Everything seemed numbed within him, even his thought.

Edmée Leber, strictly obeying the orders of this man, had told him everything.

He gave her neither consolation nor advice.

The *diligence* had now passed the *barrière*, and was rattling upon the pavement of the faubourg. A few minutes afterwards it crossed the boulevard and entered the yard of the Plat d'Etain.

In the interior there was a moment of painful confusion. Travellers and packages, disturbed too suddenly, were mutually knocking each other about. During this period Adolphe had himself to look after the fish.

Then everybody called out,—

"Three Pegs! where is Three Pegs?"

Generally the cripple was to be found behind the carriage, his head upon a level with the step, whilst his two strong arms received the packages as they were thrown to him, without any loss or accident ever occurring. But on this occasion Three Pegs was absent from his post.

"Here you are, here you are, *bourgeois!*" said Similor, offering his services, with his most agreeable smile.

And Echalot, anxious to do a little business, had thrown Saladin upon his back, and was calling,—

"Here you are! what can I do for anybody?"

The taciturn traveller, who was the first to descend, pushed them aside with his two elbows. He had no parcels.

"Holloa! Piquepuce seems to have got up in the world," muttered Echalot.

"And there's M. Cocotte inside," added Similor, "and attired like a gentleman of property."

"These are the men with the list slippers!" exclaimed Madame Blot, of Vaujours, with a terrified expression.

Adolphe said, pointing with his finger to his enemy Echalot,—

"That man looks like a malefactor of the most dangerous kind."

"Be off with you, fellows!" commanded the agent of Livry. "In this part of the country mendicity is strictly forbidden."

It happened that at this juncture Echalot and Similar withdrew, leaving the agent to imagine that his imposing presence and voice had been the cause of the sudden retreat. But the fact of the case was that M. Bruneau, who was standing by the open door of the *coupé* in front, had beckoned to them with his hand.

M. Bruneau said to them,—

"Accompany Mademoiselle Leber to her house."

And he rapidly made his way from the spot without waiting for their answer, like a man who was certain of being obeyed.

The travellers were still descending from the interior. Céleste, overwhelmed with her packages, alighted blowing like a whale. Madame Blot had the cruelty to say as she passed her,—

"I wish you good evening, Madame. The evenings are rather chilly."

She offered her arm to Tourangeau, who accepted it, in spite of the rivalry between the two communes.

Adolphe next descended, free in his movements, proud of his costume, proud of his figure, proud of his sex, proud of everything. The Parisian Apollo, when his obeseness is contained within certain limits, is the image of perfect happiness. Adolphe could have wished to call upon the passers by to look at his gaiters. He chose the moment when he could best be heard to say aloud,—

"Madame Champion, it is too heavy for you; do not tire yourself by carrying the fish!"

And, in turning the angle of the Boulevard Saint Denis,—

"It's an interesting contest that, between me and this pike. I shall have him. To-day, on the bank of the canal, my neighbours were taking absolutely nothing, and were envying my skill. And I have not been fishing for gudgeons only, Madame Champion. Did you observe the effect I produced in the carriage? One must belong to the times. You may depend upon it that those two strangers, the talkative one and the mute, will go about saying, 'The firm of Schwartz possesses a treasure in its cashier.' These are the little seeds which, when properly sown, lead to our advancement."

"But what a hot day it has been, Adolphe!" sighed Céleste, ready to sink beneath her burdens. "I am literally exhausted."

"It's just the temperature for fishing," replied M. Champion. "I feel as if I should like to walk as far as Pontoise."

At a few steps from the spot a very immoral but somewhat amusing scene was taking place. The taciturn traveller, to whom Echalot had given the singular appellation of Piquepuce, had stopped in front of the shop of a spirit merchant. He had doubtless recovered his handkerchief; for he was using a magnificent silk one, which appeared quite new. The pleasant-spoken gentleman came up to him, the same whom Similor had termed M. Cocotte.

Both were tolerably well dressed; the toilette of Cocotte was the most brilliant, that of Piquepuce the most severely respectable. An acute observer might perhaps have taken Cocotte for a member of the rising generation of the boulevard *du crime*. Piquepuce bore a greater resemblance to a lawyer's clerk. Cocotte was a handsome-looking fellow; Piquepuce, less agreeable in his appearance, had a more demure and fatherly aspect.

"How much will you give upon this?" inquired Cocotte, holding up to his companion the snuff-box of Madame Blot of Vaujours. "I don't myself take snuff."

Piquepuce replied, as he pocketed the new silk handkerchief belonging to the same lady,—

"I have got my own."

At the same time he stopped in the middle of the pathway, and, unfolding the screw of paper with which we are already acquainted, emptied its contents into a handsome box of enamelled silver.

Cocotte smiled, and said,—

"I, too, dipped into the pocket of the cashier's wife, but there was nobody at home. How fast she held the fish!"

They entered the shop, and called over the counter for two glasses of absinthe.

"The brougham belonging to Baron Schwartz passed us on the road," resumed Cocotte. "Did you see it?"

"Yes," replied Piquepuce, "and also the carriage of Madame *la baronne*."

"She came second. The husband is done brown!"

"What can they be scheming at Paris, on a Sunday evening too?"

"Ask the patron," cried Cocotte, laughing. "That kind of people don't commit sins on account of silk handkerchiefs and snuff-boxes!"

Piquepuce assumed a serious air.

"That reminds me, young man," said he; "you are the only one in the world who knows that I do a little contraband on my own account whilst serving the governor. It's severely punished; and only last week the word was again passed round not to prig the smallest thing beyond what was settled in the programme. If the firm should happen to find out . . ."

"I can say the same to you, old fellow," interrupted Cocotte; "it's only with you I make so free about it. If you were to peach . . ."

"It's a kind of slavery," observed Piquepuce. "One is like a mercenary soldier: right face, left face, eyes right. And if a likely job starts up before one, it's no go!"

"No go! on principle, as my ancient advocate, M. Cotentin, used to say; but one makes up for it in other ways."

"That's true," replied Piquepuce, warmly. "The firm must be in connection with the Government, for no accident ever happens. One would think there was no such thing as police, or judges, or assizes, or prisons, or anything unpleasant."

