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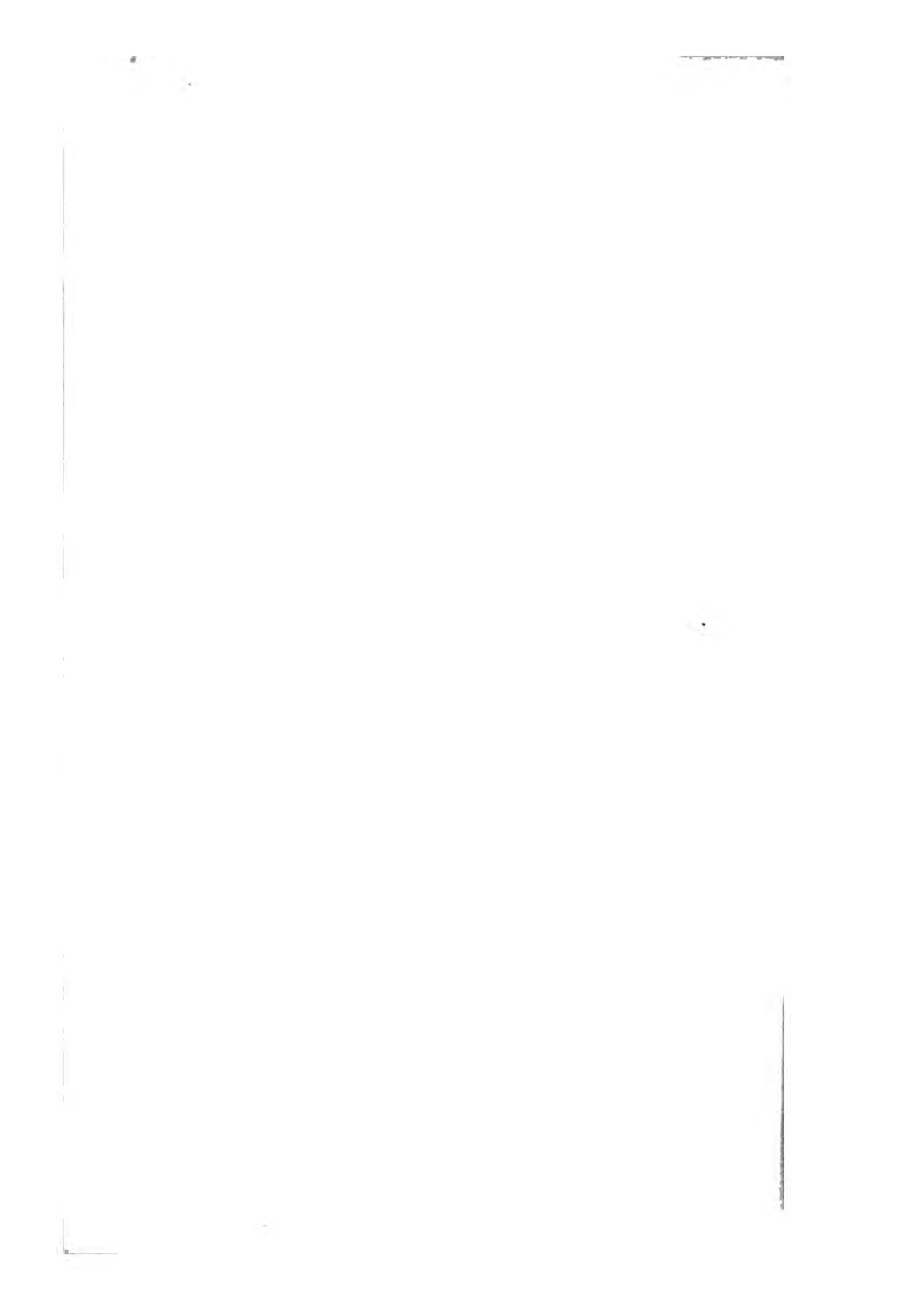
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AUGUST TO NOVEMBER.

VOL. XX.

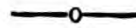


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CONTENTS.



	PAGE
Abyssinia: Mythical and Historical	422
Birthdays	417
Bit of Bulgaria, A	289
Climbing the Fell.	204
Constantinople, The Fall of	19
Facts and Fables	377
Gambling Houses of New York, The	252
Gossip on the Prorogation of Parliament.	345
Great Philosopher, A	560
HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR OF THE	
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, THE	218, 351, 473
Thomas Hood	455
Lady of Eisenach, The.	42
LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU	27, 152, 314, 446
LIFE'S MYSTERY, A	60, 191
Long Penance, A	211
Magna Charta, its History and Provisions	100
Military Promotion	117
"No Cards"	482
Old Newspapers	285

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Pearl of Damascus, The	434
POOR CLERGYMAN'S TALE, THE	1, 129, 332
Pedestrian's Fortnight on the Coasts of Devon and Cornwall, A	236
POETRY :	
After the Rain	115
Eventide	500
Semper Eadem	128
The Winds	250
The Autumn of the Heart	284
A Story of a Picture on a Vase	325
Cousin Amy	384
Rakes, The Natural History of	143
Sophoninus	229
Stray Leaves from an Indian Note-Book	166
Waiting for my Husband	361
WAVERNEY COURT	257, 387
What the Papers Revealed	81



THE POOR CLERGYMAN'S TALE

CHAPTER II.

“AND now, when I stood up to read in the simple village church, with the bright clear faces of the guiltless, simple-minded country-folk looking up to me for instruction in their ignorance, for comfort in their troubles, for guidance through the thorns and brambles of this wilderness world, I knew myself to be the guiltiest wretch within those walls. I abhorred myself as a leper, who had no business in the congregation by reason of his hidden loathsomeness. I almost wondered that the earth did not open her mouth, and plunge me into swift destruction, because I dared to bring unhallowed fire to the altar of my God! The calm, loving eyes which everywhere met mine were so many daggers, piercing my soul with unspeakable tortures. I tried to calm my conscience by fastings, by self-imposed penances; but I could get no relief from these. They did but aggravate my misery, for it soon got wind how I abstained from food, how I mortified the flesh, how ‘holy’ I was, till the villagers were almost ready to regard me as a saint. No wonder I became humble as a little child; for never did I speak to a parishioner, however low in the scale of morality, without painfully realising the fact that he was a better man than his minister.

“All this while I was consumed with a burning love for Lucy, which, like a smouldering fire, ate into my very soul. Before the murder I had brought my mind to acquiesce in her preference for Henry. I mistook the apathy of despair for a victory, self-achieved, over my passion; but now that Hope had once more begun to stir within me, Love, revived, and, nourished by her fostering influence, began to lift up its head, to gather strength, until, as with the force of a giant, it had bound and fettered my whole mind in its

cankrous, soul-devouring chains. The spring of my hope was this: that at any moment a word spoken by me could consign *her* father to the gallows. I held in my hand his very life. And, more potent still, wizard like, I had learned the 'word of destiny' which controlled *her* young life, for with the elder life would fall *her's* also. Even were *her* animal life to survive the shock, *her* reason could scarcely be expected to pass through the ordeal unimpaired; and if *her* mental powers were spared, so much the worse for *her*; she would, in that case, have but retained unimpaired the power of suffering, the consciousness of a deep and enduring degradation, too horrible to contemplate, even but in thought. I shuddered at the extent of my power over that young, innocent, helpless being, even whilst, with a strange inconsistency, I gloried in it.

"Actuated by these strange and conflicting emotions, I became once more a pretty constant visitor at Mr. Barrington's house. I endeavoured to ingratiate myself with Lucy, hoping even yet that I might win *her* affections, yet dreading to put into operation the fearful power I possessed, which must either crush *her* or make *her* mine. It was in vain. Henry was always there to thwart me; to outshine me with his manly beauty and his gay, hearty manner. I could only oppose him with the polished weapons of a gentlemanly manner and a tolerable fund of information, acquired during several years of hard study. These weapons he quietly and contemptuously beat down. The simple farmer's daughter could not appreciate them; the gay *abandon* of *her* more rustic admirer suited *her* unsophisticated taste. I was a *friend*, but he was 'the lover.' I saw it in *her* eye, heard it in the soft music of *her* voice; saw my doom and my rival's happiness; saw it, and cursed my destiny! Night after night did I wend my way homewards towards my solitary lodgings, miserable, dispirited, desperate. The dim sea chafed restlessly along the rocky promontories that stretched out into *her* grey depths. The rushing tide thundered, muffled and sonorous, in the reverberating caverns that yawned, black and vast, hundreds of feet below me at the base of the cliff. That restless, weary sea seemed the very image of my own troubled existence. Often as I wandered homewards, through the sublime solitude of night, did I determine that the time was come for me to use my power; that on the morrow the word should be spoken which must make Lucy mine for ever, or——. I filled up the alternative with a creeping feeling of horror for which I had no words. But as often as the morrow came did I defer the execution of my purpose. So lovely was she, in *her* happy, fresh, simple girlhood, that the monstrous plan I had devised to crush *her* happiness crumbled and fell to pieces before the power of *her* kindly, trustful innocence.

“ While I was thus tortured by alternate resolve and indecision Henry Armitage became the lawful proprietor of ‘The Hall,’ and its belongings. The deceased squire, as it turned out, had bought the entail from the legal heir-at-law, and had left the mansion to his illegitimate son, whose near relationship to himself he distinctly recognised in his last will and testament. This strange disposal of the fine old property filled us all with astonishment. But the mystery was solved by a simple reference to the date of that document. It had been executed nearly three years before the old gentleman’s death, at a time when Henry stood high in his favour. Rough memoranda of a new will, never completed, showed that the old man had latterly meditated a very different disposal of his mansion and estates ; but death had unexpectedly stepped in to frustrate his purpose ; and hence Henry’s quiet succession to the honours of the squiredom of Whitecliff parish.

“ But although Henry had succeeded to the position of his late father, with all its wealth and local importance, he was not long in discovering the wisdom of the old proverbial saying, ‘ A good name is rather to be desired than riches.’ No one called to congratulate him on his accession to so much honour and dignity. At the hunt he was received with such marked coldness that he speedily stole away. Mr. Leversedge was there, and Henry could not help feeling that his cold grey eye was upon him much oftener than he liked. There were nods and winks, and little groups, and now and then he fancied he heard his own name spoken *sotto voce*, and saw stealthy suspicious glances directed towards him. He felt solitary, shunned, angry, and disposed to quarrel with the members of the hunt. But, on reflection, it occurred to him that such a method of meeting the dislike of his brother squires would but aggravate the evil ; so he plucked up courage, and riding up to Mr. Leversedge, tried to enter into conversation with him, in a tone of indifference, as though he had not observed anything peculiar in his reception. That gentleman’s reply was unmistakeable—a stare of apparent astonishment at being addressed by a stranger, and, ‘ I have not the honour of knowing you, sir,’ soon settled the business. With a glance of defiance, Henry dashed the spurs into his horse’s flanks, and rode from the field, choking and half-mad with almost uncontrollable anger. He could not help admitting to himself the astounding fact that until the mystery of the murder were found out, he would be suspected of the crime, and shunned accordingly.

“ From that day he became moody, restless, and melancholy. His only refuge from torturing thoughts was the stimulus of spirits. A drunken lawyer from the next market town, who had established himself at the Hall as steward, encouraged him in his madness, and invited thither other boon companions of the same

stamp. Night after night the dining-room became the scene of the wildest orgies. Songs of more than doubtful tendency, ribald jokes, and loud ~~course~~ laughter, might be heard far into the night, not unfrequently ending in one or more of the company being carried off to bed, helplessly drunk.

A kind neighbour who had heard of Henry's repulse at 'the meet,' told Lucy the story. She heard it with apparent calmness; but the next day she looked ill, and the roses on her cheeks had begun to lose their brightness. Ere a month had elapsed, she had become a confirmed invalid. A languor, distressing to witness in a being so lately redolent of life and health, seemed to weigh down her spirits, and to enfeeble her frame, so that every movement, however slight, became an effort. A slow inward fever was eating out her young life; yet never was there a more patient sufferer. She never complained of illness, would hardly admit that she was out of health; but, spite of her failing activity, contrived, day after day, by an intense effort of the will, to go through the routine of her domestic duties, as punctually, if not as cheerfully, as it had been her wont to do in happier times—times now, in her melancholy calendar, long since passed away, though, in reality, but a few short weeks had elapsed since Henry's disgrace at the hunt; so true is it that we measure time by our sensations, rather than by the progress of ordinary events.

"She wrote to Henry, declining his visits, but it was in so tender and delicate a manner as showed him her perfect belief in his innocence of the frightful charge which public opinion had preferred against him. Poor Henry came to the farm on the receipt of this letter, and a miserable interview ensued. He was pathetic and violent by turns, now imploring her pity, and anon vowing summary vengeance on 'that villain Leversedge, and all the dastardly lot;' but all to no purpose; she was calm—sorrowfully but sadly collected—her mind fully made up to the sacrifice which reason told her was inevitable. She assured him, again and again, that she knew him to be innocent; and this assurance seemed to pour balm into his wounded spirit. She told him that the time would come when his innocence would be proved; till then, she would wait for him, unmarried, if he wished it; but, till then, his own sense would tell him she could never call herself his wife; and with this prophecy and promise Henry was, at last, obliged to depart, almost frantic with grief—his heart full of black hatred of Mr. Leversedge, and of mankind in general.

"His next step was dictated by rashness, but excited no surprise in those who knew his impulsive nature. He challenged Mr. Leversedge, and on that gentleman's refusal to be shot at, horse-whipped him. For this offence he was bound over to appear at the

Assizes; but no sooner was he at liberty than he quitted the kingdom, forfeiting his bail, and leaving Mr. Leversedge swearing vengeance on him, should he ever venture to return.

“And now that the coast was clear, I began to hope that, by-and-bye, when the edge of her grief had become dulled by time, Lucy might be brought to look favourably on my suit. I felt instinctively that my only chance lay in the exercise of patience, and I let many months roll away before I began to let her know—by actions rather than words—that I loved her still. It was a case which required the most delicate treatment. For some time I could do no more than maintain a sort of brotherly relationship with the bereaved one. The slightest hint of a warmer feeling was resented as an encroachment on the rights of the absent lover. She had nothing but friendship for *me*, and to friendship alone Lucy was determined to restrict me.

“I began to despair of ever winning her heart, and in the depths of my despondency I began to revolve my old project of compelling her to be mine by virtue of the power which I possessed over her father's life. For some months I had entirely laid aside the idea, and had made up my mind to try and win her affections by assiduous kindness; but by degrees I came to the conclusion that my case was hopeless, and as I did so, a sort of grim satisfaction sprang up within me at the thought that, at all events, I could *compel* this disdainful fair one to listen to me, if I could not persuade her to do so. I was becoming desperate, for I knew not how soon Henry Armitage might return, and I felt humiliated at my want of success, and at times disposed to be angry even with Lucy for her persistency in throwing back the heart which I was so constantly offering for her acceptance.

“The time at last came which was to bring the affair to a crisis. I had been spending the evening at the farm, where Lucy received me alone, her father being from home. I fancied that her manner was kinder than it had lately been, and we passed a couple of hours in a sort of quiet happiness, in which there was nothing remarkable but the abeyance of corroding passion on my side, and of growing grief on hers. Some such hours come to the most miserable occasionally. A bright, pitying angel passes over us in our misery, leaving behind him the perfume of his presence, and shedding down on our weary spirits a Lethean sense of rest from sorrow. The hour of respite soon passes away, and again we take up our chain, and trail it wearily after us, as we limp forward towards our fate—the inevitable grave. Nevertheless, it *has been* with us, and has refreshed us for a season.

“As I was taking my leave of her for the night, one of those impulses which sometimes sweep before them the strongest natures

urged me irresistibly to seize the moment, and to venture everything by an open declaration of my passion. I had never *spoken* to her of love, though she must have read it often and often in my eye, heard it in my voice, seen it in the thousand nameless indications by which we read one another's thoughts. But now I felt suddenly gifted with the power of speech. My tongue, loosened all of a sudden, employed its newly-found powers in pouring out all the depth of passion which lay within me. Suppose a narrow valley, dammed up by the fall of a mountain, the *débris* filling one end of it, until it has become a great basin of water, ever filling and never overflowing. At length the water reaches that point beyond which resistance to its pressure is impossible. Down at one tremendous plunge goes the yielding mass. The waters, pent-up for a season, burst from their prison with a rush and a roar that shake the mountain to its base, and, irresistible because hitherto pent-up, devour and desolate everything in their course towards the ocean. Imagine this, and you can conceive something of my state of mind when my pent-up love at last found vent in words. I told her how long and how secretly I had loved her. I painted in burning words the power of that spell with which she had enthralled me. I uttered, no doubt, a deal of nonsense, such as men usually talk on similar occasions—nonsense to other ears, but when spoken with all the earnestness of despair, terribly significant of the writhings of a tortured mind, painfully indicative of the festerings of a wounded spirit.

“Lucy heard me in silence. She remained still as a statue whilst I told her all this, growing paler and paler as I proceeded. At last, when I pressed her for a reply, she quietly told me that she never could be false to Henry Armitage, whose wife she considered herself to be in the eyes of Heaven. She was sorry to find that I regarded her in any other light than a friend; and that being the case, it would be much better if we agreed not to meet again for a time, until I had got the better of my love for her.

“As she made these simple and sensible remarks, I am bound to say there was no light of triumph in her eye—nothing but the melting gleam of soft compassion. Had I not been blinded as well as maddened by my ill-starred passion, I should have left her, full of respect for her good sense, and of gratitude for the kindly way in which she had said ‘nay,’ that most trying of all words to pronounce without wounding the feelings of the applicant.

“But, stung with the quick decision of her manner (which, in truth, left me nothing to hope), I rose from my knees (for, in my agony, I had thrown myself grovelling at her feet), and, uttering an incoherent threat of vengeance, dashed from the house, and out into the broad, moonlit downs, into solitude, and despair, and revenge, and hell fire.

“ Yes, out in the calm quiet of those voiceless downs—beneath the glorious moon, walking majestically through silvery cloudland—beneath those golden eyes, looking down with god-like tranquillity from the blue immensity of infinite space, did I rave, and swear with impious oaths that I would have my revenge. My love had taken this frightful phase—that if Lucy would not be mine she should not be another's, and with my heart and soul I now set to work to compass the mischief.

“ The coming daylight had begun to streak the eastern sky, and to tinge the edges of the dappled morning clouds with its golden radiance, ere I turned my steps towards my solitary home. The cool breeze which swept shorewards, laden with the briny moisture exhaled from the tranquil sea, fanned my feverish forehead, and brought with it a sensation of relief from the heat and the aching pain that racked my overtaxed brain. The utter solitude of the rude pathway that led from the downs towards the cottage on the cliff where I had my humble lodging, had in it a potent calm which gradually made its influence be felt even in the depths of my troubled spirit. The lark warbled in the sky, whither he had sprung up at the first blush of the coming morn, as if eager to welcome the returning sun. Presently a bright beam shot across the regions of air; it bathed the fluttering bird in radiant glory, while as yet the earth was all gloom and shadow. Anon, down came the ruddy light, throwing long, fantastic shadows across the springy turf. The gnarled and twisted bushes were alive with twittering finches and other hardy birds that frequented the downs. Grotesque, misshapen things were these bushes. The constant pressure of the sea-breeze had so bent and warped them from their very infancy, that they had never grown upwards; but there they stood, stretching their arms imploringly towards the green country beyond them, as though they had been arrested in the very act of trying to escape from the tormenting blast, and had been fixed there against their will.

“ Nature never did forsake the heart that loved her. I was becoming more cool and collected under her gentle influence, when, on turning an angle of the road, just where it descended to the edge of the cliff, along which it wound with more or less distinctness for many miles, commanding an ever-varying combination of abrupt coast views, the sea, the atmosphere, the rocky-shore presenting fresh aspects to every turn of the devious tract,—on turning an angle of the road, and casting my eye over the vast expanse of water, which from that point lay at my feet, I saw a suspicious-looking schooner standing out to sea, not above a mile from the shore. The craft I at once knew to be the ‘Saucy Sally,’ a schooner-rigged vessel, well-known on the coast in connection with

many a lucky run of illicit cargo. Her appearance so near the coast naturally excited my curiosity. I at once concluded she had put into the bay for the purpose of running a cargo during the night; and, having effected her object, she was once more making her escape unscathed, with her usual good fortune, unmolested by revenue cruisers and unheeded by coast-guard. My eye was upon her, mechanically watching her graceful movements, as the crew crowded the masts with the swelling canvas, and she leaned over beneath the pressure of the freshening breeze. All at once I became aware of the presence of a man who came bounding up a rude pathway that led down to the rocky and pebbly beach, where the tide was chafing and foaming with a restless, never-ending murmur. He came rapidly up the path, and the next moment Henry Armitage and I stood face to face, each equally surprised at meeting the other at that hour and in that sequestered spot.

"Henry!" I exclaimed, partly in wonder, partly in anger; for just then he was the very last person I could wish to see—so sore, so wounded was my spirit with the repulse of last night.

"He caught the meaning of my tone, and re-echoed it. 'Mr. Brydges?' said he, interrogatively; 'why, what on earth can have brought you here at this unearthly hour? Oh! I see, a parishioner dying, and wanting spiritual consolation and advice.'

"No, indeed," I answered; 'would to Heaven that I were indeed here on an errand of mercy! Then might I hope to quench this hell within my heart, which the sight of you, Henry Armitage, let me tell you, stirs up to yet intenser agony.'

"He made no reply to this insane speech, but calmly looked in my face for an explanation.

"Then burst out the great secret. I could hide it no longer; but out it came, in defiance of my rival, even in defiance of my better judgment, which rebuked me as I spoke, but in vain. Passion was too strong in me at that moment. I was mad, excited, reckless, with the events of the last few hours. Besides, it relieved me to play the madman, to pour out in words my fury and my agony, even to the man who had heaped this anguish upon me.

"'Lucy Barrington,' I cried, 'you know I love her! You must have known it—must have seen it often and often—though I never told the secret to mortal man until this night. I love her madly, have loved her since the first time I saw her. But for you, she might have been mine. It is you who have stepped in between me and happiness—you who have robbed me of my peace of mind—stripped me of hope for the future, and of comfort in the present!'

"Henry had always been remarkable for disinclination to inflict pain, even on the humblest of the animal creation. My agony

evidently touched him, for he looked at me with a countenance more in sorrow than in anger. It was some minutes before he spoke, and then in no tone of anger or reproach, but rather in accents of sympathy and regret.

"Mr. Brydges," he replied, "I am grieved to hear this. To say the truth, I have more than suspected it for a long time past. I am sorry for you. But Lucy and I have known each other from childhood, and we have grown up to like one another. We were lovers long before you came here, although no word of love had ever passed between us. And now she is pledged to me—has promised to become my wife, and I am pledged to her. In the sight of Heaven, as far as vows of constancy can make us, we are husband and wife. Oh, Mr. Brydges, I am sorry for you."

"Keep your sorrow," I cried out in bitterness; "I want not your sympathy. I can bear my misery without *your* consolation. Perhaps before long you will stand in need of mine." My heart gave a great leap as I said this. It was a moment big with fate to both. I felt, I suppose, like a man who grapples with his enemy on the edge of a precipice, and resolves that, if he must perish, it shall not be alone.

"Mr. Brydges," he replied, "I shall never ask your sympathy, whatever happens, and I trust I shall not want it. Do you see that schooner? Before many hours Lucy and I will be safely bounding over the sparkling sea in that tight little craft. I have means at hand which will easily arrange that matter; and Lucy herself, I dare say, will not resist, when she sees that resistance will be useless."

"Why," said I, "you don't mean to say you will carry her off by force?"

"Well, it may possibly have that appearance, but it will be very gentle violence, and I suspect that she will have the sense not to resist where resistance will be useless. Sooth to say, Mr. Brydges, I have a great deal to complain of as regards this ill-natured world, who, because they can't find out the villain who killed my father, make up their minds that it must be I and nobody else. You heard how I thrashed that fool Leversedge for his absurd conduct towards me. Poor little Lucy has got it into her head that she ought not to marry me before this horrible charge is cleared up, beyond possibility of doubt; but if she remains single till the culprit is discovered, Miss Lucy will be an old woman before she becomes a bride."

"Your bride she can never be," I answered. "Would you marry the daughter of your own father's murderer?"

"He hardly realised the full meaning of the question. Nevertheless, he turned pale, and a visible tremor came over him.

“ ‘My father’s murderer!’ he said, faintly; ‘what can you mean?’

“ ‘I mean this,’ I answered, savagely, ‘that you and Lucy can never be man and wife, because Mr. Barrington was the man who slew Squire Armitage.’

“ ‘The proof!—the proof!’ cried he. ‘Prove this, or, by the Lord who made us! you had better never have been born. Oh! Lucy, Lucy! what if this be true!’

“ ‘That it *is* true, I swear to you by the bright heaven above, and the beauteous earth beneath us. Listen, and you shall be satisfied. On the night of your father’s murder, I was passing the house. I had been to a distant part of the parish to see a dying woman, I heard a cry—that cry which came from you on discovering the old man in his blood. The next moment a dark figure passed along the terrace between me and the window. The Holland blind was down, but no shutter was closed. There was a light in the room, so that I distinctly saw the outline as it passed the window. The outline was that of Mr. Barrington.’

“ I paused to ascertain if he had any question to ask, but he merely signed to me to proceed. I went on:—

“ ‘The moment he had passed the window, he disappeared in the intense darkness. But he must have descended the steps leading up to the terrace, for in an instant he was nearly upon me. Evidently he had not seen me, for he was almost touching me before he became aware that I was standing there. He gave a startled spring on one side, and was gone before I could move a muscle, so great was my astonishment. As he sprang from me, his hat fell to the ground, but he was afraid, I suppose, to stop and recover it; for, as I said, the next moment he had vanished into the deep gloom of that terribly dark night, leaving me with the hat in my hand, terror-struck and appalled at the awful discovery.’

“ ‘And you have that hat?’

“ ‘I have.’

“ ‘Then I care not how soon I join the old man in his bloody grave.’

“ This he said in a tone so sad and despairing that I could not but feel a touch of pity even for my rival.

“ ‘Parson,’ he asked, after a pause, ‘you are telling me the truth, are you? You love her, I know; but you are a gentleman. All this is true, is it—on the honour of a man?’

“ ‘As I hope for salvation,’ was my answer.

“ ‘And yet you never told this to any one till now?’

“ ‘Never. Regard for Lucy held my tongue. I could not bear the thought of the agony she would suffer.’

“ ‘Oh! Lucy, Lucy!’ cried Henry, with a great cry of despair.

He dashed his clenched hands on his forehead, and fell grovelling to the earth.

“I stood by, triumphant, but ill at ease, ashamed of what I had done, and yet consoling myself with the Jesuitical doctrine, ‘The end justifies the means.’”

“For a long time (so it seemed to me) he lay thus grovelling in his great agony. I pass over details which when told in our calmer moments seem exaggerated, if not unnatural. Suffice it to say, that at length Henry Armitage aroused himself; but so astounded and overwhelmed were his faculties by the suddenness and magnitude of the calamitous tidings which he had just heard, that he seemed more like a man in a trance than one in the possession of the usual powers of thought and reflection. A kind of stupor had benumbed his mind. I took him to my lodgings, and did my best to rouse him from the apathy which was settling down upon him, but for some hours quite unsuccessfully. He lay on the sofa speechless and without motion. Occasionally a groan burst from him; but he did not reply to any remark, or address a single word to any one. The sun was just sinking when he sat up, and in a hoarse voice asked for pen, ink, and paper. I then saw what fearful ravages grief makes, even in the young and strong, in the brief space of a few hours. His face was swollen, his eyes heavy, his aspect dull and spiritless. He wrote to Lucy, bidding her farewell, and referring her to me for an explanation of the cause; and having sealed the letter with black wax, again lay down to brood over his sorrow. He wished to be left alone there during the night. I complied with his wish, and went to bed. When I rose the next morning Henry had left the house. The schooner was standing out to sea, and Henry was seen no more in the neighbourhood for many years.

“The secret never again passed my lips, notwithstanding Lucy pressed me several times to tell her if I knew the reason why Henry had bidden her a final adieu. As for Mr. Barrington, I saw from his manner that he more than suspected the nature of it. Ever since the murder he had been shy and uncomfortable in my presence; but now he quite avoided me. At times he was morose and irritable: occasionally he had fits of taciturnity, which lasted for days. He lost flesh, and his appetite failed. He began to wander about the grounds in the neighbourhood of the mansion. When he met anyone there he would allege some trivial excuse; but when he thought no one was watching him, he appeared to be earnestly looking hither and thither on the ground, as though in search of something he had lost. The neighbours said that Joe Barrington was going out of his mind, and I was half inclined to join in the opinion.

“But there was method in his madness, as you will hear by-and-bye. Soon after Henry Armitage's disappearance, it began to be rumoured that the mansion was going to be let—a rumour which afterwards turned out to be a true one. A retired merchant of great wealth had taken it on a long lease. Painters, carpenters, masons, and gardeners were set to work, and in a few weeks the old place had quite a spruce air about it, such, I suppose, as it had not worn for half a century at least. In cleaning out a disused shed in the shrubbery, formerly used by the gardener, when one was kept (now many years since), a dark lanthorn came to light, hidden in straw and rubbish. There was nothing very peculiar in this discovery, because such a contrivance might have been used by the inmates of the house, and might also accidentally have been left in the shed. Still, the fact that a dark lanthorn had turned up in a spot not very distant from a house where a man had been murdered but a few months previously, necessarily made a considerable noise in the vicinity. Mr. Leversedge soon heard of it, and was promptly on the spot. A week afterwards he was joined by a well-known Bow-street runner, whose sagacity as a detective was well known throughout the country.

“The shed was searched from roof to floor, but without success. The musty thatch was pulled off, and the rotten rafters were taken down; the very earth which formed the floor was dug up; but nothing further rewarded the searchers. They were leaving the spot disconsolately, when the eye of the detective suddenly brightened; he stooped and picked up part of an iron heel, such as is used by country folks who are obliged by their calling to tramp through mud and mire. Armed with these two traces of the murderer's identity, Mr. Leversedge began to think the game as good as won; but the detective looked grave, and returned to his lodgings in a frame of mind not the most amiable.

“Nobody had ever seen the lanthorn until the arrival of old Joseph, the superannuated servant of the late Mr. Armitage. He at once recognised it as very like one which Mr. Henry Armitage used to carry sometimes of a dark night, but he (Joseph) had not seen it about the house for a long time before he left.

“‘Where was he in the habit of going with a lanthorn?’ the detective asked.

“‘To this question Joseph demurred. ‘It wasn't any of *them* as did it,’ said he.

“‘Any of whom?’

“‘After a good deal of prevarication, Joseph was obliged to confess that Master Henry most likely used the lanthorn in certain smuggling expeditions, he having become a sort of head man amongst them whilst forbidden his father's house. Like most men of the

neighbourhood, Joseph was fond of a good glass of Geneva, and, provided it was the genuine article, cared little whether it had been through the gauger's hands or no.

"Who were Mr. Henry's principal acquaintances during that particular period when he was forbidden the house?" asked the magistrate.

"Joseph thought that Mr. Barrington was one of them; 'because, you know, sir, he was very sweet on Miss Barrington."

"Cunning Joseph! by this reply you have, as you think, effectually thrown the magistrate and his myrmidon off the scent. The smugglers were above suspicion, and as for Mr. Barrington, one would as soon think of suspecting the parson of the parish.

"That evening the detective took a walk through the corn-fields (now nothing but stubble), musing as he went. He was a man accustomed to put two and two together. From the first he had rejected the idea started by Mr. Leversedge, that Henry was concerned in the tragedy. 'Barrington!' he repeated to himself; 'who is Barrington?' I must make his acquaintance. This lantern might have been left at his house by Henry Armitage, and borrowed by the murderer, whoever he was. There will be no harm in looking in on Mr. Barrington."

"Sure enough, whilst he thus mused, whom should he see on a stile not far before him, but a tall man, with iron-grey hair, hard features, and a slight stoop in the shoulders. The detective went towards the stranger, apparently with the intention of pumping him as to the character of Mr. Barrington; but at his approach the stranger hastily climbed the stile, and, turning along the other side of the hedge, disappeared. As he sprang over the stile, the detective remarked, with the tact peculiar to his craft, that although his boots were rather worn, one of them had a new iron tip on the heel-piece.

"He went to the public-house where he lodged, resolved to ascertain who the man was. His flurried manner, and the new boot-tip, excited his suspicions. He soon found out that the man in the corn-field was no other than Barrington, the friend of Henry Armitage. He was too wide awake to go to the house at once, but he went straight to a village cobbler whom he had remarked in his rambles as exceedingly busy with his lapstone and hammer. He sat down, and began to talk to him about a pair of shoes he wanted to be measured for. His eyes were busy as his tongue, but for a long time he saw nothing at all answering the object he was in search of, and that was a piece of iron tip corresponding with the bit he had found in the ruined hut.

"Strange to say, just as he was going away, disappointed at not being able to discover what he wanted, his quick eye, exploring

every crack and cranny in the dusty little workshop, happened to fall on a piece of metal which had been thrown into a small, dirty box, full of broken nails and divers metallic odds and ends, which had been accumulating therein for years past, thanks to the economical habits of the thrifty follower of St. Crispin. The detective, though secretly rejoiced at the discovery, was too old a hand to let the cobbler unnecessarily into his secret; so, skilfully directing the attention of the latter in another direction, he managed to secure the prize. To his great joy, the two pieces fitted exactly.

“The next step was to find out, if possible, whether or no the cobbler could tell how he came by the fragment. The detective, cautious as he was, could not help himself here without letting the other into a part of his secret, at all events. As he did so in few words, each of which went direct to the point, the cobbler opened his eyes, and then his mouth, in blank astonishment. Then, taking the precious fragments in his hand, and joining them together thoughtfully as he spoke, he turned his mind's eye backwards into the misty past, and said—

“ ‘Let me see: that tip must have come off Farmer Barrington's boot. I can't be very clear about it, of course, seeing as 'tis a longish time ago. But Mr. Barrington, he sent me a pair of boots to mend about the middle of November. One on 'em had a broken tip, and I had to put a new one on, and I did it.’

“ ‘You are quite sure, I suppose, that the boot you tipped was really Mr. Barrington's?’

“ ‘The cobbler opened his eyes, until his bald forehead was a mass of wrinkles, and carefully scrutinising his questioner, replied, ‘Quite certain!’

“ ‘But don't you get other customers, sometimes, who want their boots tipped, when the old ones are worn off?’

“ ‘Yes, of course I do; but, you see, I recollect taking this very identical piece off the boot Mr. Barrington wanted to be mended; and the reason is, because he looked in while I was at work on that very boot, and we had a gossip together about that bad job at the Hall.’

“The detective turned on his heel, and went to his lodgings. What his thoughts were I had no means of knowing: the conversation I heard from the loquacious cobbler a short time after. But, whatever conclusion the detective arrived at, it is a fact that he never advanced one step beyond the point to which the discovery of the boot-tip led him. Mr. Barrington's respectability was impregnable; so the detective, after lurking about the neighbourhood a few days longer, mounted the London coach, as it passed through the straggling village, and disappeared. Mr. Leversedge, too, returned home, openly avowing his conviction that Henry Armitage

was the culprit, and appealing to his disappearance from White-cliff in confirmation of his opinion.

“Thus did events conspire to conceal the man whom I had every reason to believe was the culprit. You may guess how utterly abandoned I was to my love for the beautiful Lucy when I tell you that, even in spite of my suspicions as to her father's guilt, I could not shake off my infatuated passion for his daughter. Poets have imagined a love stronger than death—a love so self-absorbing, so self-dedicating, as to impel its unhappy victim to share the fate of the beloved one, even though that fate were banishment from heaven and holiness. The thought is an awful one; but doubtless there have existed many a once rational being in whom love has become a phase of insanity. The language of such an one may be expressed in one tremendous sentence—‘Better hell with thee than heaven without thee.’ To some extent, my love for Lucy had attained this wild pitch of sublime madness—for madness it must have been which urged me on to seek to make her my wife, after becoming possessed of that fearful secret, which, once known to another, must plunge her and me into irretrievable disgrace and misery.

“Again another dreary interval of suspense and hope deferred. Months rolled away, and had begun to complete their twenty-fourth revolution since Henry's sail had disappeared in the offing, and still no news of him. I knew he would not return; but Lucy, in her heart of hearts, still hoped on, though with a hope which continually decreased day by day. She began to think that Henry had indeed deserted her; and this idea I, of course, took every opportunity of strengthening. Nevertheless, I was too wary to state my opinion in so many words. I never said to her, ‘Henry will not return,’ but I assumed it, and incidentally spoke of his absence as a thing of course, about which everybody's mind was made up, without question or gainsaying. Whilst her mind was in this sore and susceptible condition, I carefully abstained from pressing my suit. My tone was that of a sympathising friend, rather than a lover. I let her see that I was sorry for her bereavement. By a thousand artifices I led her mind away from her great sorrow. I soothed and entertained her, roused her when she sank into despondency, engaged her in conversation about common things, got her to take an interest in passing events, and, by degrees, had the happiness of seeing that my visits were looked for with pleasure, and gratefully received. A feeling of gratitude sprang up within her. She could not help acknowledging to herself the depth of that affection which led me to devote myself to her, day after day, and year after year, notwithstanding all the discouragements and all the delays which it had been my lot to put up with, all of which I had borne without com-

plaint, and even with apparent cheerfulness; for it was no part of my rôle to come before her as a whining, sighing lover, but rather to win her respect by exhibiting a manly fortitude under any or every trial to which her caprice might be disposed to subject me.

“At length I won from her a promise that if Henry did not return, or write, for another year, she would consent to become my wife. That year, of course, passed away without any tidings of the lost one; and so, after all those years of waiting and longing on my part, and of sorrow and hesitation, gradually subsiding into confidence, and a sort of sisterly affection for me on hers, we were married.

“Lucy came to me without any dower, for I made up my mind from the first that I would not touch a penny of her father's money, lest it should be ‘the price of blood.’ I had little difficulty in bringing his mind to acquiesce in this arrangement, because he was ever of a covetous, griping nature, and as he grew older, his hoarding propensities had become more apparent. His bargains were proverbially hard ones. He had the reputation of a clever, shrewd man of business, whom it would be extremely difficult to ‘get the blind side of.’ No doubt he was secretly glad to find I was so easy with regard to money-matters.