"And that's the advantage which causes us to overlook the humiliation of discipline," concluded Cocotte.

They touched glasses, and tossed off their absinthe like men of the world. How greatly they were above Echalot and Similor! After having returned his glass upon the counter, Cocotte, who was of a generous disposition, opened, in order to pay for both, the porte-monnaie of M. Champion.

As they left the wine-shop he passed his arm under that of Piquepuce, and said in a low voice,—

"You are an older hand than I am in this concern. How many are there of Black Coats afoot, do you fancy?"

"Who can tell?" replied Piquepuce, with importance.

Then, in a proud and serious tone,—

"The confederation begins at a great height, and descends zigzag to the lowest depths of the social quagmire!"

Nine robbers out of ten have a certain amount of style. Lacenaire was not at all an exception. The language of Piquepuce was serious; Cocotte, younger and more audacious, united the gaiety of the French with certain solid acquirements. They were two pretty specimens.

Cocotte resumed,—

"And, in your idea, is it the governor who is the master of all?"

"The Black Coat?" inquired Piquepuce, throwing an indescribable emphasis upon the words.

"Yes, the Black Coat of the Black Coats," insisted Cocotte. "The Mogul!"

Piquepuce was for a moment silent, then he muttered,—

"I have never been further than the governor. If there's anything above him, you'll have to find it out!"

But he added immediately,—

"Young fellow, there's the hitch. If one knew the thing one might be rich. One knows something already, and one has the clue. But it's slow work to remain among the subalterns."

"And whom are you telling this to?" cried Cocotte. "Me, who have

written couplets which are sung at all the first-rate concerts. . . . He holds you fast, the governor, eh ?"

Piquepuce pressed his arm hard, and growled,—

"As he holds you, by the neck!"

They passed the threshold of another brandy-shop. This kind of thing comes naturally, like putting one foot before another. At every twenty steps, in hospitable Paris, the "green ruin" may thus punctuate an interesting conversation.*

"Where were you coming from?" inquired Cocotte, as they left the second counter.

"From the *château*. And you?"

"From further and nearer. My business was with the cashier and the Countess."

"What business?"

They paused, not far from the Conservatoire, and their eyes met, striking as they did so a spark of truly diabolical intelligence.

"Is the Countess Corona in it?" muttered Piquepuce.

"Possibly . . ."

"And the banker?"

"No . . . you know he is not, for you have in your pocket the impression of the key of his strong-box."

There was a little vanity in the smile of Cocotte. They had turned round, and were now walking towards the Porte Saint Martin.

"It's true that I struck an impression," said Cocotte, "but not at the *château*. The banker would be worthy of being in it: but there's no means of getting near him. It was when the imbecile with the gudgeons said that he always carried his key round his neck, like some blessed amulet, that I whipped out my bit of wax. Will you do me the honour of just reading to me what you set down in your note-book?"

They were passing beneath one of the street lamps. Piquepuce plunged his hand into the depths of his pocket, and drew from it a memorandum-book, which he opened. A page of it was covered with writing.

It was not poetry. Cocotte read it over his shoulder,—

"Street entrance; wire to be cut. Ground-floor, door in passage, *idem;* two safety locks and one ordinary; two bolts, Médor in the antechamber; can be heard in office. Door of office, wire to be cut, quadruple bolt. Iron safe, Berthier fastenings, spring trap. Three people, armed,—a stout woman, chicken-hearted man, strong boy. Effects at end of month from two to three millions."

These notes had been taken in the darkness. In spite of this circumstance, and of the jolting of the vehicle, the writing was large and legible.

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* And in London, too, quite as readily,—but there it is "blue ruin."—*Translator.*

"Exact!" said Cocotte. "With the impression and this, we can say, Go on ahead! . . . How much shall we get out of it?"

"A crust of bread!" replied Piquepuce, closing his book.

"And if we sold the scheme to the banker?"

Piquepuce started, and threw a look around him like that of a wild beast. A word came to his lips, but he pointed to his neck with a significant gesture, and said, forcing a smile,—

"It would be wanting in delicacy!"

They turned the angle of the Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth. Three hackney carriages were waiting in front of the second house, which is the last but one in the order of the numbers. It was to the door of this house that Edmée Leber had been conducted, according to M. Bruneau's order, by our two friends, Echalot and Similor.

"The governor has got company," said Cocotte, without stopping.

The first two carriages were empty. Through the closed window of the third the piercing eye of Cocotte divined rather than perceived a woman's face.

"The Countess!" murmured he. "There's one who works hard, if you like!"

Piquepuce simulated admirably the appearance of a man who has seen nothing. They both entered, and Cocotte put his jovial face to the casement of the *concierge*, exclaiming,—

"Holloa! Rabot, old Rodrigue! has it been daylight to-day?"

The porter raised the enormous green eye-shade which protected his inflamed eyes, and replied,—

"All day long."

"All well?" inquired Piquepuce from behind. "And nothing fresh?"

"Nothing."

Piquepuce, in his turn, put his head in at the casement.

"Is M. Bruneau still a neighbour of yours?" inquired he, lowering his voice.

"Next house, fourth story, door to the left."

"And Three Pegs here, fourth story, door to the right?"

"Yes."

"Is he ill, Three Pegs?"

"Why do you ask?"

"He was not there this evening on the arrival of the diligence."

The *concierge* removed his green shade.

"Impossible!" exclaimed he; "and on a Sunday! Besides, you know, I am not a spy upon the lodgers. M. Lecoq says this is the house of liberty; here—*libertas!* Every one carries on his own business as he thinks best."

His red eyes, hurt by the glare of the lamp, were again hidden beneath his vast eye-shade.

"Does that individual sometimes come to see the governor?" inquired again Piquepuce, with a certain hesitation.

"Whom do you mean? Three Pegs?"

"No, Bruneau."

The porter shrugged his shoulders, and replied, as he resumed his work,—

"He discounts bills for M. Michel and the young ones. They say that he is in it."

"Ring the bell!" commanded Piquepuce.

Old Rabot pressed upon a small handle, and a silvery vibration was heard upon the story above.

Our two comrades mounted the staircase. A shadow passed behind the grating in the door; the calm and placid countenance of the protector of Edmée Leber was seen for a moment, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OUR HERO.