“We took a neat house, on a lovely spot overlooking the sea. Lucy had a hundred pounds of her own, which had been left her by her mother, and with that and my own savings, we managed to furnish the place decently, if not luxuriously. And now followed a brief interval of happiness—positive happiness, I mean, for hitherto my pleasures had proceeded rather from the absence of acute sorrow than from any actual access of real enjoyment. I believe it will be found that in the history of all men's lives there are a few bursts of real sunshine on their pathway to the grave—sunshine unchequered by the shadows of ever-passing clouds. In after years, when that bright period is but a part of memory, men's minds revert to the gladsome period, dwelling on it with satisfaction and delight; just as a traveller in the desert thinks of the bright green oasis where he has rested, and drunk sweet living waters, sparkling with health and life, and eaten of fragrant fruits, and smelt the sweet spices which waved above his head in the balmy air. As the traveller looks backward to these delights, so do I even now at times revert to that solitary period in my life when I was happy, that period now so long past, that it seems as if it never could have happened,—so distant, so dream-like, has it become in the vista of time.

“The only thing that now troubled me, was the consciousness of a lurking danger—a danger so fearful that I dared not look into its terrors. I did my best to put it from my thoughts—I strove to

banish it by every possible device; and yet, notwithstanding my efforts to forget it, there was the secret still. Ghost-like, it haunted the chambers of my memory—sometimes disappearing for days together, till I had almost ceased to remember the existence of the phantom; then again, on some trifling stir, stalking before me, hideous and real, with threatening gestures and malignant scowl, causing my spirit to quail within me.

“Nevertheless the general tenor of my life may be described as happy. These fearful forebodings came and went, like passing clouds on a summer's day; and as I got used to my new position, they became fewer, until at last they well-nigh ceased altogether.

“I often speculated as to what might be the state of mind which prevailed in the inner consciousness of my father-in-law. Externally he was ever the same cold, hard man as ever, totally impenetrable to observation. Never by word or sign had he evinced any guilty knowledge of the secret which rested so awfully between us two. So unconscious did he seem, that at times I questioned with myself whether, after all, I had not been deceived by some extraordinary resemblance between the murderer and Mr. Barrington. What were his feelings towards me? Had he recognised me on that fearful night? If he had recognised me, how wonderful that self-possession which carried him calmly through our now almost daily intercourse. Once only had I seen him moved, and that was when I told him of Lucy's engagement with me. Then, indeed, did his hollow care-worn face flush up with irrepressible emotion. His wonderfully keen grey eye flashed with some expression that looked like triumph, and, for the remainder of the evening there was a manifest elation of soul, which I interpreted to mean the removal of some great depressing weight that lay upon it, as with the deadening influence of a mountain of ice. The next day, the cold, calm demeanour had returned, and there it had been ever since. Read by the light of the secret, what could that flash of joy mean but this—‘I am safe! Now he is bound to me, he cannot betray me. My disgrace will be his own. I am safe—I am safe!’ Imagine the sudden rebound which his mind, so long depressed by feeling an awful sense of insecurity, must have experienced, when that weight was removed.

“But an event was at hand which, as you will see, had an important bearing on the future lives of us all. Lucy became the mother of a boy, and from that day may be dated the beginning of the end. From the very first moment he beheld him, the infant became an especial favourite with Mr. Barrington. For hours together would he rock his cradle or fondle him in his arms. At his grandsire's request, the child was named George, and George soon became quite a necessity to the old man's existence. During all the little

ailments which fell to the child's lot—disorders which most men are content to leave in the hands of the women-kind—he was almost ridiculously anxious about the infantile diet and treatment. He watched each symptom with the minuteness of a nurse, and hailed every sign of recovery with the enthusiasm of a medical student with his first case. Once, when George was seriously ill, we could hardly get rid of him night or day; he was, indeed, as Lucy emphatically declared, 'in the way.' Going into the room suddenly, I found him on his knees, praying that the child might recover. Mr. Barrington had been a local preacher among the Methodists, and still occasionally officiated in that capacity. But I had noticed that since the murder he had been much less regular in attending the duties prescribed by his creed. In fact, he was regarded by many of his co-religionists as a 'Gallio' and a 'backslider.' But there was no mistake here. 'Behold, he prayeth,' might truly be said of him at that moment. His head thrown backwards; his eyes looking upward as in an agony of supplication; his face rigid and imploring; his hands clenched; his muscles knotted with the tension of strong desire,—all bespoke that the man was wrestling with his Maker for some great blessing which he could not forego. So surprised was I at the sight, that for a few seconds I could not move. I stood rooted to the spot, almost as insensible to external impressions as the mortal suppliant kneeling there before high Heaven; then, struck with a kind of shame at my unseemly curiosity, I quietly retired. Apparently, he had not observed my presence. When I next saw him, he was as impassive as ever. Strange to say, the child began to amend from that very day. The little fellow got well in the course of time, and once more became the playmate of his doting grandsire, to the no small comfort of our family circle.

THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

IN CONNECTION WITH THE REVIVAL OF LETTERS IN THE
FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY.

MUHAMUD II., called the Great (Buzack) had ascended the Turkish throne in 1451, after the death of his father, Amurad II., at the same time that Constantine *Palæologus*, the last of the Greek emperors, had ruled in Constantinople since 1449. Despite his fair promises of peaceable intentions, Muhamud continually planned the conquest of Constantinople, and even sketched with his own hands the situation of the place, and the points most easily assailable. In 1452, Muhamud led in person 6000 of his pioneers to the difficult work of erecting a fort on the right shore of the Bosphorus, which work was completed within three months, and which he nicknamed *Boghaskesen* or "Cut-throat." It stood opposite a similar fort, erected by Muhamud I., on the left bank of the canal, and which was called the *Anatoli-hissar*. These two citadels, which are still in existence, were destined to cut off the trade of the Levant with the Black Sea, to starve out the inhabitants of Constantinople, and to prevent ships coming to the assistance of the town. The churches on both sides of the canal were destroyed by the Turks, and the ruins employed for the building of the Boghaskes fort; and the Christians who dared to complain of the atrocious act were mercilessly killed. The Greek Emperor, indignant at the desecration of the holy places, and the cruelties committed on his subjects, nevertheless complained in temperate language of the wrongs thus committed, to which Muhamud only replied in terms of insult and contempt, saying, "My father, Murad II., of sacred memory, has sworn, on the battle-field of Borneo, to erect a fort opposite *Anatoli-hissar*, and I now fulfil his oath. Besides," asked he, "what right have you to interfere with my acts in a country that belongs to me—both shores belong to me; the Asiatic, because it is inhabited by Osmans, and the European, because you are unable to defend it. Go to your master, and tell him that the present Sultan is a different one from his predecessors, and that their *will* fell far short of my *power*. I allow you to go hence, but I intend to skin alive any one who in future should dare to intrude on my patience with such and similar instructions." The reply of Constantine was dignified, and worthy of a Christian warrior. "Since treaties and submission will not secure peace," wrote he to the Sultan, "you are at liberty to do your worst. I trust in God Almighty, whom I supplicate, to

convert your heart, or, if so be His will to deliver Constantinople into your hands, I resign, without murmur, to His omniscient will ; but so long as He has not pronounced His decree, I shall do my duty, defend my people, and conquer or die with them." Muhamud, however, continued his armaments against Byzanz, while the Greek emperor prepared himself to resist with all the resources of defence in his power.

To give the reader a more comprehensive view of the operations of the famous siege of 1453, we will preface them with a few topographical observations of the fortifications of Constantinople under the Greek Emperor. Constantinople, it is well known, has the form of a triangle ; the southern part is washed by the sea of Marmora ; and the northern side is bounded by the harbour, or the Golden Horn ; while the north-western side, or the base of the triangle, is turned towards the land. The harbour has the extension of about ten miles ; the portion of the walls which are washed by the Sea of Marmora is about five miles long ; while the length of the walls, from the western point of the Marmora, where the Castle of the Seven Towers stands, as far as the salient corner, which commands the northern end of the Golden Horn, is ten miles, so that the whole circumference of Constantinople is about twenty-five miles.

In the beginning of the siege, Muhamud II. attacked the town from the land side. His troops, which were placed from the Golden Port as far as the wooden gate (*Odun Kapussi*) which governs the Golden Horn and the suburb *Ejub*, were spread over a distance of about ten miles in length. The Sultan had pitched his tent (surrounded by 1200 of his Janishares) behind the hill, opposite the former gate, *Kaligaria*, since called by the Turks *Egri Kapussi* (the vaulted gate). All historical writers have spoken of the enormous gun of Muhamud II., the largest at that time ; it was cast at Adrianople by a Hungarian named Urban, and had been brought thence by thirty waggons, drawn by fifty teams of oxen. This monstrous gun, which discharged a ball of 600 pounds weight to a great distance, caused more alarm than hurt ; it burst during the siege and destroyed its own maker. That gun was carried before the gate *St. Romano*, on account of which it is now called *Top-Kapussi* (cannon gate) and is situated between *Egri-Kapussi* and opposite the *Adrianople* gate. The author has seen some of the granite balls which the Turks used at the siege in 1453 ; they belonged to the trophies which the present Turks exhibit with pride to European travellers. Muhamud then bombarded the town with fourteen batteries, of rather inferior calibre ; but the besieged replied to the various attacks with showers of darts, and arrows, and their muskets, each of which sent forth ten balls of the size of a walnut, which carried death and destruction among the Turkish troops.

When the Turks put up their scaling ladders at the foot of the ramparts, the Greeks poured a flood of Greek fire and boiling oil on the heads of the storming soldiers, in addition to the massive stones which they hurled from the walls, and thus repelled the assailants with great slaughter. The Greeks, though they possessed heavy pieces of artillery, made but little use of them with success against the Turks. Constantine was found everywhere where danger threatened; he hardly enjoyed any rest during the whole time; having spent his days in the camp, he occupied his nights in giving orders and instructions, in having the shattered ramparts repaired, the ditches and trenches filled with logs of wood and heavy stones; and he did, in short, all that could be done under those pressing circumstances for the defence of the city, which not a little astonished the Sultan on beholding every morning that all the ravages done by him on the previous day were next day found to be wholly repaired by the assiduity, industry, and wisdom of the Christians. "By the holy prophet!" cried he one day, "I could never have believed that the Greeks could perform such wonders in a single night." The continual strife, however, from day to day, diminished the little army of Greeks and Genoese (8000 in number), who defended the city, though the surviving ones never lost for a moment their energy and determination to defend the sacred cause with the last drop of their blood. The siege having lasted upwards of a month without the Turks having gained an inch of territory, they saw one day from a distance five men-of-war sailing towards the port, one of which belonged to the Greek Emperor, and the other four to the Genoese commander. On approaching the shore they were received by the poor citizens with acclamations of joy. With a skilful and bold manoeuvre, the five vessels at once began to discharge their guns on the three hundred smaller Turkish craft, which were placed in the form of a crescent before the harbour, in addition to two iron chains which obstructed the entrance. In this battle 1200 Turks lost their lives; and those of their craft which escaped the balls of the Franks sailed towards the upper end of the Bosphorus, and the allied fleet then entered triumphantly the Golden Horn. "The Christians," said Kadsha Effendi, in his report of the victory, "showed, like tortoises issuing from their shells, their heads above the ramparts, and poured menacing threats on the believers." The latter were in consequence so discouraged that the Sultan began to think of peace, but was dissuaded from the step by the Ulemas and Sheiks. Muhamud, enraged at the defeat, ordered the execution of Balta Ogli, the capudan pasha (admiral), as guilty of cowardice; but, at the request of the Janissaries, he had him brought into his presence loaded with chains. He was compelled to throw himself upon the ground, and the Sultan, having trodden upon him

with his feet, and inflicted upon him with his own hand a hundred strokes with a heavy stick on his back, he had his property confiscated, and himself banished into exile.

Muhamud now despaired of taking the city by any way, except by attacking it on the sea-side, by the harbour, where fortification was much weaker than on the other points. He found, however, that the bars of iron chains, in addition to the five Christian men-of-war, were sufficiently strong to obstruct the entrance to the Golden Horn; but he also observed, on the other hand, that the northern part of the harbour did not contain enough water to hold these larger vessels of the allied powers, while the much lighter crafts of the Turks could easily find there an anchorage. He therefore suggested that these smaller crafts should be brought by land to that point. This bold enterprise, which was executed in one single night, was by no means so novel as may be imagined. It had been already applied by Hannibal, who had by these means brought a great number of vessels into the Gulf of Tarent; as also by Octavius Augustus, who had thus transported his vessels across the Strait of Nicopolis, into the Gulf of Ambrosia; and still later by Nicotas, in that manner, in the tenth century, who transported his galleys into the port of Corinth; as also by the Venetians in 1435, who thus carried their fleet from the *Elsh* to the *Garuda Lake*.

The vessels of Muhamud, to the number of eighty, took their way from the points of the Bosphorus, where now rises the Palace of *Becchitash*. They were carried by men and windlasses, upon strong planks besmeared with grease and tallow, across the cemetery to the hill of Pera, and launched by the deep valley of St. Dimitri, east of Galata, into the port. Having completed this operation, the Sultan shortly after had a vessel built, upon which he brought batteries to reply to the fire of the Genoese vessels, and to bombard the town. When the Greeks saw this marvellous undertaking, they remembered the prophecy once current in Constantinople, that "the city would fall when the fleet is sailing on land." But, notwithstanding this ominous prophecy, three light barks manned with ten Greek sailors each slid in one dark night among the Turkish vessels, and attempted to set fire to them. But the Turks were on the look-out; they had been informed of the proposed attempt by some Genoese inhabitants of Galata, who usually betrayed, by turns, the Greeks and the Turks, to serve their own purpose of safety. The Greeks were taken, beheaded, and their heads next day exposed to the view of the besieged inhabitants. A retaliation soon followed. Constantine ordered the prisoners in his power to be also beheaded, and have their heads suspended over the ramparts. The struggle became every day more hot and bitter, and yet Muhamud thought proper to offer peace to the Greek Emperor,

on the condition that he should give up Constantinople in exchange for a province in Morea. To which the latter replied that the Morea already belonged to him, and that he was willing to make peace, and give up the Morea, but not Constantinople and its inhabitants, whom he would never forsake.

The Sultan was so indignant at the reply, that he exclaimed: "In a few days Constantinople shall be either my capital or my grave." On the 29th of May, he announced to his army his intention of making a general assault on the place, and encouraged his soldiers by the promise of giving up to them the Greek women, with the permission also to plunder and ransack the town, reserving for himself only the possession of the town and its edifices. In addition, he held out the prospect of appointing as governor any one of his soldiers who would first ascend the walls of the town. He rode among the troops, holding in his hand a golden battle-axe, and swore, by the name of the prophet of Mecca, by the soul of his father, his children, and his sword, that the Koran should soon triumph in Constantinople.

This address was received by the troops with acclamations of triumph, while the dervishes ran through the ranks with the cry,— "Happy are those who will obtain the palm of martyrdom; but woe to the cowards who may and will think of flight."

In the evening of the 28th of May the Turkish camp was suddenly illuminated. The soldiers amused themselves with dancing, and the air resounded with their cries of joy and triumph.

The Musselmen celebrated, in short, their conquest already in anticipation; while the interior of Constantinople presented, on the contrary, a far different aspect. The inhabitants of every age and rank wandered about despairingly, and hastened with cries of despondency into the churches; "*Kyrye eleison!*" "*Kyrye eleison!*" they said, sinking on their knees before the altars, and prayed that the Almighty may deliver them from the enemy.

In the meanwhile, Constantine, true to his character, had repaired to the Sophia Church, where he confessed and took the sacrament, and asked pardon of those whom he might have offended, and then returned to his palace, took up his weapons, mounted his horse, and assembled the little troop of his brave soldiers on the Hippodrome, and addressed them thus:—"Comrades, our last victory, or last hour, approaches! May our courage overcome all danger! Your forefathers have conquered the world, and vanquished all those that resisted their arms. Constantinople has for centuries resisted the attacks of the barbarians. Even recently was Murad II. repulsed before our walls, and so were the soldiers of Muhamud! Our ditches, our fields, and even our ramparts, are filled with their dead. Only one single day more of

your usual courage, my friends, and all will be saved! We defend that which is the most sacred to man—our religion, our country, our liberty! Glory awaits us! The fatherland calls us! May the shades of our heroes look down upon us! Come, my brave children, I am ready to share with you all the dangers of the camp, as well as all the fruits of victory. Should, however, Constantinople and my comrades fall, I shall not survive them! Yes; we will conquer or die together!”

“Victory and long life to Constantine Augustus!” shouted the warriors. They then embraced each other, with tears, and repaired to their respective posts; while the Emperor took his stand, with 300 of his chosen troops, at the St. Romano Gate.

The announced assault thus began with daybreak on the 29th of May. The whole of the Turkish artillery bombarded the town simultaneously from sea and land; and it was not long before the scaling-ladders were placed at the foot of the walls, and the Turks were ascending the breach. Constantine, who had taken his stand at the Gate of St. Romano, fought like a lion. At his side were his uncle, Theodor Palæologus, Demetrius Cantacuzenos, and Giustiniani, a Genoese noble, celebrated alike for his bravery and military talents.

It was now eight o'clock in the morning, and the assailants were still being repulsed, when Giustiniani received a ball in his hand, and asked the Emperor to allow him to retire.

“Your wound is a trifle,” answered Constantine; “remain here, and do not forsake us. Besides, we are shut in on both sides, so that there is no place to retire.”

“I shall go the way which God hath opened to the Turks,” replied the other, and quitted his post of honour, impressing thus, by this cowardly act, an indelible stain on his hitherto glorious career.

The retreat of the Genoese general surprised the whole camp, and caused great consternation among the brave soldiers. At ten o'clock, a.m., the Turks were masters of the place; they penetrated into the interior, and killed every one whom they met in their way. The vapour of the gunpowder filled the town, and mixed itself with the dust of the crumbling walls. The dying and the wounded filled the air with their cries and groans, while the bulk of the people rushed into the Sophia Church, for prayer and protection. “You wretched Greeks!” exclaimed the historian Ducas; “you expect to be saved by an angel, and yet should even now, in the midst of the misfortunes that surround you, an angel descend from heaven, and recommend you to unite the two creeds, and assist one another to repulse your enemy, you would assuredly either reject the proposal, or accept it merely to become perjurd again; and those

who only a few days back had declared that they would rather fall into the power of the Turks than be assisted or saved by the Latins, know well whether I speak the truth or not." In the meanwhile, the Turks enter the Sophia Church, the doors of which they had broken open by axes and crowbars; they violate the women, even the nuns at the foot of the altar, kill men and children, and ransack the treasures of the sacred edifice. In less than two hours, more than 50,000 citizens were dragged into captivity, and dispersed throughout the whole Asiatic Empire, belonging to Muhamud II., while some more fortunate Greeks had saved themselves in the Christian galleys which were anchored in the Golden Horn and in the Bosphorus; they sailed to Italy, taking with them costly MSS. of Greek antiquity, together with those of the Fathers of the Church, which they saved from the flames of the burning cathedrals, and which were destined to adorn the libraries of Florence, and in which they are still found, and throw lustre on the monuments of human genius.

It was a remarkable coincidence that Byzanz should have become a prey to the barbarians at the moment when the art of printing was invented in Germany, and destined to perpetuate the thoughts of the mind in everlasting monuments of Greek literature, which the Medici family kindly received and transmitted to posterity by printed copies, and thus encouraged the revival of the arts and sciences in the West.

Meantime, Constantine, and a few of his intrepid companions, left the St. Romano Gate, and hastened to the Porta Caligaria, by which the Turks were passing in vast numbers. Before that gate was raging a terrible battle; Christians and Turks were strangling one another with their bare hands. The sword of the Emperor was everywhere in the *melée*; but his warriors at last succumbed to the superior force, and when the Emperor saw them all stretched on the ground, and no longer doubted of the fall of the town, he exclaimed, sighing, "My dear companions are dead, my empire lost, and I am still alive—am I then to fall alive into the hands of the Turks? Is there no pitying Christian to kill me?" At the same moment he was stabbed by two Janissaries with their scimitars, and the body fell unobserved among the other corpses. He was forty-nine years of age, a widower, and left no issue behind him, and his death, says Gibbon, was more glorious than the long brilliant lives of the wicked Cæsars of Byzanz.

Muhamud caused the imperial body to be searched for, which was discovered under a heap of slain; it was recognised by his hose, on which was embroidered the golden eagle. A Turk cut off the head, and brought it to the Sultan, who, after looking at it with malicious joy, had it suspended on an iron pole on the Augustus

Square, and sent it afterwards as a trophy of his victory to the governors of the Asiatic and Thracian provinces.

Thus fell, on the 29th May, 1453, the Greek empire, which, under Constantine Palæologus, and his predecessor, had consisted of the only town of Byzanz, and after it had been founded in 1123 by the son of St. Helena.

SUNLIGHT

A BLUE haze in the distance lies,
 The crisp green meadows are newly shorn,
 Cloudlets drift in the Summer skies,
 Birds are loud in the fragrant thorn.

The leaves, like lovers, kiss in the breeze ;
 And over the fields of glossy wheat,
 Like ripples glancing on sunny seas,
 Light winds dance on their fairy feet.

The river, glimmering to the sun,
 Like a forest of Templar lances shows,
 Motionless as a kneeling nun,
 The gray spire shines from cottage rows.

Swifter than swallow down the wind,
 O'er the bridge, and through the vale,
 The engine rushes, and far behind
 Wreaths of luminous vapour sail.

To one long pent in city lane,
 Noting the Spring by slow degrees ;
 Of Summer little but warmth and rain,
 What magic in such morns as these !

The breast expands, as to night dew,
 Wood violets spring in haunts of dove,
 Hope brightens to her brightest hue,
 And the heart glows with faith and love.

R. F. H.

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

BY THE COUNTESS VON LAUENBRÜCK

CHAPTER XVIII.

"HAVE you ever thought about getting married, Helmine? (I may call you Helmine; may I not? And you will call me Hilda. It is absurd to continue 'Frau Gräfin' any longer.) Have you thought about getting married?"

This was certainly a leading question.

"Sometimes," said Helmine, faintly, and dropping her delicately-veined eyelids over her gentle blue eyes, as though she could not face the thought. Her eyelids were so white, so pure, so delicately veined, so transparent, that the violet eyes seemed almost to shine through them; they suggested a new train of thought to Hilda.

"You are very beautiful," she said, taking the young girl's slender white hand within her own; "and you are as good, and pure, and gentle, as you are beautiful, Helmine. You must not ask me *why* I say the things to you that I am going to say; but you must let me say them, and you must not be angry or offended with me."

"No; I will not be angry, or offended, Hilda: but, surely, you can have nothing very terrible to say to me."

"Perhaps it is not terrible; but it is not very pleasant. Let me see: what did I begin by saying?"

"By asking me whether I had ever thought of getting married." As she said it she blushed, and looked like a piece of beautiful tinted Parian.

"Yes; because never marry a man you do not love, Helmine."

"Why should I?" and she opened great eyes of wonder on her cautioner.

"That I cannot tell, nor can you, perhaps, foresee; but never do it, Helmine. It will not only make you wretched; it will make others, like yourself, unutterably miserable."

"Why do you tell me this?"

"You know the French answer to *pourquoi—parceque!*"

"But that conveys no idea to me. I must have the answer hidden within my own breast, or be able to find it in my conscience, in order to make your reply understandable or satisfactory."

"Well, dear—dearest Helmine, I will tell you; but you must promise me first that you will not be offended."

"I promise."

"Ah! you are so good!"

"Pray go on!" There was a touch of impatience in Fraulein von Wolfram's voice.

"Yes; I will go on. Do you think Graf Stralenheim very handsome?"

"Yes."

"But of course no one could help doing so. Do you think him very fascinating?"

"I think him agreeable."

"How guarded you are in your replies!"

"No; I am perfectly truthful."

"Well, Helmine, I scarcely need ask you whether you find him so. He is acknowledged by all the world to be handsome and clever; but he is (and this all the world does not know) as cowardly and unscrupulous as he is talented and good-looking. I know it, Helmine; and I venture to warn you against him. I know it; and I know how wretched he would make any woman who was his wife; how evil his wickedness is, and how horrible a contrast to your angelic purity and innocence."

"And yet, Gräfin Hilda, you have seemed to take great and constant pleasure in Graf Stralenheim's society."

"Have *seemed*?" You are right, but it was only seeming; and if you do not love him, this can matter but little to you, though I may live to repent it bitterly."

"That you shall!" muttered a voice from behind a large Indian screen that was drawn across the lower end of the billiard-room, where the two girls were sitting.

"I have thought, Helmine, that Karl had a deeper and more absorbing feeling for you than you have seemed to notice. You do not know Karl as he was. Before you came he was restless, moody, dissatisfied. Now, if he can only see you, he seems happy. He looks at you with a mute admiration that is far more eloquent than all Graf Stralenheim's flatteries can be to such an one as you. He is good and noble, Helmine, and he loves you—I am sure of it—with a great and noble love—with a love that is worthy of you."

"Did Count Karl tell you to say this to me?"

"Never! He has never spoken to me on the subject. What I say, I say of my own accord, and on my own responsibility. I have sometimes thought that you liked him, too; but whether you like him or no, I do not inquire. I only venture to warn you against Graf Stralenheim, because I know how dangerous he is—how utterly unworthy of you."

There was mistrust in Helmine's lovely eyes.

"You are very kind," she said, "but I scarcely know that the caution is necessary."

"Thank heaven, if it is not!" Hilda answered, earnestly. Ah, she little thought what a different tale had been poured into Helmine's ear that very morning! "You are offended with me, I am afraid," she said, going towards her fair guest. "I am unhappy, Helmine, but I am not selfish; I could not bear to see your life, which may be so beautiful in the bright future, sacrificed for want of a few courageous words."

"Thank you!" Helmine said again, gently, but coldly. Indeed, there had been no cordiality in either voice or manner during the whole interview. "Thank you! I think I will go down to Countess Lauenbrück; she is waiting for me in the orangery."

"I brought you here because I knew we should be undisturbed. I saw all the gentlemen go out with their guns half an hour ago. No one else ever comes up here."

"Pray do not apologise! I have been very happy to come."

"Then let us go down this way. There is a narrow staircase which leads directly into the orangery." As Hilda spoke, she moved towards the Indian screen; but the next instant, with a startled exclamation, she sprang back.

"Herr Graf!"

"Frau Gräfin!"

Count Stralenheim stood before her. An evil expression was in his eye, but he was calm and courteous as ever.

"You have overheard our conversation?"

"Every syllable of it."

"Then I may add eaves-dropping to the list of your virtues, Graf Stralenheim!"

"And I calumny—calumny as gross and vile as ever perjured false feminine lips uttered—to yours!"

"I am sorry, very sorry, Herr Graf, that you should have overheard my strictures upon yourself; but I cannot admit that they are perjuries."

"It scarcely needs any comment from me, I think, to convince you, Fraulein von Wolfram, that Gräfin Hilda's allegations are the fictions of an overheated fancy, of disappointed vanity, culminating in a desire for revenge."

"You must let me go, Herr Graf; I cannot listen to such language as this; I am Graf Lauenbrück's guest."

"Not until you have heard me—not until I have justified myself." Gräfin Hilda thought fit to tell her poor, good-natured fool of a husband, when she accepted him, that she had refused me. There was some slight discrepancy in the statement, since I had never offered to her. On my arrival here, I found her quite willing to forget any former pique that she might have ever had against me. I found her also much improved—far handsomer, far more fas-

cinating, than she had been in the old days at B——.” (He spoke of her in a slighting, indifferent manner, as though she were miles and miles away, taking no note of the cruel pallor that was spreading from cheek to brow, blanching her parted lips, as she stood, like some beautiful statue, making no sign, uttering no sound.) “I found her,” he continued, with studied carelessness, “surrounded by love and affection; I saw Zulau at her feet, and I laid myself also there, her devoted slave, the humblest of her adorers. She had long since wearied of her good-natured husband. She had turned him off, and he had sought and found consolation elsewhere.” A spasm of pain contracted the muscles of Hilda’s face, but she never offered to interrupt. “I did what any other man would have done in my place,” he continued. “I humoured her in every caprice; I fooled her to the top of her bent. On the very night of our theatricals, I was told that her husband had publicly pitied me, calling me a ‘poor devil’ for my pains, and relating the history of my imaginary discomfiture, when he had won the prize I had been so anxious to secure. The cases are reversed now; it is I who might apply the same obliging epithets to him; but I will refrain from doing so. On that same night I saw you, in your perfect beauty, in your simplicity, and intelligence, and I felt that my heart was irretrievably lost.” A movement from the lovely Helmine for a moment arrested him, but she spoke no word. “I flirted with Graf Hilda, but, as I told you this morning, I did so as a blind. I was determined that what love and patience could do, my love and patience should effect. I betrayed myself. In spite of all my resolutions, jealousy crept in—a jealousy adverse to prudence. It left me no peace, no calm. I dreaded rivalry, I was suspicious of all who approached you, envious of the flower in your hair, of the jewel at your throat. Graf Hilda was not slow to see this. Revenge is sweet—especially to women—and she has sought her vengeance, and found——”

But Hilda was spared the humiliation of hearing any more. The door opened, and Fritz, gun in hand, ran into the room. “Why, Stralenheim,” he said, “what a time you’ve been finding that rifle! I’ve come back to look for you; all the other fellows have gone on.”

No one spoke.

“Haven’t you found it yet? Perhaps Karl has taken it downstairs.”

The poor fellow was searching in all the corners of the room whilst he spoke, and did not notice the silence which greeted his words. But, at length, looking up—“Good God, Hilda!” he said, “what’s the matter with you?”

“Fritz—Fritz, *you* will believe me; you are true yourself; you are just! I have been foolish and wild, Fritz, but I have not been wicked. I only wanted to warn her. She is good; she is beautiful; she does not know him. Does not know how he came with his gentle voice, and flattering ways, and made me believe that he had been misrepresented, and that he had loved me long ago; and that I had cast a shadow over his whole life; does not know how he breathed suspicion into my soul with words that scarcely were words, and yet were so full of poison and bitterness that they almost drove me mad; does not, cannot know, how, lest he should think I was a deserted wife, pining after a truant husband, I laughed, and talked, and flirted, though my heart was breaking! Does not know how, when all else were entranced, enraptured with her beauty, he called her purity ‘insipidity,’ and declared that she was tiresome beyond expression! Oh, Fritz! why do I tell you this? Why, but because you may still save her. I know other things,” she added; “but I will not tell them to you now. I may have been—I *have* been wrong, dear Fritz; but I have not meant to be wicked. I thought you did not care; and I forgot that I ought to care, whether you did so or not!”

She moved a step nearer towards him, tottering as she did so.

“Sit down, Hilda,” said her husband; but he did not offer her a seat. “Allow me to take you to my mother, Fraulein von Wolfram. Count Stralenheim, you are my guest; the laws of hospitality are sacred.”

Then Graf Stralenheim had walked out of the room, casting a defiant glance at Hilda as he passed her, and Fritz had followed with the beautiful Helmine on his arm.

“I should be obliged by your mentioning nothing of this to my mother,” he said, as they went down the broad stone staircase.

“Certainly not,” she answered. And then there had been silence between them. After that Fritz went to his own room; to that peculiar *sanctum sanctorum* so full of his whips and guns, and sporting paraphernalia. Hilda had often laughed at him about his room, declaring it was Gothic beyond the possibility of barbarism; but when she had been in a specially gracious mood, she would come and have tea with him here, still laughing, it is true, at his peculiar proclivities; but showing a negative interest in his tastes and pursuits, by that very laughter which had been as music in his ears. Now all that was for ever over. Those times seemed so remote now, that they faded away into immeasurable distance, like the days of early, early childhood; those days that “never can return.” How happy he seemed to have been in those days! how full of life and hope! Now, indeed—and poor Fritz looked mournfully round the room—now, and what might come

afterwards! Then he laid himself down on the great leathern sofa, and began to think of those old days over again, until they seemed so remote and so marvellously happy that he quite forgot his present troubles in contemplating these. But presently he woke up to the fact that it was not so long ago since they had been realities; and then he put his curly head down upon the sofa again, and wept.

After a time Fritz got up. The early autumnal night had come. The room was dark. "Where is Hilda?" he thought, and then he went to seek her. Not in her pretty drawing-room; not in the boudoir; not in her bedroom did he find her; but in the billiard-room, where she had dropped into the chair (which no one had offered her), after her wild appeal to him. There she still sat, speechless, tearless, rigid.

"You had better go to bed, Hilda."

Then she rose and went into her bedroom. No word, no touch, no familiar gesture. He had recommended her to go to her room, and she had gone, passive and obedient. But Fritz found no fault with this. His mind was full of what he had to say to Graf Stralenheim, and he found the one subject enough for the present.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT was he to say to Graf Stralenheim?

What, indeed? The problem might have puzzled an acuter brain than poor Fritz Lauenbrück's; and he was therefore greatly troubled in his mind. Yet it was scarcely a case in which he could ask for advice. Stralenheim was his own, his father's guest; therefore every law of honour and hospitality forbade Fritz's fixing any quarrel on that gentleman so long as he remained under their roof. But, then, had he not forgotten all the traditions of friendship? Had he not, by Hilda's own confession, sought to tempt her from her duty as a wife? Had he not imputed unworthy conduct to him (Fritz)?—conduct so unworthy that the poor fellow felt an inward rage rise up in his heart, coupled with a desire for vengeance, highly inimical to all his prudent resolutions? But then, again—and he winced at the remembrance—had not Hilda openly encouraged Graf Stralenheim's attentions? Had she not flirted with him to a degree that had caused his mother to look grave, and his father serious, and had made poor Zulau retire from the field in a state of despondency that would have been touching, but that its sublimity of despair verged on the ridiculous? Had not that gallant officer's respectful adoration faded away into mild insignificance before the gay Austrian's honeyed flatteries and elegant compliments? Fritz had not heard Stralenheim's words of bitter contempt towards

Hilda; but he had comprehended from her passionate appeal to him—(to him, the despised, neglected Fritz!)—he had understood that all the woman in her had been roused, outraged, insulted. Should any man insult his wife with impunity? Never! Let the laws of hospitality and the fictions of honour be what they might, and yet—and yet—and poor Fritz's heart sickened within him at the thought—was *he* the one to defend his wife's honour?—could he without making himself eternally ridiculous, call out a man who, for weeks past, had been smiled upon with favour, consulted, cajoled, flattered? He groaned aloud. Why had he not spoken? Why had he let her go on? Why had he not appealed to her good sense, to her pride, to her self-respect, where he could not appeal to her love, to her affection? But, no; it would have seemed like distrust, like jealousy, like suspicion. And he had never distrusted her. Had she not taken him, when she was free to choose, and rejected Stralenheim? That it had been an unlucky choice (for her) poor Fritz, in his humility, was open to confess; but that was all the more reason why he should not watch and control her actions; that was all the more reason for him to show no meanness, or envy, or jealousy of such an old friend, and such a gay, clever, handsome fellow as Stralenheim. What had brought about this rupture? In spite of himself, the answer came, involuntarily, sharply, painfully—jealousy, Hilda was jealous. She had seen Stralenheim's attentions to Fräulein von Wolfram, and had tried to prejudice that young lady against him; had forgotten herself so far as to repeat his disparaging remarks on Helmine's beauty; had, with utterly illogical anger, sought to impute every bad quality to a man whom she had, to say the least of it, distinguished with her highest regard for some weeks. How the scene had come about—whether Stralenheim had gone back on purpose to speak to one or other of the ladies; whether Hilda had reproached him, or Fräulein von Wolfram had rejected his addresses on account of communications made to her by his wife, poor Fritz did not know—did not care; he only felt that he had been lowered and degraded through his wife; that his wife, against whom, even in this hour of darkness and misery, he had no bitter thought—that his wife had been also lowered and degraded in the eyes of a young lady who, being herself the object of Graf Stralenheim's attentions, would be disposed to side against her poor foolish rival, and, with feminine small-mindedness, rejoice, rather than otherwise, in Hilda's humiliation. These thoughts, and many others, passed through poor Fritz's perplexed and puzzled brain, as he strode angrily along the leaf-bestrewn paths, down the gloomy avenue, out into the dark downs beyond. It was now six o'clock; he need not be home till eight, the usual supper-time.

Suddenly a thought struck him. Had not Hilda said that Graf Stralenheim had imputed unworthy motives to him? had sneered humiliating implications as to the causes of his frequent absence at X——? had covertly taunted Hilda with her little influence and short-lived supremacy? As he thought of this, the veins in Fritz's forehead became swollen and knotted like so many cords, and an energetic curse, short, sharp, and incisive, burst from his lips. "The hound!" he muttered between his teeth, "the false, mean, lying hound! But so much the better! Her name need never be mentioned; this will be an ample pretext for calling him out, and shooting him like the sneaking cur he is. Her name need never be mentioned. After what has passed, he cannot, of very decency, remain at Lauenbrück. I will go this very night to X——. Zulau shall be my second; he shall meet him on the first stage of his journey hence, and arrange all preliminaries; the rest can be easily settled. Thank heaven! her name need never be mentioned; my poor foolish Hilda is safe!"

The bitter, autumnal blast swept through the leafless branches; the sea murmured its monotonous murmur, the road was dark and gloomy, the past full of bitterness, the future without hope, and yet Fritz gave a sigh of relief, and grew almost cheerful. He had arrived at a definite conclusion; he was no longer tossed hither and thither on the waves of doubt and uncertainty; his mind was made up; his course clear before him, and, according to his light, he was ready to act for the best. The influences under which he had grown up, the customs of the country in which he lived, the tradition of honour in vogue amongst the gentlemen with whom he associated, all pointed to one course of action as the only way open to him of avenging his insulted honour. That he was able so to avenge it without making his fair young wife's name the text for a dispute, was a subject of such joy to the honest-hearted fellow, that he now turned on his homeward way almost "rejoicing," and gaily whistling as he walked up the avenue, and making for the forester's house, entered without ceremony, no one surer of a hearty welcome.

"I have come for an hour's chat with you, Herr Förster," he said, cheerily. "I am obliged to go to X—— late to-night or early to-morrow morning, and I wanted to speak a word about the new preserves in the Thiergarten. Herr Franz," he said, calling the little "infant Bacchus" of Fraulein Eckstein's "polterbend" towards him, "take these few lines up to the Schloss; and say I am going to have supper with your father, but will be in Count Lauenbrücks' study about ten, if he can speak to me then." Franz withdrew, greatly pleased to act as amateur postman; for all the children about the place loved Fritz, and liked to serve him, in return for the marbles and lollypops they periodically received at his

hands. "I can't break bread and eat salt with that —— scoundrel again," Fritz had said to himself, thinking of Stralenheim; and then he had settled down to an hour's chat with the forester, and had forgotten all about his troubles, or would have forgotten all about them, but that every now and then a contraction of the heart, and a sudden impulse of fierce animal anger, made him remember that vengeance was near. About half-past nine, Fritz went across to the Schloss, and, passing through the hall, entered the drawing-room. He did not wish to see Hilda alone; he would see her there, and would say good-bye to her then; and if he never saw her again, her last remembrance of him should be the kiss of forgiveness and confidence that he would give her. He wanted no explanation—his purpose was definite, fixed, and settled. Why enter into unnecessary retrospections? Thus with a cheery step and a light in his eyes, Fritz entered the drawing-room. His mother sat reading at a small table, alone. Hugo, Karl, and Fraulein von Wolfram were grouped round another, but somewhat larger table at a little distance. The light shone upon Helmine's lovely golden hair, through which a blue ribbon was run; at her bosom she wore a bunch of exquisite pink roses; her white hands were, as usual, occupied with some feminine confection in the shape of fancy-work, and Hugo was looking at her with the delighted gaze of a child inspecting some new toy or marvellous picture. Max was absent; absent also Graf Stralenheim and Hilda.

"Is that you, Fritz?" asked the Countess, turning round and shutting up her book.

"Yes, mother."

"I am so glad you have come in, dear; we are quite a small party, and there is news to tell you."

"News?"

"Yes. Firstly, by this evening's post, Graf Stralenheim has received letters which will oblige him to leave us early to-morrow morning." As she said this, the Countess glanced towards Helmine, but that young lady was counting her stitches, and therefore in a state of suspended animation.

"Ah! and what other news?" (for this was scarcely news to Fritz).

"You insatiate monster, is not that enough? But I will tell you the next. Uncle Halford has left Mabel and Cuthbert a little fortune, and Mabel is now in her room, writing to her husband to come and fetch her instantly. I believe she is quite tired of us!"

"Where is Hilda?"

"Hilda is lying down, dear. She sent word that she had a bad headache, and would not come to supper; but I had some tea taken

to her, and she then said that she would try to go to sleep, and did not wish to be disturbed."

"And Max?"

"Max was to help Graf Stralenheim to pack, and then they were to have a farewell game of billiards."

"Max is too fond of billiards."

"Well, he must have some amusement; and they play for such trifling sums, that it is really a very innocent pastime."

Fritz sighed. He wanted to have seen Hilda, but he would not go up to her; she was asleep, and it would be cruelty to disturb her; besides, he would not trust himself to see her alone. His mother evidently knew nothing; Stralenheim had employed the stereotyped excuse that every one else, under similar circumstances, makes, of "letters, pressing business," &c., &c., &c. The lovely Helmine had evidently been as good as her word, and nothing had transpired. So far, so well. He rose to go to his father. "Good night, mother!" he said, and kissed her. Poor mother! she little dreamt that that might be the last kiss her firstborn should ever give her with earthly lips. "Good night, Fräulein von Wolfram!" Then Fraulein von Wolfram had arisen, oblivious of the cotton that she was torturing into occult shapes, and had come towards him, and had cordially given him her white hand; and Fritz had understood that she was his friend, and that she pledged herself to discretion and silence, and he had bent and kissed the narrow white fingers, in token of his gratitude and respect. "Good night, Hugo!" and Fritz, after the custom of his people, kissed his young brother, "as one that goeth on a journey into a far country." A few words he said to Karl, and Karl replied that he would look into the smoking-room in an hour's time. But he said no word, from first to last, of his journey to X——.

CHAPTER XX.

"Father, I am going to X—— to-night!"

"To-night? What has happened to call you there?"

"I cannot tell you; but I must go."

"Why not go to-morrow; Stralenheim will then be also going, and you can drive him over."

Then Graf Lauenbrück turned and looked upon his son, as though a sudden thought had struck him, and he sought to read its confirmation in his face. But Fritz's face was impassive.

"Are you going on that old business? I thought it had been settled?"

"No; I am going on other business this time—on business of

my own, father. I have not mentioned the fact of my going in the drawing-room, but I thought it better to tell you of it."

"Does Hilda know?"

"Hilda is asleep."

Then there had been a pause of some minutes. After a time, however, Graf Lauenbrück had broken the silence, and had spoken words of counsel and advice to his son; and after another pause, Fritz had spoken. "I see all that," he had said, sorrowfully; "but I did not see it then, and now it is too late; Karl imposed the strictest secrecy upon me, and he was right. Women do gossip—and gossip was, above all things, to be avoided; I must not betray his confidence;—and, indeed, I do not think Hilda has any such suspicions as you fancy;" for Graf Lauenbrück had been telling his son that his frequent absences at X—— had caused remark, and that his reputation had not profited by the fact of his drag having been seen before Fräulein Eckstein's door more than once of late. Fritz had answered all this very wearily; what the gossips of X—— said seemed so indifferent to him now—so utterly indifferent and void of meaning. His father observed this, and stopped. Then, after a moment's hesitation—

"I am not altogether sorry that Stralenheim is going," he said.

"Curse him!" Fritz replied. Then the door had opened, and admitted Karl. An hour later the uncle and nephew parted. The interview had been a long one. Fritz had told everything, but had bound Graf Karl down to secrecy: a bright feverish spot was burning on the invalid's cheek, and there were tears in his blue eyes.

"You are a noble fellow, Fritz!" he said, grasping the young man's hand. "Tell her everything; as for that devil incarnate of a Stralenheim, I wish I could go out with him myself; but I was too closely winged in my last little game of the kind to be able to hold a pistol. I could have insulted him any time the last three weeks on my own account, with the greatest possible pleasure, but that I knew I could not 'give him satisfaction.' Give him no quarter. I don't say kill the black-hearted devil, but let him have a reminder on my account, if not on your own."

Then the two had parted, and Fritz had sat down to write the letter, which, in the event of his falling, Karl had undertaken to deliver to his wife. But before he finally settled down to trace those last words to poor unconscious Hilda, an impulse of generous affection, true to its own faithful character, drove the young husband to go and look once more at his unhappy wife; to press the kiss of peace upon her fair brow. He stole noiselessly into the room. A lamp stood on the table by the bedside; the curtain was

drawn between the light and the sleeper's eyes. She had thrown herself on the bed in the light blue dress that she had worn all day ; it was unfastened at the throat, and a blue velvet ribbon, on which hung a locket, containing Fritz's portrait, and a lock of his hair, met his eye. "She is incapable of falsehood," he said to himself ; "and if she has been foolish, it is I who have been to blame." Then he took the lamp in his hand, and so held it that the light fell on her face. She turned and murmured in her troubled sleep ; but it was his name that she had muttered, and tears stood in the poor fellow's eyes. How beautiful she looked ! The golden-brown hair lay tossed in cloudy luxuriance about the pillow ; the brightest rose glowed on her transparent cheeks ; her dark eyelashes cast a shadow round the delicately veined eyelids. "I should like to kiss her just once more," he thought, but feared to wake her. Then he sat the lamp down on the table again, paused for a moment, looked round, and then knelt down by the bedside. Only for a minute did he so kneel ; the next, his lips lightly rested on her forehead. "God bless you, my poor darling !" he said, and went away—away into the dark cold rooms beyond, which, like his fate, were waiting to receive him ; all that was bright and beautiful, and warm, and light, and cheerful, lay far behind him now—far behind, like some blessed dream, like some rosy memory, impossible—and gone. In the ante-room he met Hilda's maid. "You had better attend to your mistress," he said ; "she is not well, and may require your assistance."

After that there was nothing more for him to do but to write his letter, and put it in the place agreed upon between them, where Karl should find it in the event of its being necessary he should deliver it.

He wrote—

"DEAREST HILDA,—For you are, and ever have been, the dearest thing to me in the world. I am going to leave you, perhaps for ever ; at any rate, if you ever should read these lines, it will have been for ever, and so I need scarcely tell you that every word I say is strictly true. I have just been to kiss you, Hilda, but you did not feel my kiss ; you were asleep, but I saw my portrait round your neck, and when I saw that, any lingering doubts I may have had were dispelled in a moment, and I knew that you had been faithful to me. I have not asked any explanations of you, dearest, because I do not need any. Whatever appearances may seem to say against you, I believe nothing but to your honour and credit ; I admit no moment's doubt as to your truth and faith. But I, dearest Hilda, have some confessions to make ; I have to beg your pardon, my dear, for remaining silent when I might have spoken, when, by speaking, a great deal might have been averted which, I fear, is inevitable now.

"How I have loved you, dearest, you cannot know, because I am not

a fellow to be able to make you understand this. But all the words which I might have spoken, had it been given to me to speak such words well and gracefully, have lain buried in my heart, like seeds in the earth, growing and gathering strength by their very silence, and bringing forth fruit. I have never thought much of myself, dear Hilda—never but once, and that was on the day you accepted me. I cannot tell you now what I thought on that day, and I shall never be able to tell you—for if ever you read this, my dear, I shall be dead, and gone to a place where I shall be silent enough for some time to come. But I hadn't been married long, dear, before I saw how I bored you. How you sent me about on messages, and liked me to go out, promoting my amusements though you had none of your own! and I soon found out it was so that I should not see how I tired you. Sometimes I longed for you to quarrel with me, dearest, but you never would. 'I am not even worth quarrelling with,' I thought, and then I would go out on longer expeditions than ever. But you never complained; you preferred being alone. I saw that, and I left you alone. Sometimes I felt angry, but most times I was only sorry, and would have laid down my neck for your little feet to trample upon, and have kissed your shadow as it passed, and endured all sorrows for you, and even borne the pain with delight. But that could do no good; so, though I left off boring you, dear Hilda, I went on loving you. Do you remember the night we went to Arvenshagen, and Karl sang that song about the beautiful woman who had poisoned him with the tears from her glorious eyes? Do you remember his being brought back for dead from X—, and how you refused to kiss me because of my hands? Well, he had fought a duel with Major von P—, the Grand Duke's adjutant, about the Eckstein, and P— had got off unscathed, and poor Karl was nearly killed. By degrees he told me all about it—told me how madly in love with the Eckstein he had been; how Von P— had persecuted her with his attentions; how it was whispered that the Grand Duke himself had sent her magnificent presents; but how she had denied the truth of all this to him. Karl's madness had reached such a height that he believed her an angel of virtue and purity, and he had promised to marry her. These terrible rumours had reached his ears, and in an agony of jealousy he had sworn he would see before he believed; but that, if he were once convinced, he should also be for ever cured. Boasts of Von P— met his ears; he went to X—, and you know the result of that visit. Whether Von P— fought on his own, or on the Grand Duke's account, does not much matter. It was impossible for my father to appear in the matter. The house of Lauenbrück has always stood well with the Grand Ducal house of X—. I volunteered to break off the marriage, and to get Fraulein Eckstein to relinquish her claim to the settlements that had been made upon her (for, in his infatuation, Karl had been mad enough to settle all his small fortune upon her). But there was some difficulty in effecting this. Fraulein Eckstein made it a point of honour to persist in considering herself the affianced of Karl. She protested her innocence, forbade Von P— the house, and declared that the diamond bracelet which the Grand Duke had sent her was simply an acknowledge-

ment of her merits as an *artiste*. Karl believed none of this; he had seen too much; and he bade me say he would never see *her* again. When the Grand Duke and Von P—— came to the *chasses*, you will remember that Karl was too ill to appear. Your observations about the Eckstein, on the night of your private theatricals, petrified everybody; all eyes turned towards the Grand Duke, whose name you so boldly coupled with hers, and every one felt embarrassed and uncomfortable. I cannot tell you what I felt; all the world at X—— knew the history of the duel, though it was prudent for us here at Lauenbrück to ignore it. But, Hilda—dearest Hilda, perhaps—who knows?—you made that observation out of—may I say jealousy, pique? I do not think so; but an observation which my father made to me to-night, has suggested the possibility of my frequent visits to X—— having annoyed you. This would never have occurred to me; I am not vain, Hilda, and your manner has never been such as to lead me to imagine jealousy on your part possible; but I mention this because, as a dying man, I tell you all my dying thoughts. I knew how I loved you, and I forgot how little you could know it. In the Eckstein I only saw a beautiful fiend. I was glad to get away from her, to return to the atmosphere of purity that surrounded you, dearest; and yet I almost feared to sully that purity, coming from her presence, tainted, as it was, by every low passion and unscrupulous design. It seems sad—terribly, horribly sad—that the last words I shall, perhaps, ever speak to you should be on such subjects as these; but I have asked Karl, and he has given me permission to tell you everything, and I do not want you to think badly of me when I am gone. To-day, in the presence of Fraulein von Wolfram, it was very terrible to me to hear those accusations; but in her presence, it was doubly incumbent on me to hear them in silence, for—as you must know, dearest—Karl loves her, though he does not think it would be right to speak to her yet. I could only have cleared myself at his expense, and perhaps have ruined his prospects, and broken her heart for ever. I do not believe she cares for Stralenheim. There! I have written his name. He is a black-hearted devil. Your name will never be mentioned between us. Our quarrel is concerning certain mis-statements he has made, seriously affecting my honour. My father and mother love, and will take care of you, darling; Max will be my successor; Karl will be like a brother to you. And now I must say ‘Good-bye!’ I have never written you so long a letter before; it is the first and the last; yours, and a lock of your hair which you once gave me, but which I have worn ever since, will be buried with me. Good-bye, my dearest; it would be much harder to die if I could think I had ever made you happy. It was not quite my fault; but I ought to have seen you were not meant for a fellow like me. How could I see it, having such a chance? My last dying prayer shall be for your future happiness, my darling. Forgive me for all that I have done displeasing to you.

“Good-bye, my best and only love, be happy, and think sometimes of
“FRITZ.”

He laid down the pen. He had never written such a long letter in his life. The door opened, and Karl came in.

"Good heavens! Karl, what are you doing here at this time of night? You are wasting your beauty-sleep."

"Never mind about my beauty-sleep, old fellow," Count Karl said, affectionately; "I could not leave you sitting here alone."

"The carriage will soon come round; I ordered it at one o'clock."

Then there was a pause.

"Have you anything more to say, Fritz?"

"Nothing. I have written *everything* to her. Her name must never be mentioned in the matter. You know your lesson?"

"Of course."

"And stay—there's one thing more; say 'Good-bye!' to Max for me. I could not go to him—he was with Stralenheim. Tell him my last words were to beg him to give over gambling. I am afraid he is let in very deeply for it again, from something I heard at the mess, at X——, last time I was there. It would break my mother's heart if she knew about it. And, perhaps, now that he will be the eldest son, he will be more reckless than ever."

"I will tell him," said Graf Karl, to whom it was terrible to hear Fritz speaking of himself as though he had ceased to exist; "but you may get off without a scratch, after all, old fellow."

"Stralenheim is not the man to let one off without a scratch."

"Perhaps not; at any rate, give him a souvenir. I shall try my hand at the same game as soon as I can hold a pistol steadily; meanwhile, 'never say die.'"

"There's the carriage!" and Fritz rose to his feet.

"Oh! sir, come to my mistress—she is dying, or out of her mind!"

Fritz, and Karl with him, ran after the frightened maid.

An hour later the carriage went for a second physician to X——, but Fritz was not in it; he was kneeling by his wife's bedside, bathing her hands and face, and murmuring uncouth, unconscious prayers for the doctor's speedy arrival.

THE LADY OF EISENACH

THE story which I am going to relate is one of the many which illustrate the old proverb that "Truth is stranger than fiction." In a beautiful part of Germany, and far from the banks of the Rhine, the old castle of Eisenach was situated, which had been in the family of the Count of H \ddot{e} gel for many generations. It had descended from father to son in unbroken succession; and gloomy as the old walls appeared from the valley beneath, the open-handed hospitality of its owners, and the merry voices of the children who played around its hearth in winter, or in summer on the green lawns which surrounded it, imparted to it a cheerfulness that was never wanting to those who resided there.

It was a prevailing belief in the neighbourhood that an heir would never be wanting to that ancient house; but at the time of which we are speaking the old tradition was at fault, and one girl was the only child of the then reigning count.

Not far from Eisenach Baron Steinhuber resided upon his property, which in former times had been a very sore subject to the owners of Eisenach, who bitterly resented the purchase, which had been made by the Baron's grandfather, of a tract of country which ought to have belonged to the Counts of H \ddot{e} gel. The feud which had existed between the two families had now almost died out, and when the Baroness Steinhuber expired in giving birth to a son, the then reigning Countess of H \ddot{e} gel almost adopted the young baron, whose lonely condition she commiserated, his father having died only a few months before his birth. Baron Steinhuber, who had been always welcome at Eisenach, never married; and when Frederick H \ddot{e} gel became the Count of H \ddot{e} gel and Lord of Eisenach, he absented himself from it altogether, and lived a most secluded life.

The young Countess Louise was the idol of her parents, who devoted themselves to her; and Alfred Reiner, an orphan nephew of the Count's, who was brought up at Eisenach, was her constant companion.

When he was about fifteen, Count Alfred Reiner was sent to college to finish his education, and this was the first grief to cast a shadow over Louise's happy childhood; but the delight of meeting in the holidays almost compensated for the pain of parting.

This cousinly affection did not, however, ripen into love; and when, after a time, Count H \ddot{e} gel determined that his nephew must not waste his youth by remaining longer at Eisenach, and insisted upon his entering the army, though Louise showed that she missed her companion, it was quite evident to her mother that no deeper

passion had taken hold of her. At this time some law business in which they were mutually concerned brought Count H^ögel and Baron Steinhuber together, and the old friends were glad to renew their friendship and talk over past times, when they used to roam together over the woods and plains of Eisenach. The Baron was an agreeable and highly-educated man. His time had not been passed in idleness; and notwithstanding the disparity in their years, Louise seemed to take an interest in his society, and to delight in his conversation. The Baron invariably treated her with the utmost deference, and the Countess H^ögel was glad to find her daughter interested in the society of so superior a person; especially as she had noticed from Louise's listless manner that she missed the companionship of her cousin, and was on that account indisposed to take her wonted exercise. Louise was perhaps flattered, as the young often are, by the attention of one so much her senior; and when the Baron begged the Count and Countess H^ögel to pay him a visit, Louise caught at the idea with gladness.

Her mother having observed the Baron's devoted attention to Louise, spoke to her on the subject; but all her remarks were received with raillery and incredulity, for Louise either could not or would not believe that the Baron could think of her otherwise than as a child.

The report of an intended visit from Alfred Reiner, brought matters to a more speedy termination than could have been expected. The Baron viewed Alfred Reiner's return with some alarm, and sought an interview with Louise, with whom he pleaded earnestly that she would consent to be his wife, after he had clearly ascertained from her that she had not bestowed her affection upon her young cousin. Louise did not give a decided answer, and begged for some delay, on the plea that she could not bear the idea of being separated from her parents. But after a time, as Louise saw the satisfaction with which they viewed the possibility of her union with the Baron, she yielded, and rejoiced that it was in her power to contribute to the happiness of those she loved so fondly.

As soon as Count Alfred Reiner arrived, the news of Louise's projected marriage was broken to him by Count H^ögel. He was incredulous—would not believe that Louise had not been unduly biassed; but at her father's request, he never said a word that could tend to alter her resolution, and merely spoke of it with the interest he must naturally feel in the welfare of one with whom he had been brought up; and when it became certain that it was her own wish to marry Baron Steinhuber, he never made any further allusion to the subject, and left Eisenach, after a sojourn of only a few days.

Louise remonstrated with him for leaving them so abruptly, but he only replied that they should meet before long in Vienna.

“Oh, no,” she replied; “I never mean to leave Eisenach.” Alfred smiled incredulously, and persisted in his conviction that before two years had expired they would meet in Vienna.

After a few weeks, Louise became the wife of Baron Steinhuber. Her mother watched her carefully and anxiously, and saw that she was perfectly contented with her lot. Her new domain, her dependants, her garden, the various improvements which the Baron was continually making, and about which he always consulted her, were a source of never-failing interest. Besides which, scarcely a day passed without a visit to Eisenach, especially as her mother's health became an ever-increasing anxiety, as it was plainly perceptible that the Countess H^ögel would never see another summer. At length, after much suffering, she gradually sank, and when all was over, the violence of Louise's grief was so intense and overpowering, that it alarmed both her father and her husband. When this subsided, it was succeeded by a despondency and gloom, from which it seemed impossible to rouse her. She had lost the great occupation of her life—the brightness had suddenly dropped out of it, and change of scene was pronounced to be absolutely necessary. In spite of Louise's remonstrance, the early spring found them installed in a splendid house in Vienna. Count H^ögel was ordered to some baths in Hungary, and, for the first time for many years, Eisenach was deserted.

Some months elapsed, and change of scene, society, and amusement, produced their natural effect upon Louise. She was admired, courted, and popular. Her cousin, Alfred Reiner, was a continual visitor at the house, and became Louise's constant companion in the gay world, as the Baron disliked society. Two years thus passed away with occasional short visits to the country; for since his wife's death, Count H^ögel never could make up his mind to live at Eisenach. After a lingering illness of some weeks, Count H^ögel died at his daughter's house in Vienna, where Louise had persuaded him to come for medical advice. Deeply attached as she was to her father, his death did not affect her in the same way that her mother's had done; nor did it cause the same blank in her life, as circumstances had separated them so much of late. By his death, she became the sole inheritrix of the broad lands of Eisenach—a splendid dowry; but much as she loved it, she could not make up her mind to live there. Changed and desolate as it must appear to her now, her husband, too, began to show signs of age, and disliked the trouble of moving about. This, combined with a growing taste for the stir and amusement of a town life, kept them mostly in Vienna.

It was at this time that the first cloud that ever darkened Louise's married life appeared. Small, in truth, at first, it slowly and steadily increased. This was, the change that she perceived in

her husband's manner towards her. He was still kind, still considerate; but he seemed constantly dissatisfied, and would sink into long fits of abstraction and melancholy, and avoid her society as much as possible. At first Louise could not believe that her husband's heart could possibly be changed towards her, and imagined herself fanciful; but, by degrees, she became convinced of the truth of her suspicions.

Deeply concerned, as she was sincerely attached to him, she consulted Alfred about it, for whom the Baron had of late conceived a great liking. Her cousin assured her that he had not detected any change in their outward relations, but advised her to speak to her husband, and ask if she had in any way annoyed him.

A trifling incident brought matters to a crisis. One evening she came down dressed for a ball which was to be given in honour of some royal personage.

"So you are going out again?" the Baron said harshly.

Louise was naturally timid; any coldness chilled and depressed her. "There is a ball at Madame de C——'s; but I have no wish to go if you had rather I did not. In fact, I should prefer to stay at home with you, if you will let me."

"Certainly not," he replied, quickly; "old age is intended to be lonely. I do not complain," and he resumed his book, and did not look up again.

Louise appeared grieved, and stood undecided for a few minutes; then, returning to her room, she took off her jewels and ball dress, and glided gently back into her accustomed place. The Baron did not appear to see her, and she occupied herself with her embroidery. At last he closed his book, and, rising from his seat, said, "Louise, why have you done this? Am I a tyrant? God knows my one wish has been that you should be happy."

"And I have been quite happy," she answered, as tears streamed down her face. "My sorrow only arises from thinking that, in some way to me unknown, I displease you. If you would only tell me what it is, it should never happen again."

"I daresay not," he rejoined bitterly. "Slaves obey their masters. If the affection I once hoped for subsisted between us, you would not make my life miserable without knowing the cause."

"Rudolph," she exclaimed, throwing herself at his feet, "what can you mean? I implore you—I beseech you to tell me. Some one has poisoned your mind against me. Oh! if it had but pleased God to give us a child, you would then have been content."

"It is not that, Louise," he said, relenting as he saw her evident grief; "that, as you say, is as God wills. He would give us children if it were for our good. I do not complain. I am far happier than I have any right to expect."

Here their conversation was interrupted by the hasty entrance of Alfred Reiner, who had expected to meet Louise at the ball; and as no one could give him any tidings of her, but, on the contrary, he was himself beset with inquiries as to the possible cause of her absence from such an unusually brilliant *fête*, he had come to inquire if she were ill, or anything unwonted the matter. Louise felt very much annoyed at this intrusive visit, but determined to seek a further explanation as soon as possible. Alfred, surprised at his cousin's evident agitation, but with too much tact to appear to see it, retreated as quickly as he could, wondering greatly at what could be the real reason of Louise's absence from the ball. The next day, before she had had an opportunity of seeing her husband alone, he sent for her to come to him, and then said—

“ Louise, I have been reflecting upon our conversation yesterday, and I am willing to tell you what it is in your conduct that so annoys me. Probably you will look upon it as a weakness; but if you do, in consideration of the kindness I have always shown you, I must beg of you to humour it.”

Louise assured him that she would do all in her power to please him, and only regretted that he had not told her sooner.

“ I was unwilling to spoil any of your enjoyments. Now that I feel my health giving way, I fear I must do so. It is of your late hours that I complain; it is this that makes me miserable. Night after night I lie awake, knowing that you are out, till broken rest has become so much my habit that I seldom close my eyes till daylight. My doctors tell me if this continues it will be my death.”

Louise listened in breathless amazement. “ Does my coming home disturb you? I had no idea of it. I fancied you could not hear me.”

“ Perhaps not; but that makes no difference,” he said impatiently. “ I wish you to make me a promise.”

“ Certainly, if possible; what is it?”

“ It is quite possible—quite easy; it is this: always to be in the house by twelve o'clock.” He paused, and looked earnestly at his wife, who remained silent. “ And further,” he continued in a loud, excited voice, and with a sudden sternness of manner for which she was totally unprepared; “ as your husband, I command it: and if you ever fail in your obedience, if it be but once, and the time exceeded ever so short, the doors of this house will be closed against you for ever—for ever!” he repeated, as he rose to leave the room.

Pale with dismay, astonished and alarmed, Louise promised obedience. The Baron instantly resumed his usual manner, saying—

“Now, then, Louise, we understand each other once for all. This subject need never be again referred to.”

But her husband's unexpected harshness, and the strange command he had impressed upon her, had caused a sudden shock to her nerves from which she could not rally. She grew pale and dissipated, and longed for the quiet of a country life; so they removed to Eisenach, which had remained uninhabited since it came into her possession. There were great rejoicings in the neighbourhood, when it was known that Louise was coming to reside there; and in the warm welcome she received, and the interest and the occupation of her old home, she soon regained her usual spirits. The Baron, too, seemed quite as much attached to her as of old. Alfred had accompanied them, and they were glad of his advice in the management of a property which he had known from a child. But his visit could not be prolonged many weeks, and after his departure some of Louise's former depression seemed creeping over her. Her husband perceived it at once, and watched her anxiously as she sat at the window, pale and listless, gazing over the well-known scenes in which she had passed her happy childhood, that seemed now *so long ago*. Louise felt very old that day. As these and similar thoughts passed through her mind, she started as the Baron laid his hand upon her shoulder, and said, “We will go back to Vienna, Louise. Eisenach has no charms for you now.”

“Indeed it has; I love no place so well; but as one grows older, sad thoughts come more naturally into one's mind.”

“It is quite true,” he said, kindly; “and you miss your cousin. I wonder how it was, Louise, that, brought up as you were with such a handsome youth, he did not win your heart away from all other suitors.”

“Why will you recur to this?” she replied, impatiently. “I have told you before that, except as a cousin, Alfred never could be anything to me. Of course I miss him, but that does not make me wish to leave the country. I care very little where I live,” she added, as a recollection of all she had suffered, and the strange promise that had been extorted from her before she left Vienna, came vividly before her. Her timid nature required all that was genial in order to thrive; she could not bear up against unkindness. The seeds of misunderstanding had been sown between the Baron and herself, and she had not moral courage resolutely to root them up. So they grew till there was a very definite, if an unexpressed, feeling in Louise's heart that she was happier in any other society than that of her husband. This naturally had its effect upon both, and resulted in a speedy return to Vienna. Though the promise Louise had given was never spoken of, she had never for a moment forgotten it; and it weighed so much upon her

mind, that at first she refused all evening engagements. After a time she found herself obliged both to give and accept dinner parties, but her dissipation was restricted to these, and all balls were resolutely declined. Young, lovely, and popular, this gave great dissatisfaction, and Alfred was constantly bringing complaints from the houses she used most to frequent.

"It is useless to tell me this," she would say; "you know why it is; but I should be sorry for the whole world to know the bondage I live in."

Her sweet temper was gradually becoming soured, and she chafed against what she considered such an unreasonable rule being imposed upon her. She obeyed it, however, scrupulously, in spite of the irritation and bitterness that often rankled in her heart. During Louise's absence from Vienna, a new singer had appeared before the public, and the whole world was full of the beauty of her singing and acting, and an opera had been written expressly for her, which had become quite the rage. Alfred had in vain tried to persuade his cousin to accompany him to the theatre. He assured her that it was always over early, and that, at all events, he would bring her home whenever she chose. She was passionately fond of music, so it was real deprivation to her not to go with him; but, partly from nervousness, partly from perverseness, she was inexorable. Her sudden seclusion had caused a great deal of wonder among her acquaintance. Some thought that she had become a devotee, some that she was only capricious, and were accordingly displeased.

One day, after dinner, when Count Reiner was leaving the house, the Baron called him back to look over some papers which had been sent him from Eisenach relating to the property. Alfred hesitated, and asked if it would not do as well in the morning.

"Oh, certainly," said the Baron, with some annoyance; "but I had no idea that your time was so occupied that it was impossible for you to give up one evening."

"It is only this evening that I wish to go."

"Of course," interrupted Louise, "this is the evening of the new opera which entrances all the world."

"I wish it did," he rejoined quickly; "for then I should be able to induce you to go with me."

"Have you never been?" said the Baron, turning to Louise. "Why not? There is time yet. If you can get a box, Alfred, she shall be ready to go with you by the time you return."

"No, indeed," she protested; but Alfred took him at his word, and was gone before she could stop him.

"There can be no reason why you should debar yourself from these pleasures," he said, gravely. "It is my wish you should be

able to go to the opera when you please ; I shall therefore take a box for the season. If you do not use it, I shall know that you prefer to consider yourself a martyr, and to proclaim to the world that your husband is a tyrant. It is perfectly easy for you to have this pleasure, and yet to act in conformity with my wishes."

Louise was afraid to disobey, and with tearful eyes went to prepare herself for the opera. As soon as she was dressed, she found that Alfred was waiting for her ; that he had procured an excellent box, which the Baron begged him, if possible, to engage for the remainder of the season. In spite of the sadness that oppressed her, Louise's delight at the exquisite music was extreme ; it seemed almost more than she could bear. She returned home early, and, finding the Baron still up, thanked him for the pleasure she had enjoyed, and which had far surpassed her expectations.

From this time she was most constant in her attendance at the opera. It seemed to be the only pleasure she cared for. Sometimes she was able to persuade her husband to go with her ; but she usually went alone, and Alfred always joined her there. She was so passionately fond of music, and cared so little in comparison for conversation, that she never gave much encouragement to anyone to come into her box. Occasionally some of Alfred's friends came in to speak to him, but she did not pay much attention to them ; so that one evening, when some one came and beckoned to Alfred to come out, she scarcely noticed it.

Soon after he returned, and said, with a very perturbed expression of countenance, " Louise, I have had a considerable annoyance, and am obliged to go and see someone in the town. I shall not be away half-an-hour. You will not mind being left for that time ? "

Louise, who was absorbed in the music, and scarcely took in his meaning, did not object ; but half-an-hour passed away, and still she was living in her dream-world, — nearly an hour, and the opera was over, and Alfred had never appeared. What could it mean ? Suddenly startled and aroused, Louise looked at her watch. It was half-past eleven. Oh ! how should she get home ? Where was her carriage ? She left the box by herself, and, regardless of the remarks she was causing, stood on the steps of the theatre eagerly asking for it.

No one seemed to have seen either her servants or her carriage. At last some man said the Count Reiner had been seen to get in and drive away more than an hour ago. Utterly at a loss what to do, she stood irresolute. It was much too far for her to walk, even if she could do so in her evening dress. She saw no one that she knew, and the precious minutes were passing away. Suddenly the carriage drove up, and Count Reiner alighted. She sprang in without speaking. Alfred followed her.

“ Oh, what have you done? Tell him to drive fast—faster! How could you take the carriage? I am lost—ruined! My husband will never forgive me!” and her voice was broken by hysterical sobs.

Greatly concerned, Alfred tried to comfort her.

“ My dear Louise!” he said, “ pray be calm. You cannot tell how deeply grieved I am that this should have happened. I found your carriage there, and used it to prevent your being kept waiting. There was some unaccountable delay; the man drove the wrong way. I was miserable when I found it was so late, and heard the clock strike.”

“ It has not struck!” almost shrieked Louise. “ It had not when I got in: I listened for it. It is impossible, Alfred! If it has, I will not go home.”

“ How absurd!” he replied, a little contemptuously. “ Where would you go? Suppose the old gentleman is a little angry, it is surely nothing of such very great importance. He will recover his temper to-morrow. You don't suppose he would carry out such a threat as that?”

Here the carriage stopped suddenly before the gate, which was closed. Alfred looked extremely annoyed.

“ Here, let me out; I will make it right in no time.” But all he succeeded in doing was rousing the porter. He would not open the gates; he said he did not dare; that his orders had been so strict that he could not.

Appalled at the delay, Louise hastily alighted. The man bowed respectfully, but would not open the gate.

“ Martin, let me in. What are you waiting for?”

“ Madam, I dare not. My orders were never to allow the doors to be opened for anyone after midnight.”

“ But for the Baroness,” said Alfred. “ You must open them for her. Of course she was not included in such an order as that.”

“ Yes, sir; she was specially included,” replied the man, in a low voice.

“ But it is preposterous—absurd?” said Alfred, angrily.

“ May be so, sir,” said the man, doggedly; “ but I can't help it.”

Almost frantic with the delay, Louise laid her hand on the servant's arm, and said, with tears in her eyes, “ Martin, I have been a kind mistress to you; have I not? When your children were ill, I nursed them myself. I have often assisted both you and your wife. I beseech you—I implore you to accede to my request.”

Martin said that Madame had always been most kind, and that he was most grateful, but that he should lose his place, and then he and his wife and children might starve.

“Oh! if that is all,” exclaimed Louise, “if such a misfortune happens to you, I will make up for it; I will support you; you shall be better off than you are now. That need not weigh with you for a moment. Count Reiner is my witness that you shall be no loser.”

The man hesitated, touched by Louise’s grief and alarm.

“You will—oh! I see you will!” she cried. “I shall be forever grateful to you, Martin, and God will bless you for it!”

Slowly and reluctantly he unbarred the doors. Louise flew upstairs. The saloons were empty. Before going to her room, she went to her husband’s apartments, and knocked at the door. He did not reply. “How weak and foolish I am,” she thought, “to make things worse than they are! He will be still more angry if I disturb him. To-morrow, I daresay, he will have forgotten it.” In spite of her endeavours to dismiss the subject from her mind, she could not succeed, and though she soon fell asleep from the fatigue and exhaustion her violent agitation had produced, her short and fitful slumbers were constantly broken, and she started up with a sense of impending calamity upon her. The morning light brought some relief to her mind. All the alarm she had suffered the previous night seemed like a bad dream, and she dressed and went down with as much hope as fear fluttering in her heart. After all it was quite possible that the Baron might not know of her disobedience. Martin would conceal it, if possible, for his own sake, and she had not seen any of the other servants. Besides, the whole thing was accidental. She had no intention of being late, and if Alfred had not taken the carriage, she would certainly have been at home before twelve o’clock; therefore the fault was not hers—he would explain, and no one could be so unreasonable as to be angry at an unintentional fault. Still she waited nervously till her husband came down. He was often late, but this day was later than ever.

Breakfast had been waiting long, when Louise inquired if the Baron knew it was ready. A few minutes after his own servant came in to say that he had knocked at his master’s door, which was locked, and could not get any reply, and feared that he might be ill, and he wished for the Baroness’s permission to force open the door. With some hesitation Louise granted it, and waited anxiously for the man’s return, but no one came for some minutes. Then she heard a smothered cry, the sound of many voices, then a sudden silence. She could not bear the suspense any longer, and rushed upstairs, but on the landing her maid met her, and begged her to go downstairs again—Louis was coming to speak to her.

Bewildered and dismayed she went down, and the Baron’s servant followed her. He looked pale and horror-stricken, and closed the door without speaking.

“What is it?” cried Louise, “for God’s sake tell me!”

“It is my master—the Baron;—how can I tell you?”

“He is ill—he is dead! I must know the truth! Let me go to him! Why am I kept away?”

“Madame must hear me,” said Louis, resolutely opposing her leaving the room. “It is but too true—he is no more; but it is not only that, but there is every reason to fear that he has been murdered.”

Louise gazed upon him with eyes that were dilated with horror, but no sound came from her lips.”

“It is but too true, madame—we have sent for a doctor, but life has been long extinct. We have locked up the room, for it is no fit place for you.”

“Count Reiner—Alfred—” Louise faintly articulated, as she fell down in a deep swoon.

All the servants were attached to their kind and gentle mistress. Louis raised her up, and laid her down tenderly on a couch, and summoning her maid, left her to inform Count Reiner of the terrible event that had occurred. In less than half-an-hour he arrived, bringing a commissary of police with him. The doctor said that the Baron must have been dead many hours, and that though there was no trace of any weapon by which the dreadful deed had been committed, it was impossible from the nature of his wounds that he could have inflicted them on himself. It must have been done in the night, and the murderer must have carried off with him everything that could bear evidence of his guilt.

Nothing could exceed the trouble taken by Count Reiner to investigate the mystery, and bring the murderer to light. Every servant was subjected to the strictest examination. Every window and door—even the chimneys—by which any one could have entered or escaped, were closely searched; but all in vain. Not a trace, not a clue was discovered. Louise had fallen into a state of almost stupefaction. She seemed totally stunned by the horror of this awful event; and the idea that her last act had been one that was displeasing to him, fastened itself on her imagination, and she brooded over it night and day.