It is high time we should find a hero. A hero is absolutely necessary. Every drama, every tale, every poem needs this privileged being, around whom the action takes place. He is young, handsome, mysterious; he is the object of all the hatred and of all the love. Without him the work is a body without a soul.

It is high time, we say. The reader might think we had no hero.

It was on the fourth story of that house, the back of which overlooked the yard of the *messageries* of the Plat d'Etain; the house that Three Pegs was watching on behalf of the Baron Schwartz, the house of M. Rabot, the *concierge*, who had the honour of numbering amongst his lodgers not only that phenomenon, Three Pegs, but also the "young ones" of whom M. Bruneau was the bloodsucker, the famous M. Lecoq,—the "governor" of Cocotte and Piquepuce, Edmée Leber and her mother, Echalot and Similor.

The apartment in which our hero lodged was composed of two rooms. The first, looking out upon the yard of the house, was furnished with a large portmanteau, an old sofa which served as a bed, two chairs, and a low table. The one window opened upon a little terrace, narrow, and covered with trellis-work overrun with green leaves and flowers,—the work of some young couple belonging to the working classes, and whom a strike had banished from this humble Eden. Below the terrace was the damp yard, three sides of which, and the half of another, were enclosed by buildings. Through the remaining space might be seen the yard of the *diligences*.

This first room, we say, belonged to our hero, but it was now empty.

They were three friends, three good and brave young fellows, who

lived Heaven knows how. Two of them inhabited the second room, presently to be described. Michel, our hero, the most important of the three—though his name was simply Michel, and the two others belonged to families which were well-to-do in the world,—kept this room to himself. The revelations of Similor to Echalot relative to this abode of mystery, in which the question of "killing a woman" had been mooted, have acquainted us with the fact that nothing in Michel's room indicated the presence of the woman who was to be killed.

It was late in the evening. An oblique ray of light, starting from a window on the fourth story and on the opposite side of the yard, showed upon the faded paper of the wall several geometrical plans, attached by pins, and scattered upon the table a number of drawings of the same description. The window of the opposite lodging was closed; but the poor blinds of cotton muslin, raised on each side, discovered one of those terrible and touching pictures which the Devil on two Sticks, when in search of gay adventures, too often meets with as he raises the roofs in Paris, the city of pleasure;—a pale and emaciated woman, to whom illness much more than age gave almost the appearance of death, was half reclining upon her bed, and working.

Ever and anon she paused, overcome by evident fatigue; her worn eyes were half closed; to any one who might have watched the supreme effort of want or of duty, the thought and the hope would have come that the lamp would at length go out, and the needle escape from her trembling hands. But the pitiless lamp continued to burn, the pale and fleshless hand stiffened over its work, and so soon as her eyes opened, the needle stitched, stitched, stitched.

There was no one with the sick woman. When her eyelids closed, relieving for a moment the cruel lassitude of her aching eyes, her white lips sometimes moved, but it was to speak to God.

This Michel, our absent hero, was a fine fellow of twenty, tall and well made, and with all the air of a gentleman. Indeed, it was possible that noble blood might run in his veins, for he knew neither his father nor his mother. The most intelligent minds—and Michel, our hero, was gifted with no small amount of intelligence—have their weaknesses, especially when the ignorance of their origin carries them naturally into the region of dreams. On his old sofa-bed, Michel every evening built up afresh the romance of his own destiny. In spite of certain confused recollections which gave the lie to this fairy tale, he never fell asleep without seeing himself, when quite a little child, in a cradle trimmed with lace. Then came a dark man with a long cloak, under which children are hidden when they are carried off. Michel seemed to remember having been almost stifled under this cloak. How his mother had wept on his account! and his father, Monsieur *le Comte!* Perhaps they had been seeking him ever since.

Between eleven and midnight, Michel was frequently possessed of an

ingenuous and ingenious imagination, which would not have been out of place in the Parisian and poetic temperament of Similor. More than once he had started from his sleep while on the threshold of the "castle of his fathers."

Then he would laugh at himself; but his laugh did not come from the heart. The dull walls of his chamber, lighted by a ray of the moon, or by that gleam from the lamp of his neighbours, looked to his eyes like a prison cell.

I have said the lamp of his neighbours; although the old sick woman was now alone in her room, she had a daughter, and it was not the mother who generally was latest at work in the night-time.

This lamp had something to do with the ambitious dreams of Michel. At twenty it is never for one's self alone that we gild an imaginary future.

Across the narrow and damp yard, from one window to the other, smiles were often exchanged. And Michel had spent hours together watching the young girl at her work.

This was another romance, alas! a poem rather, full of pure tenderness, of humble and dear promise, of enchanting hopes, of fears and remorse.

What! remorse? Already a remorse in this young girl, whose light golden hair crowned her forehead like a holy glory. Remorse in those deep blue candid eyes, in which were alternately reflected the joy and the sadness of the angels. We must explain,—the remorse belonged to Michel, and belonged to him alone.

The proud but gentle child had known tears, but her heart had never yet learned to shun the gaze of the Almighty.

We are in the forest of Paris. In our twentieth year we know everything. And who can have learnt everything without regretting something? Michel, our hero, was not an angel, far from it; and all his dreams were not of love. He loved with strength, with grandeur, for his was a lofty spirit; he was a lion in those Parisian jungles where creep less noble creatures; but he had other passions too, other wants, perhaps other destinies.

In his bearing there was I know not what supreme eloquence, scorning the insults of fortune; an almost feminine sweetness, sometimes suddenly replaced by something cold and hard, as though there had been two souls beneath this youthful envelope; an open candour, mingled with some diplomatic mistrust; a native warmth, an artificial reserve. All these shades were blended in our Michel, the characteristic product of two causes, of which the first has but one name,—nature; but of which the second, according to the point of view we take, may be termed "fall," or "conquest." "'Tis an ill wind that blows no good," says the proverb. Can it be true that we may gain something by falling?

According to ancient history, the Amazons had their right breast cut

out; the tenors in Italy get rid of their low notes; professional runners throw their spleen to the dogs. Why should they keep things which inconvenience and trouble them? In Paris, at every corner of the street, you may find surgeons who will cut out your heart. They will even come to your house. And you would scarcely believe what tough fellows are produced by the aid of this operation—the amputation of the heart.