After the funeral, Alfred begged her to return to Eisenach; but she could not bear to go there alone. He was still so much occupied in endeavouring to pierce through the mystery that hung over the Baron’s death, that he could not accompany her; but he wrote to an aunt of his, who lived at some distance, begging her to come to Vienna, to take charge of his cousin, and to remove her to the country. She was a kind old lady, ready for any work of mercy, and made no objection. The presence of a stranger roused

Louise a little, and in a few days they left Vienna, Count Reiner promising to join them as soon as possible.

Louise had been so much beloved in the neighbourhood, that all her old friends gathered round her; but she repelled their advances, and lived in the strictest seclusion, generally wrapped up in gloomy thought. Madame Schröder, the old lady who had accompanied her to Eisenach, after trying ineffectually to rouse her, was at last obliged to leave her to herself, and, when Count Reiner came, assured him that it was impossible to distract her in any way, and that she believed her presence useless. But he begged her to remain longer with Louise, believing that time alone could restore her peace of mind. By slow degrees he contrived to interest her in the management of her property, and she was always ready with sympathy for sorrow and suffering when brought before her. Madame Schröder thought the life at Eisenach very dull, and would sometimes suggest a return to Vienna; but Louise's evident horror at the very idea of it silenced her.

A year and a half passed in this monotonous manner, the only change being Alfred's visits, which became more and more frequent as he saw that Louise looked forward to his coming, and apparently dreaded his departure. He was extremely popular in society—accomplished, educated, and agreeable; but nowhere did he exercise his powers of fascination so much as at Eisenach, though he had only two women to amuse—one old and commonplace, the other too spiritless and dejected to take much interest in the outer world.

He was of great use to Louise in managing her affairs, which, in truth, she left mostly in his hands. He was a good man of business, and she heard no complaints of his administration. He had given up the army for some months, and had been living mostly at Eisenach, when he, in his turn, became moody and dejected, and sometimes went away for days together, for no apparent reason. Louise spoke anxiously to his aunt, and inquired if she knew the cause of his depression; but she only shrugged her shoulders, and asked how it could be otherwise. Feeling, as she did, really grateful to her cousin for his untiring and unwearying exertions in her behalf, she endeavoured, by every means in her power, to combat his increasing melancholy, and was sitting alone one morning, wondering what could have brought about such a change, when Alfred suddenly entered the room, looking more careworn than ever, and with an open letter in his hand.

She was sitting at the window, and the bright sunlight of a June day was streaming into the room, lighting up the old oak carving, and resting, as if it were a glory, on the young, fair head. There was a sound of bees, a scent of flowers, the song of countless

birds, the rustling of the leaves in the soft wind ; all nature seemed revelling in the glory of a summer day. Louise felt almost light-hearted as she drank in the delicious sights and sounds.

“ I am so glad you are come, Alfred ! it is such a beautiful day, it will do for our excursion to——”

“ I think not,” he replied, gloomily. “ I must go on a very different expedition.”

“ Where ? What can you mean ? Alfred ; you are ill or unhappy, and why don't you tell me what it is ?”

He did not reply, and seemed overcome with emotion.

“ If I thought you cared, Louise, I would tell you.”

“ Not care ! Oh ! Alfred, whom have I on earth to care for but you ?”

He paused a moment, and seemed struggling for mastery over himself.

“ Louise, this letter contains the offer of an appointment—a lucrative appointment in India. Am I to accept it ?”

“ Go to India !” she exclaimed, in dismay. “ No—certainly no. Why should you ? Surely, I have enough for any wants you may have. You know I would gladly give you anything you require.”

Alfred took her hand.

“ Louise, you can't expect me to live much longer in this manner. I have done all I can to cheer you, and to relieve you from any burdens your position might entail upon you, but mortal man can do no more. To live with you, day after day, and be no more than I am to you now, is torture. I love you madly, passionately—you must know that I do ; and therefore I say you are cruel when you say you can give me all I require. Give me this hand—give me yourself, and I will gladly live and die at Eisenach !”

Startled and surprised, Louise hid her face, and remained silent. Alfred had always been so essential to her that life without him was impossible to contemplate ; and yet this was so new, so sudden ! But she felt existence without him was impossible ; he must not leave her—that, at least, was certain.

“ Well, Louise,” he said, bitterly, “ am I not even to have a reply ? I am ready to free you from any annoyance my presence may be ; only speak the word.”

“ Alfred, you are cruel !” she exclaimed, bursting into tears. “ You know I cannot live without you !”

“ Then you will be mine—mine now, and for ever ! There has never been a time when I did not love you beyond all earthly things. Be mine at once, my Louise ! I shall only feel happy when I know that nothing on earth can ever separate us.”

Louise looked up in surprise.

"You may think me unreasonable, perhaps, but I have a presentiment that something will yet part us unless you will consent to marry me at once. No one need be told of our intentions. My aunt is going away next week—we can be married here privately, for I cannot bear to leave you till I have the right to claim you as my own."

"It shall be as you please," murmured Louise, to whom escape from publicity of any kind was a relief. She was surprised at the sudden feeling of relief this gave her—as if the burden of existence had passed on to some one else, and she could once more enjoy life.

Alfred sat down by her, and in the summer sunshine they rejoiced in their love, and in the anticipation of a bright future. He told her that he was going to ask a friend of his, whom he could trust, to marry them, and that they would visit Italy, and travel for some months, and the marriage need not be declared till their return.

All took place as Count Reiner wished, and Louise was happier every day. Nothing could exceed his devotion to her. Every one approved of the marriage, and though Alfred's extreme popularity prevented their leading as secluded a life as Louise would have preferred, still she had nothing to complain of.

Four beautiful children blessed their union. Their life was divided between Eisenach and Vienna, for the place that had belonged to her former husband was left uninhabited, and Louise's life, after so many vicissitudes, seemed to be one long summer day. But this prosperity was not destined to last; it was broken up by a calamity so appalling that it is difficult to imagine any one, and that one a weak and delicate woman, not being crushed to the earth by so fearful and unexpected a shock; and this was the sudden and mysterious disappearance of her husband. They were living in Vienna, and had been to an evening party. Louise was getting into her carriage, when a hand was laid on Count Reiner's shoulder, and a few words were whispered in his ear. He turned deadly pale, and said to the servant, "Beg the Countess to return without me, as I am detained."

Louise thought but little of it. She went home and retired to rest, and as her husband did not return, she imagined that he had come in so late that he was unwilling to disturb her; but when she found the next morning that he had been absent all night, her dismay and alarm could not be exceeded. No one had seen him—no one knew anything of him. She sent to Eisenach, but he was not there. It was as if he had disappeared from the face of the earth.

By-and-bye the mystery was unravelled. A few days before, a respectable-looking man, apparently in bad health, had presented

himself at the palace, and begged for an audience with the Emperor. He refused to declare his errand to any one else, and as the Emperor is accessible, when there is occasion, to the very meanest of his subjects, his request was granted.

Admitted to the royal presence, the man bowed humbly, and said, "Sire, you see before you a dying man. It has been announced to me this day that the disease from which I have been suffering for some time has suddenly assumed a most deadly and malignant form. No human aid can avail me, and the end cannot be far off. Under these circumstances, and as it is now my duty to make the best preparation I can for a death which is fast approaching, I think it incumbent upon me to reveal a most dire and dreadful secret. Your Majesty is acquainted with Count Reiner?"

The Emperor replied that he knew him well, and was not likely to believe anything to his discredit.

"But there is nothing too bad for your Majesty to believe," said the man, in an excited tone. "There is no such cold-hearted villain in your dominions. Does your Majesty remember the murder of Baron Steinhuber?"

"Yes; he was Count Reiner's greatest friend."

"He believed himself to be so; but Count Reiner was his murderer. I saw him do it, and I even assisted at the dreadful deed. Your Majesty does not believe me; but is it likely that a dying man should come before you to increase the load of a guilty life by lying and perjury? I swear it is all true: I can prove it. And there is yet more dark villany to disclose. The young and lovely Baroness Steinhuber, his cousin, whom he persuaded to be his wife, was never married to him. I enacted the part of a clergyman, so she is not his wife, and her children are illegitimate."

Greatly shocked and astonished, the Emperor merely said the matter should be inquired into. Within a week the man was a corpse, but during that time his statements had been strictly inquired into and verified.

With the same dread secrecy with which Count Reiner had committed his awful crime was his punishment inflicted on him. Those few whispered words, the well-known official who had stopped him at Prince C——'s palace, showed him at once that neither resistance nor denial could be of any avail. There was but one person who could have betrayed him; and that was Martin, the Baron's porter. Through his assistance the murder was committed; by his connivance did Count Reiner contrive his stealthy and secret visit to his friend's sleeping-room. It was he who both advised the pretended marriage, and enacted the part of a clergyman on the occasion.

Count Reiner himself had worked upon the old man's jealous temper, and raised suspicions in his mind against his pure and gentle wife; and the strange command he had given her was at Alfred's suggestion, as the only certain means of ensuring sufficient uninterrupted time to commit the dreadful crime.

Before many hours had elapsed the terrible story began to be whispered throughout Vienna. It found its way into every circle, with all the horrible details dwelt upon and enlarged. Throughout society there was but one feeling—horror at the cold-blooded murderer, and entire compassion for his lovely and guiltless wife. The sympathies of all were firmly enlisted on her behalf, who had been doubly the victim of his heartless cruelty. The Emperor showed great consideration for her, and took every pains to secure that the terrible announcement should be made to her in the least painful manner, and before any idle rumours could have brought it to her ears.

While the awful tidings were being gradually broken to Louise, secretly and silently was Count Reiner being carried off to his doom. As soon as he was arrested at ———, he was hurried into a carriage. None replied to his often-repeated question as to where he was being carried, and all through that long and weary night he was left a prey to remorse, and the reflections of his guilty conscience. The early dawn found him swiftly passing through the dark alleys by the side of the Danube, only to emerge from them when he alighted at the gloomy fortress of Spielberg. He knew the dread unfailing justice of the law, and from that hour all hope forsook the unhappy man.

The effect of the awful intelligence upon Louise was rather different than had been expected. Instead of being utterly crushed and overwhelmed by such a fearful blow, her whole mind, true to the instincts of nature, clung to the hope of yet doing the only justice she could to her children, by insisting upon a legal marriage, and securing her fair name. With this single object in view, she sought an audience of the Emperor, and besought him to grant her this boon. Pale and weeping, she threw herself at his feet, and demanded access to the prison, and an interview with him whom she had so long loved and considered as her husband.

The revulsion of feeling was so great that she could not realise the whole tremendous tragedy. The deceit practised upon herself and her children engrossed her mind, and she determined, as far as reparation could be made, to ensure it. Her request was granted, and orders were sent to the Governor of Spielberg to make preparations for the extraordinary event, which was to take place within the prison walls.

Louise went alone. She would have no eye-witness of her shame and grief—no spectator of the broken-hearted agony she

knew she must undergo at the sight of him who was the father of her children, the sharer of her past happy life ; of him who, with all his black and damning guilt, she felt was yet, and must be while life should last, still dear to her. Alone, though shrinking and trembling, she passed those dark portals, and, outwardly calm and collected, passed into the prison. She was received with the deepest sympathy and respect, and was asked to name anything she might especially wish to be done.

“ Only to return as soon as possible,” she said, in a voice which betrayed the deep mental suffering she was undergoing. “ My carriage will wait.”

“ All is arranged, madame, by the Emperor’s orders. There need be no delay ;” and the Governor led the way into a dark and gloomy corridor, which was dimly lighted by men who were stationed at intervals with torches.

At one end a grille was erected, and in front of it an altar covered with black, on which were lights, which only served to show the deep darkness that surrounded her.

Enveloped in a large cloak, her head enshrouded in a thick veil, no one saw the quivering agony of the poor wife’s features, and, happily for her, in that dim light she could not distinguish the abject, craven, and guilty look of him who now presented himself before her to be united to her for the short space of time that must elapse before death should part them for ever. The ceremony over, the Governor approached Louise to conduct her back, when a convulsive movement of the prisoner, manacled as he was, caused him to stop. “ Louise, my wife,” he almost shrieked, “ speak to me ! You must say you forgive me ! Oh, God ! cannot you induce the Emperor to spare my life ! If he will send me to the galleys, to the mines—only not death !”

“ There is no hope of a respite, Count Reiner,” said the Governor, sternly. “ If you have any request or communication to make to the Countess, it must be made at this moment. You cannot be allowed to remain here.”

He was silent, and shrank back, cowering. But Louisa approached him with a firm step, though still keeping her face closely concealed from view, and speaking in a voice hoarse and unnatural from the evident constraint she was putting upon herself.

“ Alfred, from my heart I forgive all you have done to me and mine ! May God forgive you as I do !”

The effort she had made was too much for her strength, and she sank to the ground in a fainting-fit, and in this condition was removed from the prison and placed in her carriage. The Governor judged rightly that the sooner she was removed from the scene that could recal such a terrible trial to her mind the better.

Before many days, Count Reiner met his just doom, and died on the scaffold ; his craven nature clinging to the last to the hope of life. Popular, admired, and feted as he had been, still there were none but his unhappy wife to mourn his loss, for he was a man who had never made a friend.

The second dreadful shock had proved too much for Louise's tender heart, and fragile frame. She remained insensible for hours after her fainting-fit in the prison at Spielberg. Her attendants removed her to the nearest village, and then by short journies to Eisenach ; but a long and serious attack of brain fever was the result of such unnatural tension of mind and fatigue of body ; and for weeks both life and reason hung on a thread. She recovered, but only to a state of broken health and spirits which precluded any society beyond that of her children. She never again crossed the threshold of Eisenach—of that home which had once been so bright to her. She gradually faded, and sank into an early grave, as truly lamented by her dependants as she had been truly loved all through her short and grief-stricken life. Her name is still cherished in her country, and many a kindly act is recorded by some who still remember the broken-hearted Lady of Eisenach.

A LIFE'S MYSTERY

BY CLINTON HOPE

CHAPTER XLVII.

FEARFUL TIDINGS.

ON the ninth day after her confinement, Lady Welgrave was allowed to leave her bed-chamber for her boudoir, where she reclined upon a sofa the greater part of the day, her husband sitting by her side, reading to her, or wiling away the time with easy converse. She looked pale and weak, but yet very lovely; in expression, as in dress, everything became her. Who looked so handsome when, in the flush of health, she was borne along on horseback, her figure seeming even more perfect in its close-fitting habit, and her cheeks receiving a deeper glow from exercise? As, with mingled love and pride, Lord Welgrave had seen her thus, he said she never looked so enchanting; but he formed this opinion only to revoke it when he afterwards followed with his eyes her steps in the dance, affirming in the ecstasy of admiration, that in a ball-room she surpassed herself in witchery. Then again, rapturously, would he gaze upon her when taking part in a conversation, thinking that here her superiority was more displayed than in any other occupation; in short, whatever she did, he was convinced she excelled all others in the performance of it; and decidedly she was now a most captivating invalid. Her pallor and languor would have made her an object of kindly interest to the most hardened and unimpressable person; for in the former there was nothing sickly, and the latter was only that kind of inactivity which takes refuge in postures of unstudied but infinitely graceful ease, and in a laugh and tone more subdued than ordinary. Let her features express love or scorn, joy or sorrow, pity or reproof, they were superlatively beautiful; whether excited by strong passion, or in the repose of thought, the concrete fascination of her face and voice never lost one iota of their power; at all times, and in all seasons, she was, as she was destined to be, the enslaver of every heart, the idol of every mind. Even her deadly foe, Hinda Lyttleton, acknowledged the resistless influence of her charms, and, as a consequence, was at times softened to compassion towards the being she was intent upon destroying. But when did the compunction of one woman for her persecution of another reduce the sum of her vengeance? Though impelled by an irresistible force sometimes to repent of her cruelty, Miss Lyttleton made up for such momentary triumphs of pity by an increased

hatred of her victim. Could Liliás have known, as she passed the days so peacefully in her own room at the Abbey, to what lengths Hinda's revenge had already carried her, all her renewed hopes of future security would have been changed for fierce torments. A fearful price was to be paid for the brief respite she had enjoyed; terrible tidings were on their way to her at the very moment she congratulated herself upon her freedom from fresh troubles. Before the expiration of another day, Liliás received a letter bearing the post-mark of Sedgley, the superscription being in Dr. Darby's handwriting. Fortunately, she was alone when the letter was brought to her, and glad she was that no one was present to surmise a cause, either true or false, for the frightened look that appeared upon her face as she examined it. In her eagerness to open the letter, her fingers trembled so violently that it took more than double the ordinary time to break the seal, tear open the envelope, and unfold the paper it enclosed.

She read as follows:—

Jan. 7, 1855. 11 o'clock A.M.

"MY DEAR LADY WELGRAVE,—I scarcely know how to tell you of a trouble I would gladly longer conceal, if I did not think it would be a greater unkindness to keep it still a secret, than reveal at once the extent of the grief which awaits you.

"Your father was seized with a fit of apoplexy the afternoon before your telegram reached the Hall, and has, till this morning, remained insensible. He has just finished writing a note to you, which I enclose. Do not, however, my dear young friend, let this circumstance inspire you with false hopes; he even now shows symptoms of a relapse, which I fear may prove fatal. If the state of your health will permit, come immediately.

"The cause of the seizure I understand to be the hearing of some dreadful news, which was communicated to him by a lady whom you have every cause to distrust, and against whose machinations you cannot be too much upon your guard. Consolation, under such trying circumstances, I know to be impossible; but I beseech you, dear Liliás, to remember that although you may be bereft of a father, you have still friends who would devote their lives to serve you.—Yours faithfully, CHARLES DARBY.

"P.S.—No improvement has taken place up to the time of writing this."

Having finished reading the doctor's letter, Liliás unfolded the second note, the one from her father. It was written so badly as to be hardly readable; yet she managed to comprehend sufficient to inform her that her father's death-blow had been dealt by Hinda Lyttleton, and that she was not a moment secure from the officers of justice.

Sir Shenton wrote thus:—

"MY DARLING CHILD,—I know all, all you have spent the best portion of your life in efforts to conceal from me. Miss Lyttleton has fathomed

your secret, and will use the power it gives her over you to the utmost. The shock of this discovery will doubtless make you fatherless; but this is a small matter if my loss conduces to your repentance. I forgive you, Liliás; but can you forgive my weakness in leaving you unchecked to your own devices? I should early have sought your confidence, and not given you such full liberty when unable to distinguish between good and evil. God bless you, and help you to act rightly in this dreadful crisis. I dare not advise your flight, and yet cannot bear that the vengeance of so remorseless an enemy be wreaked upon you. I would say more, but I have not strength; the effort to write this is almost too much. Farewell, my child, a last farewell!"

It was at this awful juncture that the innate grandeur of Liliás's soul shone forth in all its native beauty, undefiled by any selfish consideration. No craven fears for her own safety agitated her breast: the consciousness that she might within an hour be dragged before a tribunal to answer for a charge of murder was nothing to her now. What greater misery could the knowledge that her enemy's triumph was complete, and that the schemings of her ambition had been all unable to protect her fatal secret, inflict upon her, when she was called to weep over her parent's expected death? She would be the means of killing her father, who loved her so tenderly, and for whom in return her reverence and affection were immeasurable. Whatever sins might be upon her head, to her must cling everlastingly the guilt of parricide. Could a thousand years be portioned out to her for the period of her life, she could never more know peace; her father might forgive her, but she never could forgive herself.

"Oh, my God!" she cried, "was not the weight of crime heavy enough upon me, but that I must add to it by the murder of my father?"

Never was grief more intense than hers, because never more hopeless. She could not wish her father to live, for the pain of existence must supersede that of death, now that he was convinced of the wickedness of her he had conceived to be so pure.

"No; it is better that I should even have that additional misery," thought Liliás, "than that he should survive to witness the termination of my sad career."

This reflection brought to her mind for the first time since she had read her father's letter the peril that surrounded her. She spent a few moments in thought, during which a resolution of a terrible nature had been formed in her heart: she would leave the Abbey, never more to return. But to insure the success of her plan, it was necessary for her to discard the outward semblance of her agony, and to appear calm as usual. She moved towards the fire, laid Dr. Darby's note upon the burning coals, and watched

till it was devoured by the flames. Having done this, she put her father's letter into the bosom of her dress, and then left the room: her step was firm, and her expression unwavering as she proceeded from the boudoir to the library. She went in search of her husband, but he was not there, and during the time she awaited his return, she unlocked her desk and secured the papers which had lain in the private drawer undisturbed since the night before her marriage. It was not a desire to read them that caused her to remove them from their hiding-place, nor yet was it her design to destroy them; on the contrary, she placed the bag carefully together with the letter she had just been reading, and which conveyed such awful news. The coolness with which she moved about, arranging a book in its proper place, looping up the window curtains, or plucking a dead leaf from a stand of flowers, was perfectly marvellous. A strangely rigid look had settled about her mouth, and a paleness, greater than that of debility, covered her delicate skin; but farther than this, nothing in her appearance denoted the hell that was raging in her bosom.

It would have been impossible to fancy that in her one saw a woman accused, and with the greatest evidence of justice, with the most deadly of crimes—that the beautiful creature, flitting with a girlish vivacity from one trivial occupation to another, was suffering from as deep mental anguish as could well be conceived. She had not yet played out her part; a few more scenes, perhaps, in which she must figure, and then a long, long rest. But till the time appointed for this there must be no flagging in her task; she must smile and sham content to the very last, aye, though she knew the ground beneath her feet was yawning to receive her; that perdition, inevitable perdition, awaited her. Lord Welgrave was not long absent from the library, as he was eager to finish the perusal of a book he had been compelled to leave. He was surprised to find Liliás there, and begged her to return to the boudoir lest she should take cold.

“Why do you fear for me?” his wife inquired; “I am quite well again, well enough even to travel. Henry,” she added, and her voice faltered slightly, only, however, to be quickly steadied by the force of her strong will, “my father is unwell, and has sent for me. I must go to him directly.”

Her husband stared at her aghast.

“Dear Liliás,” he exclaimed, hastily, “you must do no such thing. I will go to him; but I cannot have you risk your health. It is nothing serious, I dare say.”

Liliás shook her head sadly.

“You mistake,” she answered; “it is very serious, I assure you. I am quite able to endure the fatigue, and am resolved to see him.”

“This is very shocking, Liliás! I hoped you were alarming yourself unnecessarily; but since this is not the case, of course, love, you shall go. Pray do not agitate yourself. What time shall you be ready? It will not take me a minute to prepare.”

“I would rather you should let me leave alone,” Lady Welgrave exclaimed, earnestly.

His lordship seemed almost provoked at her persistency, and in a tone of quiet determination rejoined, “I cannot permit you to have your own way: you must not go unprotected, dearest.”

His wife saw it would be useless farther to urge her request, so appeared to concede to his desire; she, however, secretly resolved that she would proceed from the house without him, and, in order to gain time for the safer accomplishment of her design, said she would try and sleep for an hour or two before starting, as this would make her proof against the fatigue of the journey.

Although Lady Welgrave had expressed herself as feeling drowsy, she yet lingered in the room some time after, watching her husband with an interest she had never before experienced for him. It has frequently been stated that Liliás had no love for Lord Welgrave, and perhaps with too great positiveness, for had there been no latent affection lurking in her bosom for him, her gaze could not have been so tender as it was now. She was going away from him secretly, not for a day, a week, or a year, but for ever. She would never look upon his face again, and it was but natural that she should feel a strong regret at the thought of leaving him. She had been all to him that a woman could be to a man, and this she knew full well; he had given her the entire love of his generous soul, and though she could not completely return his affection, she felt, as she stood near him for the last time, that he was far, very far, from being indifferent to her; she even discovered—and with what an increase of torture, now it was too late!—that she might have loved, nay, that she did love him. A look of pain usurped the unnatural calm of her expression as she made this discovery, and, perfectly unable any longer to control her emotion, she hid her face upon his shoulder, and sobbed aloud; nor were her tears restrained. Lord Welgrave knew with what strong tenderness she regarded her father, and was not greatly surprised at this manifestation of grief. Not that it was a common thing for my lady to weep; generally she kept too strict a guard over her feelings to permit them the relief of tears; but being still under the weakening effects of her recent illness, his lordship could not regard with wonder her emotion at hearing of her father's attack. Gently he strove to comfort her, when the first violence of her sorrow had abated, not by instilling hopes of Sir Shenton's recovery, which might be fallacious, but by bringing before her mind the love borne her by others, and the duty she owed to them.

“Remember, my own Liliás,” he said, tenderly, “that another life now depends upon yours—that your child can exist only in you; it is so delicate that there would be little likelihood of its living without the solicitude which can alone emanate from a mother.”

This mention of the babe's dependence upon her, far from imparting the determination to conquer her sorrow, served only to add to it. She had been engrossed so much by thoughts of her father, that she had not till now remembered her child, and the words of her husband, intended to strengthen her, had but the effect of reminding her of what she must lose in flying from her home. Could any position be more deplorable than hers? To stay at the Abbey was to give herself up to the hand of the executioner, to cast upon her husband and innocent child an ineffaceable stigma, and to bestow upon her foe the fierce gratification of seeing her dying hour, not soothed by the attentions of loving friends, but filled by the jeers and execrations of a brutal multitude, to whom the expiation of a dreadful crime by a revolting death is a spectacle that draws forth their unqualified delight. Then, on the other hand, her secret departure from the Abbey must be productive of almost as great misery to herself and friends. Her name could not long be kept pure in the sight of her husband; he would, if he lived after a shock so awful, live but to curse her; and her child (which, even without her care, might reach to womanhood) would have hourly to endure, upon her account, torture of a nature the most refined; would have to blush with shame when the name of her mother was mentioned before her, and pine in secret for the crimes which prevented her from revering her memory. Of the anguish she must herself endure in becoming an exile from all she held dear, Liliás gave little thought; all her grief was for her father, her husband, and her child, over whose lives she had cast a blight not to be erased by time, nor to be wiped out even by death. With a power of imagination so vivid that it might be mistaken for memory, she sketched the dismay of her husband at her loss, to be followed up by a hatred of her very name. She saw her father's corpse carried to the tomb, her child's happiness and prospects blighted, her friends steeped in sorrow and contumely, and all this through her sin. With David she groaned, “On me, Lord, and on me alone, let the punishment fall; let not my shame be reflected upon these guiltless ones.”

When, after repeated and ineffectual struggles for the mastery over her grief, Liliás at length became more composed, her husband besought her to retire to her room, and try to recruit her shattered strength by rest. She raised her head from his shoulder and moved towards the door, as if in compliance with his wish; but she could proceed no farther without coming to give a last look at the man she had wronged so fatally, and whose love for her, till this trying

moment of separation, she had never fully estimated. Lilius returned to her husband's side, placing one hand in his, while with the other she caressingly parted the dark hair from off his thoughtful brow, and looked earnestly into his face. In her gaze there was something so mournful and intent, that Lord Welgrave felt an apprehensive shudder creep over him; but it quickly passed, for he knew not, as Lilius did, that the impression of his features engraved upon her mind in that glance was to be the last—that her cold little hand, timidly clinging to his own as if for protection, would never feel his grasp again, and that the silent kiss she imprinted upon his forehead was destined to be the only touch of those beautiful lips he was ever again to feel. The agony of an eternal parting was spared to him, while to Lilius everything which could possibly conduce to the pain of separation was multiplied. It was not merely the father of her child, her faithful friend and indulgent protector, she was about to forsake, but a lover whose affection she had ever before slighted, and only in the moment of parting comprehended at its full value. Her passion for Owen Arnold had been more what is called love than the feeling she even now bore to her husband; it had been a sentiment wild and tormenting, yet not so firm and powerful as this new love, which she found spring up so suddenly. Had it not been that she meditated a permanent farewell of Lord Welgrave, she might not have learned the extent of her affection for him, which was of a nature so placid and undemonstrative that it required a mighty power to rouse it from its torpor, though when once roused it proved itself to be really more sincere than her devotion for young Arnold had ever been. With what infinite difficulty did Lilius tear herself from the fond embrace in which her husband held her, and shut herself for ever from his sight! Blinded with tears and sick with grief, she went upstairs to prepare for her journey, and take a final good-bye of her sleeping babe. Her parting with the infant she knew must be a painful one, and in order to delay it as long as possible, she allowed herself to take a mute farewell of the elegant and costly ornaments that filled her apartments, and which were all endeared to her by the newly-born attachment she felt for their donor. How numberless were the associations connected with each article! She remembered (and with what self-reproach for the coldness with which she had received the delicate attention) that everything the rooms contained, though selected by her husband, was in accordance with the tastes she had from time to time exhibited; and how he had treasured in his mind the recollection of her every fancy with the design of gratifying it.

“Dear, noble-hearted man,” she cried, as she gave a final glance around the room, ere she left it for the one in which her child lay; “do I but discover your excellence when on the eve of leaving you

for ever? and must my love for you awaken at a time when it can only serve to aggravate my misery?"

The tiny creature was asleep, and, with the glowing shade of the crimson velvet curtain falling upon its face, seemed not the puny thing it really was. Here, at least, the unhappy Liliias need be under no restraint, and clasping the babe to her breast with the energy of frantic sorrow, she showered hot tears upon its face.

"My sweet darling, how can I leave you?" was the cry of her agonised soul, and again the unconscious little being was pressed closer to her heart. The violence of her grief soon aroused the infant, and it set up a feeble, pitious cry that, while it caused Lady Welgrave to stifle her sobs, afflicted her, if possible, the more. In a few moments the crying ceased, and with a smile the babe resumed its slumbers. Liliias laid it back again upon the bed, covered it over with the quilt, and, without hazarding another look, walked, like one bereft of animation, down the stairs and through the garden into the high-road.

It was no time for sentimental regrets: she was compelled by the tide of circumstances to forsake her home, and retrospection would have destroyed the little fortitude that remained to her, and which alone restrained her from returning and throwing herself at the feet of her husband, with the purpose of revealing to him the secrets of her wretched life. Whether this would have been the better course she could not think; an all-powerful impulse guided her to leave her husband, rather than await the vengeance of her accuser under his roof, and her mind was incapable of judging if the impulse were right or wrong. All her consideration was to act so that the smallest share of her degradation and misery should be felt by her friends. She had turned her back upon everything dear to her; was an outcast now, without home or protection, and not at liberty to indulge in fond regrets. Though her limbs tottered beneath her weight, and she felt so faint that she was forced continually to support herself against a tree or gate lest she should fall, she would not have hired a conveyance had there been one within call. The place of her retreat must be hidden, which would not be the case if she employed anyone to drive her to her destination (the railway station). So wearily she walked farther and farther from Welgrave, with no other goal than the one already mentioned. She had an idea that she could not secrete herself near the vicinity of the Abbey, and that a journey by rail was necessary to secure her safety, but beyond this she had no thought or plan.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE RESOLUTION OF DESPAIR.

THE reader, before this, may have been inclined to ask, why a woman so revengefully disposed as Miss Lyttleton should delay the prosecution of her vengeance upon a being she hated with such an intensity, when the power to work her destruction was in her hands. In a few words I will solve the apparent inconsistency.

The unusual excitement Hinda had been subject to for some time previous to the last important discovery rendered her not only more irritable and stern than was common with her, but had likewise robbed her of sleep, and altogether predisposed her to sickness; and when the sudden illness of Sir Shenton followed so closely upon the terrible disclosure made to her by Sarah King's servant, it was not wonderful that, acting upon an impaired constitution, it should have brought on a slow fever, which, for the time, effectually put a stop to her proceedings against Lady Welgrave. Like many strong-minded persons, who loudly declaim against the weakness and wickedness of superstition, she was not, in seasons of physical and mental depression, exempt from spiritual fears, and having, during the first few days of her indisposition, been visited by dreams of an appalling nature, in which the ghost of her brother appeared to rebuke her for her inhumanity to Lilius and Sir Shenton, she began once more to think of relinquishing her cruel designs, and of leaving the punishment of her brother's injuries to a higher power. This half-formed resolution calmed her perturbed spirit, and greatly facilitated her partial recovery. She was soon enabled to write to Mary, relating to her the situation she was placed in, to turn over in her mind the events of the last week, and take a final resolve as to what should be her future career.

Hinda Lyttleton's superstition, as some people's religion, possessed influence only during the time of sickness, so, with little or no hesitation—when again in the possession of comparative health—she resolved to act in accordance with the vow made upon the day of Norman's funeral; and mistaking the energy of her mind for strength of body, she almost exhausted herself in making preparations for a consultation with a lawyer. Her doctor came into the room as in a fainting state she was attempting to fasten her bonnet, before setting out upon her expedition. At sight of this, he peremptorily ordered his patient to undress and go to bed, assuring her that if she neglected his instructions the consequences might be fatal. This had the desired effect, and though disappointed to the last degree at being prevented from commencing proceedings against Lilius, Hinda was forced to submit, and confine herself to her

chamber for many days more. Meanwhile, the object of her pursuit had wandered far from her home, with no other instinct but that of hiding herself from Hinda's fury.

Lady Welgrave's nerves were so completely shattered by what she had undergone in parting with her husband and child, that the train in which she had taken her seat stopped at the London terminus before she had formed any plan for her future actions; vague and unsettled thoughts of distant colonies haunted her brain, but no determination had she as yet arrived at with respect to the course she should adopt. From the moment she stepped into the compartment of the train to the moment she alighted, a dulness, almost amounting to insensibility, had seized upon her faculties. It is true she knew where she was, also that she was not alone, but farther than this her overwrought mind appeared incapable of comprehending. The memory of her miseries faded away, leaving upon her a numbness very like that which sometimes precedes death.

The scream of the engine in stopping, and the emptying of the various carriages, at length aroused her, and with an effort whose feebleness occasioned her surprise, she tried to think what she should do. Somewhere she must go; to none is it permitted to stand still. The "move on" of the policeman is but the echo of progressing nature. However weary and footsore the traveller may be, still the inexorable official bids him "move on;" and so it is in the journey of life; there must be no flagging by the way; the heart may be bruised and bleeding, but it is not permitted to rest; the ground over which our forefathers have travelled must be trodden by us; there is no more sitting upon steps in the highway of life than there is in the thoroughfare of a crowded city. The rough hand of a constable upon the shoulder of a beggar, who has slunk beneath an archway in the hope of resting his tired limbs unmolested, could not be more startling to him than the rush of busy life that awoke Lady Welgrave from her lethargy, and bade her "go about her business." It was in vain her soul replied, "My business is done; I have nothing now to do with the active multitude who swarm around me;" the answer of necessity was unbending in its sternness, and with a faltering step she followed the crowd, unknowing and uncaring what was to become of her.

When fairly out of the station, the mass separated, and again the unhappy Lilius was reminded that every one must choose his own course. She paused for a second to reflect, and then, with a step that showed her to have decided upon some mode of action, she returned to the station.

"When will there be a train starting for Sedgely?" she inquired of a porter.

“In less than ten minutes, ma'am,” the man replied, respectfully. He instinctively acknowledged her sorrow and high birth, and in his heart paid homage to them.

“Can I do anything for you, ma'am?” the porter turned back to say.

“No, thank you,” my lady answered; but to show that she was not insensible to the sympathy which spoke in his face, she gave him a piece of money, and, without waiting to hear his thanks, walked round to the other side of the station. She had still a few moments to spare, and went into the waiting-room to warm herself. As well might she have thought to infuse warmth into the dead as by outward heat to overcome the coldness that tinged her fingernails with purple, and robbed her face of every vestige of colour.

The bell sounded, to warn the passengers of the near departure of the train, and my lady, drawing on her gloves, took her seat amongst the earliest of them. There was in the same carriage with Lilius a very officious personage in a military undress, who, seeing a lady of her appearance travelling alone, considered her to be an excellent subject for his very gallant attentions; but Lady Welgrave, after a few mild efforts to check his assiduities (which his conceit converted into encouragement) almost petrified him by a dignified refusal to be indebted to him for any act of politeness; and she was subsequently permitted to think undisturbed. What fearful pangs tore her breast, as every well-known view upon the road greeted her eyes! She had passed them, in company with her father, during times so happy and guileless, and also with her husband. Every cottage on the wayside, and every meadow, how familiar they were to her! and the nearer she drew towards Sedgely, the more well-remembered were the objects, and the more painful to her sight. At first, she had wished she might instantly be brought to her father, to be assured in person of his forgiveness; but when she found herself once more within the range of her childhood's home, she was afraid to see him, and even more afraid to hear that he was worse.

She walked from the village to the Hall without any sense of oppressive fatigue. The agitation the sight of her old haunts occasioned her, and the mingled hopes and fears that engrossed her, precluded the possibility of her giving any attention to the weariness of body, which at another time would have been too much for her endurance.

The sheltered avenue was leafless and dreary, and the noble pile of building, which had often looked to her so cheerful and beautiful, seemed grim and forbidding beneath the cold, wintry sky.

The Marchioness trembled so violently that she could scarcely

walk the length of the winding elm avenue leading to the entrance, and when there it was with difficulty she summoned the resolution to lift the heavy knocker, which, in falling, gave back a sound that appeared to Liliás like a funeral knell. The sound having ceased, a step was heard in the hall, and in an instant a servant opened the door, only to start back with an exclamation of alarm, when he saw the ghastly countenance of her ladyship.

"My father!" was all she could say; and then followed, or rather led, the terrified servant up the broad stairs to the door of Sir Shenton's bed-chamber. Here the man paused in evident and painful perplexity.

"You must not go in there, my lady," he said, and a half sob rounded the sentence.

Her eyes turned sharply upon him. She did not speak, but the footman was at no loss to comprehend the agonised interrogation of her look. He could not answer, but turned aside, to avoid meeting her gaze. Liliás perceived his embarrassment, and her face became transfixed with fear.

"Stevens," she screamed, "is he—is he dead?"

A groan was the only reply she received; and waiting for no farther confirmation of her apprehensions, she turned the handle of the door, and entered the room.

The blinds of the windows were closely drawn, and the bed was in the darkest corner of the apartment, but yet there was light enough for her to see (what the evident terror of the servant had prepared her for) the corpse of her father. No cry was wrung from her by the spectacle; no swoon came to relieve her from the horrible reflection that she had been the cause of his doom. Slowly she walked towards the couch, her eyes fixed all the while, with a look of insanity, upon the calm face of the dead. No pain had disturbed his last moments, and those who watched around his bed knew not the instant when he died, so peaceful had been the transition from earth to heaven. An expression of holy serenity sat upon his furrowed brow, and a smile lingered about the mouth—a smile of mingled faith and hope.