Michel, our hero, had kept his heart; his friends even asserted it was a fine large heart. The jolting on the road had bruised it here and there, and the malaria of Paris had done what was possible to inoculate the gangrene of egotism upon these wounds. But as to the rest, the best plan will be to give in few words the history of Michel, or at least what Michel knew of his history.

Michel remembered, vaguely but vividly, being a happy little child, petted and spoiled, in the quiet home of a handsome young man and sweet young woman, his father and mother, who loved each other dearly. Where was the house? He did not know; probably he could not have recognized it, so confused and distant was the recollection. The young man and the young woman had to him no other names than mamma and papa. He could still see them as through the clouds of a dream,—the mother smiling over her embroidery, the father occupied in some manual labour that Michel could not have defined, but which blackened the hands and drew the perspiration to the forehead.

According to his estimation, he was probably three years old when this period of his existence suddenly ended. One day there was a great tumult in the house, terror, noise, and tears. This must have taken place in some provincial town, for Michel could remember a narrow river, and an old bridge, much smaller than those at Paris.

No sorrow as yet, no tears; for the kind, homely face of his nurse was smiling by his cradle. That face he would have recognized. She kept saying to him, "They will come back."

A woman dressed in mourning did, in fact, return. Was she his mother?

One night he was afraid, because a cart was jolting with him upon the road. He saw his nurse no more.

All this was in his mind like the confused impressions of a dream.

Then he had a more clear recollection of a great farm in Normandy,—large fields of wheat, meadows where the lazy oxen wallowed in the tall wet grass, a low farmhouse with an immense yard, where for the first time he saw them thrash the corn. And here there was one detail which struck him more strongly than aught beside. He knew that during the first period of his stay at the farm he was treated as one of the children of the house, or better, as a boarder, who brings in money to its proprietors; but gradually this changed, and at eight years of age he found himself a little labourer, employed in the lowest kind of work. For all this, old farmer Péchet and his wife were good people;—the old man,

seated of an evening by the fireside, talked of his crops as an old soldier might have recounted his campaigns; and the good woman, when she had drunk her pint of hard cider, would sleep for three hours at a time without ceasing to turn her wheel whilst working at her distaff.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ADVENTURE THE FIRST.

In those days Michel had neither hopes nor regrets; it was at a later period only that the vague recollections of his early infancy grew strong within him. The tranquil valley in which was situated the farm, and the green hills above which was seen the spire of the little village church, were all the world to him; he excelled in plaiting whips, and those long bands of straw with which hats and bonnets are made; in the spring he sought out the linnet's nest, and robbed the blackbird of her young, like any other happy country boy. The good man and good woman, Péchet, took care that he should earn his rest by work, and did not too often reproach him with the bread he was eating. The village people already said that he was a fine little fellow.

The farm was a portion of a considerable domain which the Revolution had not broken up, and which belonged to a very old gentleman living at Paris. The old gentleman happening to die without issue, half a hundred cousins in Normandy immediately pounced upon his estate, and the law courts ordered that the domain should be sold.

This was the occasion for the arrival from Paris of fifteen or twenty of those gentlemen termed in the country the "Black Band," who are wont to cut up and devour the broad lands belonging to the old *châteaux*. There were in the district but few abodes at all adapted to such guests; and so, in the absence of better quarters, a young banker of the *Chaussée d'Antin*, whose name was J. B. Schwartz, and whose already proverbial skill was rapidly and surely augmenting a very considerable fortune, was glad to put up at the farm belonging to father Péchet.

M. Schwartz, according to his custom, arrived at his conclusions in relation to the business which had brought him from Paris within a very few minutes from the period of his arrival. In anything pertaining to speculation he had the eye of an eagle. As it was necessary that he should wait until other matters were settled, he inquired for a guide who could bring him into relations with two or three coveys of partridges; old Péchet lent him Michel, and Michel enabled him to exterminate half a dozen head of game.

M. Schwartz, who had never before effected such carnage, took a great liking to the little fellow. He entered into conversation with him as they returned to the farm, and Michel's ready intelligence completely charmed him. Parisians, even when they bear names most strongly savouring of

Alsatia, always come down from their height in astonishment when they meet with anything but donkeys at a few leagues from the Place Saint George. M. Schwartz questioned old Péchet whilst eating his own game—delicious repast; and Michel, who had troubled himself but little on this head, for the first time learned that he was a stranger, an orphan, and that they kept him at the farm out of charity.

This, at least, was the expression of the good father Péchet. Michel, whilst listening to this revelation, which, for the first time in his life perhaps, had caused him to reflect, was struck with a bold idea.

"Take me with you," said he to M. Schwartz. "I will show you how to kill partridges every day at Paris."

M. Schwartz burst out laughing. He was in an excellent humour, and announced to old Péchet that he intended to take the little man with him.

The good folks of Normandy know how to take care of themselves. Father Péchet wanted a hundred crowns to let Michel go. A few minutes before he had said of the boy, "A very heavy burden upon poor country people!"

If you are not acquainted with Normandy, which is a charming country, go to Brittany, to Flanders, or to Burgundy; everywhere in the villages you will find Normandy, and always some father Péchet.

Ah, the good man! M. Schwartz having given the hundred crowns, so delicious did the partridges appear to him, old Péchet began a lamentation comparable to those of Jeremiah,—"Oh, *là, là!* my goodness, my goodness! What a pleasure that child was to us! how fond we were of him! how we caressed him! how long it will be before we can console ourselves for his absence!"

And the good mother Péchet, too, was wiping her eyes with an enormous checked pocket handkerchief, and emulating her husband.

All that cost M. Schwartz another hundred crowns; and he found himself obliged to hurry his departure in order to keep in pocket the price of his journey homewards.

Madame Schwartz was somewhat surprised at the result of this expedition. She had a pretty little girl, six years old, and certainly it was not for the purpose of purchasing an adoptive child that M. Schwartz had taken the diligence to Normandy. Michel was received as the germ of a future *valet de chambre.* They sent him to school, and made him up a bed in the house.

The fancies which strike us in the country do not hold good at Paris, where the art of marking coveys of partridges becomes useless. At the end of eight days Michel, nearly forgotten, recognized but one master and protector, the mighty Domergue, who already wore his iron-grey livery.