There was some comfort in this for his wretched child, who saw in the tranquillity of her father's features a further assurance that he had pardoned her. Wildly she kissed his forehead and lips; her lamentations proclaiming themselves, not in words, but in sighs and moans that seemed as if they must rend her bosom. Who can say the agony that was compressed into the hour she permitted herself to continue with those beloved remains? Had she been the most depraved of women, surely the unspeakable torture of that hour may have atoned for much of her sin; for who can affirm that the Almighty takes no account of our remorseful miseries?

Lilias retired from the chamber of death, to all appearance little changed from the time she entered the house. The servants, who saw her go out of her father's room into the library, thought how well she bore the shock; but they knew not that what supported her in this accumulation of sorrows was the resolve to *die*. She had thought of this way to escape from her miseries before—nay, had long determined upon it as the means of defeating her persecutor, should she ever be upon the point of obtaining the victory over her; and yet hitherto she had shrunk from the unhallowed deed. The *something* Hamlet speaks of, which we cannot understand, and yet dread so greatly, had presented itself in an appalling shape to her imagination, and made her turn rather to the thought of exile than death as a refuge from her cares; but when the corpse of her father lay before her, the decision not to survive him had conquered her fears of the impenetrable future, and made her resolute to face eternity. Never dare she again return to her husband and child. Why, then, hesitate to end her career? It was impossible for her ever more to be capable of giving happiness to another, or receiving it herself; it could not, then, be a crime to do that which could injure no one.

Thus the unhappy creature reasoned; waiting only to act upon the fearful impulse till all should be at rest within the house. It was still early, not more than three o'clock, and from now till about midnight was to be passed away. Lilias had eaten very little for the last fortnight, and that day not anything, so she was almost sinking for want of nourishment; she therefore rang for a glass of wine and a biscuit, rejecting anything more substantial. There was no impatience in her manner as she gave the trifling order, only a settled despair, that looked to an ordinary observer very like indifference. Having finished her meagre repast, she pushed the tray aside, and searching for some paper, began to write. Often, as she pursued her task, she pressed her hand to her aching brow, as if to hold her temples together, which throbbed nearly to bursting; and frequently would she look around with an expression so wild and woe-begone, that the sight would have made one weep tears of blood. The butler, alarmed at the silence Lady Welgrave preserved, went to the library about six o'clock, and found her in the same position at the table, with her pen skimming the paper, sometimes rapidly, and at others lingering as though the hand was weary of its task. Lilias knew nothing of the intrusion till the man addressed himself to her; he came to say that dinner was served.

"I shall not take any to-day," was the reply, uttered in tones so harsh as not to be recognised, and slowly and sadly the butler retired.

The servants saw no more of her that night, except the house-

keeper, whom Liliás summoned to inform her that she should want no further attendance, and desiring not to be again disturbed. They wondered greatly at her calmness, and more still at her occupation; some of them were of opinion that her ladyship was going mad, and all that there was something very strange in her composure, for none doubted her love for the baronet.

"No daughter could feel more affection for her father, I am sure," said the servant who had admitted Lady Welgrave. "If you had seen how white she was when she asked to see him, and how her eyes started from her head, looking for all the world as though they were on fire, you would have said she cared very much. I never was so frightened in my life; she really looked fearful."

"She could not look more so than she did just now, sweet lady," remarked the housekeeper with authoritative solemnity; "and when she had asked me a few questions about Sir Shenton, she said, 'You have always been a good servant, Mrs. Jordan, and my father, I know, has not forgotten you;' and while she said this, the tears came into her eyes, and she shivered so badly that I thought she was dying; so I begged her not to think about Sir Shenton, only that he had gone where he would always be happy; but my saying this did no manner of good, for she wiped her eyes, and sat down again quite calmly—which, of course, being unnatural, was worse for her than giving way—and I said, 'Now, my lady, if you would only cry, and not try to take it as if you did not care, it would be much better;' and when I said this, she sighed, oh! so mournfully, and leaned her head upon the table as if she could not speak; I really could not help crying myself," and as Mrs. Jordan concluded with this confession, she sobbed outright.

Eleven o'clock struck, and Liliás laid down her pen as the last sound died out. She had no time to read what she had written, had even the inclination not been wanting. She took the packet of letters from her bosom, and, drawing the lamp nearer to her, burnt them all separately; but the singed paper containing the ring she folded within the letter she had just written, which she addressed to her husband, and laid in a conspicuous place upon the mantel-piece.

"I feel a burthen taken from my soul, now that I have cleared up all mystery," she murmured sadly, as she looked at the packet. "It must follow that Henry will cease to love me, when he becomes acquainted with my history, but may be he will pity me. My confession will at least destroy any false aspersions upon my character, and clear my fame of one blot."

Occupied with thoughts the most sad, an hour passed away; and the bombing of the midnight bell sounded, before Liliás was aware how long she had lost herself in visions of the past. She moved

slowly from the room when thus aroused, and proceeded without noise to the one which held her father's corpse. Worn out with fatigue and grief, the inmates of the Hall slept soundly. Sir Shenton had been a generous master, and was loved by every one of his domestics, who had, throughout his illness, been kept awake by apprehensions of his death; and now, when suspense was exchanged for certainty, however distressing, they were glad to give way to the feeling of drowsiness their long watching and great sorrow occasioned, so that Liliias had no cause to fear lest she should be heard by them. Courageous as was her heart, a tremor of superstitious awe ran through her veins as she entered the still chamber, and gazed upon the calm face of its occupant. Truly death is an awful thing, and who in its presence is without a species of dread? This was the last time those beloved features could be seen by Liliias, and with intense but silent sorrow she clasped the icy fingers, and passed her hand through the thin white hair, still damp with the dew of death.

"My father, my beloved, I come!" she cried. "Wait but a little while, and your Liliias will join you! You have forgiven and blessed me when all beside would have cursed! Could I have dared to die if your pardon had been withheld? Should I not have dreaded to meet you in the invisible world, without having received the assurance that your love for me remained unaltered till your last breath? Now may I go to the grave in peace, knowing that beyond it I shall not be greeted angrily by you."

The clock upon the mantelpiece struck the quarter as she was speaking. She started violently at the interruption. "Farewell, my father! your suffering child bids you farewell, only to join you quickly in spirit!" and slowly she left the chamber. My lady walked, as a somnambulist walks, with open eyes, and just enough sense to keep her steps from slipping, yet without any fixed purpose or knowledge of her actions. Soon she found herself at the door leading to her own suite of rooms; it was ajar, and seemed to invite her entrance. All was just as she had left it; nothing but the escritoire with the secret drawers was missing from its accustomed place; everything else was as it had been nearly a year ago, when she quitted her father's home for her husband's. An oval mirror was before her as she entered, startling her by the reflection it presented. Her eyes were sunken and wild, and her face wonderfully aged; the countenance of the scared and care-worn woman in the glass might have passed for that of a woman nearly forty. She frowned at the haggard image, for the vanity of her sex was not dead, and a slight displeasure mingled with her surprise as she beheld the havoc the last few hours had made upon her beauty.

Within a few moments of death, a fugitive from the law, a

mourner over her father's corpse, and the wrongs of her husband and child, still the womanly instinct to look her best clung to her. Possibly she was hardly conscious of what she was about when she pulled down her beautiful hair, smoothed it with her jewelled hands, and rearranged it as carefully as if she had been going to a ball; when she shook the wrinkles out of her rich dress, and finally adjusted the crumpled lace collar more particularly around her lovely neck, and the cuffs about her wrists; it might be that her thoughts were absent while she was thus lightly engaged, or it may have been a triumph of weakness, to which all are prone, even in the solemnest seasons. The trifling occupation served for a brief space to mitigate the poignancy of her distress, and by the time these little improvements had been effected, there was a marked difference in the expression of her face; the harsh lines about the mouth had softened, and the fiery light of the eyes subdued to a less unearthly brilliancy. Every article, here as in the rooms at Welgrave, was to be gone over, and a tear dropped upon many of them; for at the Hall, as at the Abbey, a loving heart had selected all with a view to her gratification.

"My father and my husband," thought Lilius, "would both have died to save me from pain. I have always had everything I wished for; have been loved, courted, and admired; yet I have never been happy, never since my childhood; and why?"

This question took her back to the time when deceit had first entered her heart, and given the dismissal to joy.

"No; I have never been happy since that hour," repeated my lady with a half moan, "dating from that first offence, all has been shadowed with gloom, and not one moment of my life has since been really peaceful. What then can love, beauty, and rank, conduce to felicity, if the heart is a prey to remorse? These things have all been mine, and yet how wretched am I! How gladly would I sacrifice them to have my heart cleansed from guilt; and in exchange for these treasures be poor and uncared for, if in humility I might retain the unsullied purity of my earlier years!"

Feeling that a longer indulgence in retrospection might unnerve her, Lilius sat down to think calmly what she should do. Time was fleeting fast, and with it the opportunity for the completion of her fearful project was on the wane. Her steadfast resolve was to die, but the means of death she had not yet considered. It was time now that she should decide by which of the many loopholes her escape from existence should be made. The choice was not a difficult one: instantly the briny waters of the English Channel flitted before her fancy. By straining her ear, she could even catch the sound of its roaring waves above the shrieking of the wind, which agitated them fearfully. Lady Welgrave's mind was

shortly made up ; there was no faltering in her step or fear in her brave heart as she left the apartment and proceeded to make her way through the conservatory to the garden. The wintry blast beat against her unprotected face, almost cutting its delicate skin, while the bitter night air penetrated through her every nerve ; but this she did not heed : an awful purpose had brought her out—a purpose which nought had power to check.

Straight she went from the house over the crisp lawn, never pausing till she reached the brink of the sea, which, black and mirky, stretched itself beneath the dark shadows of the bending trees, that assumed weird-like and fantastic shapes as they were reflected in the water. There was no moon, and the stars, giving an uncertain light, made the figure of Liliás at times but just perceptible as she stood upon the coast, her clothes rustling mournfully with the angry wind. She stood there, almost in the embrace of death, with thoughts whose agony Heaven alone could estimate, listlessly watching the waves as they nearly washed her feet. Once she heard a sound, and waited in painful suspense for its repetition, thinking it might be a human voice ; but it was only the shriek of an owl, which, having subsided, left the solemn hush more solemn than before.

No interruption came to disturb the fatal intention of her soul ; no guardian angel sped to save her from the guilt of self-destruction. A lull succeeded the tempest ; nature herself stood awed at a sacrifice so terrible, and all was silent as the tomb. For a moment longer the despairing young creature looked into the black depths, then a loud splash broke the dread stillness. No form now occupied the spot upon which the Marchioness of Welgrave had so lately stood ; that splash was all to tell that a weary spirit had taken its flight from mortality to immortality !

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE DOUBLE FUNERAL.

THE utmost consternation prevailed the following morning at the Hall when Lady Welgrave was discovered not to be in her bedroom. Every corner of the house was ransacked for some clue to her whereabouts, and of course without avail. The library underwent a rigid examination, but, in their agitation, the servants for a long time overlooked what they were in search of. At length their attention was drawn to the written packet on the mantelpiece, when their fears were changed to the wildest amazement and horror ; for, by the side of Liliás's letter to her husband, she had left a note addressed to the housekeeper, in which she revealed her fatal intention, and told where her body might be found.

The distracted domestics, upon this dreadful intelligence, instantly proceeded to the grounds, where they soon espied the corpse of their mistress. It had floated for a short distance, and then been cast, by the force of the waves, upon the shore. Liliias's long black hair fell in damp disorder about her white face and neck, and those eyes, lately so lustrous and beautiful, were now dim and vacant; but though their fire had departed, and the bloom of health was substituted by the fixed look of death, the loveliness which had subdued so many hearts was not yet obliterated. The classical perfection of feature, and sweetness of expression, was there still.

"Death, that had suck'd the honey of her breath,
Had yet no power upon her beauty."

Tenderly and mournfully the weeping servants bore her ladyship's lifeless form to the house, and laid it beside her father's cold clay. The spirit of the erring, but penitent child, had followed closely upon that of the wretched parent, and they were perhaps now as near together as the frail tenements of humanity each left behind.

How great was Lord Welgrave's alarm and surprise when, upon the day his wife received notice of Sir Shenton's illness, he discovered that she had departed on her sorrowful errand without him! The peculiarity of her manner when she expressed her desire to undertake the journey to Sedgley alone now struck him forcibly, and occasioned him manifest uneasiness. What fatal consequences, he thought, might not so terrible a shock produce in her delicate state of health?

So stealthily was her flight conducted, that not one of the servants could give any information concerning her; and being slightly in doubt as regarded his first surmise—that she had actually set out to see her father—his lordship ordered the park and grounds to be diligently searched in all directions, for in the confusion of his anxiety he thought it possible that Liliias might be wandering out of doors, being too much oppressed by sorrow to sleep. The long and fruitless search necessarily took up a considerable space of time; and when it was found beyond question that Lady Welgrave was neither in the Abbey nor its environs, her husband set off with all speed to the railway-station, where, to his extreme mortification, he learned that he must wait for nearly two hours before the train started for London.

The thought of Liliias travelling without protection, in such a distressed condition of mind, was more than vexatious, it was almost maddening. A hundred accidents he fancied might occur to his darling wife, while he was helplessly waiting for the train to carry him in pursuit of her. So much time had been lost that he could not possibly reach Sedgely before eight o'clock, and what might not

happen by then? The alarm of Liliás at beholding her father's dangerous position might, he feared, prove too much for her present powers of endurance. The delays which prevented Lord Welgrave from reaching London before six o'clock were not destined to be solitary, for half way between the metropolis and Sedgley, the engine-wheel broke, and though no farther damage resulted from the accident, the passengers were compelled to postpone the prosecution of their journey until the morrow, as there was no train starting that night from the shabby little town at which they had to make a temporary stay.

Early the next morning the anxious travellers were again upon their way, some bound for pleasure, others upon business the most sorrowful. Utterly unconscious of the loss his presence at the Hall the night before might have averted, his lordship went with a heart full of tenderness, prepared to meet his wife; he was accosted on the threshold of her father's home with the tidings of her death. Though his grief was not stormy, it was intense; and not alone was his anguish occasioned by Liliás's death, but partly by the knowledge that it was self-inflicted. Every suspicion he had ever entertained came back to him now, and was, as he conceived, justified by the fearful manner of her end. With terrible clearness he perceived the meaning of the hints thrown out at different times by Miss Lyttleton, and no longer dared he hope that they had no connection with his wife, when he beheld the ruin of what he so fondly loved. Liliás's suicide seemed a too conclusive proof that she was not wholly free from the guilt imputed to her, and that it was through fear of Hinda she had committed the deed for which there is no repentance. "But," asked Lord Welgrave of himself, "was she not (if my fears be correct) in as great peril before she resorted to death as a cure for her wretchedness? Must it not have been her father's decease which affected her so fearfully?" This thought softened a little his unbearable agony of mind, inasmuch as he might still gaze upon that dear face with affection; greatly as he mourned for the loss of what he valued more than life, and grieved that his wife's love for himself and her child was not sufficient to restrain her from complete despair at her father's death, still it was a more bearable species of sorrow than that which made him shudder at her remembrance, and half regret the day when his destiny had been united to hers.

Liliás's confession was immediately despatched by the servants to Welgrave Abbey, where it awaited his lordship; so that for the few days the remains of the father and daughter were uninterred, he was permitted to assuage his sufferings with the reflection that Liliás had not deceived him, but was worthy of his most exalted devotion. The idea he had at first entertained was so horrible to

him, that he clung with a despairing tenacity to his subsequent conviction, that regret for Sir Shenton was the sole reason of Liliás's self-murder. But, alas, how short a time would even this frail consolation be left to him? He must partake all the misery and shame the knowledge of her sin was capable of inflicting, in addition to the irremediable deprivation he sustained by her death. An idolised wife was torn from him before the expiration of a year's possession; his first born was left motherless; but this was not all he was called upon to bear; he must yet discover that the being he so keenly deplored had grossly deluded him, and that upon her memory rested a blot which no love could have power to hide, and no sophisms rob of its terror.

The day of the funeral at length arrived—a cold, dreary day, as was fitting it should be to witness so melancholy an event. There were no hired mourners, no false friends to follow the biers of Sir Shenton Bellamy and his daughter. The distracted husband and the good Dr. Darby were the only mourners. The strange excitement attendant upon the sad preparations for the double funeral alone enabled Lord Welgrave to bear up against the awful loss he had sustained. While he could yet look even upon the lifeless remains of his darling, his loneliness was not so complete; there was still a trifling diversion from the contemplation of his woe; but when the coffin was fastened down, and Liliás was for ever excluded from his sight, then indeed did desolating misery reign supreme in his breast.

Before, however, the coffin was finally closed, he went into the room to look his last adieu. The bodies of father and daughter lay side by side; and now, more than ever, might be traced in the delicate lineaments of Liliás a likeness to the handsome features of the baronet. Smiling and beautiful was she even in death; no sign of the struggle which had separated her soul from the flesh was visible in her face; its expression was as unruffled as if she had drawn her last breath amidst the prayers of weeping friends and holy divines.

The same course the bridal party had trodden less than a year ago was now passed over by the funeral *cortége*; and the man who then, in all the fulness of joy, received from her father's hand a bride, now followed her to the grave. The hope of the bridegroom was changed to the despair of the bereft widower; the pride of the successful lover to the agonised disappointment of the injured husband.

How Lord Welgrave got over the fearful torments of the few hours succeeding the burial, he could never tell; but when at last his commiserating friends had departed, and he was left alone in his great misery, a long sleep, almost like a trance, came to the relief

of his overwrought mind, which, without the rest, must have succumbed to the pressure of his calamity.

A despairing and heart-broken man, Lord Welgrave returned to his desolate home; appalling temptations to do as his wife had done haunted him continually; and it was only the thought of the helpless babe, whose dependence was solely upon him, that prevented him, in the first wild gush of anguish, from following the example of the erring Liliás. Truly she had cast a cloud over his existence that no joy might ever after be able to disperse—which no hope could lighten. Lovely and gifted as she had been, association with her had proved destructive to the happiness of nearly all.

The important packet was duly delivered to his lordship, who was too much overcome by the sight of his wife's writing to be enabled for some time to read it; he, however, at length ventured to commence perusing it, and an hour after he was found by his valet senseless, with the fatal epistle grasped tightly in his hand.

The letter, which disclosed the mysteries of Liliás's life, I will give without curtailment.

WHAT THE PAPERS REVEALED

INTRODUCTION

"SIR, the gentlemen are coming down."

"Indeed! I suppose then it's all over. Poor old Nancy! she will be a dreadful loss to me." And the speaker looked up with a sigh from a volume of Greek plays, which he had been reading with evident relish.

The room in which this brief colloquy took place was a handsome and lofty, but not very spacious apartment, pannelled in oak and lined with book-cases; a massive oak table, quaintly carved, was drawn near the large old-fashioned grate, where a fire of mixed coal and wood burned brightly. Everything in the room bespoke comfort and luxury, but of the ornamental element there was not a single vestige. The original oak chair had been discarded to make way for deep cushioned loungers, and in one of these sat the master of the house, Sir Edward Ashly, his book now closed, plunged in what is commonly called, "a brown study."

The servant-girl, with the uncertainty that betrayed a novice to the ways of the house, moved and replaced a tray containing wine-glasses, decanters and biscuits, that she, a minute before, deposited on the centre table; she then busied herself in re-arranging the folds of the window-curtains, glanced inquisitively from one side of the room to the other, from the huge lamp burning on the centre table, to the smaller pair on the chimney-piece, and apparently gaining no inspiration by the inspection, inquired hesitatingly:

"Anything more, sir?"

"No," said the master, shortly; "you may go."

As he spoke, the heavy curtains that hung before the door were raised, and two gentlemen entered the room. The foremost of them looked very grave; he was a tall man with silvery hair, and his white cravat pronounced him a clergyman.

"I am glad you sent for me," he said; "the poor woman, so Dr. Nichol tells me, grew calm directly she heard I was coming, and although greatly agitated at first, her end was peace."

"She is dead, then?"

"Dead, and no mistake," observed the gentleman who had not yet spoken, rubbing his hands cheerfully, and approaching the blaze. "I never allow the parson to be summoned till all hope is over; the sight of one is too suggestive to a nervous patient. But," he added more seriously, "when I feel my efforts to be hopeless, I make way for the disciple of a better Physician."

"Poor old Nancy!" said Sir Edward, regretfully. "Well, if skill could have saved her, I am sure yours would. And now draw

nearer the fire ; you will require a glass of wine before venturing into the frosty air."

"You see I did not wait for an invitation," remarked the clergyman, who was already seated, "I consider myself one of the privileged few who may venture with impunity into the lion's den."

"It would be strange if you could not, Nugent," answered Sir Edward, "for, of course, by the lion you mean me. A chat over old college-days sometimes does good even to a hermit."

"And what a hermit you have become!" was Mr. Nugent's reply ; "it seems impossible to understand why a man, who has lived all his life in continental courts should return home merely to shut himself up."

"For that very reason you ought to understand it," answered his friend. "When I first left England, many years ago, I required the whirl of action and continual change of scene ; but I was ambassador in Spain long enough to wish heartily I had never accepted the post, independent of my earlier diplomatic experiences in Turkey and Russia. Such responsibilities give a surfeit of society, I assure you, and render repose inexpressibly desirable and grateful."

"Well," here interposed the doctor, "I candidly confess that your perfect seclusion is a mystery to me ; no dervish could worship solitude with more pertinacity. Of course, personally, it makes the exception in my favour the more flattering ; but can you wonder at the indignation of the county when a man in your position, Sir Edward Ashly, of Ashly Hall, indulges in such unorthodox tastes?"

"That indignation has long ago died out," answered Sir Edward, good-humouredly ; "the world is, fortunately, very willing to forget those who forget it ; my return and retirement were the conventional nine-days' wonder, nothing more. Besides, I am not without companions," he added, pointing to the book-cases round the room.

"And these have been your only companions ever since you came back to England?" the doctor said, interrogatively, his eyes following the direction indicated ; "why, that must be nearly four years."

"Just four years."

"And during all that time you have had no other servant to wait upon you but the poor old woman lying above?"

"No other."

"More of your eccentricity," cried Mr. Nugent. "Not only you restrict your household to one sole attendant, but you choose for the post the ugliest and most repulsive sample of womanhood I ever beheld. I am now merely speaking of appearances,

for I remember how well and faithfully she served you, and have often remarked with astonishment her wonderful quietness and rapidity while waiting on us at table ; but how could you have ever brought yourself to look at her ?”

“Habit, I suppose. There were two other servants in the house besides old Nancy, but you never saw them, for she constituted herself my special attendant, gliding about noiselessly, and keeping the others, with their creaking shoes, always in the lower regions. It was such comfort. The house might have been managed by invisible fairies, so punctually and silently everything was done.”

“How much you will miss her !” said Mr. Nugent.

“More than I can tell you. When I first returned from abroad, my present head groom, who was then my valet, chose her for me from among the few who presented themselves ; for there were not many willing to take service in a great, lonely country house, deserted except in one wing, without any prospect of company or variety. He chose her for the qualities which would have deterred you, and which made her so inestimable to me, her excessive ugliness, her insurmountable taciturnity, and her activity, remarkable in so old a woman ; and he certainly chose well. The poor creature fell into my ways silently and at once ; her seamed and scarred face was an ever-present assurance of the impossibility of lovers and interlopers ; her grim determination and surliness, a guarantee of her empire below stairs ; and, to give you an idea of the really unprecedented value of old Nancy, I do not remember having once exchanged as many as six words with her during the four years that she was my exclusive and constant attendant.”

Sir Edward Ashly concluded his sentence in the slow and impressive tone always adopted, when the culminating point of a eulogy is reached.

Dr. Nichol smiled. “‘Words are as silver, but silence is as gold,’” he quoted, “I always thought for my part, that your old servant was a mute, until called in to attend her, and I am ashamed to say, although not a timid man, that her ghastly, fossilised face used to frighten me. It is painful to think how much we are influenced by looks,” the doctor said ; “and in cases like the present, how unjustly so. My dear Ashly, you will find it difficult to replace this poor woman. Such qualities, as those you esteem most are rare.”

“I don’t expect I shall ever replace her. Already that girl who emerged from the back premises when poor Nancy gave up work (which she did not till the last moment) has driven me to the verge of insanity, rushing about, bustling, fussing, and actually tormenting me for orders. Orders ! Why,

Nancy never asked me for an order in her life. She did everything by intuition, and never left anything undone. Poor faithful old monster, I shall miss her steady, unobtrusive services, as I would the presence of an old friend."

"How long was she ill?" asked the rector.

"Two days," the doctor said, replying for his host. "When I was first sent for, I saw there was no hope; the frame completely shattered and worn out; and I asked the poor woman if she would like to go home. She said she had no home."

"Poor thing!" observed Sir Edward; "I did not know that; but in any case, I think it a cruelty to send a servant away for getting sick, as if it were a crime. Yet this is often done. For my part, I gave orders that poor Mary should receive as much care as myself, in proof of which she was attended by my favourite doctor."

"You could not do less, even in a human point of view," answered Mr. Nugent; "besides, this old woman always struck me as a perfect Cerberus of trustworthiness and vigilance; and, from what you say, she must have exceeded all I gave her credit for."

"Four years of untiring service are a great test," Sir Edward said, with a groan. "I expect I shall soon learn, to my cost, how invaluable she has been to me."

"By the bye, what was her name?" asked the doctor; "we shall want it for the burial certificate."

"I don't know," moodily replied the host, whose thoughts were occupied with his difficulty in the matter of household reorganisation; "I never heard—I always called her Nancy."

"We can easily settle that question," said the rector, producing a roll of papers from his pocket; "the poor creature's mind was sorely ill at ease, and one of her last efforts was expended in drawing this packet from under her pillow, saying it would tell all about her."

With these words, Mr. Nugent handed the papers to Sir Edward, who began listlessly to unroll them; but no sooner had his eyes fallen on the first word, than, with a smothered sound, as if he had received a heavy blow, he clutched nervously at the table, and his face, from pale, became perfectly livid. With wild eagerness, he perused the documents, and when the last had been read, he raised his head, revealing to his astonished companions, a face so changed as to be almost unrecognisable—ghastly, expressionless, and awful in its vacancy. Then, before either of his friends, paralysed by the suddenness of the attack, could utter a word, his grasp relaxed, the papers fluttered to the ground, and he fell back rigid and insensible.

Both gentlemen flew to his assistance, and endeavoured to restore him, but unsuccessfully. The servant-girl nearly took leave of her

senses, when summoned by Dr. Nichol, at the sight of her master, motionless and apparently dead, and threatened to faint herself, when the doctor resorted to his lancet, all simple restoratives having failed. As the blood started, in obedience to the summons, the baronet moaned, and opened his eyes.

"All right!" exclaimed the doctor, twisting a handkerchief round the incision; "in a very few moments 'Richard will be himself again.'"

"Doctor, can you account for this?" whispered Mr. Nugent, whose curiosity rose as his fears lessened. "Was it caused by those papers?"

"Undoubtedly. Perhaps a date, or even a stray word, may have brought too vividly before him some forgotten circumstance. Certain it is, that the mind first, and then the body, gave way under a mental shock."

"The body—yes; but the mind?" said the rector, in a horror-struck voice. "You don't mean to say——"

"Oh! only for the moment, of course," answered the doctor. "Look at him now! in five minutes he will be as well as if nothing had happened."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Mr. Nugent, greatly relieved.

By degrees Sir Edward's colour returned. "Those papers?" were his first words.

"Oh, never mind the papers, Ashly," said the rector; "leave them to me, and I will see about everything. The fire was too hot for you, and you fainted."

"No, Nugent. You know, as well as Dr. Nichol, that it was not the fire. I saw in those papers a name that I never expected to see again, and learned from them a strange and wonderful fact—so wonderful that it is impossible to realise it. The unexpected resurrection of that name prostrated me; but now the shock is over, I feel I shall derive comfort from what I have discovered."

"Good!" said the doctor, as if dismissing the subject. "'All's well that ends well.'"

"But," Sir Edward continued, "you ask me no questions, and I appreciate your delicacy, for you must have been startled and mystified; but there is now no reason why I should not enlighten you. The one great episode of my life has been revived to-night; the episode which made me a wanderer from youth to age from my native land. The long-buried memories have been suddenly recalled to life; you shall hear them, if you like."

The faces of both gentlemen betrayed eager curiosity, but Mr. Nugent hesitated. "If the mere recollection has been too much for you, a long recital will surely do you harm," he said.

"No," answered Sir Edward—"it was the surprise that upset

me; and, moreover, brooding upon such a past would be worse than relating it."

"True," said the doctor, nodding assent; "brooding would be worse." And his sanction settled the question.

"I really owe you an explanation of my strange emotion," their host then said, heaping additional logs on the fire from a handsome carved wood case that stood beside his chair, a relic of continental habits. "Draw near; and while we share the house between us and the dead upstairs, I will tell you what those papers recalled, and what they revealed."

THE NARRATIVE.

When I bade farewell to a college life—leaving you, Nugent, winning the praises of all, and the envy of some—I started at once for Wales, on a visit to Sir Andrew Heath. This visit had been a long-planned project of my parents, and originated, strangely enough, in a romantic attachment of Sir Andrew's for my mother. My father, who had been the confidant of the lover, became, ultimately, the husband; but, contrary to the usual rule in such cases, no quarrel ensued. Sir Andrew, shortly afterwards, married an heiress, who, fortunately for him, shared his love for the country, and they lived quite out of the world, on their estates in Wales. My father, Sir Edward Ashly, had only one child, a son; Sir Andrew Heath had only one child, a daughter. The result is obvious: to cement the two friendships, to join the two fortunes, to connect the two families—such was the dream of our respective parents from our earliest years.

As a child, I had been accustomed to speak of my little wife, but I had never seen her; my father had a theory on the subject, and did not believe in years of childish familiarity being favourable to the development of the tender passion; so it was arranged that not until I had come to man's estate, and had left college, was I to see the young lady, and judge for myself whether the wishes so long entertained by the houses of Ashly and Heath were likely to be realised. My father's system was certainly a good one; no constraint was laid upon me; I was merely made acquainted with the facts of the case, and left to decide for myself. In consequence of the young lady being personally unknown to me, the charms of expectation and conjecture were added to the greater interests involved, and I started on my journey to Wales in a state of excitement and suspense that would have delighted my father and Sir Andrew, could they but have known it.

I am telling you a story of many years ago, before railways were everywhere, and isolation an impossibility. Such is truly the

case now, but in those days many parts of the country were almost unattainable; and my journey to Glentwyr, a thinly-populated district in the most distant section of Wales, was an affair of no inconsiderable magnitude. Many days, in various coaches, brought me to within some fifty miles of my destination, where I found Sir Andrew Heath's carriage in waiting, with post-horses, to carry me the rest of the way.

The approach to Glentwyr was a scene of barren picturesqueness almost savage in its desolation, but very beautiful nevertheless. I did not remember having seen a single human habitation from the time I entered the carriage till I drove through the little village of Glentwyr. All the stories of fairy palaces I had loved to read as a boy rushed to my memory when I first laid eyes on Sir Andrew Heath's grand old house, lying in a wide-spreading, sheltered valley, and encompassed round by the finest and boldest mountains in the country. I have often been reminded of its situation by one of our most sympathetic modern poets, in a reference he makes to a similar scene, which he describes happily as

"A lovely land-lock'd vale."

Sir Andrew received me at the door of his house—an honest, open-hearted, country gentleman, somewhat boisterous, I thought—probably an active sportsman and farmer. Such was my first impression, and I had some pretension to unusual powers of observation. He led me at once to Lady Heath, and left us to make acquaintance. She struck me as a delicate woman, rather preoccupied with her health, but in a graceful, feminine way, not devoid of a certain charm; and before we had been many minutes together, I was wholly fascinated by that indescribable gentleness which, for want of a better word, we call womanliness, and which she possessed to a remarkable extent.

It was during that interview that I first looked on my long-dreamed-of betrothed. Where was she? Had she heard of my arrival? How soon should I see her? Such were the questions I was asking myself—a feeling of restless impatience stealing over me. When she entered the room, on perceiving me, she started, as if unprepared for my presence, but went through the ceremony of introduction with haughty stateliness. To say she was handsome would be to use an expression contemptibly weak—there was something startling in her faultless loveliness; highly-coloured and ideal as all my preconceived portraits had been, I had never pictured in my imagination a beauty so dazzling as hers. She held a book in her hand, and I heard from her mother that she was a great reader: from her I could not obtain a word. This reticence continued throughout the whole of that first day, and for long afterwards.

I must not weary you with minute details, though every hour spent under that roof is as vivid to me as if it had only occurred yesterday. Let it suffice to say, that as day after day passed by, uneventful and monotonous, I could not thaw the icy reserve Miss Heath had shown me from the first.

Alone, comparatively speaking, in a country house, it seemed almost impossible, that constant companionship should not inevitably render an increase of familiarity; yet, far from this, her manner, with time, only grew more distant and undemonstrative; and, if occasionally I sought to join her solitary rambles in the park, she would either acquiesce silently, laying down with ostentatious resignation some favourite book, or darkly hint a vague taunt about forced companionship. I was honestly mystified. I could not decide whether to attribute her varying, but always disdainful mood, to a naturally morbid character, self-cultured in solitude, or to a studied motive for which it was impossible to conjecture a cause. That I was personally distasteful to her, as my fears sometimes suggested, seemed contradicted by the fact, that in the very first hour we met, before she could have formed any opinion adverse or favourable to me, her manner had been equally repelling. Besides, if such a feeling existed, why not express it? Her marriage was not compulsory, and I felt sure that whatever might be my sufferings, and their disappointment, her parents would never force a sacrifice to their wishes, from an only child.

With Sir Andrew and Lady Heath, I was soon on the friendliest terms, and their open-hearted kindness formed a strong contrast to their daughter's unfathomable nature. To them, therefore, I confided all my doubts, and certainly found consolation. Sir Andrew attributed his daughter's reserve to the natural shyness of a young girl, brought up in an almost uninhabited part of the country, isolated from all society, having never met a young man before; and, moreover, aware of the object of my visit to Glentwyr—an additional reason for conscious bashfulness. He argued that the reserve which alarmed me ought, rather, to be a source of satisfaction, as showing the delicate and sensitive nature of the girl I hoped to make my wife.

Lady Heath, with truer instinct, deplored her daughter's manner, but it appeared to occasion her no surprise. Miss Heath, she told me, was reticent and undemonstrative, even with her parents; she had lived on books ever since she had been able to read, and had resisted every effort of her mother's to stop her constant supplies of indiscriminate literature. "I feared," concluded Lady Heath, "that so much reading, in a life of inaction, might tend to a morbid state of mind; but Gabriella is a strong nature, and I am a weak one; and though she never openly disobeyed me, I foresaw

great difficulties in depriving her of her only pleasure; especially as I could not hope to make Sir Andrew understand my view of the case."

There was something so reassuring and so plausible in all this reasoning, that I gladly allowed myself to be convinced by it; resolved that, if patience only was required, I would endeavour to emulate that of Jacob for his beloved Rachel; for the beauty of this strange girl had enslaved me. I could not call the feeling love—however strong the passionate element in love, there still must be a large share of personal identity, a real or supposed sympathy with individual character: something beyond the mere outward impression on the senses, to compass the full meaning of the word; whereas Gabriella Heath's mind was a sealed book to me, her character as inscrutable, her feelings, if she had any, as impenetrable as those of the sphinx. But an admiration stronger than reason, and overwhelming in intensity, grew upon me in spite of myself. It may be that the mystery of her unalterable reserve gave additional fascination to her already irresistible loveliness; for her cold, proud face was full of power, and the character of her beauty the complete reverse of what would be generally attributed to a passionless nature. But whatever the cause, the result was that my whole life and thoughts became concentrated into a desire to lead her to a betrayal of her real nature; and many were the traps I laid to find the bent of her mind, and on that clue to shape my course.

There were times when a gleam of animation rewarded my perseverance. I remember especially one occasion that, seeing her with a history of the first French revolution in her hand, I made some trivial remark on the pathetic incidents of the time, the sufferings of the weak, well-meaning king, the degradation of the beautiful, proud queen, and the unhappy, heartrending story of the poor child, Louis XVII. She turned on me with unexampled scorn—"Of course," she sneered, "what is it if people groan for generations under the pressure of tyranny and wrong? What if they toil, and faint, and perish, to supply a proper succession of pleasures to their superiors? What if they die by thousands of starvation and penury? It is their business—the purpose for which they were created; but if, by some mistake, a latent spark of manhood struggles to the surface, and they rise upon the oppressors, or the representatives of their oppressors, to proclaim a glorious equality, then the necessary sacrifice of two or three lives is a blot upon the page of history, hitherto quite unsullied by the myriads of deaths among the people, caused by iniquitous and heartless misgovernment. If such narrow-minded egotism is education, you had better not have gone to college."

Her extraordinary warmth on so completely abstract a subject quite bewildered me; her philosophy, too, though, perhaps, well founded, sounded strange from the lips of a girl scarcely twenty years of age; and it seemed to me, as days wore on, that I knew her less and less.

Beyond this one outbreak, however, and an occasional sarcasm when any question of social distinction was started, I never got any further clue to Miss Heath's real character, her unvarying placidity remained as unimpressionable as ever. At length, when days and weeks brought me apparently no nearer the object of my mission than in the first hour of my arrival, I resolved, in a fit of despair, to brave all consequences, and propose to Gabriella. Her whole conduct was such an enigma, that I thought it might possibly conceal an inclination favourable to myself; and, at all hazards, a declaration would lead me to a partial solution of the puzzle.

When I apprised Sir Andrew of my intention, he implored me to delay until we knew more of each other. To this I replied that I had given up all hope of ever knowing more of Gabrielle; and that I had certainly been at Glentwyr long enough for her to know me fully. I did not tell him how much I was beginning to suffer from this protracted suspense; how, with every succeeding day, my passionate admiration made the barrier between us an ever-increasing torture; yet, with the cowardly consciousness that a refusal might result in banishment from her presence, I listened to Sir Andrew's warnings against precipitancy.

"Wait, at least," he said, "till after the fair"—a most important era in the lives of all Glentwyr people. Once a year this little village awakes to life; buyers and sellers, marionettes and menageries flock in, for the day, from all parts of the country; and every one, from the highest to the lowest, is expected to be in a state of excitement and exultation at the great event. Even Gabrielle forgets her books, and seems as interested as the busiest when the fair time comes round. "You will have an opportunity of seeing her as you have not seen her yet, and may then find the secret spring to her favour, which you do not seem sure of having yet discovered. She is, perhaps, a little cold, and, like all women, capricious; too much precipitation may rouse her opposition, and I think you now concur enough in the family wishes to dread this. Therefore I say, wait a little. In my day young men were not in such a terrible hurry to give way to despair."