M. Schwartz was then occupying a very fine apartment, Rue de Provence. His first hotel was then being built. Domergue lodged Michel in a little attic. This Domergue was a very worthy fellow. During two years he inquired at least once a month of his *protégé*,

"When will you know how to read?" At those times Michel rather regretted old father Péchet.

But an event happened to him just at the period when the idea of flight had taken possession of his youthful mind.

One evening Michel heard the sound of a piano in the attic next to his own. He was then twelve, and he was to remember this incident for a whole lifetime. There was merely a partition between him and the instrument. To the generality of my readers, the introduction of this perfidious engine might have been a nuisance; but Michel listened as though the notes had spoken to him. A friendly voice was awakening in the silence of his solitary life. From the very first moment he loved this harmonious sound which glided into his prison.

He slept but little that night. With the notes of the piano had mingled the fresh prattle of a child. Michel was already certain that he had a little girl for his neighbour. A graver voice had pronounced the name of Edmée. What a pretty thing is a name! Michel would have given the whole world to see Edmée,—he who in the whole world had nothing.

But Edmée either never went out, or went out only when Michel was at his school. A long week passed without Michel seeing the daughter or the mother, for he felt certain that the other voice belonged to the little girl's mother.

He did not dare to question the *concierge*, who was freezingly respectful. Every evening the piano played. Michel already knew that they were poor. Upon the other side of the partition the mother had once said, "Let us go to bed, my Edmée, and economize our candle."

Certainly Michel did not know that the word "candle" proclaims poverty even more cruelly than the word "economy" itself.

And what an evil is poverty! Michel felt a tightness about the heart, although he was not rich.

It was winter. On the windows of his garret the frost had produced its foliage of crystal, but this he scarcely felt.

How could he manage to see Edmée? Michel taxed his mind to answer this momentous question. His first schoolboy trick was the result of this. Since he had left the country, Michel was no longer the laughing child, the hardy farm lad. Paris oppressed and frightened him. The master of his class seemed to him a giant. He looked up to the mighty M. Domergue from an immeasurable distance; all mischief had died in him with his gaiety. And thus it was in fear and trembling that he bought a gimlet for two sous, by the aid of which he bored a very small hole through a plank of the partition.

When this was done he was obliged to sit down to still the beating of his heart. He did not dare to put his eye to the hole; and when at last he screwed up his courage to do so, you would have thought he was committing some terrible crime.

At first he saw nothing, for his emotion blinded him. Then a movement that was made unsealed his eyes, and he perceived a woman in mourning, whose face was placidly sad. A religious respect seized him. It was the mother of Edmée. She was seated near a table, and held in her hand an open letter. There were tears in her eyes. Michel felt his eyes moisten too.

But it was not to see the mother of Edmée that he had pierced the partition. Where, then, was Edmée? The mother was weeping alone. Michel was beginning to be a scholar. The address of the letter was turned towards him, and he was able laboriously to spell out, "To Madame, Madame Leber . . ."

Edmée Leber! In what resides the harmony of certain concords? Perhaps you may find the assemblage of these four syllables quite simple and common. When they passed between the lips of Michel, they sounded like the music of a kiss.

It was already two years since the little country boy had first taken possession of this garret. The free air which circulates about the roofs of your houses, O generous proprietors, brings poetry with it. I have seen those miracles of vegetation, the monstrous, adorable orchids, springing from a crevice in a worm-eaten beam. Life is full of these contrasts. Poetry is the flower of the garret.

Our hero Michel did not know how many feet are required to make a verse. What matters verse to poetry? These four syllables, in which we may see no beauty, sprang from his heart like a song of triumph.

A door suddenly opened on the other side of the partition, and it seemed as if a ray of light inundated the chamber. Everything now looked smiling, even the mourning of the mother. A smiling child, whose fair tresses spread like a glory around her forehead, sprang joyously in, and threw her two arms round Madame Leber's neck. Michel recognized Edmée. He expected she would be thus, only he could not have thought her so pretty. Madame Leber hid the letter which had caused her tears. She commenced working with her needle, and the little girl—Edmée was only ten years old—seated herself at the piano.

Michel forgot to descend to the kitchen to get his dinner; night only moved him from his post.

I have not time to enumerate all that he saw during the long hours of this culpable but charming *espionnage*. One thing alone is of importance to our history. It was freezing hard. On the hearth of Madame Leber were only two small embers which kept going out. The mother shivered as she plied her needle. The little fingers of Edmée looked quite red upon the white keys of the piano.

"She is cold!" said Michel to himself, with a thrill of horror.

He who cared as much for the cold as he did for the moon!

She was cold! Edmée, that dear child, crowned with this halo of golden hair! Madame Leber, too, was cold. Michel was hurt to his

very soul, and experienced an impulse of indignation. So much wood was burnt uselessly at the Schwartzes! That night he could not sleep; he tossed until the morning upon his hard mattress; his thoughts were at work. When he rose his plan was settled in his mind. Instead of going to school, he set out straight before him in this unknown Paris, thinking that he at length would find a forest. Mother Péchet had frequently sent him into the woods; he knew how to make up a good fagot of dead wood, and he said to himself, "Edmée shall no longer suffer from cold."

One may walk for a long time in Paris without having an opportunity of picking up gratis anything that can give warmth, quench thirst, or satisfy hunger. Michel, our hero, became convinced of that. He walked on for two good hours without getting beyond the region of houses. He saw many new things, but no wood, except in the shops. At the end of two hours he reached the *barrière*, and beyond that he found other houses, only uglier and poorer. Where was the grass? Heaven be praised! here was a great plain white with snow. The snow was an old acquaintance; he loved the snow in Normandy. But the forest? Far, very far, the trees were grey in the distance. Michel drew tightly round his waist the cord he had brought to bind his fagot, and hastened his steps.

He thus reached, the valiant little man, the wood of Montfermeil; and what joy it was at length to see the oaks! When the pale winter's sun had almost reached the horizon Michel had his fagot, a good fagot, which he threw upon his shoulder, singing. Luckily, the *garde* was at that period warming his feet in his lodge.