And accordingly I waited.

There certainly was a change in Miss Heath; her placid tranquillity was replaced by an unmistakable restlessness. She now often joined our general conversation, always introducing the subject of the fair, either proposing to her father to throw open the park gates and

give a banquet to all comers, or declaring her intention of passing her whole day in the village in the midst of the festival.

My heart began to beat with a sensation almost like hope as I noticed this change ; there was something so natural and girlish in her interest for the coming gala, and anxiety for the people's enjoyment of their holiday, that I argued well from the contrast to the indifference she had hitherto shown for everything.

Sir Andrew readily entered into all her sympathy for the villagers, and promised that the presence of the party from the castle should not be wanted to crown the occasion as a complete success. To me the projected fair was a species of revelation ; it seemed to explain away my principal doubts, and account for Gabriella's outward apathy by her life of unnatural stagnation. Lady Heath had said, that her daughter was a girl of strong mind ; she had been brought up in an atmosphere so dull and eventless as to be absolute petrefaction, and had probably ended in creating a fictitious existence for herself, through her books, in which, as far as thought and feeling went, she absolutely lived. From this imaginary region, pleasure, excitement, variety alone could wean her, permanently, perhaps, temporarily, certainly, as her activity for the coming festival abundantly testified. There was still one drawback to my growing confidence. Willing, as Gabriella was, to converse on the subject of the coming festivity with me, especially when alone, she was as silent and reserved as ever ; not even on the all-absorbing topic could I get her to utter an opinion ; she froze at once, whenever I attempted to address her.

When, at last, the long-expected morning dawned, and I threw open my window to let in the glorious sunshine, distant noises from the village, principally the discordant notes of primitive musical instruments, came wafted in on the air. I fancied, as I listened, that Gabriella must have been disturbed by these sounds many hours before, for hers were the only rooms that looked out towards the village, and were much better situated for seeing and hearing than any others in the castle. Indeed, with a good glass, she could probably distinguish the movements of the busy multitude, and count the number of booths and tents erected during the night. She certainly never looked more beautiful than when we met that morning at the breakfast-table ; her grand eyes sparkling somewhat restlessly, and her cheeks flushed with a colour almost feverish in its intensity.

Sir Andrew also seemed impressed with the importance of the occasion. An annual *fête*, that his mere presence sanctioned, was an institution far more to his taste than the gaieties of society, that he had tired of at a very early age. Lady Heath looked at father and daughter with an amused smile. She had lived in the fashion-

able world for many years, an acknowledged belle and a courted heiress. Fortunately for the blunt country gentleman she chose, a belief in her own extreme delicacy and failing health led her to prefer a life of perfect retirement to any other ; but the importance allowed to this little rustic festivity by Sir Andrew and Gabriella, recalled, no doubt, in startling contrast, some memories of the busy life beyond the little world of Glentwyr. Nevertheless, in her quiet way, she shared her husband's and child's wishes for the successful issue of the holiday, and consented for once to forget her ailments, and accompany us to the scene of action. The great event of the day was to be a wrestling-match between the chosen champions of the surrounding villages ; so, after wandering a short time among the temporary booths, lavishing small coins on every side, and patronising for a few moments each separate show, we were led to the seat of honour reserved for us on the field, where the modern tournament was to take place. I say "tournament" advisedly, for, however unromantic and degenerate this display of brute force might be, compared with the knightly feats of tilting, an old flavour of chivalry was cast upon the scene, in the custom, revived by Miss Heath, of crowning the victor. Had the exhibition been twice as interesting as it possibly was, I should not have noticed a single detail. My whole attention was riveted on my betrothed. She followed the varying scene with breathless interest, and seemed transfigured suddenly from an insensate statue into a passionate, palpitating woman. Even Sir Andrew remarked the change, for he looked at me triumphantly, and at his daughter, as if struck with an unusual sense of her exceeding loveliness.

You will think I am infringing on my privileges as a narrator, in dwelling so often on the wondrous attractions of this young girl. Forgive me ; I cannot help it, and I shall not tax your patience much longer. In a few minutes I shall have ceased for ever to trespass in this respect. Till then, and while I am endeavouring to recal the scene on the village green, the most prominent point in the picture must be the almost superhuman beauty of Gabriella in her transformation, for such it was.

As I have before mentioned, I did not follow the details of the struggle, but every phase of it was reproduced in my betrothed's changing face. At one moment it lighted up with enthusiasm, her cheeks burned, her lips parted, and her whole frame seemed thrilling with excitement, and unconsciously, she half rose from her seat ; at another moment I saw her turn so deadly pale, I thought she would have fainted, and seriously alarmed, I whispered to Lady Heath, who, looking round, was frightened at her daughter's pallor. "Come away at once, dearest," she said, holding out her arm to support the trembling girl ; "this has been too much for you."

But with a strong effort that showed how complete was her mastery over herself, Gabriella, on being remarked, recovered her composure. "No, mamma," she said, "I am not ill—I cannot go—we must stay to the end. And without giving her mother time to answer, she appealed to Sir Andrew, who, intent on the wrestling, had observed nothing, and of course consented. Following the direction of his eyes, I sought the cause of Gabriella's emotion, and saw one of the hitherto most successful wrestlers prostrate and wounded on the ground. It was evident that such a display was not fit for a girl unused to the slightest excitement; while at the same time it showed how rich in human sympathies was her apparently cold nature, how delicate her sensibilities, how much too trying the present tention on her nerves. With the simplicity of a child, she suffered with the fallen, and triumphed with the victorious; and when at last the conqueror was brought to her feet to be crowned, she performed the ceremony with a pride and solemnity too full of grace to be ridiculous. I scarcely remarked the recipient of this honour, who appeared to be a strongly built, handsome young fellow, with a rather sheepish expression of face.

On our return to the castle, Gabriella's vivacity deserted her; exhausted probably by the fatiguing events of the day, she sank into her usual listless silence, and retired early to her own apartment. Gentlemen, I have reached a point in my story that it is agony even to recal; every hour of that fatal evening lives again as I rake up the long-buried memory; nearly forty years—a lifetime—lie between me and it, yet even now, I dare not dwell upon it.

Briefly, then, our usual evening's amusement, chess—between Lady Heath and me, while Sir Andrew invariably dozed in an easy chair—was on this occasion interrupted more than once by noisy cries from the village, which increased steadily, and, to judge by the sound, seemed coming nearer. Presently all doubt on this score was confirmed, the shouts grew louder and louder, and we could almost distinguish voices.

"Strange that this noise has not disturbed Gabriella," muttered Sir Andrew—"hers is the only room from which anything could be seen; go, my dear, and find out what it is."

Lady Heath was pale, and evidently alarmed. "Come with me," she said. And Sir Andrew seized one of the branch candlesticks from the table, and followed her out of the room.

I waited anxiously—not long, however. A minute had barely elapsed, before a wild shriek rang through the house,—a shriek so piercing, so full of terror, that reckless of consequences, I rushed to the spot, following in the wake of Sir Andrew, who was just then entering his daughter's inner chamber. What this chamber was like I never knew. I felt that the window was open, for the night

air blew upon my face ; but my eyes were fastened on the scene within. Lady Heath lay on the ground in a fainting-fit, mercifully unconscious for some moments of what ensued. Sir Andrew totally oblivious of his corpse-like wife, whose most fanciful complaint had always filled him with concern,—was looking steadily, and with grim determination into the room, at the other actors in this horrible drama. For there were two—Gabriella, her long hair falling loose upon her shoulders, stood boldly forward, with her arms spread out, as if to form a barrier ; and behind her—a man. In this man I recognised the hero of the wrestling-match, the successful champion of the morning's sports. His courage was certainly not of the moral order, for he shuffled uneasily, and at sight of Sir Andrew's set face, sheltered himself more completely behind the dauntless girl, who stood before him like some hunted animal at bay.

It was she who first broke the awful silence : “ He is my husband,” she said, tearing some papers from her bosom, and offering them to us ; “ he is my husband, and I love him.”

No one responded to the gesture ; but Sir Andrew in a voice so changed, that I started at hearing it, merely asked the man—“ Is this true ?”

The creature muttered an affirmative, and some words in extenuation about her having made him marry her. But Sir Andrew interrupted. Stern, collected, and therefore merciless, I recognised what these easy-going, indolent natures can sometimes hide of intense power and self-control. His voice alone betrayed the effort : “ That will do,” he said, “ I want no explanation. I have seen. That is enough. You are free to go. Take that woman with you ; she is no child of mine, and she has killed her mother.” He pointed to the inanimate form of Lady Heath, and turned, with pitiless calmness, to speak to his daughter. “ You have chosen dishonour deliberately ; abide by it ; you are no longer anything to me that I should seek to rescue you. From this hour remove your accursed presence, your tainted person, from the roof to which your shame has brought undying dishonour and disgrace. Go !” he added, more bitterly, “ join the witnesses you have summoned to your triumph.”

Then, for the first time, I looked round, and perceived through the window, at some little distance, the group of peasants whose clamour had originally disturbed us. They had missed the hero of the day from their revels, and suspecting him of having abandoned them for the company of the Castle servants, had followed him in a state of noisy intoxication. But now, awe-struck into silence, they stood huddled together, gazing up through the dim night into the brilliantly-lighted room where so strange a scene was being enacted.

For one moment Gabriella quailed under her father's words; then raising her head, defiant, as before—

“You will regret this harshness when you know all,” she said; and, without even a glance at her mother, she seized the crestfallen champion by the hand, and almost dragged him from the room.

Then followed a scene that I cannot attempt to describe. The unhappy girl gone, Sir Andrew was himself again, hanging over his still unconscious wife in an agony of tenderness; while the scared servants bustled about the house, getting restoratives for their mistress. But from the shock of that night Lady Heath never fully recovered. Although the very next day, she left Glentwyr for ever with Sir Andrew, time brought her but little consolation. She died shortly afterwards at Pau, in the Pyrenees, having never seen or heard of her daughter since that fatal night. Poor Sir Andrew did not long survive his wife.

After her death, I persuaded him to join me in Italy. Glentwyr Castle had been sold; and not only had he forbidden Gabriella's name to be mentioned before him, but he refused to be made acquainted with her whereabouts, her prospects, or her position. From this resolution he never swerved. In small things tolerant beyond most people, once his sense of honour was touched, his whole nature became metamorphosed. In the same degree that he had been a credulous and adoring father, so was he afterwards a relentless and unforgiving judge; and on the few occasions on which I ventured to sound him on the subject, he invariably replied, with perfect calmness, that he bore no ill-will to the peasantry of Wales, with the exception of one woman who had deliberately dishonoured a name stainless for generations, and had, moreover, murdered his wife. Did I require him to select this special woman as a recipient of his gratitude. With these feelings unchanged, he died about a year after the catastrophe that had broken up his home, his hopes, and happiness; and in his will Gabriella was formally disinherited.

My friends, in all this I have not spoken to you of myself. How could any words give an idea of the bitterness of a trial such as mine? I can relate naked facts, the desolation of a hearth, the degradation of a name, the deaths of a stricken woman and broken-hearted man, my own voluntary exile for long and weary years, the ruin of my hopes, the blasting of the youngest, and what should have been, the brightest portion of my life; but to describe or detail the sufferings that such things bring with them, is not in the power of mere language.

When I left England as *attaché* to a foreign embassy, it was partly to shun the land of such cruel experiences, and partly because my father feared that, if at home, a morbid desire to find out what had become of Gabriella Heath might prompt me to seek her out.

Certain it is, that I listened eagerly to all news from England, in a stupid, unreasoning way, as though it were possible that any despatches could contain intelligence of an obscure cottage in some remote part of Wales. The feeling may have been presentiment—a foreshadowing of the future that some people possess, for there was yet another link to be added to that hapless chain of events.

One morning while scanning, as usual, the English newspapers, my heart gave a sudden bound as the familiar name, Gabriella Heath, caught my eye. Once more that fatal name was destined to be associated with calamity, and this time with guilt. The paper stated briefly that a young woman known as Gabby Wynn, daughter of the late Sir Andrew and Lady Gabriella Heath, of Glentwyr Castle, and Rocklands, &c., &c., was arraigned for the wilful murder of her husband, James Wynn. My first instinct was a wild desire to start for England, which I should certainly have yielded to, but I was most unexpectedly chained. I could not get leave of absence. I did not then know that my father had sent word to detain me; but if I could have thrown up my appointment with honour, I should certainly have done so. I lived in a kind of dream during the progress of that terrible trial. With feverish anxiety, I watched for the arrival of the mails; and then, with a copy of the public papers, hurried off to battle alone with the horror of the awful details. The accounts were pitiless and precise. The case for the prosecution was short, and to this effect:—That Gabriella Heath had fallen violently in love with and married the man, Wynn—and here some painful references to the disparity of their social positions, and her broken-hearted parents, were given—that he had brought her home to his father's farm, and had been a good husband to her, in spite of the objections of his family to seeing a fine lady among them; that she was proud and violent, unwilling to conciliate her new relations, and accustomed to exasperate her husband by incessant scenes of scornful reproach and vituperation; that on one of these occasions, returning home, tired out from a day's labour, she met him with such a volley of unprovoked and bitter taunts, that, in a fit of indignation, he raised his hand, and struck her. That night he was found murdered in his bed. Such was the substance of the accusation, without the comments and remarks with which it was interspersed. The prisoner—my soul revolted at the expression—pleaded guilty, and sullenly refused to say a word in extenuation of her crime. But the unhappy woman was not wholly forsaken. Some distant connexions of the Heath family, anxious, if possible, to lessen the additional disgrace which threatened their doomed house, had engaged for the defence one of the ablest lawyers of the day; and he certainly made as much out of his miserable materials as was possible. Ingeniously

avoiding any attempt at refutation of the crime, or any direct reference to the crushing facts of the accusation, he slid, with apparent unconsciousness, into the strain, always so powerful with English juries, of an appeal to their sympathies. The woman before them was still young and very beautiful; and, in words of glowing eloquence, he wove, from the stores of his imagination, a pathetic tale of her life and sufferings. First representing the young girl in her aristocratic home, surrounded by all conceivable luxuries; then painting her romantic devotion, her sacrifice of all for love; and crowning the elaborate imaginary picture by a vivid description of what the gradual disenchantment, the daily and hourly loss of cherished illusions, the terrible waking from the ideal to the real, the discovery, too late that the idol of gold was an idol of clay—what these must have been to a highly-wrought and sensitive nature.

“God forbid!, gentlemen of the jury,” he said, “that I should attempt to palliate this crime; but in shrinking from the act, I cannot forget the provocation. Trampled on and insulted by the man through whom she had lost all—name and fame, home and friends—reviled and disowned *for* him, deceived and degraded *by* him, this woman expiated in years of bitterness—who can estimate their bitterness?—the crime of having loved too faithfully. But even the veriest worm will turn at length. There came a day when the one drop that filled it to overflowing was poured into this woman’s cup. Encouraged by the applauding jeers of every member of his family, the brutal coward struck her as she stood alone among them, in her fatal defenceless superiority. Was it the blood of a thousand ancestors that rushed with tumultuous rebellion to her brain? Was it the last agonised throe of a yet unbroken spirit? I dare not conjecture. I only know that, goaded to madness, in a frenzy of wild unconsciousness, the unhappy woman rushed to avenge her wrongs; to cancel her misery in the crime for which she now stands charged before you.”

It was a well-imagined defence, and, I always thought, prompted the recommendation to mercy which accompanied the verdict of guilty. In consideration of that recommendation, the sentence of death was commuted into one of transportation for life; and the subject dropped from the record of human events. These occurrences took place four years after the death of Sir Andrew Heath. In all the lacerating pain they brought, it was yet a comfort to remember that he had not lived to know them. From that time my native land became more than ever distasteful to me. My father died, and I succeeded to the title and estates, an alien and a foreigner. Love, marriage, and all the dear domestic ties realised in the one word “home” were not for me; a blight was upon

my life ; a ghastly memory was attached to all such associations ; and not until thirty-five years of exile had blanched my hair, and warned me of coming old age, did I venture back to the cold hearth I had left a buoyant, joyous youth.

Here, comparatively happy in the genial society of my books, I have lived for five solitary years, with the ashes of nearly forty winters to cover the story of my early life ; a story so old as almost to belong to the records of a former generation ; yet this very night, my friends, I have learned that till within a few hours ago it had a sequel.

CONCLUSION.

As Sir Edward Ashby pronounced the last words, he placed before the doctor and clergyman the papers confided to the latter by the dying servant. They were three in number.

The first was a baptismal registry of Gabriella Heath, daughter of Sir Andrew and Lady Gabriella Heath, with date and local particulars.

The second, a certificate of marriage between James Wynn and Gabriella Heath, with date and names of witnesses.

The third, a ticket-of-leave, discharge from prison for good conduct, granted to the convict, Gabby Wynn, and dated some six years back.

“ My God ! ” exclaimed Dr. Nichol, “ it cannot be possible ! That strange, wizened creature—that mass of scarred ugliness and deformity—— ”

“ Was once the peerless Gabriella Heath ! ” said Sir Edward, concluding the doctor’s sentence in the absent tones of a man whose thoughts are far away from the subject on which he is speaking.

“ Truly she was, as she herself said, a deeply guilty sinner, ” mused Mr. Nugent, as he renewed in thought the death-bed scene he now so fully comprehended ; “ but the mercy of God is infinite ! ”

And then silence fell on the little party. But that night, for the first time since its reoccupation, Ashby Hall harboured guests, for the clergyman and doctor refused to leave their friend alone with that strange revelation, while the dead was yet in the house.

A few days later, when a mourning train issued from the gates of the Hall, the lord of the manor attended as chief mourner, and truly—

———“ the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.”

But in this extraordinary deference to the memory of an old servant, the people of Ashby only saw a confirmation of their opinions respecting the “ eccentric Sir Edward, ” who, being the

greatest aristocrat and landed proprietor in the neighbourhood, had given too deep offence to the county by his unexpected seclusion and unaccountable inhospitality to be worthy a renewal of surprise. Others, whose greater curiosity took them to the churchyard to inspect the last testimonial to the object of this homage, found only a simple marble slab, erected near the family vault of the Ashby's, and inscribed with the simple letter, G.

MAGNA CHARTA: ITS HISTORY AND PROVISIONS

PART II.

It was shortly after the events recorded in the first part of this history that the death of the Chief Justiciary removed the last restraint on King John's falsehood and perfidy. "By the feet of the Lord," he exclaimed, when he heard of it, "I am now for the first time king and lord of England." But he felt that his power was precarious, and needed help. And he looked about for such.

He is said about this time to have sent three messengers on an embassy to a Mohammedan prince, chief of the Moors in Spain and Africa. They were to offer in John's name to give up the realm of England to this prince, to be held under him by John as his tributary and vassal; and it is even added that the English king offered to become a Mohammedan. When his ambassadors were admitted to an audience, the Moorish chief told them that he had been lately reading a Greek book by one Paul, a wise man and a Christian, whose words had given him great satisfaction, but whose conduct did not please him in this respect, viz., that he did not continue in the law under which he was born. These were not hopeful expressions; and they were followed, on the chief making further inquiries about England, its climate, productions, and king, by an indignant refusal of the offer that was made to him. With two of John's emissaries he seems to have held no further conference; with the third, one Robert of London, he had another interview, and inquired more particularly of him into John's character. Robert is reported to have described him as a tyrant rather than a king, a subverter rather than a governor, an oppressor of his people and a favourer of aliens, a lion to his subjects and a lamb to rebels, an insatiable extorter of money, a corrupter of the marriageable daughters and sisters of nobles, and so indolent that he had lost Normandy and other possessions, and was then seeking to lose or ruin England. On the Mohammedan prince asking why the English permitted such a fellow to reign over them, Robert replied that the English were the most patient of men till they were offended beyond measure; then they become fierce as lions or elephants when they are wounded, and try to shake off the yoke. Robert was dismissed with handsome presents; the other two were sent away without even a parting word.

Whether this account be true or false,* John had to look around

* Matthew Paris, who relates this story, says he had it from Robert himself when he was at the abbey of St. Alban's—being placed there by John as a reward

for help; and his hopes now rested with Innocent. He sent him considerable sums of money, with further promises, undertaking to be tributary and subject to him for ever, if he would take a favourable opportunity of confounding the archbishop, and excommunicating the barons, whom he might then imprison or put to death, and seize upon their possessions.

Another legate was sent from Rome to settle dissensions, as it was alleged. The question had never yet been decided, what amount of restitution was to be given for injuries inflicted on his subjects by the king. Several meetings had been held, but with no definite result. The legate had, besides, authority from Innocent to fill up vacancies; and he proceeded to carry out this part of his instructions without regard to archbishops, bishops, or other patrons. Stephen was not the man to submit to these proceedings. In the early part of A.D. 1214, he held a council of his suffragans at Dunstable, in which the legate's intrusions were considered. The resolution of the council was that the archbishop should send letters to the legate, who was then at Burton-on-Trent, to interpose an appeal, pending which he was not to proceed in his arbitrary appointments. The act shows Langton's independent English spirit. On receiving the impertinent communication, the legate sent off Pandulph to Rome, to raise a storm there against the archbishop. The mission was ridiculous, when we remember the facts. It was Pandulph who had upheld the archbishop and the barons against the king; it was the same Pandulph who now went back to Rome, to blacken, as much as he could, the character and conduct of the same archbishop and barons. And he did his part well. He accused the archbishop, and those who acted with him, of too much severity in exacting restitution for the king's damages. He charged them with trying to degrade the king, and he represented him as a model of humility and moderation, such as he had never seen before. He succeeded so well, that when Simon, Stephen's brother, interposed on his behalf, he was not allowed a hearing.

In the November of that year, the barons again assembled at St. Edmundsbury. Here the liberties promised in King Henry's charter were further discussed. They had previously spoken of a fitting opportunity; now they swore at the high altar, that if the king refused to grant the laws and liberties promised by King Henry, they would withdraw their allegiance, and carry on war with the king, until he had by his seal confirmed their petitions. They agreed to present themselves, with their requests, before the

for his services—and that he exhibited there the presents he had received. If he were the scoundrel that the old chronicler describes him to have been, he was capable of forging the story, which he might do, to account for being in possession of treasures acquired by other means.

king immediately after Christmas, and to employ the intermediate time in providing horses and arms, that if, as they anticipated, he should practise his usual duplicity, and draw back from his oath, they might seize his castles.

Duly and truly, at the time appointed, the barons represented their grievances to their sovereign. They reminded him of the oaths that he had taken when he was absolved by the archbishop at Winchester. Their appearance was imposing, for they came in great military array; and the king began to fear their force, and to apprehend violence. He alleged, therefore, that the matters which they had brought before him were of grave difficulty, and that he wished to have till Easter for consideration. At the same time he gave a sort of reluctant promise that he would satisfy all. Soon after, as Crusaders had something of inviolability attaching to them, he took the Cross for his own greater protection.

About Easter, the barons re-assembled at Stamford. The king's proceedings had drawn to them almost all the nobles of the realm, and a great army. Two thousand knights were there, besides serving-men. They moved on to Brackley. The king was then at Woodstock, from whence he moved to Oxford. He sent the archbishop and the Earl of Pembroke to the assembled barons, to ask what laws and liberties they required. They handed them a paper, which chiefly referred to laws and customs that had formerly prevailed in the realm. The barons also held out a threat, that if their petition (if it may so be called) were not granted, they would lay siege to the king's castles, and take possession of his lands. The commissioners returned with the important document to the king, and the archbishop repeated (it is said) *by heart** each head of the barons' demands. When the king understood their purport, he asked, with a violent sneer, "Why do not the barons demand my kingdom, as well as these iniquitous exactions? They are vain and superstitious things they ask, and have no ground of reason to stand on." Then, working himself into one of his most furious passions, he swore that he never would grant them such liberties as would make him a slave.

On receiving the king's answer, the barons at once appointed Robert Fitz Walter (who had been previously obliged to flee the kingdom, and had made acquaintance with the archbishop in France) their chief, with the title of Marshal of the Army of God and of Holy Church. They proceeded first to Northampton. There, from want of engines of war, they were not successful, and went on to Bedford, which received them. While there, they were invited to London; and they at once obeyed the summons. Early

* "*Memoriter*."—Mat. Par.

in the morning of May 24, while the good citizens were at church, they entered, and took possession of the city. They then sent letters to those barons who still professed to adhere to the king, calling upon them, as they regarded the safety of their possessions, to leave him, and join those who were fighting for peace and liberty. At the same time, they did not forget to hold out a threat that, in case their overtures were not listened to, they would treat them as public enemies, and would destroy their castles, burn their houses, and lay waste their parks, warrens, and orchards. Very many joined them; in fact, the king is said to have had only seven knights remaining. He hated the barons, and, at the same time, feared them. He thought that, if he could make terms with them, he should disperse them, and break up the confederation. The Earl of Pembroke, with some others, was sent to the barons. He was authorised to say that, for the sake of peace, and for the glory and honour of his kingdom, the sovereign would grant the laws and liberties they asked. The barons were to fix a suitable time and place, when and where to meet, that these promises might be carried into effect. The day fixed was June 15; the place was between Staines and Windsor, known as Runnymede. Then and there appeared for the king, officially*—for we know that some of them were, in heart, with the insurgent barons—the Archbishops of Canterbury and Dublin, the Bishops of London, Winchester, Lincoln, Bath, Worcester, Coventry, and Rochester, Master Pandulph, the Master of the Knights Templars, Brother Almaric, the Earls of Pembroke, Salisbury, Warren, and Arundel, Alan of Galway, William Fitz-Gerald, Peter Fitz-Herbert, Thomas Basset, Matthew Fitz-Herbert, Alan Basset, Hugh de Neville, and a few others. On the side of the barons were almost all the nobles of England with their retainers. The king, finding himself no match for them, conceded their demands, and sealed Magna Charta.

The barons returned to London with the charter. The king sent letters to the sheriffs, charging them to make all persons swear to observe these laws and liberties. About the same time, the pope confirmed some of John's concessions, mainly (perhaps) with the view of detaching some from the confederates, by which the king promised that all ecclesiastical elections should be free—that he would neither obstruct the elections, nor suffer them to be obstructed, on the electors obtaining his license, which he undertook not to refuse or postpone; and, if he did so, the elections were still to proceed. When made they were to be submitted to him for his sanction; and this he engaged not to withhold, save for a reasonable and lawful cause to be duly proved.

These events raised a general feeling of satisfaction and joy;

* *Fuerunt quasi ex parte Regis.*—Mat. Par. 245.

but it was of short duration. When some of the nobles required their lands and other possessions, the king put them off, on the plea that he must be assured on legal authority what their rights were. To the archbishop alone he at once restored some of his castles.

The barons had obtained from the king this stringent security, appended to the charter, for its fulfilment on his part: "The barons shall elect twenty-five barons of the realm, whom they please; and these shall observe, hold, and cause to be observed with all their might, the peace and liberties which we have conceded, and by this present charter have confirmed, so that if, by ourselves or our Justiciary, we fail in any respect to any one, or transgress any of the articles of the peace or of the security, and the offence be pointed out to four of the twenty-five barons, these four shall come to us or to our Justiciary (if we are out of the kingdom), and, setting before us the offence, shall require that without delay we make amends. And if we, or, in our absence, our Justiciary, fail to do so within forty days, reckoning from the time when the information was laid, the aforesaid four barons shall refer the case to the twenty-five; and they, with the whole body of the entire country, shall attack and harass us in all ways they can, by capturing our castles, lands, and possessions, and in whatever other way they are able, until amends be made, according to their pleasure, saving our person, the person of the queen, and the persons of our children. And when amends have been made, they shall behave to us as aforesaid. And whoever of the country wishes, may swear that, to carry out the aforesaid, he will obey the commands of the said twenty-five barons, and with them harass us according to his power; and we publicly and freely grant licence to any one who wishes to swear this, and we will forbid none. If the twenty-five barons in any of the matters committed to them disagree, or, if some of them are unable to attend, let the decision of the majority have force the same as if the twenty-five had all agreed. And they shall swear that all the aforesaid they will faithfully observe, and with all their power cause to be observed. We will not obtain, through ourselves or any other, anything by which any of these concessions and liberties shall be revoked or diminished. And if any such things be obtained, let it be null and void; and we will never avail ourselves of it, through ourselves or through any other." *

It might be supposed that this was security stringent enough. It shows the utter want of confidence that the king's subjects had in his promises and oaths. It shows, also, the strait to which he was reduced. But it soon after transpired that he had given orders for arming some of his castles; and, in the teeth of his solemn promise

* In the articles presented by the barons, the pope is expressly specified.

not to seek for authority to set aside the charter, Pandulph, who is mentioned in it as one of those by whose advice it was granted, was despatched to Rome to excite the pope against the barons, and other emissaries were sent to different parts of the continent to raise mercenaries. The messengers, on arriving at Rome, represented to the pope that when the king and the barons were treating, he had publicly protested that England was a fief of Rome, and that consequently he could not introduce anything new without the pope's sanction, or make any change that might be to his prejudice; that the barons disregarded this protest and seized on London, and then exacted their demands by force. When Innocent heard of these rebellious proceedings against his sovereign authority, he exclaimed, "Do these barons dare to expel their king, and to transfer the possession of the Roman Church to another? By St. Peter, we will not let this injury pass unpunished." In short, he proceeded to condemn the charter and annul it for ever. He sent letters at the same time in which he accused the barons of supporting John, while he was in opposition to the Church, informing them that he had previously enjoined the king to receive with clemency their just requests, and the barons to present them in a proper manner; that before these instructions had arrived, they had taken possession of London; and after they had received them, they had despised the king's offers; that John had declared his kingdom to be a fief of Rome, and, consequently, could do nothing without the pope's special command; that Innocent had called on the archbishop and bishops to defend the rights of the Roman Church, and to protect the king as one who had taken the Cross; that the barons would do none of these things, and the king was thus compelled to grant their demands; finally, that Innocent utterly and totally reprobated and condemned the compact under pain of anathema, and pronounced the charter, with its obligations and securities, null and void. He held out an offer of putting an end to grievances and abuses, if representatives were sent to the Council that he had summoned to meet in Rome in November. The barons, however, paid little attention to his admonitions. They made their preparations for war with greater activity; and their opinion of the pope is shown by the words uttered on receiving his letters—"Woe to him that justifieth the wicked for reward." It was in vain that Innocent excommunicated them; generally at first, afterwards by name. When the archbishop was required by Pandulph—on his return from Rome—and the Bishop of Winchester to publish their excommunication of the barons, he refused to do so. Upon this they proceeded, according (as they alleged) to their directions, to suspend him. It was then that he went to Rome to attend the council; and, while there, the king's accusations against him were heard.

He seems to have met them with a dignified silence. He knew that this was his wisest course ; he could afford to wait. The pope, who had been his friend, and who had sent him to Canterbury, now confirmed the sentence of suspension. Though he afterwards remitted it, Stephen was not allowed to return to England.* Thus the barons were left without a head. They were brave and bold ; but now they fell again into their former helplessness. The miserable state of things which followed justifies us in saying that if there had been no Archbishop Stephen of Canterbury there would have been no Magna Charta. The king received his foreign hordes, the refuse of their own countries. With these he pillaged, burnt, and laid waste the lands and houses of the barons, seizing all whom he could find, torturing them, and compelling them to pay heavy sums for their ransom. When any of the barons' castles were taken, their wives and daughters were insulted. Cathedrals and abbeys were plundered, and their lands devastated. The barons were powerless ; they wasted their time in questionable employments. They neglected to relieve their friends, who held Rochester Castle, when the king besieged it ; and at last they were obliged to invite the son of the French king to come over and be their leader. Although forbidden by the pope to do so, he accepted the invitation ; and for some time plundering, burning, and devastation were committed on both sides, when the death of King John, on Oct. 16th, 1216, gave the barons the opportunity of offering allegiance to his son, and thus ending the miseries that had so long afflicted the country. Pope Innocent died in the following year ; but it was not until May, 1218, that Archbishop Stephen returned to England. At Michaelmas of that year he held a council in London, when the charter was solemnly confirmed in the name of the young king, and the archbishop sealed it. It was at another council, held by the king in 1223, that the archbishop required it to be confirmed anew. When one member of the council objected that the liberties conceded by it were extorted by force, and therefore ought not to be observed, the archbishop, remembering vividly the evils of the former reign, replied, " If you really love the king, you will not seek to disturb the peace of the kingdom." On which the young king said, " We have sworn to observe all these liberties ; and what we have sworn we are bound to abide by."

Here, then, we close the history of the events which led to Magna Charta. Succeeding kings confirmed it.

But what was this Great Charter ? Its provisions may probably surprise some. It was not a law to let everybody do as they

* His brother was at this time elected to the arch bishopric of York. This *must* have been a " gratifying testimonial " to Stephen, and its value would not be lost on him when the king and the pope set the election aside.

pleased—rather it was intended to prevent such lawlessness. It was not a law for one class against another. Though gained by the barons, it bound them, according to their own articles, to respect their vassals' rights, as the king was bound to respect those of the barons, and thus it had regard to the liberties of all classes. It begins by stating that it is granted by "John, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, &c., in the presence of God, and for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his ancestors and heirs, for the honour of God and the exalting of holy Church, and for the amendment of his kingdom, by the counsel of the venerable father, Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England and Cardinal of the holy Roman Church; Henry, archbishop of Dublin; William, bishop of London; Peter, bishop of Winchester; Jocelyn, bishop of Bath; Hugh, bishop of Lincoln; Walter, bishop of Worcester; William, bishop of Coventry; Bennett, bishop of Rochester; Master Pandulph, the pope's subdeacon and familiar; the Master of the Knights Templar of England; William, earl of Pembroke; William, earl of Salisbury; William, earl Warrenne; William, earl Arundel; and others of the king's liegemen." It then proceeds: "We have, in the first place, given to God, and by this present charter have confirmed, for us and our heirs for ever, that the English Church be free, and have its own rights whole and its liberties uninjured; and so we wish it to be observed, as appears from this, that before discord was openly existing between us and our barons, we, of our own free will, granted and confirmed by charter the liberty of elections, and obtained the confirmation thereof from our lord Pope Innocent the Third, and this we will observe and wish to be observed by our heirs for ever in good faith."

The freedom of elections here promised to the Church was also specified in the first article of the charter granted by King Henry, which was referred to in the first part of this paper, and produced by the archbishop to the barons, and then made the foundation of their demands. The phrase, "*English Church*," does not occur in it, but it is used in the Great Charter, as if it were familiar at that time. It carries with it a peculiar significance when we remember the part which the archbishop, who is described as "Cardinal of the *Roman Church*," had in carrying Magna Charta. The Churches of England and Rome were then in communion with each other. The archbishop was the friend of the pope, and had been elected to his see at Rome. Still, he was an Englishman. We have seen that he acted, after his appointment to Canterbury, independent of the pope's authority, and even contrary to his commands. Without straining the expression, "*English Church*," too far, but at the same time viewing it in connection with Archbishop Stephen's con-

duct and the stipulation contained in the barons' demands, that the king should not seek to obtain from the pope any absolution from what he had granted, it seems as if Stephen, without intending any infraction of the communion between the two Churches, aimed at gaining for the English Church independence alike from regal and from papal tyranny.

But it is freedom from the English king's despotic interference that appears on the surface of the Charter. The Norman monarchs had been guilty of gross iniquities in ecclesiastical matters. Whether they feared it, or suspected it, one thing is clear—that they plundered it. They kept sees vacant, and appropriated the incomes to their own purposes, or they bestowed Church lands on their own favourites or agents. It is recorded that William Rufus, in a sickness, vowed to give peace and protection to the Churches of God, and never more to sell them for money; and yet at his death, seven years later, he held in his own hand the revenues of the sees of Canterbury, Winchester, and Salisbury, besides those of eleven abbeys, all of which were let out to farm. King Henry II. kept the see of Lincoln vacant for many years; York was vacant for two years in King John's time, during which its emoluments were in the hands of Brian de Insula. It was against abuses like these that the king was prevailed upon to grant a charter conceding freedom of election to the authorities of the Church, requiring only that his licence should be had before proceeding to election, and that the election, when made, should be submitted to him for approval, but promising, at the same time, not to delay granting the licence, or to oppose the election, but for good and proved reasons. Perhaps the full liberty thus granted has never been enjoyed. The jealousy of the civil power has prompted it to take every advantage, and the nineteenth century has not all that was conceded in the thirteenth. Sees are not, indeed, now kept vacant to maintain royal extravagance or to reward lay adventurers; but private and political motives still too often influence the patronage (as it is called) of the Church; and a lay commission, the invention of this generation, requires large slices of Church lands for its working.*

Many of the provisions of Magna Charta depend on institutions peculiar to feudal times, and would be unintelligible without some acquaintance with these institutions. The origin of feudalism is lost in the dimness of distant ages. Some writers have ascribed it to the northern hordes which poured forth under their chiefs, like

* Since this was written, the author has seen the following terse passage on this matter, in Dr. Hook's "Lives of the Archbishops" (vol. 2, p. 364):—"The Chief Commissioner receives the incomes of two prebends and a living; the second of two prebends. Their secretary receives the income of five livings; his work being considered equal to that of five clergymen."

birds of prey, to feed on the carcase of the expiring Roman empire. It bears on it the marks of a military institution, and was gradually developed into the state in which it existed in the days of King John. The victorious chieftain, who led his troops to victory, rewarded the bravest and the boldest of his followers out of them. The condition of their possession of such lands was military service under him when he required it. These domains, or fiefs (as they were called), were so granted at first that they might be resumed by the chief at pleasure. But it was clearly advisable to give the vassals a more abiding interest in their possession. Hence the grants, instead of being resumable at pleasure, were made annual; then for a term of years; then, as things became more settled, for life; and, finally, hereditary. Into this state they had passed by A. D. 800.

The feudal system had existed in England before the Conquest, but in a modified form to that which it then assumed. William of Normandy introduced it in the more fully developed form to which it had grown on the continent. It was about that time that what were called knight's fee and knight's service were established in England. The lands were required to supply a certain number of soldiers; that which furnished one was denominated a knight's fee, and so on for more. If the king made the grant to a noble, the latter had to furnish a certain number of men for the service of the sovereign; if a noble made the grant, the vassals had to supply a certain number for the service of the lord; for what the king was to the barons, that the barons were to the vassals. William parcelled out the country in grants to his most deserving followers. Everywhere feudal castles arose for their defence. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us that "William caused castles to be built, and the poor men he made to labour heavily. Truly, in his time, men had much labour and very many sorrows." There were eleven hundred of these castles in King Stephen's time. Probably the royal prerogative was more absolute in the hands of the Norman kings, because military dominion had to be maintained over a people conquered but not subdued; and thus the Norman barons who were settled in England found it necessary to allow larger powers to their chief than they might otherwise have been disposed to yield. Add to this William's own firmness and determination, for (to use again the words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) "he cared nothing for the ill-will of the whole of them, yet must they entirely follow the king's pleasure if they wished to live or possess their land." What he held by the force of his will his successors claimed by hereditary right; and thus, in the hundred and fifty years that intervened between the Conquest and Magna Charta, the abuses grew up which it was intended to remedy.

A vassal, on entering on his possessions, brought a present to

his lord. It was an acknowledgment on the vassal's part, that he held the land under his superior. These presents went by the name of *reliefs*. Custom had fixed the relief at five pounds for the knight's fee of land; but this "reasonable relief" (as it is termed in the Charter) was often set aside, and the superior exacted what he thought proper. The vassal, having no power of resisting, was obliged to submit. Magna Charta fixed the relief for the heir to an earldom at a hundred pounds, for the heir to a barony at a hundred marks, for a knight's fief at a hundred shillings, and others in proportion. When a vassal died, the superior was the guardian of the son, if a minor, and was to take charge of the estate for him. The benefits which must have resulted from such an arrangement, when carried out in a paternal and conscientious manner, are obvious; and it would be a libel on human nature in general, and on the noble and generous spirit that was so often exhibited in the age of which we are treating, to suppose that there were not many bright instances of a faithful discharge of this important trust. But at the same time there were those who only impoverished the ward's estate while it was under their guardianship. Magna Charta enacted on this head that guardians should not take from their wards' lands anything but reasonable outgoings, customs, and services, without waste or destruction of men or effects, and the heir, on coming of age, was to have his estate without relief or fine. The houses, parks, warrens, lakes, mills, &c., were to be kept up out of the produce, and the guardian was to hand the inheritance over, supplied as well, at least, as he received it; and those who failed in their duty in these particulars were to make amends to the king, who, it was appointed, should commit the care of the estate to two discreet men of the fief, and they were to be answerable to the sovereign.

The daughters of deceased vassals became the wards, and were at the disposal of the superior. The heiresses of barons, who were tenants in chief, were royal wards, and the king might give them in marriage at his pleasure. It was usual that fines should be exacted of widows for their portions; and this Magna Charta forbade to be done. It provided that a widow might remain forty days in the house after her husband's death, and that her portion should be paid her within that time. If she left the house, being a castle, a competent abode was to be provided for her, in which she should stay till her portion was paid her, and meanwhile she was to have a reasonable allowance out of the estate. Her portion was to be the third part of her husband's land. She was not to be obliged to marry if she wished to remain unmarried; but she was to give security that she would not marry without the consent of the king, or the superior of whom she held.

When the chief was reduced by any cause, what was called an *aid* was the remedy. An *aid* was also given to the superior when his eldest son was made a knight, or his eldest daughter once married, or to ransom his body, if he were taken captive. The same, of course, applied to the king. But aids were exacted for other purposes, and to unreasonable amounts. It is stated that the year 1110 was a very oppressive year, in consequence of the tax that King Henry took for his daughter's portion. King John exacted three shillings from every carneate of land to make up three thousand marks, to be given with his niece on her marriage. Magna Charta provided that aids should not be taken by king or baron but in the three cases that have been specified, and that then it should be a reasonable aid.

An obligation was attached to every knight's fee to serve in arms forty days in the year. This obligation passed by the name of *scutage*. The term was afterwards applied to the sum paid by the vassal for non-attendance in the field. King John took two marks for scutage of those who did not accompany him abroad in 1202; two marks and a half in 1204; an immense sum in this way when he returned after losing his French possessions; and two marks from those who did not follow him into Wales.

There was also another impost on cities, towns, and freemen who owed no military service, called *tailage*. It was arbitrary in its imposition, though professedly made on an estimate of income. It is not mentioned in the Charter, but it is noticed in the articles presented by the barons. They desired that it should be put upon the same basis as aids and scutage; *i.e.* that it should be reasonable, for specified purposes, and with the consent of the king's council.

And of what did the council consist? On the principle recognised by the provision of the Charter just referred to, that a people should have liberty to tax themselves, the House of Commons now votes the public money. To limit the sovereign's arbitrary power of imposing taxes, Magna Charta provided that for the purpose of assessing the imposts of which we have spoken the archbishop, abbots, earls, and greater barons, the direct tenants of the crown, should be summoned by the king's sheriff's and bailiffs. The council or parliament consisted of these. The purpose for which they were summoned, and the place of assembling were to be specified; and a notice of forty days was directed to be given. There is no mention of representatives in the present acceptation of the term. It was not till the following reign, when the Charter was renewed, that this provision of it was developed into a House of Commons. And, although King John and his successor bound themselves to observe this clause of the Charter, still every kind of impost, levied by royal authority alone, without the consent of the

council, was not given up for several years after. The sovereign might well regard it as a chief part of his prerogative. It supplied him with the "sinews of war;" and a refractory council might seriously impede his plans, and obstruct his desires. It is thus easy to understand why King John asked, on hearing what the barons required, "Why do they not demand my crown as well?"

The judicial power centred then, as it does now, in the sovereign. But the law-courts followed his person. This necessarily led to great delay. The barons required, and the king granted, that the supreme court of justice should be stationary. The more regular administration of justice was thus secured; and the king, in connection with this provision of Magna Charta, made this striking promise—"We will sell justice to none, deny it to none, delay it to none."

In Magna Charta we find, also, reference made to what has since been known as trial by jury. "Let no freeman be imprisoned, or outlawed, or in any way injured, or in any manner proceeded against by us, otherwise than by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the laws of the land." Oppressive fines or seizures were guarded against; lands were not to be seized for debts, if chattels sufficed; nor were a man's pledges to be distrained if the chief debtor had the means of payment; a freeman was to be amerced in proportion to his offence, saving his contenenement; a merchant, saving his merchandise; and a villein, saving his wagonage.

Tolls were demanded of merchants for each baron whose estate they passed through, or whose bridge they crossed. Some seized their persons, and demanded ransom. Magna Charta directed that merchants were to have safe and secure passage to and from the country, and through it, without any wicked tolls, according to old custom, except in time of war; and then no injury was to be inflicted on their bodies, and they were to lose none of their effects till it was ascertained by the Chief Justiciary how merchants were treated in the country with which the war was waged.

Jews suffered severely in those days. King John had tortured and imprisoned them in order to extract money from them. Some gave all they had, and even promised more. At Bristol one refused to give up his wealth after many tortures. At last, orders were given that one of his teeth should be violently knocked out each day. He thus submitted to the loss of seven; and all the pain of the operation, proverbial in ordinary cases of extraction, was then wilfully aggravated. On the eighth day he was fain to give up the contest; and as his eighth tooth was about to be wrenched out, he agreed to disgorge 10,000 marks, and save his tooth.

It is not to be expected that much consideration would be shown

to Jews in that age. Magna Charta merely provided that when a freeman died indebted to a Jew, no interest was to be claimed while the heir was under age; the widow was to have her portion, necessaries were to be provided for the children according to their tenement, and the debt was to be paid out of the residue. It was added, that the same was also to hold good in debts that were owing to others than Jews.

Among minor matters—though they were probably not felt to be such at that time—we may notice that amendment of weights and measures was directed to be made; the arrangements of counties and hundreds were to be as of old; assizes were to be shortened; the distribution was fixed that was to be made of the chattels of one who died intestate; the king's possession of felon's lands was to be for a year and a day, at the expiration of which they were to revert to the lord of the fief; compensation for illegal and unjust fines which had been inflicted, was to be made according to the decision of the twenty-five barons; one, who held land in a barony that was forfeited to the king, was not to pay a greater relief or service to the king than he would have paid to the baron; none were to give lands to a religious house, and then hold them under it; hostages and papers, which the king had taken as securities from the barons, were to be restored; certain obnoxious people about the king were to be dismissed the kingdom; and restitution was to be made to Llewellyn of Wales and the King of Scotland.

There is a separate paper appended to Magna Charta, besides a provision in it, concerning forests. There had been severe laws on this head in Saxon times. But the Norman kings enlarged the forests. William made the New Forest, and is said to have been by no means particular as to what was swept away in making it. The old chronicle, which has been previously quoted, says that "he instituted a great protection for deer; and he established laws therewith, that whosoever slew hart or hind should lose his eyes. He forbade the harts and boars to be slain; so much he loved the tall deer as if he were their father. Also he commanded concerning hares, that they must fare free; his rich men lamented it, and the miserable people murmured at it." The barons, through Magna Charta, stipulated that no new forests should be made, and that those which had been made in the former reign should be disafforested.

Such is a sketch of the causes that led to Magna Charta, of the means by which it was gained, and of its main provisions. It was not an attempt to overturn the throne or the existing institutions of the country. Its provisions are either for the restoration of former liberties, or the expansion of the state of things as at that time existing. The sagacity and forecasting wisdom of its originators are

shown by the fact, that so far from being a temporary measure, its principles formed the basis on which, in later years, were developed many of the institutions under which we live, and which have made England what it is. "For five hundred years," it has been said, "it was appealed to as decisive on behalf of the people." Those who drew it up, and carried it, enjoyed, perhaps, its benefits the least. They were content to work for after-times, and therein they showed true greatness of soul. They have not left many memorials of their private life. Of the archbishop—the life and soul of the movement—we know scarcely anything beyond the part that he took in its stirring events, and the reputation which he has of having divided the Bible into chapters. Of the barons who co-operated with him in obtaining Magna Charta, a great authority says that not six are now represented in the House of Peers. Their works remain, when the authors have passed away. So far as men's works are built upon the eternal principles of truth and justice, they flourish with a life that is ever new, ages after the foremost men in raising them have disappeared—when their places have long ceased to know them, and their names are almost, or even altogether, forgotten. But though

"The knights' bones are dust,
And their good swords rust;
Their souls are with the saints, we trust."

AFTER THE RAIN

BUT when the noiseless shower has ended,
 And the bright sky looks forth again,
 And fades the bow in Heaven bended,
 Wrought from the crystals of the rain,

The earth stands held in mute delight,
 And joyous with a silent mirth;
 Bride-like in tears, she seems to sight
 A new, rejuvenated earth.

A verdure bursts upon the leas,
 As verdure ne'er had been of yore;
 Those clumps of leafy-laden trees
 Look fuller-foliag'd than before.

With keener, purer life, the air
 Your sense enthrall'd enamour'd greets;
 Fraught with a thousand perfumes rare,
 Snatch'd from a thousand summer sweets.

And out of air and dewy ground
 Comes forth a wondrous moving calm;
 That unseen incense breathes around,
 And influences, dropping balm.

Quite steep'd in the delicious sense
 Of new-born atmospheric life,
 The spirit, from a peace intense,
 Can give no thoughts to care and strife.

Then the clear ether palpitates,
 Beat by a myriad wings of gauze;
 Yet ever at a breath it waits
 As revelling in ecstatic pause.

Most soothing falls the drowsy hum,
 And dreamy murmur of the bees;
 Most musical, from far off, come
 Vague sounds that mellow on the breeze.

AFTER THE RAIN

Now drowning them—from bush and briar,
 (A sweet collusion of sweet lays),
Bursts forth the untaught woodland choir
 In unpremeditated praise.

Oh, linnet! tell me, whence is born
 The subtle sweetness of your song?
I hear you throstle from your thorn,
 That thrilling chant—prolong, prolong!

Waft to me some didactic strain
 Through the cleft alleys of the wood;
Can man not learn your bless'd refrain,
 And pour spontaneous gratitude?

M. S.

MILITARY PROMOTION

THE events of the past year have caused every nation in Europe to examine carefully the working of its military system. Among ourselves the discussion thus generated has lately turned on the principle of promotion by purchase. As regards this subject, public opinion appears to be much divided. Several speakers on both sides of the House of Commons took occasion a few nights ago to declare that our present method of promotion is a blot on our military system, if not a disgrace to our civilisation. The House, however, appeared to be unconvinced by their arguments, and affirmed the disputed principle by a considerable majority. It must certainly be allowed that the method by which officers at present obtain promotion to the higher grades of an army is by no means perfect; but before it is discarded we must discover some other system of regulating the matter equally practicable and more satisfactory. When we begin to inquire how we may advantageously rearrange our present system of promotion, two principal courses at once present themselves for consideration.

The first of these is to promote officers according to their seniority. In order that the full effects of this system may be seen, we must turn to some corps like the Royal Artillery, where it has long been in use. The whole of the Artillery service forms one regiment, though it is subdivided into many brigades and batteries; the promotion goes on in it by seniority throughout the entire mass of officers. The result is, that in the present state of affairs a young lieutenant of the Artillery can hardly become a captain in less than ten years from the date of his first commission. Hence it must inevitably follow that the higher ranks of a regiment so circumstanced will be filled by men far past the prime of life. It is plain that such a class of officers cannot be expected to possess that decision, energy, and bodily endurance which are necessary to the successful management of great enterprises. Nevertheless, the senior ranks of the Royal Artillery are at present filled by men who in no way answer to the description above given. The reason of this is, that the nominal state of promotion in the regiment has been of late years interfered with by the Crimean war and the Indian mutiny. The losses experienced by the Artillery in those campaigns had the effect of giving for a time a great impetus to their promotion; that stimulus has now ceased to be felt, and the ascent of the junior officers is extremely slow. Unless war should soon occur again, the corps will return, after no long interval, to the condition in which it was between 1840 and 1850. At that time the senior officers of the regiment were

almost unfitted for severe service by age and infirmity, and promotion was practically at a standstill. From this, it appears that to extend throughout the entire army the system of promotion by seniority would be a most unwise measure; yet, even if there were no such practical objection to the scheme, it is very questionable whether any such plan would be found to work satisfactorily. It certainly does not follow that one man should understand his profession better than another because the latter is his junior. Therefore the system is imperfect, even in theory; for it offers no guarantee against the danger, lest a post of enormous responsibility should at a critical moment be filled by an incompetent man. This is one of the principal objections directed against the method of promotion by purchase, and it holds good against the theory of that by seniority.

We have now to examine the opinions entertained by those who consider competition and promotion by merit as the grand panacea for military evils. As regards the second of their doctrines, opinions do not differ much. Promotion according to merit is what we all want; but according to what kind of merit is it to be given? and who is to be the judge? For an illustration of the system in its perfection we are frequently referred to the French army. Here all alike enter the army as private soldiers. From this common level the most meritorious men are picked out, and promoted in accordance with their abilities and behaviour. Such being the case in the French army, it is asked why we should not pursue the same method. Now, to a certain extent the system of promotion by merit is pursued in the English army. Our non-commissioned officers are at first chosen from among the private soldiers as being the best-behaved, the most intelligent, and the most efficient men in the regiment. The best are then promoted to the ranks of sergeant and colour-sergeant, and, theoretically, the most meritorious of them all should become serjeant-major. So far the system works admirably. It is not to be denied that the English non-commissioned officers are a most useful and praiseworthy class of men. Perhaps we may not quite agree with Marshal Marmont, who states in his work on the Peninsular War that the non-commissioned officers are "the back-bone of the English army;" yet no experienced soldier will ever deny that they are, as a rule, honest and trustworthy, and form an invaluable link between the commissioned officers and the private soldiers. Since, then, by promotion from the ranks we gain so valuable a class of non-commissioned officers, it may fairly be asked why the best of them should not be encouraged and aided to rise to the higher grades of the service.

Those who put such a question are generally unaware that the

experiment has been often tried. There are among the commissioned officers of the army many men who have risen from the ranks solely by their distinguished merit. Some of them owe their elevation to acts of signal valour in the field; others to good and faithful service during a long series of years. They were raised from the ranks in the hope that they would by degrees amalgamate with the new society amidst which their promotion placed them. And it was also expected that such a class of officers would have peculiar influence over the private soldiers. Neither of these advantages has been attained by the result of the experiment. In practice, it is found unwise to mix with the present class of commissioned officers those who are their inferior in birth, manner, and morality. I do not mean to assert that every man who is raised from the ranks is invariably below the usual standard of regimental officers in such matters. Occasionally officers of this class may be met, who have quite succeeded in gaining the tone and manner of the society to which they have been elevated. But these isolated instances only serve to impress more deeply on the observer the fact that no widely spread amalgamation can at present be looked for between the different orders of which the army is composed. Before any such fusion can take place, the gulf which separates the tastes, feelings, and habits of the officer from those of the men which he commands, must at least be bridged across. It is easy to imagine that, in course of time, the spread of education and refinement among non-commissioned officers may be such as to render those of them who receive commissions fit for the society into which they are thrown on their promotion; but it is idle to speculate on the possible action of an influence which must require many years before it can exert its full effect. For the present, officers who have been raised from the ranks should remember that, if they wish for admittance to regimental society, they have but one thing to do—namely, to fit themselves for it. The present class of officers who have been raised from the ranks generally keep as much as possible aloof from the society of the other regimental officers. This is natural, as the former feel themselves disqualified in every way from being agreeable companions to the latter. For the most part, they get small regimental appointments; as, for instance, those of quartermaster, paymaster, or adjutant. In the first two positions, many men of this class give great satisfaction to all concerned with them, and become universally popular throughout their regiment. Strange as it may appear, men who have accepted a commission after service in the ranks do not usually succeed well in the position of adjutant. They do not get on easily, either with officers or men. The private soldiers dislike them particularly, declaring that they are harsh and unjust. To this statement there are doubtless many exceptions;

but it holds good notwithstanding. Another curious fact is that men who have risen from the ranks do not usually make very good officers. It would be natural to think that any one who for a length of time had performed the highly responsible duties of colour-sergeant, or sergeant-major, would be ready and smart as regards those of a subaltern. But, on the contrary, such a man is frequently found to be slack and careless; in a word, he makes but an indifferent officer. The reason generally is, that the man has now no longer much to gain by activity and energy. He is no longer young, and he has obtained a commission, to do which may, perhaps, have been the object of his whole life. It need not excite astonishment, therefore, that he should lapse into indolence, when he has no longer any aim to induce exertion. Occasionally, indeed, men have been raised from the ranks in early life, and have attained high military honour. Such instances, however, are very rare indeed; the general rule is otherwise.

Comparatively few non-commissioned officers show much desire to obtain a commission. The reason is evident. In the case of a single man, even, the change of position consequent on such an increase of rank must necessarily remove him from the society to which he has been accustomed all his life. Added to this, the tendency of his promotion is to throw him alone among a set of men who are utterly new to him, and with whom he has but little in common. What advantage can his new rank give him, to compensate for such enforced isolation? The difference between the pay of an ensign and that of a sergeant-major is not so great as to make the commission of the former very desirable on account of the income attached to it. Indeed, when due regard is had to the expenses which fall on a commissioned officer, it is quite evident that a man without private means must be poorer as a subaltern than as a sergeant. There is nothing at all which can induce a non-commissioned officer to take a commission except the honour which must accrue from so marked a distinction, and the expectation of some regimental appointment. If the sergeant to whom a commission is offered be a married man the case is still more clear. His own isolation may be considerable, but in the course of his daily duty he must often find himself in contact with the other officers of his regiment, and thus he obtains a certain amount of society. But with whom will his wife fraternise? She, as the wife of an officer, cannot associate with the wives of the sergeants, who nevertheless are women of her own rank in life. Can she find friends and companions among the wives of the regimental officers? No, it is hardly possible that such should be the case. She cannot understand their thoughts and ways, nor they hers. The ladies represent a class of society altogether different from that to which

she belongs. If the two are to be amalgamated, this will be effected when the lower shall have risen to the level of the higher. The higher cannot descend to the lower. I do not assert that in a case such as that supposed above, the ladies of the regiment would absolutely avoid the wife of the new officer. Probably one or two of them would at first call upon her, but no intimacy would be the result of those advances. Nor is it only the fear of being unpleasantly situated with regard to the commissioned officers of their regiment which deters sergeants from accepting a commission when it is offered to them. The other reason why they hesitate to do so is to be found in the extreme smallness of the pay and allowances granted to a subaltern. These are utterly insufficient to enable a married man who has been promoted from the ranks to live with anything like comfort. The pay of an ensign amounts by itself to £90 and some few shillings a-year. To this is added the use of a room, generally a very small one, with a modicum of coals and candles. No furniture is provided, except a four-legged table and a few chairs. Now, the pay and allowances above stated may possibly be sufficient for the wants of a single man, though they certainly are unequal to those of the average British subaltern. But no diversity of opinion can exist regarding their utter inadequacy to the requirements of a married man, especially if he have children. Is it possible for an officer, who has been raised from the ranks and has no private means, to lodge his family in a room where, with a little ingenuity, he can shut the door, stir the fire, and open the window, without moving from his seat? Even supposing that he has two rooms allotted to him, it will be almost impossible for him to live comfortably in camp. Under such circumstances, a man possessed of private fortune, as most married officers are, would, of course, take a house in the nearest town. This cannot possibly be done when a man's whole income is only £90 a-year; so, in the case we have been supposing, an officer would be reduced to live in camp as he best could. It is true that regimental appointments, such as those before mentioned, are always, if possible, given to men thus circumstanced. But this only concurs with the arguments before adduced to prove that so long as the present scale of pay and allowances continues in force, it is absolutely impossible to carry out any comprehensive scheme for the promotion of meritorious non-commissioned officers to the higher grades of the army.

I once knew a serjeant who received a commission for an act of astonishing courage in the trenches before Sebastopol. He accepted it, and was posted to a new regiment, as is customary in such cases. He then sold out at once, and thus cleared £450, the price of an ensign's commission. Then he went back to his old

regiment, and re-enlisted as a private soldier. The result was, that within a week he was reinstated in his former position as colour-serjeant, having cleared £450 by the manœuvre. Such an action on the part of a man who was in a singular degree loved and respected by his comrades and his officers, is worth a whole volume of argument on the subject of promotion from the ranks. or is this a solitary instance. Probably there are few officers who have not met with some such case in the course of their experience. It has been necessary to discuss at some length the advisability of promotion from the ranks, because an opinion appears now to be gaining ground that this is the right principle on which to act. It also seems to be believed by some that the repugnance to any such scheme which is naturally manifested by the present class of commissioned officers is merely the effect of unworthy prejudice. But if the facts stated in the early part of this article be calmly and carefully weighed, it will be found that any plan of promotion which involves the constant elevation of men who have served in the ranks to the dignity of commissioned officers is at present both undesirable and impracticable. Such a system is undesirable because it would tend to split the officers of regiments into cliques, and thus to ruin the efficiency of the service. And it is impracticable because the pay of a subaltern is insufficient to enable officers without private means to live in tolerable comfort with their regiments.

We must now consider the system of competition and examination, as applied to the arrangement of military promotion. Those who support this method of procedure would, in the first place, desire that a strictly competitive examination should be instituted, through which candidates for commission should be obliged to pass. In this way, we are told, a number of the most able young men in England would be obtained for the military profession. Now, such a system might be very suitable if men were required who love books and abstruse study. But such youths are fitter for a learned profession than for the army. The principal qualities required in young officers are that they should be strong in body, brave, daring, obedient, cool in danger and quick to decide; besides which, they should be men who honour their own consciences and hate a lie. If high intellect be found conjointly with these indispensable qualities, it may be of untold benefit both to the man who possesses it and to the army at large. But without these, no man can ever become even a good subaltern. Now, it is impossible to ascertain by means of examination the existence of qualities such as those above mentioned among the young men who present themselves as candidates for commissions. Indeed, we need hardly observe that in many cases these valuable mental attributes are found in men

who are utterly devoid of love for knowledge and of ability to acquire it. Hence it appears that by instituting a very difficult competitors' examination for commissions in the line, many youths might be lost to the service who, under proper training, would make valuable officers. Military men do not estimate youths by the same standard as do the advocates of competition. The latter look to the intellect as being all important; the former judge the man as a whole, taking body and mind together.

We have now come to the conclusion that a severe competitive examination for commissions in the line would be very undesirable. Nevertheless it would be absurd to argue that we ought to return to our old system and give away commissions without imposing any previous test to ascertain the amount of knowledge possessed by the candidates. It is clearly important that those who wish to enter the army should possess ordinary intelligence and such education as is necessary to an English gentleman. To ascertain that this is the case a test examination is quite sufficient, and has now been used for a considerable period. The standard of attainment required to pass it is not unreasonably high, nor is it absurdly low, and it is found to work very well practically.

Even at the present time, however, the principle of competition is not wholly unknown in the selection of officers for the line. A considerable number of those who obtain commissions, both in the cavalry and in the infantry, pass through the Royal Military College of Sandhurst. The examination for entrance into this college is nominally competitive. In fact, the competition is at present very slight indeed; but this may alter in course of time, and probably will do so. Young men stay at Sandhurst a year, and then have to pass through another examination before they obtain their commissions. To the five youths whose names are first on the list at the final examination commissions are given free of purchase. The examination is, therefore, competitive, and frequently the competition is close and sharp. Here, therefore, is an institution which sends into the army young men whose powers have been carefully tested by competitive examinations. According to the theory of those who advocate this system, these youths from Sandhurst ought to make by far the best officers in the service. But such is by no means the case. Many of them are clever and well-instructed, but they are not in general better officers in any way than those who have merely passed the usual slight test examination before entering the army. In other ways the effects of competition as known at present in the army are still worse. For a long time it has been a moot point, whether unlimited competition would not bring into the army a lower class of men than those who have hitherto entered it. At present few officers will

deny the fact that among the youths who join the army after passing through Sandhurst, a worse tone of feeling and a more lax morality prevail than among any other men who enter the service. The idea that such would be the case was for a long time sneered at as the vain prejudice of unreasoning conservatism; but the fact is now too plain to admit of doubt, though there may be many different ways of accounting for it. It may perhaps be said that the class of young men who present themselves at the Sandhurst examinations is the same as that which furnishes candidates to pass that for the line. It may be supposed with considerable plausibility that lack of amusement in the hours which are free from study at Sandhurst may cause many of the youths collected there to fall into bad habits which they afterwards find it hard to shake off.

But at the Royal Academy of Woolwich there was some years ago a remarkable decadence of morality, under circumstances which differ in all respects from those of Sandhurst, except as regards the introduction of competition.

This fact affords a presumption that the system, as now carried out, is faulty in one of two ways: either it brings forward a lower class of young men than anyone can wish to see in the army; or, the special schools, which make it their business to train youths for these severe examinations, exercise a bad influence over them. This last hypothesis will appear the more probable of the two to any one who has had experience of those delectable places of instruction commonly called "cramming-shops." Into their merits, or, rather, into their demerits, it is at present needless to enter. But it may be stated that the principal fault to be found with competition is, that it has called into existence this system of "cramming" for the military examinations, and continues to encourage its growth. If the one cannot exist without supporting the other, it would be a very good thing for the army that both should disappear. After an officer has entered the service, his examinations do not at once cease. Before he becomes a lieutenant he has to pass through a certain test, and before he obtains his company he must go through another. The object of both these examinations is merely to ascertain that the young officer is practically acquainted with the elementary duties of his profession. After the last-named test he has no more to pass through. At each half-yearly inspection, indeed, something like an examination takes place, which is conducted by the inspecting general; but except on such occasions as these, when every one and every thing is examined, an officer's knowledge is not again formally tested after he has "passed for his company." Would it then be well to increase the number of these examinations, and to make promotion competitive? Such a course appears undesirable in the last degree. Subjects immediately

connected with military manœuvres and organisation would of course be selected for examinations of this kind; but every one knows how easily such things may be learnt up for a given occasion, and how soon they may be forgotten again. If promotion in the army were conducted on this system, it would be quite possible for a young and clever man to rise in a short time to the highest rank in his regiment, by help of a good head and a strong memory. Thus would be attained the ideal of those who favour competition; for the man at the head of the regiment would, in a sense, be the cleverest man in it. But what a miserable state of affairs this would be! To make a really efficient commanding officer, a large share of experience is required, together with that knowledge of men and insight into character which only experience gives. In these essential matters the commanding officer, who has won his way by competition, may be utterly wanting. So we see at once that "a clever officer" is not necessarily a really efficient one. This is, in few words, the reason why the system of promotion by means of examination and competition is not applicable to our army.

Lastly, we have to consider the method of promotion by purchase, which is now in vogue. The name is certainly very unpleasant. It sounds as if commissions were put up for sale, and knocked down to the highest bidder. Indeed, many of our neighbours in France fully believe that such is the case, and speak of the supposed fact with most edifying solemnity. The price of an English commission is £450. As soon as this sum is lodged in the hands of the army agent, the young officer begins to draw pay at the rate of £90 a-year. In fact, this pay is no more than a high rate of interest for the money which he has invested. It is utterly impossible that he should live upon it in any degree of comfort, however economical he may be. If it is sufficient to pay his mess and wine bills, he is a moderate man. The method in which promotion is sometimes obtained sounds strange at first. Suppose that the senior captain of a regiment has determined to leave the service. He has at different times invested so many hundred pounds in buying his steps. Naturally he is anxious, for the sake of his family, to get back the capital which he has thus invested; so he threatens that if the money be not speedily forthcoming in the regiment, he will exchange into another, where he can get what he wants. If he were to do this, his step would be lost to his own regiment; so negotiations are at once set on foot. The senior lieutenant has not got the whole of the required sum, so he appeals to the senior ensign. This young gentleman's power is not equal to his will; but when the two men put their money together, they find that it amounts to within £30 of what is wanted. Under such

circumstances, an appeal will perhaps be made to all the subalterns, for it is to the advantage of all that the step should "go in the regiment;" and the money will be made up by a general subscription. It is perfectly evident that in this system of promotion no pretence whatever is made of selecting for the highest posts of regimental authority the men who are most fitted for them. Nevertheless, strange to say, the method does practically work well. The reason is, that men who have entered the army merely as an amusement, or to pass away time, generally leave it before they attain the higher regimental ranks. Thus, for the most part, those only reach its upper grades who have long determined to make the military profession the business of their lives. This desirable result is not always attained; but it is so very generally. Much has been said lately about changing the system of promotion. In discussing this question, the first thing to be remembered is the enormous expense which any such alteration would entail. In the first place it would be necessary to compensate the existing body of officers for the loss they would sustain in not being able to sell their commissions. This compensation alone would amount to some millions sterling. To find out the exact amount would be a rather wearisome problem. And even then, many officers would lose a large portion of the capital which they originally invested in the purchase of their steps. For the Government would only give compensation to the amount of the regulation price for each step; whatever money is invested over and above this tariff is beyond the cognizance of the Government, and no compensation would be allowed in consideration of it. But this would be only the first item of the expense which would fall on the nation if our present system of promotion were changed. If it were wished to obtain a class of officers who would expect to live by their profession, the pay of all ranks must be much increased. At present, a colonel who has invested some thousands of pounds in the purchase of his steps, who has served thirty years in all climates, and has in all likelihood shattered his health by so doing, may, if he be fortunate, obtain a retiring pension of £365 a-year. The work of such a man's life has been done at a cheap rate, considering how well and gallantly it has most likely been done. One would have thought that a rich nation like England might afford a somewhat larger sum to render comfortable in their declining years those who serve her so well in the burden and heat of the day. But there is still an ample supply of young officers, and commissions are eagerly sought after, so it is hardly probable that the pay of the army will be much increased at present.

We have now examined nearly all the principal systems of regulating military promotion which have as yet been brought before the notice of the English public. The inference which

forces itself upon us is that no method has yet been devised better calculated than our present system to attain the objects which we require. How to promote officers in accordance with their efficiency is a problem which still remains unsolved. The real difficulty is to find out who are the efficient officers. It is perfectly evident that the only people who can truly know whether an officer is efficient or not are those who fill the higher ranks in his own regiment. Therefore, it seems probable that if ever a system of promotion by efficiency be made use of in our army, a great deal of power and responsibility will fall on the commanding officers of regiments.

How long the present method of promotion may be retained it is difficult to say. The army is now entering on a series of changes which, doubtless, will materially affect its composition, both as regards officers and men. But it would be unwise rashly to discard our present system of promotion, which, though it presents many obvious defects, has nevertheless been found to work well during a long series of years.

G. W. B.

SEMPER EADEM

"I will pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that love thee."

EVER the same, though the progress of ages
 Imposes new aspects on all that we see ;
 E'en as the ocean midst hurricanes' rages
 Observes its due limits, though powerless they be.

Ever the same, as the corn-fields around us
 Now ripple in verdure, now rustle in gold ;
 Ever the same, as the mountains that bound us
 In sunshine and fog still our valleys enfold.

Ever the same be thy beadroll of glory,
 O England, my country, the bride of the sea ;
 The page of the past is illumed with thy story,
 The far away future shall echo of thee.

Such as thou wast to the insolent Roman,
 To him who with darkness thy champions subdued,
 When the dead hid thy soil from the victor, the foeman,
 Such ever in war be thy terrible mood.

Ever in peace be of progress the leader,
 May Science and Mercy thy followers be ;
 Swift Justice bring ever to him who shall need her,
 Let him dwell in safety who trusteth to thee.

Be ever the same ! May the God who hath brought us,
 Through peril and toil, to our haven of rest,
 Still impress on our children the truth He hath taught us,
 Who trusts in His name shall for ever be blest.

R. C.



THE POOR CLERGYMAN'S TALE

CHAPTER III.

Thus things ran onward in their wonted course for ten more years. Georgey had become a fine robust little fellow, and as he grew in stature the mysterious love which the old man had for him outstripped even his vigorous growth. It began at last to resemble rather a species of insanity than the healthy affection which a man of years ordinarily entertains for his son's son. He could hardly bear to be separated from George even for a few hours. When the child was not with him, he was more than usually silent, sad, and morose. When the lad was present his extravagant love for the little tyrant was the wonder of all who saw it. I call the boy a tyrant because he soon had wit enough to discover the influence he had over the old gentleman, and to use it, too. When corrected for a fault, the young rogue would run complaining to his grandsire, by whom he never failed to be consoled with toys or comfits. His simple lessons he evaded in the same way, by appealing to 'Grandpa.' 'Grandpa' he evidently considered as having been sent into the world for his especial use and behoof—the purveyor of toys, the provider of all the good things of this life—a sort of bank on which he could draw without stint and with no fear of having his cheques dishonoured, let them be ever so extravagant.

"During these ten long years, as they quietly stole away, one after another, a marked change had been creeping over Mr. Barrington. His stoop had become more confirmed—his hair had become silvered and fell in masses nearly to his shoulders. His keen eye, indeed, retained its accustomed brilliancy, but as regards gait and appearance he had become an old man. There was something venerable and commanding in his aspect, which even a stranger must have felt and acknowledged. George was pronounced by the entire parish to

be a 'fine boy of his age,' and in truth, it would have been difficult to have found a handsomer little fellow in all Somersetshire. A broad and high forehead, with long drooping curls of rich amber-coloured hair; eyes of a deep blue, which seemed to penetrate everything they looked at, so full of intellect were they, and yet so soft and kindly in their glance that they made friends with you immediately; a clear oval face, with a small mouth and well-cut features,—these were the characteristics of the lad. So beautiful was he that the eyes of all seemed to dwell on him with delight, and to turn away from him unwillingly. The mind within matched with the form without, so nobly was it cast—so full of inherent love for all that is good and great, so vehement in its hatred of everything little and contemptible. The boy, of course, was not faultless. The long course of inconsiderate indulgence to which he had been habituated by his grandsire had made him selfish, impatient, and imperious. He could not bear contradiction, and everything must give way to him, or there was an end of domestic peace for some time at least.

“It was a source of wonder to all, and not the least to me, who knew his secret, this almost insane love which the old man had for little Georgey. I could not comprehend how a man with (as I too well knew) that fearful stain of bloodguiltiness on his soul could find pleasure in the prattle of a little innocent creature, fresh and pure from the hand of its Maker, with the odour of heaven still breathing from it—I say, I could not comprehend how that sin-laden soul could enjoy the contact of unsullied purity, as one sees it so beautifully indwelling in the spirit of happy childhood. This wonder grew on me more and more. Was it, I asked myself, that the old man saw in the child an image of himself ere guilt had robbed him of his peace, and so, like a lost spirit shut out from Paradise, could not choose but linger as near as he might around the crystal gates, casting many a mournful look of regret into its forbidden garden of delights, once his, never, perhaps, to be his again? Or was it that the innocent gambols and childish prattle of the youngster drew him from painful regrets, and for a time took him out of himself, and lulled him into forgetfulness of the past, or of his dread of the future? It was a riddle, and as such I left it until accident threw a light on it which I could not have arrived at from any course of reflection.

“I shall never forget one golden evening towards the end of August. I had strolled to the beach, partly to pass an idle hour on the cool wet sand after an intensely hot day, and partly to complete a collection of the *Algæ* of the locality, which I was making for a college friend. I was sitting amongst a cluster of rocks, enjoying the beauty of the sunset. The heaven was all aflame with orange and

crimson, shading off to a most delicate tint of a pale greenish hue, thence passing into a deep cerulean blue. The waves, as they leaped and bounded for very joy, caught the bright gleams of the glowing sky, and sparkled innumera- bly. It was that brilliant hour when we see nature in all her pomp, with none of her sombre shades, akin to melancholy. So beautiful was the sunset that I sat there dreamily watching it. Presently I heard voices, then I knew them to be those of Mr. Barrington and little Georgey. The old man said something which startled me into attention, and thus I became, almost before I knew what I was about, an involuntary listener. I kept my seat unobserved among the rocks, and so became an ear-witness to a scene which I will endeavour to describe.

“They sat down on a fragment of rock, the cooling water spreading out in layers at their feet. The tide was going down, but the breakers, as they sank on the sand, spread out in crested furrows, and seemed unwilling to retreat from the sands, where they disported themselves so gleefully.

“ ‘Grandpa, why do the waves go back again so soon? When you were asleep, and I called you to go out, the water was quite over these rocks. I could see the waves dashing over them from my bedroom window, and now they are quite dry, and the water is still going down. Where does the water go to?’