Michel took the road by which he had come. His stomach was empty, but his heart was joyous. To the tune of some Christmas chant of Normandy he went singing along his way, "Edmée shall not be cold! Edmée shall not be cold!" The inspectors at the *barrière* told him he had at least fifteen sous' worth of dead wood. They are calumniated, these men in green. Michel thought them very good fellows. Fifteen sous' worth of dead wood! At M. Schwartz's Michel was in want of nothing, but he did not see much more money than he had done in Normandy. His garret was a hundred leagues from the cash-box.

In the Faubourg Saint Martin he sat down on the kerbstone: fifteen sous' worth of dead wood weighs heavy, I can tell you, when it is brought all the way from Montfermeil. But, bah! Michel arrived at the Rue de Provence, singing, about ten o'clock at night.

It was long since Michel had no longer been in vogue at the banker's, and yet inquiries had been made about him. Domergue had said, "The little fellow has not come for his dinner to-day." Madame Schwartz, who was almost as good as she was beautiful, inquired three times during the evening if he had returned, and M. Schwartz talked of sending to the *préfecture*. When Michel came back with his fifteen sous' worth of dead wood, the *concierge* called the servants, who all assembled in the yard: it was quite an event. Where had he stolen this fagot? The history of the

fagot soon reached the drawing-room. Mdlle. Blanche, who was seven years old, wanted to see the fagot. In the drawing-room the fagot had a great success. Michel had grown; M. Schwartz could scarcely recognize him, and Madame Schwartz thought him a charming boy. The idea of going to collect wood at Montfermeil struck them as quite original.

"The child is cold up there," said Madame Schwartz; "they must put a stove in his room."

"Well! but is there then no fireplace?" cried the banker, bursting out laughing. "Impossible! Going simply to set the house on fire! Comical!"

Something came to the lips of Michel, but he had the strength to prevent it from passing them, and his great secret remained within himself.

The next day Domergue had a little iron stove placed in his garret. Besides his fagot, he had now a good provision of wood.

But our hero Michel could not warm the poor dear red hands of Edmée through the small gimlet hole he had made in the partition. You shall see that he was a hero in fact, and that we are not writing the biography of a commonplace individual.

Michel had observed that his little neighbour absented herself regularly every day about two in the afternoon, returning between four and five with a music-book under her arm. She, too, went to school; a celebrated professor was giving her gratuitous lessons in music. Michel was not a connoisseur in music, but considered everything charming that was done by Edmée. We may, however, at once say that there was in Edmée the stuff of which true artists are made.

The winter days are short. Madame Leber, alone and fatigued with her almost profitless labour, was wont to fall asleep at dusk. Strengthened with this double information, our hero Michel contrived and put into execution a plan which completed his celebrity in the establishment of M. Schwartz.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ADVENTURE THE SECOND.

THE first step was a hard one. It was simply to invade the domicile of Edmée Leber and her mother; and Michel was greatly afraid of Madame Leber, so dignified, so resigned, so venerable in her indigence. Truly, that radiant Madame Schwartz would have inspired him with less fear; at all events, she was rich.

You would have taken Michel for a precocious malefactor when, for the first time, profiting by the slumbers of the mother of Edmée, he noiselessly turned the handle of the door. One scarcely knows how these acts of courage are accomplished. Michel, when the door opened, creaking a little on its hinges, felt his heart sink within him. He nevertheless

advanced. On the almost cold hearth were as usual two disconnected embers, which were slowly consuming; Michel threw over them a handful of his fagot, and, on the top, four good chumps of wood which had been destined for his stove.

And then he ran off, the young rascal! Through the crevice he saw the fire smoke, and then burst into flame. Madame Leber was not awakened by the merry crackling of the fagot. It was a splendid flare, and Michel danced a little about his room, so light was his heart. When Edmée returned all was finished, and the stove had resumed its modest aspect; but she said,—

"It is nice and warm here, mother."

Michel no longer danced. He sat down at the foot of his bed, surprised that his eyes were full of tears.

And, I know not why, he set to work at his studies, about this period, furiously. Perhaps he had a serious idea of becoming somebody.

The room of his neighbours was quite small, and preserved its acquired heat like a box. That evening the piano seemed to have improved in tone; the pretty fingers of Edmée ran along the finger-board as white as the ivory itself.

What connection was there between these little dainty fingers and the ambitious thought which had vaguely germed in the soul of Michel?

This trick played by Michel upon his neighbours continued for fifteen long days, just the time of the hard frosts. Mother and daughter were often surprised at finding, every evening, the temperature of the room notably increased, and more than once the hearthful of cinders was like to betray the culpable intrusion; but the mind never meets impossibilities halfway. What could they think?—what could they even suspect? Michel, whose virgin stove had not burned a splinter, grew more hardy, and began to devise answers as sensible as they were honourable in case the good lady, suddenly waking, surprised him in the fact. But you know the fate of prepared answers: they never happen to suit the questions.

One evening, as Michel, kneeling down in front of the grate, was blowing with all his lungs upon the stubborn fire, a loud scream brought him terrified to his feet. Madame Leber, alas! more terrified than he, was already in the corridor, and crying "Fire! thieves!" with all her force. General turn-out of the neighbours, disturbance, and scandal! Several members of the national guard arrived with their muskets. Michel, bodily apprehended, had lost his speech; he was about to be taken to prison, when Edmée, who had unexpectedly returned, divined the enigma as she saw the good fire burning up the chimney.

"Mother," said she, "it's the fairy!"

The fairy! you understand? The soft warmth which in the evening was felt through the attic, the beneficent hobgoblin who prevented the graceful fingers from growing red over the cold ivory, Edmée had guessed it: Michel was all that.

But it was she, it was Edmée Leber, rather, who was the fairy. This simple word was the stroke of her wand, the scales which fear had fastened upon her mother's eyes now fell from them. What had she seen as she woke? A child kneeling by the hearth upon which the fire was now brightly burning. She sprang forward, she tore Michel from his persecutors, she accused herself, she explained. Oh what a delicious anecdote to put in the *Patrie*, evening edition! Sympathetic neighbours are always like fulminating powder; there was an explosion of pity; the national guard, greatly moved, talked of the Montyon prize for generosity and self-sacrifice, and the *concierge* said,—

"It surprised me too; for those people have not got the wherewithal to be robbed!"

In these assemblages of lodgers the *concierge* is the voice of reason. The *concierge* added,—

"For all that, the young rascal performs his charities with the wood of M. the baron."

For he was baron, M. Schwartz. It was a month since he had been made one.

Domergue made his appearance, attracted by the noise. Before Domergue, the brilliancy of the *concierge* grew pale, as the stars become extinguished when the orb of day takes possession of the heavens. By bestowing upon M. Schwartz the title of baron, the King of Sardinia had augmented to a corresponding extent the importance of Domergue. Simplicity becomes great men: we cannot express the grateful appreciation that was felt of the humility of Domergue in wearing neither embroidery, nor scarf, nor decorations, nor insolent plumage in his cap. Beneath the austerity of his grey livery, Domergue was a demigod.

Protection obliges. Domergue was fond of Michel, though scarcely acknowledging it to himself. He expressed himself as follows, accompanying his words with a sober and stately gesture :—

"Gentlemen and ladies, M. the baron and Madame the baroness do not wish any disturbance to take place in this well-regulated establishment prior to the period of their departure to take possession of their *hôtel*, now completed, but of which the walls must be allowed to dry, by reason of the damp, so often productive of rheumatism in this winter season. You have done it with the good intention of giving your immediate assistance in case of thieves, which was called for. Nevertheless, I answer for the child and his generous action, who does not require to obtain fuel at the expense of integrity, for wood and aliment are in plenty at our establishment. It only remains for every one again to go quietly home."

There was amongst the national guard a classical scholar, who compared Domergue to Neptune calming the waves; but, whoever this Neptune may have been, the majority would not have ventured to put him on the same level with M. Domergue. It is a fine thing to unite with high

influence the rare gift of oratory. A flattering murmur escaped from the ladies, and by common impulse the other sex presented arms. M. Domergue took Michel by the ear, and led him off to M. Schwartz's.

In the house of Schwartz everything bore witness of opulence. Fortune had openly declared herself for M. Schwartz, who already was not a commonplace millionaire, although millionaires were in those days more rare than at the present time. M. Schwartz was an eminent millionaire, of European reputation. He was numbered amongst the heads of finance; the day could already be named when he was to become a political millionaire.

I think it is Béranger who has said, "Pleasure makes the soul so good!" In the same way he has said many things which are not very profound, but which please immensely pious people and royalists of Yvetot. He is a great poet, nevertheless, and M. Domergue knew all his songs. Other philosophers, it is true, teach that the soul becomes strengthened and ameliorated in that mysterious and divine crucible which is termed sorrow;—but what on earth are we talking about? Let us accept, without reserve, the philosophy of Béranger. It is pleasure which improves the soul. Gavarni, who is much more witty than Béranger, has thus translated the apothegm of our national lyric:—"All true apostles dance the *cancan* at the *bal masqué de l'opéra.*"

To possess millions is incontestably a pleasure. To be a baron, for the first month, may also pass muster as a great delight. As M. the baron was not naturally at all ill-natured, as Madame the baroness had nothing but kindly instincts, a mild kind of clemency seemed to surround them. It appeared to them that the whole universe should smile upon their glory, and the battalion of flatterers, which is never wanting to any prosperity, feasted sumptuously.

All that I complain of in Béranger, who was not in the habit of looking very closely at things, is the use of that big word *soul* to characterize the good nature of stomachs which digest well, or of cash-boxes which are successful.

The Schwartzes were simply in good humour. The soul had very little to do with it.

Michel arrived at the drawing-room with his ear between the finger and thumb of Domergue. The latter, having obtained permission to speak, threw into his recital all the eloquence with which nature had gifted him. Here was the second volume of the history of the fagot, so favourably received fifteen days before. The fact was mentioned that the little iron stove had not even been lighted. Michel became a lion. M. the baron took it into his head to make a man of him, that is to say, a banker, and a portion of his newly acquired favour fell upon his neighbours in the attics.

At first sight it seemed very easy to benefit people who were so poor; but it was really a matter of some difficulty. Madame Leber would

not have accepted alms, however well disguised; but there was Blanche. Edmée, though only ten years old, gave her lessons on the piano. As for Michel, who was not at all proud, they dressed him like a little gentleman, and sent him to the commercial school. He had not yet spoken to Edmée, but Madame Leber, meeting him once upon the staircase, had kissed him on both cheeks, and wished him joy.

Michel had three friends at the Schwartzes: Domergue in the first place; then Blanche; lastly, the baron. Ordinary mortals cannot know what amount of caprice enters into the determinations of very rich persons, and especially of those who have become very much enriched. Satiety comes much more quickly than is imagined—not the satiety of acquisition, but the satiety of enjoyment. M. Schwartz had within him an imperious want of amusements, and Michel was for him a plaything of the first order. From that moment the idea arose within him of producing a master-work, of creating the Napoleon of bankers. He looked upon himself—and not without some reason—as about equal to Rothschild: this was not enough. Granting that Rothschild is the biggest gun in finance, M. Schwartz desired still further to perfect this marvellous machine, to rifle this admirable cannon and to give it a tenfold range.

Madame Schwartz alone, in these days, showed towards Michel merely a calm and smiling kindness. Certainly, she was far from opposing the fine projects of her husband, but she did not participate in them—she had her daughter. Madame Schwartz was one of those women who cannot be sketched in a few touches, or described in a few words. We know that her beauty was dazzling, and that her mind was worthy of her face; she had a large heart, the unfortunate would have told you so; her tastes, her instincts, and also her manners, were much superior to those of the society in which she was placed, and yet the level of the *monde* in which she lived was continually rising with the financial importance of M. Schwartz. M. Schwartz admired and adored her, although from time to time, for his honour and credit's sake, he made some ostentatious excursions beyond the conjugal domain. The opera makes up to the bank. A grain of rice is necessary. In our beautiful France, to say of any one that he is a good father, a good husband, savours of the epitaph. We are a most charming people.

Don Juan was not an Alsatian by birth; the follies of M. Schwartz did not go very far; he established from time to time a *liaison* of gallantry with a person in a position to compromise him sufficiently, but decently; everybody was a gainer by it, especially the jeweller. That portion of Paris which is called All-Paris, in the delicious articles of the chroniclers of fashion, reckoned up with delight the value of the diamonds which were bestowed. Having sufficiently played at this game, M. Schwartz was wont to come back repentant to the feet of Madame Schwartz.

M. Schwartz, a man of intelligence and experience, felt the superiority

of his wife in point of race and instinct; his wife was a great lady, independently even of their acquired fortune and of the bran-new title of baroness. Jewels and cashmeres counted for nothing in this, nor the most brilliant equipage. On foot, with a woollen shawl and a cotton print dress, Madame Schwartz would still have been a great lady.

M. Schwartz was doubly fond of her—with love and with pride. She was at the same time his joy and the lustre of his house. In every love, analysis discovers many things, and many curious things. There are not two loves in the world which are similar. M. Schwartz loved passionately in his own way, and he was jealous, although he had confidence. The Baron Schwartz was jealous because he felt there was one side of his wife's character to which he was completely a stranger. We do not put him forward as a great man, and yet he had the littleness of a giant. He was curious, prying, indiscreet, a violator of small mysteries. In order better to know his wife, he had tried to learn by heart every detail of her apartment, a study of which some parts were easy, but which in its entirety was impossible. The apartment of his wife had also its little closed corner. If her character presented a rebus to be guessed, a certain drawer had an impertinent lock, the key to which was never left about; never, for years. And this in an apartment where everything in its turn was left about.

M. Schwartz had confidence, but he was jealous.

What was there in this drawer? and why was Madame Schwartz so often musing? One may solve most problems by the vague word Caprice; but as well not answer them at all. The word caprice is also a lock, and needs a key.

The temper of Madame Schwartz was sweet and remarkably equable. And yet, according to the expression of Madame Sicard, her maid, a sadness would often come over her. It had always been thus; M. Schwartz could even remember that these sadnesses had been more frequent and more lasting prior to her marriage.

After the birth of Blanche—a pure and great joy—an apparent cure had taken place; but the sadness sometimes returned, and had pursued the happy mother even to the cradle of her child.

When Blanche was quite little, she sometimes said to M. Schwartz,—

"Mamma has been crying."

Doctors are wonderfully clever in explaining women to their husbands; were it on this account alone I should proclaim them benefactors of humanity. M. Schwartz had a weakness for the explanations of the doctors, but he remained jealous.

The doctors told him, "It's the liver." What a criminal is this liver! And they cited some of the most interesting cases in point.

There were some weeks during which Madame *la baronne* was madly fond of going into society—the spleen; other weeks in which she had a great horror of going out—the liver.

In the same way for the differences in dress.

They had observed in her—rarely, it is true—a kind of suppressed anger against Blanche, her beloved little daughter. The doctor said, like a charming man as he was, "I knew, in 1829, a young woman of very good family," &c., &c.

That was ascribed to the stomach.

It would have been to the taste of M. Schwartz to act as a spy upon his wife, thoroughly, minutely, and according to the art of jealous husbands who have implicit confidence. But for this, time is required, and time is money. The unfortunate M. Schwartz was like all of us: instead of amusing himself with spying his wife, he was obliged to earn money. He preserved, therefore, his confidence and his doubts, picking up bits of information here and there, and sometimes forgetting his dignity so far as to question Madame Sicard and Domergue, who were no wiser than himself.

The conduct of Madame Schwartz, to her servants and to the world, appeared manifestly irreproachable. She scarcely ever went out except in her carriage, and a lady's carriage is part of her own house; she saw only the friends of her husband; and her conduct, in the vulgar interpretation of the word, was a hundred cubits above all suspicion.

And yet, upon the world, her servants, and her husband, Madame Schwartz produced I know not what fugitive and undefinable impression—that vague odour of mystery which follows a woman who has a secret.

M. Schwartz, it should be said, was not well pleased with the apparent coldness of his wife towards our hero Michel. He wished that everybody should adopt his fancies, and he attributed the indifference of his wife to those famous pre-occupations which were doubtless under key in that "middle drawer." He committed many little rascalities to obtain this invisible key, and did not succeed.

In relation to our personages, things were taking place as follows in the house of Schwartz:—Michel was at the commercial school, where he was making rapid progress; Edmée was giving lessons on the piano to Blanche, who loved her like an elder sister; comfort was returning to the home of Madame Leber,—for no one approached Madame Schwartz without experiencing the effects of her generous bounty; Edmée was greatly improving as an artist. She was a noble and charming girl, and already, in her large deep blue eyes, there was the soul of a woman.

Michel had met her, periodically, once every fortnight since the adventure of the fagot. They had never spoken to each other alone. I believe that love may be awakened in the heart of a child, and the slow growth of a sentiment which may fill a lifetime is a beautiful thing to contemplate. In a poem I might endeavour to follow the development of this dear little germ, but this prosaic history has no time to linger upon details.

Edmée was wont to blush when she saw Michel. When she sang before him, her voice was apt to grow tremulous. Michel worked for

fifteen long days to live for a few hours. His efforts had an aim. He loved already as though he had been a man; he knew that. Edmée did not yet know it.

When Michel was sixteen years old, M. Schwartz examined him, and was seized with a complacent kind of pride at what he considered was his own work. Michel had made giant strides; his was a strong and active intelligence; he had literally played with the difficulties of study, and the commercial school could no longer teach him anything.

"Worthy of entering my offices," said M. Schwartz, "positively!"

Michel was really a very handsome young fellow,—tall, slender, and of a graceful bearing, full of frank but quiet gaiety. On the occasion when he exchanged the blue frock of the collegian for the elegant uniform of the *monde*—a transition which is ordinarily unfavourable—he produced quite a sensation in the *salon* of Madame *la baronne*. The women remarked him, thinking perhaps of his education to be completed, and amongst the men none ventured to rail at him. Edmée was quite proud of him, and with better reason than M. Schwartz.

And yet M. Schwartz was more glorious than Edmée. He had the capricious enthusiasms of those who have conquered fortune. He said to his wife, as he pointed out our hero,—

"My work; a husband for our Blanche! Idea!"

Madame Schwartz had one of her lovely smiles, and, perhaps for the first time, looked at Michel attentively.

Edmée heard this; she heard everything that was said of Michel. She became as pale as a sheet.

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