“It was George who spoke, and his grandfather replied, ‘My darling, the rising and falling of the sea is, as you know, called the ebbing and flowing of the tide. By-and-bye, when you are old enough, you will learn all about the cause of this rising and falling of the water. Now you are too young to trouble yourself about it. Twice a-day the tide comes up, and twice a-day it goes down. The moon has something to do with it. At full moon and new moon the sea rises much higher than at other times; but why this is you could not understand, even if I could properly explain it to you.’

“ ‘The moon? the bright moon, grandpa? I lay awake last night looking at her through my bedroom window. She seemed so beautiful that I almost longed to go away and live in that bright place, all silver, not like this world, made of dirt, and rocks, and stones.’

“ ‘What! go away from poor grandpa, and leave me behind? Silly boy, the moon is not silver, as you think; wise people say it is nothing but dark rocks, like these, and that the sun shining upon it makes it look like silver.’

“ ‘And God made the moon, just like He made the sun and the world?’

“ ‘To be sure He did, silly little boy. God made everything you see, you and me, and papa and mamma, and the world we live in, and the bright sun.’

“ ‘And the sea, the beautiful sea,’ added the boy, with emphasis.

“They were silent for some minutes. The boy took up some pebbles, and began to throw them as far as he could into the water. The old man, left to himself, groaned. Georgey came back with a young crab he had caught. The creature not liking the hot hand, gave it a nip. George dropped the crab, and angrily tried to tread its little life out. The old man stopped him.

“ ‘Georgey, my son, let the poor thing go, and come here and listen to me.’

“The boy came, wondering what he had got to say. His grandfather, passing his hand caressingly over his beautiful curls, softly said, ‘My boy, none but wicked people take pleasure in torturing poor, harmless things, like that crab. Now I want you to be good, to grow up a good man. Last night did you say that little prayer I taught you? Do you say it every night and every day?’

“ ‘Yes, grandpa.’

“ ‘Thank God! thank God!’ This was said so earnestly that I listened more intently than ever for the next remark.

“ ‘But, grandpa, why do you want me to say it? Who is it that killed a man? And why do you want God to forgive him? He must be a horrid, wicked man, and I hate him!’

“ ‘Oh, no—not hate him—not hate him! Pray for him. Ask God to forgive him.’

“ ‘But I don’t want God to forgive him. He ought to be hanged, like the man mamma was reading about in the paper.’

“ ‘Oh, no—God forbid! Pray that he may live and find place for repentance. Pray for him, Georgey. He cannot pray for himself; he is so wicked that he cannot come before his God. But you, dear Georgey, you are young, and spotless, and pure as an angel. You can pray, and God will hear you. He who hears the angels will and must answer you, when you pray for this wretched, wicked man I told you about.’

“ ‘But, grandpa, why did he kill the poor man?’

“ ‘Because he was forsaken of God, and given over to the power of the evil one.’ As my poor father-in-law said this, he groaned deeply and heavily.

“I half rose from my seat, intending to go and comfort the penitent sinner; but something restrained me. I felt the time for that was not yet come. The old man’s head had sunk on his hands, and his tears forced themselves through his fingers, and fell into the sand.

“The child looked at his agony in silent wonder. Then he stepped up to him and kissed his hands—those hands which had once been stained by the blood of his fellow man. The next

moment the old man had thrown his arms around the child—his head sunk on the boy's shoulder, and he sobbed convulsively.

“ ‘Grandpa, dear grandpa. I *will* pray for him!’ said the child, scared into solemnity by this outburst of grief. The next moment the little fellow was on his knees, his tiny hands clasped, and his eyes raised to heaven, repeating the solemn words which his grand-sire had taught him. The old man knelt by his side, and there, under the blue heavens, with the everlasting sea sounding its deep diapason along the cliff-lined shore, the prayer went up from the lips of innocence and the heart of guilt that God would have mercy on that great crime. I slipped away, and left the pair kneeling together, and fortunately succeeded in gaining the homeward road unobserved.

“ This was the first unmistakeable symptom that convinced me that the weight of guilt, preying so constantly and heavily on the old man's mind, had begun to unhinge his reason. It was a singular development of insanity that he should have so far trusted his secret to his little grandson—that secret which had been so long and so carefully hidden from the world ; and it was equally a matter of wonder that the secret remained safely in little George's keeping. I used to agonise over my father-in-law's imprudence in thus taking a child into his confidence ; but, with the cunning that frequently accompanies insanity, he had somehow found means to secure George's secrecy ; for never once did the child allude to the subject. For aught I knew, his prayers for the unknown criminal ascended punctually to heaven morning and evening ; but so secretly, that none but myself and the wretched object of them ever suspected the fact.

“ Poor little Georgey ! he never lived to reach man's estate ; but early showed symptoms of a delicate constitution—symptoms which gave me great uneasiness, though I did my best to hide it from his mother and her father. He became a thoughtful, quiet boy, fond of study—a habit of mind unnatural to his age, and not to be too much encouraged in a lad of tender years. No doubt, the constant presence of that gloomy, but to him kind old man, had an injurious effect on his health and spirits. Nevertheless, the lad grew and prospered, until he was twelve years old, and then one day he laid his head on his mother's shoulder, and burst into tears. She kissed him, and tenderly inquired what was the matter. His flushed cheek and bloodshot eye too truly told her : the lad was ill of a dangerous fever. For many days and nights the fever was strong upon him. It was painful to sit by his side and hear his inarticulate murmurings ; it was painful to see his dear form wasting away beneath the ravages of that fell disease ; but more painful still was it to see the change in Mr.

Barrington. Nothing could induce him to leave the sick room. He would persist in watching by George's bed, even though the lad's mother or I were there to tend the sufferer. His anxiety was so great that in a few days he had fallen away to a mere shadow. His cheeks were sunken, his complexion sallow, his eye gleamed with an unnatural brightness. He tottered as he walked from weakness and want of rest. I began to fear that the old gentleman would kill himself by his ceaseless watchings and his corroding anxiety. His affection for the little sufferer seemed to be eating his very life out. I dreaded the result, but could see no way to avoid it. To have shut him out from George would have killed him at once; so we got him as often as we could to take highly-nourishing food, and in this way went on from day to day, hoping the best, fearing the worst. At length came the crisis: the doctor said that the next twelve hours would settle the point, whether the lad would live or die. We prepared to do battle with the fearful ordeal from which there was no escape.

"Anxiety, such as we suffered in those few hours, no tongue can describe. Every one must have felt the fearful silence which broods over a sick chamber—that silence, in its depth and intensity, increasing the inevitable load until it becomes almost unbearable. For hours nothing had occurred to break the monotonous silence; I was quite worn out with watching. Towards morning, nature, o'erwearied with the vigils of so many hours, at length asserted her sway, and I began to drop to sleep from sheer exhaustion and weariness. All at once a shriek from my wife broke the long silence. I started to my feet. In an instant I was awake, every faculty aroused to its fullest tension by the awful sound. Never shall I forget the sight which met my gaze.

"Standing at the foot of the bed was my father-in-law, or at all events a ghastly and distorted image of him. I say, an image of him, because those words, though strong, are hardly strong enough to depict to you the fearful change which had suddenly come over him. For days past the settled gloom which seemed to weigh him down had rendered him by turns morose, testy, or taciturn; but this state of mind we naturally attributed to his anxiety and want of rest. That night, however, he had gone to bed early, for he was utterly exhausted; and when I looked in on him, he had sunk into a deep sleep, in which I had gladly left him. Now he was half-dressed; his long, iron-grey hair hung wildly on his temples; his eye had a fearful expression of horror; his lips were drawn apart by some potent emotion beyond his control. I had but an instant to take note of all this, for the next moment he had thrown himself on his knees at the bedside, almost at my feet, as I stood there like one amazed. Then, raising his hands wildly

to heaven, and looking upwards with a glance, so woe-begone, so eager, so despairing that it well nigh moved me to tears, he broke forth into a wailing cry—a 'great and bitter cry'—such a cry of anguish as is only wrung from a strong man when human nature can bear no more. There is a limit to suffering which the strongest of us cannot pass. That limit the old man now reached. His emotion was terrible; it quite prostrated him; it swept everything before it, laid bare the dark recesses of his soul, and, tornado-like, bent and broke those barriers which his pride and fear had raised as a defence against disgrace and punishment, which he had been strengthening for years past with a jealous watchfulness. Something had evidently occurred to effect this marvellous change. What was it? I was not long in doubting. That 'bitter cry' presently gave place to sobs and tears and broken exclamations; that awful silence was broken by a voice lamenting to itself, and speaking to God, as though he were alone with Him. 'It is enough—it is enough!' it cried. 'Oh, my God, take my life, and spare the child—so young, so happy, so innocent, so beautiful, so beloved! Let not my sins be visited on my children's child; let me bear my guilt *alone!* O God, Thou knowest that in this household I alone am guilty! Let not Thy sore judgments descend on this house! Let not Thy thunderbolts fall on these pure and innocent lives! Let them fall here—here, on this hoary, this guilty head, over which they have too long passed harmlessly! O God, I am guilty—guilty of blood-shedding! I have slain a man, and hidden the crime for years! Let the punishment of Cain and of Judas descend on me! But this innocent child, what has he done? Oh, spare him—spare him; and let Thy wrath descend on *me!*'

"Thus did that solemn voice go up in the dismal silence; then all was still again. I waited to see what would come next, for I felt spell-bound at the awful nature of the scene. All at once the child awoke, raised himself on his pillow, then looked at the old man and smiled. Holding out a little, thin hand, he muttered the old, familiar word, 'Grandpa!' The old man sprang to his feet, and clasped the dear child in his arms. 'The sacrifice is accepted!' he cried, 'O God, I thank thee! My life for his! my life for his!'

"A moan from my wife recalled me to myself; she had sunk back in her chair fainting. I lifted her in my arms, and carried her to her room, and called up our only servant-girl to attend her. When she recovered from her faintness, it was only to fall into a fit of convulsive weeping. Poor thing! well might she weep, for happiness and she had parted for ever. The doctor came, and went away again, looking very grave. I thought of the text, '*The son shall bear the iniquity of the father,*' and shuddered when I thought

of it. When I went back to my son's room, I found him in a healthy sleep. The fever had left him, and the old man was gone.

"Gone? gone whither? No one knew—no one had seen him. For some days, indeed, I had no leisure to make inquiries, beyond the most cursory ones, as to his whereabouts. I was tied to the spot, for my wife's illness continued to increase; and such was my anxiety about her, that I had neither leisure nor inclination to follow up my search after her father. Strange to say, the lad commenced to improve from the very hour of that impressive scene by his bedside. It seemed, indeed, as though Heaven, appeased by the self-sacrifice of the grandsire, had withdrawn the visitation from the child. But in what way was that sacrifice of himself to be carried out? Had he committed suicide? Had he left the kingdom? What had become of him? I was filled with apprehension of the worst. I was tormented with vague fears on his account, which took various contrary shapes day by day, almost hour after hour. At length my wife began to show signs of improvement; my child also began rapidly to recover his strength; the house no longer resembled a hospital, and I had leisure to turn my thoughts into another channel. I quieted Lucy's mind, to some extent, by feigning a belief that her father's mind must have become deranged by too much anxiety, and I had no difficulty in obtaining her acquiescence in this solution of the mystery. Of course, it never occurred to her, for a moment, that the frightful self-accusations of her father could be founded on fact; so my solution appeared to her the most natural one in the world.

"That difficulty disposed of, my next step was to make inquiries in the neighbourhood, in order, if possible, to discover what had become of my unfortunate relative. Strange to say, no one had seen him. I had many a ride through the lanes of my parish, and even of one or two of the neighbouring parishes, and in the course of my rambles made inquiries of almost everybody likely to give me any information, calling at many of the houses, and following up every clue, however vague, but only to find that the search ended in disappointment and total loss of time. You may guess how anxious we all became. My poor wife was, at times, almost beside herself. My boy made endless inquiries of us as to where grandpa was gone? when would grandpa come back? and so on. But I, who, if I had ever entertained any doubt as to Mr. Barrington's guilt, now *knew* the sad reality, had a double share of distress to undergo. The neighbours, too, began to talk unkindly about the missing individual. There had always been two or three of them who suspected him to be an 'old hypocrite,' and now they were not at all backward in giving free scope to their opinions.

“Mr. Barrington’s eccentricities had prepared me for anything. I was not, therefore, the least surprised to hear George cry out one morning, ‘Mamma, here is grandpa—grandpa!’ But before we could catch a glimpse of him he was gone. The child looked quite scared, and told us how, on awaking in the morning, he found the old man seated on the bedside, stedfastly regarding him. Moreover, George described him as looking very thin and pale, and that his dress was dirty and travel-stained. In vain did I attempt to follow him. I could find him nowhere in the neighbourhood; but in the course of the day a man called on me, saying he was certain that he had seen Mr. Barrington not far from Langside, a small village lying at the foot of the Mendips. I lost no time in acting on the information, but set out instantly on horseback in pursuit of my luckless relative. In due time I drew near the village indicated by my informant; and as I did so, my curiosity was excited by constantly passing little knots of the country folk all going towards the hills, and all making for one spot. My road lay across one of the spurs of that great chain of hills which intersects the county of Somerset, a district which then was, and probably still is, pretty well populated by the miners and their families. Mendip has been celebrated for its tin mines from time immemorial. Years ago the miners were much more numerous than they are now. Of late, richer mines have been opened in Cornwall and elsewhere; but at the time I speak of, the hills were the abode of a fierce and semi-barbarous population, amongst whom there was little regard to any law, divine or human, except that of physical force. As I wound upward, the vast hills began to rear themselves around and above me, their huge rounded outlines broken here and there by straggling clouds which streamed across their grey foreheads. The wildness of Nature in all her untamed beauty struck me with an awful sense of the sublime. She had been working on a scale of grandeur which I had not often beheld; and I could not withhold my tribute of admiration at her handiwork. Notwithstanding my anxiety, I was giving myself up to these thoughts, when, on turning an angle of the road which wound round the shoulder of a huge hill that seemed as if it reached almost to the sky, I came suddenly on a scene which brought me to a stand.

“A huge rocky amphitheatre had been quarried from the grey hill side, and in it there stood a field preacher holding forth to a congregation consisting of some hundreds of listeners. I was so distant that I could only catch a word here and there; but there was something strangely familiar in those tones, for which I could not account. I tied my horse to a sapling, and climbed up the rugged track that led to the rocky temple. I looked around me in amazement, first at the preacher, then at the congregation. The

latter I will describe first. The bulk of them were evidently miners from the neighbouring hills; though interspersed with them were a few farm labourers, with here and there a woman with one or more children at her side. The men were sitting, lying, or standing, just as the fancy took them; forming picturesque groups dispersed amongst the weather-stained rocks, but massing into a compact body just in front of the preacher. They were the stalwart descendants of the men who, though badly armed and undisciplined, resisted at Sedgmoor for some hours the trained soldiers of King James. Huge rough fellows they were—heathens living in a Christian country; but who nevertheless had something divine within them, could you but approach it in the right way. I was surprised to see the attention and order which prevailed amongst this uncultivated auditory. Every eye was fixed on the speaker, whose language came clear and distinct from his rocky pulpit, and every ear drank in the sound, as with fervid and vehement sentences (sentences always well chosen, sometimes rising into eloquence), he sought to rouse them from their degraded condition. He stood on a flat rock which jutted out from the side of the hill, and, as I looked up to him, I fancied his eye caught mine, and an expression of recognition passed over his face. But whatever might have been his thoughts about me, he did not falter in his discourse, nor did he direct a second glance at me, but went on like a ‘Boanerges,’ waxing stronger and stronger as he proceeded. I can recall his figure at the present moment. He stood, tall and commanding, a few feet above us, his right foot a little advanced. In his left hand he held a Bible, and with his right, he gave force and emphasis to his words by action, which, though it might occasionally be extravagant, was always appropriate. His countenance bespoke benevolence, mingled with a certain sternness. It seemed at once to reprove and to allure. There was rebuke for the sinner, but encouragement for the penitent. The hardened culprit, reading that face by the light of his own evil conscience, saw there only his own condemnation; the repenting sinner could and did see there traces of deep compassion for his ruined, but hopeful condition. There was something grand in the man,—preaching with such honest, such tremendous energy from that wild crag,—his eye lit with a fine enthusiasm, now looking up into the fathomless vault of heaven, as though in mute but undoubting appeal to the great Author of Nature and revelation, presently sweeping over the multitude with a glance that sought to win their rugged natures back from the mire and slough of sin into the pure ways of godliness. I need not tell you that his doctrine was that of the wildest Methodism. If he could not entice the wanderer into the fold, he would ‘*compel*’ him ‘to come in.’ As he drew near to the end

of the discourse, he painted the torments of the lost, with such terrible distinctness, such graphic power, that he completely led captive the imagination of his auditory. He took them, as it were, by the hand, and at one plunge showed them the dreary caverns of the abyss, the baleful gleams which flickered from the eternal fires! Then, suddenly pausing, he cried with a loud voice, 'Why will ye die, oh ye house of Israel? why will ye die? why will ye die?' There was a pause. The voice went echoing up the cliffs, and came back sadly and solemnly, as thought Nature herself had put the question to her erring children, 'Why will ye die?' And again there was silence.

"When that voice again spoke to us it was in tones so winning, so yearning, if I may say so, that I looked up in surprise. The thunders had died away, and now the speaker was all tenderness and love. He painted to them the Divine Sufferer expiating their guilt, and opening a way of escape from the torments they had just in imagination beheld. As he went on to describe the wisdom, spotlessness, and unutterable love which dwelt in the meek and lowly Saviour, his voice faltered, his eye filled with tears, his whole nature was shaken with strong emotions of adoration for the God-man, who had done for poor humanity this unspeakable service. At length he fairly ceased, overcome by feelings which he could not control. Sobs and cries broke from the congregation. The preacher threw himself on his knees, and prayed loudly and fervently. It was an importunate cry for mercy, one which sought to take heaven by storm—so urgent, so fervid, that it seemed as if denial would be impossible. It brought back to my memory the text which declares that 'the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' It grew at last to be a wrestling, an agony. It was, in truth, an irresistible display of power and force of will, such as these unsophisticated natures had never before witnessed. It swept everything before it. They went down, some on their knees with clasped hands, and others grovelling on the earth. Men who had never uttered a prayer in their lives, men who had never uttered the name of God but in blasphemy, now cried aloud for mercy; the women shrieked and became hysterical, even rolled on the ground, and called on God to pardon their sins. It was a scene which I could not help regarding with a mixture of feelings I could not analyse. Much of this strange emotion was contagious; generally speaking it was genuine, but how much of it would result in real reformation when the excitement was passed, that was a question on which I could but entertain grave doubts.

"But these speculations were suddenly cut short by the preacher descending from the pulpit and approaching a group which had collected around some person or object of transcendental interest.

As he approached the group, I observed that it opened and let him in. Curiosity impelled me to see what might be the cause of this movement, and I also drew near the group. Gracious Heaven! what did I behold? There, in a circle formed by the crowd, knelt Henry Armitage, for in an instant a flash of recognition darted through my consciousness. Yes, the preacher was in very deed none other than the long-lost acquaintance of by-gone years—my ancient rival—the man whose history had been so painfully bound up with mine, in days long since gone by. And by his side, groveling on the sod, writhed and groaned, in all the anguish of a wounded spirit, my father-in-law, Mr. Barrington. Some of the crowd had thrown themselves on their knees, and were adding their cries to his; others stood looking on, paralysed with wonder. With a strength which surprised myself, I pushed my way through the crowd. I seized the old man by the arm and lifted him up. A glance told me that he was fearfully changed; so emaciated, so travelworn, so wild and yet so weak was he, that I might almost have passed him in a crowd without recognising him. His eye was rolling almost insanely. He had evidently been one of the congregation most wrought on by the strangeness of the scene. I held him by the arm, my eye confronting his. ‘Sir,’ said I, ‘this is no place for you. Come home to your friends.’

“‘Never!’ cried he, desperately struggling away towards the preacher; ‘never will I quit this spot till I have made my peace with God!’

“That phrase brought a rushing sound into my ears, and a blindness seemed for the moment to shut out everything from my view. I felt a faintness pass through me, for with the swiftness of thought the idea flashed across me, ‘What may not this madman say or do, with that fearful secret on his soul?’ and I saw,—that is, my mind saw, as plainly as I see you now, Lucy sitting at home, bowed down by grief, mourning for her father, and crushed by the ineffaceable disgrace of being the child of such a parent.

“‘Come home!’ I cried, ‘come to Lucy—come to George!’

“But before these words could take effect, Henry had got hold of him by his arm and hand. ‘Mr. Brydges,’ he said, in a tone of command, ‘I charge you to let this man alone! This is his hour of repentance and pardon. Often as he has been with me of late, I have never yet seen such hopeful manifestations in him as I do at this precious moment. This is one of the souls given me for my hire. Leave us in peace. Stand not between him and his God!’

“Then turning to the supposed convert, the preacher inquired with an air not unlike that of a surgeon examining the symptoms of a patient, ‘Mr. Barrington, have you yet found peace, or does Satan still persuade you there is no hope?’

"I knew not what to think of this. Was Henry Armitage mad, or was he the fanatic that he appeared? The crowd grew denser every moment—the difficulty greater. I looked on in despair, dreading what was coming next.

"The worst that I had anticipated really occurred. I will not dwell on the scene that followed—the long prayer over poor Barrington—the exhortation to repentance—the groans, the self-accusations of the sin-burdened wretch. I will not narrate these at length; it would do no good to describe them in detail. How far Henry intended to lead him on, I cannot say. I have every reason to believe that at the time he was a genuine fanatic. In fact, both the men seemed demented; one through remorse, the other from having become little better than a monomaniac, through having been brought into contact with some of the most extravagant of his sect in the United States.

"It ended in Mr. Barrington openly accusing himself of murder, and begging the prayers of the congregation. At that awful word, even the preacher seemed sobered. An awe fell on the assembly; the most enthusiastic began to cool down; the noisy were silent. Presently they quietly dispersed, leaving us three standing alone, looking on each other with horror-stricken faces. Then we made the best of our way home, hoping that no notice would be taken of so mad a piece of business, and that this confession would be looked upon as nothing else than the raving of a maniac.

"The next day Henry was at his preaching again, and my poor father-in-law ill in bed of a raging fever. For some days he lay in my house at the point of death. In his delirium he acted over and over again the scene at the field preaching. Now he was fasting forty days and nights (as we subsequently found the poor wretch, during his absence from home, had really attempted to do), in hope of getting peace of mind; anon he was lamenting and confessing himself in the rocky temple on the side of Mendip.

"One morning, just as he began to recover a little, and was seated in the garden enjoying the fresh air, with little George seated at his feet, a chaise drove up to the door, and two men descended from it. One of them remained at the gate, while the other came up to Mr. Barrington, and apprehended him for murder! I glanced at the warrant: it was signed by the indefatigable Mr. Leversedge.

"The fever had worked a wonderful change in Mr. Barrington; it left his brain cool and clear, and cleansed it from those odd fancies and strange delusions which, for a long time past, had taken up their abode there. One feeling, however, survived—his marvellous attachment for Georgey. His last request, as he

went away, was that the knowledge of the crime he was charged with might be kept from his grandson. I believe it was his desire to stand well with George which now prompted him to deny his guilt. Once he would have sacrificed himself for his grandson, under a delusion that Heaven was visiting his crime on the child; now he would have given worlds if he could but clear himself of the charge, because he dreaded that George would hate him while living, and execrate his name when dead.

“Mr. Barrington now had leisure to study the providential problem, that the consequences of a man's guilt rest not with himself, but extend themselves to those he loves. He tried to reverse this order of things, but failed, as he always must who strives against those great fundamental laws instituted by Almighty wisdom for the world's guidance.

“Mr. Leversedge had been indefatigable in his researches and inquiries *ré* the murder of Squire Armytage. Some few small facts he had got at, but the case, apart from the prisoner's confession, was a very weak one. Nevertheless, the magistrates before whom Mr. Barrington was brought thought there was evidence enough to form a *primâ facie* case, and he was thereupon committed for trial.

“A dreary interval followed; my poor wife was inconsolable, and though she did her best to keep up her spirits before me, yet I could not help seeing how deeply the iron had entered into her soul. As for me, I was obliged to give up my curacy, and to remove to the Assize town, partly that I might hide my shame in a comparative crowd, partly that I might be near the prisoner. Nevertheless, I took care to procure reliable information as to the course of events in Whitecliff, where I soon found that the indefatigable Mr. Leversedge, with his bloodhound, the Bow-street runner, were busy on the scent. To do them justice, both exhibited an amount of energy and perseverance which did them credit. If, indeed, they did make any discoveries, these they kept to themselves. The old house where Mr. Barrington had lived so many years was rummaged from roof to basement. The very tiling was examined; the walls were sounded, to ascertain if they held any secret store-place; but all ended without throwing any light upon the subject. You may guess how anxious I was (knowing what I did) about the result of all this activity. But as the fearful day of trial drew nigh, my mind grew more easy, for I felt that acquittal was certain. No jury of Englishmen, I often said to myself, could possibly convict a man on such slender evidence as the prosecution had to offer.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF "RAKES"

WE propose to devote a chapter to the consideration of that picturesque and fascinating embodiment of humanity, which if we don't meet with in its perfect and most romantic development in our every day experiences, is, nevertheless, tolerably well classified under the characteristic title of "Rakes," and we intend to do so for this reason—we are assured that some degree of amusement, and probably advantage, too, may be gained, if only by the force of example, from the study of human nature in the strangely varied forms in which we come in contact with it, whether it is, as we so often see it, distorted by affectation, cramped by the trammels of etiquette, influenced by a slavish adherence to custom, damped by the force of untoward circumstances, or lastly, what is worse, characterised by an absence of that moral power which enables us to resist the allurements of vice, and fight successfully against the difficulties which, in our smoothest paths through life, we are certain, sooner or later, to meet.

"We think if one inquires into the genus of "rakes" proper, their lineal descent may unquestionably be traced from the knight-errantry of the good old days of chivalry and romance, and this from the simple fact, that there is about the habits and mode of life of the modern rake, besides strong erratic tendencies and an irresistible love of novelty and adventure, a certain frank, dashing, and manly bearing, which always stands him in good service, and generally speaking is the means, not only of getting him out of the most apparently inextricable difficulties, to which he is naturally more prone than other men to fall, but also of releasing him from them with a good grace, and enabling him, as a rule, to come out as more than a conqueror. Besides this, and what is perhaps still more to his advantage, his manners, from being naturally generous and careless, very soon become captivating, and are almost sure to ingratiate him with the opposite sex, and on such a state of things the rake, very naturally, sets a high value. He is a man who enjoys being petted and humoured by women, because he is satisfied in the assurance that they trust him, and appreciate him, for what he is, and not for what he appears to be. Your modern rake is by no means a slave of fashion, but on the contrary, he is rather disposed to be careless of his dress and appearance, and as a rule you will find him just the kind of man who can well afford to take so much liberty with himself; notwithstanding this, he is exceedingly jealous, from a consciousness of superiority of any slight which may be intended to affect his reputation as a gentleman and man of honour.

The "fast man" according to the nineteenth-century model differs essentially from the rake proper. There is a kind of method in the irregularities of the one which has grown into a system from sheer force of habit, whereas those of the other amount only to irregularities, and are never under any circumstances preconcerted; for this reason they are of course the more excusable. He can't be said to be altogether a lady's man according to the approved type of modern society, because his gallantry is too genuine and disinterested for this. The homage he is accustomed to render to the sex is general, and not particular, and is paid by him as a matter of course, but necessarily with far more promptitude than his bills; in regard to these, he very conveniently ignores all pecuniary responsibilities as degrading to that high moral principle of credit, which he considers is so well calculated to promote confidence between man and man; but so far as women are concerned, he owns allegiance to them all; like Lancelot, he is "gracious to all ladies," to the old and to the ugly, not less than to the rich and beautiful, and this from no assumed and studied deference or artificial earnestness, but from an innate respect, which he really and devoutly feels and considers as a man of birth and honour (for the rake proper must of necessity be a gentleman) is due to the sex *en masse*, notwithstanding his decided preference for individuals. Hence, he is an universal favourite with ladies of a certain age; and straight-laced matrons are wont to connive at his manifold shortcomings, because, they say, and with a great deal of truth, that "He is such an amusing, handsome, good-natured, careless fellow, and one can't help liking him;" and, after all, they add, "He is but a boy, and must sooner or later sow his wild-oats;" besides which, there are many excuses for him, "Poor fellow! he hasn't had the best example set him at home." "With years and experience," they go on to say, "he will be sure to sober down, and, perhaps, be none the worse after all." Young and innocent daughters, and even wards in chancery, too, have sometimes been known to echo this sentiment from their hearts; and is it not human nature that they should show a preference for a man who behaves himself always agreeably, and at the same time naturally and without affectation? who, without knowing one letter of the theory of drawing-room etiquette, possesses the natural polish of all that is captivating in it, and who, whatever may be his faults in private, never says what he does not mean, if he does not always say what he *does* mean? and who, if gossip-mongers, chatter-boxes, busy-bodies and scandal-dealers set him down as rakishly disposed, at any rate does not appear offensively so to them? Under these circumstances, it is not strange that ladies are invariably found to vindicate, if not individually, as a class, this sort of men; I once

heard, and not for the first or last time in my life, such a sentiment expressed by a most experienced and accomplished flirt. It was many years ago, and when I was much more susceptible of tender influences than I am now ; but the effect of it will never be effaced from my memory if I live to be a great-great-grandfather. I was, I remember, at the time, so utterly incapable of reconciling this sentiment with any ideas of earthly happiness, that, of a truth, my hair began to turn grey immediately I realised its full purport ; the voice that uttered it rings now in my ears like the distant echo of sweet music, which has lived through the long, long years. But stay ; I am recording a matter of fact, and must needs not grow sentimental, although her name, which was so soon after to be changed, must be nameless now ; suffice it for the purpose to say that our acquaintance, near and dear as it was, ceased for the time being just fifteen years ago this April. And a showery April it was for me, for only a few short months afterwards, when the leaves began to fall, she married ; yes, it is a fact, and why should I hesitate to admit it ? and why should my hand tremble as I attempt to record it ? It is by no means an uncommon occurrence. She married, I repeat now that I have had time to compose myself, a *most confirmed and accomplished rake*, who, nevertheless, made her the very best of husbands, as they say reformed rakes generally do, and *me* the most miserable of men ; in fact, the expression of this salutary sentiment had such an effect on me at the time, that I was weak enough, for her special gratification, to try and habituate myself to the fascinations of a rakish life, for which I was anything but suited ; the consequences were, by my mistaken efforts to please her, I managed, by way of prelude, to break the knees of three valuable horses, and, afterwards, my own collar-bone, in a rash attempt, positively in her presence, to ride a steeple-chase, which I thought the best way to make myself a hero ; and I remember, as vividly as possible, although it is fifteen years ago, the exact thoughts which crossed my brain as I came to grief and lay at the bottom of a deep ditch with my legs entangled in a fence, and presenting anything but a picturesque appearance, begrimed from head to foot with mud. Can she possibly see me now ? said I to myself ; and will she, after this humiliating exhibition, condescend to love me and nurse me too, for I feel that I'm dying ? However, I didn't die. I whispered farewell, breathed her name, and fainted instead, although, in one sense, it was verily and truly death to me. Besides this little episode, and all to please her, I managed to spend a small fortune at the billiard-table, ruined my constitution learning to smoke, and accidentally shot my brother Jack's favourite pointer, which he wouldn't have lost for all the game in the county. I say *accidentally* advisedly, because,

had I been actuated by any intention to have killed him, I should most assuredly have failed, as I invariably did in all undertakings of a sporting nature. Eventually, in the space of about two months, I came to the most ignominious grief; and this because I had'nt then studied human nature, and didn't realise the necessity, *esse quam videri*; but there! The rake, I suppose, like the poet, *nascitur non fit*; and it is clear I was never born to be one. I apprehend that it was for this very reason also that I was not destined to indulge in any nearer or dearer ideas of relationship with S—— E—— than by a special request, which I considered at the time a most cruel one, to become godfather to her hopeful son and heir; and, if you'll believe me, I was positively good-natured enough to incur this responsibility on behalf of a young scapegrace, who is now at Eton, and a regular chip of the old block—*head* I was going to say; but no, I'll restrain myself, as it is just fourteen years ago this April that I was invited to the christening; and now that love is dead, jealousy, I suppose, should die with it, for Charley Dashwood, after all, is a genial, good fellow, and, as I said before, a very model of husbands; but there! who wouldn't be with such a wife?

Among rakes, the perfection of development depends in a great measure on early history and associations. I have known many boys at school who were, by their habits as boys, doomed to continue rakes, and rakes they doubtless are at the present time—boys who for a consideration would take a "licking" as cheerfully and readily on any other boy's account as they would tell a lie to avoid one on their own, and to whom a question of getting "hoisted" and "swished" six times a week was a far less important consideration than the excuse they would have to make to avoid a seventh repetition. Such promising examples of "those dreadful boys" are invariably to be met with in every public school. As a rule, they are by no means wanting in natural abilities; if not on the highest form, they are not necessarily to be found on the lowest; they have a happy knack of their own of acquiring sufficient knowledge with the least possible amount of reading to enable them to maintain a creditable reputation in-doors, while all their energies are directed to out-door sports, in which they invariably excel. The natural proclivities of rakes in embryo are necessarily curbed by the restrictions of rigid scholastic discipline, but immediately they go up to the Universities, and feel themselves so to speak free, and their own masters, then the rakish part of their nature crops up in its full force, and bears fruit, some thirty, and some a hundred-fold; notwithstanding this, they contrive somehow or other to "fluke" through their "*smalls*," "*mods*," and "*greats*," (let it be distinctly understood that we refer to examinations, and

not to any articles of attire), without any apparent effort, as the newspapers say; they often get "gated," occasionally "proctorised," and sometimes "rusticated," and though they seem "to toil not, neither do they spin," they somehow seldom fail to get their degree in the end, just as they have never failed from the beginning to get many degrees—into debt.irate fathers may rail, as fathers always will, at the unconscionable extravagance of their hopeful sons, and preach and lecture them, but it is all to no purpose; the process is, generally speaking, like pouring water on a duck's back, and they refuse to listen to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely; not even the tender influences of a mother's love avails aught beyond the moment, and the last long letter from home, full of kind and womanly advice, bearing the evidence of tears, has positively been converted into pipe-lights. Good staunch old family friends, too, have proffered certain suggestions, as good old friends always have a right to offer: pay no more of the young rascal's bills, it will only encourage him to further extravagance. Then, when the exchequer is at its lowest, comes home most opportunely a letter, with sundry bills enclosed, and positively a printed copy of Latin verses, addressed pointedly to the "dad," from which he, "good easy man" that he is, is convinced of his boy's talents, sends him by return of post another check for a good round sum, which S——, the horse-dealer, cashes, and with it an assurance that so long as he gives his mind to reading he will never cramp his maintenance, lest he take to evil courses, and winds up with a stereotyped lecture, admonishing him to be careful in the selection of his acquaintances, and warning him, as he does regularly once a month, if he is ever pressed for money to write home at once, and never, under any circumstances, put his hand to bills—advice which our hero punctually adheres to, so far as their payment is concerned; in respect of the Latin verses, he commends their tone and quality, perhaps with too much fervour, considering that he understands scarcely a word of their meaning; and it is, perhaps, a fortunate circumstance that he has of late grown so rusty in classical lore, otherwise the said verses might have been recognised as not purely original. But, there! they were genuine enough for the purpose, and, considering how well they answered it, not over dear at the price, at any rate in the estimation of a kind, easy-going father.

We have succeeded in tracing the "rake's progress," thus far, by drawing a very imperfect and crude outline of him as he appeared—a gentleman commoner at Oxford. Throughout his career at Alma Mater, his name more frequently appeared with the eleven than on the class list, and without him the stroke of the Exeter boat might have said of a truth, "We are seven;" he was

known as one of the best of whips, and straightest riders across country; he smoked the choicest cigars, and was considered the best judge of wine and horseflesh in the university—and all this on an allowance of £500 a-year: he was "in," as the phrase goes, with the best set, was a first-class shot, and a bungling fisherman. While I was plodding on for my degree in the steady, old-fashioned style, it appeared to me that this particular class of men enjoyed an immunity from everything that is disagreeable, and commended themselves exclusively to the pleasures and enjoyments of life, which they took to as a matter of course, and which appeared to have been created for their sole and special benefit. As a striking instance of this, I remember once seeing Charley Dashwood, to whom I have before alluded as an admirable example of this type of men, "tooling" a pair of high-stepping greys tandem down the "High," almost at a hand gallop, when, as luck would have it, his leader's head came into unexpected and violent contact with old Pry, the Proctor, who was, at the moment, crossing over to St. Mary's. The shock almost knocked him off his legs, "Out of the sunshine, you old idiot!" exclaimed Charley, before he had time to recover them, and was off like a shot. Of course he wasn't recognised, his simple effrontery tided him over the difficulty, whereas, if such a rencontre had happened to you or I, or any one else, it would have cost him the expenses of a term, to a moral certainty.

Some of our readers may consider that we have taken too fascinating and dangerous a view of the rakish element which forms such a prominent ingredient in modern society, and moves so conspicuously, and generally with such good grace, in almost every phase of it; if such is really the case, we would fain be excused on the plea that we have known and met with, in our experience through life, such good, jovial, and genial fellows, who, if they did not actually belong to the order in question, were unmistakably so closely associated with it, that from such examples we have, perhaps, been inclined to judge too leniently of the class; but if the best among us are to be judged barely according to our deserts, "who shall 'scape whipping?"

The rake's character is certainly not one which claims unqualified commendation, but it is, on the whole, a character which, although we are often called upon to *excuse*, we can never *respect*; it is one that we may, on some occasions, be justified in *admiring*, but seldom or never in *imitating*. The rake appears, as a man, to live too much in opposition to his reason; just as a flirt, among women, lives in the constant misapplication of her beauty; he is decidedly by nature *proud*, but never *conceited*; possessing in its fullest development the *suaviter in modo*, but in the least possible degree the *fortiter in re*; he has been most aptly described as the

most agreeable of all bad characters—always to be *pitied*, and certain, if he lives long enough, to be *reclaimed*. His faults—or call them *weaknesses*, if you will—do not proceed from choice or inclination, but from strong passions and appetites, which, in youth, are too violent for the curb of reason and good sense to control. He must necessarily be gifted by nature, and refined by education, before he can be allowed to enrol himself in the order; and so long as he belongs to it, if he is weighed in a strictly just and impartial balance, he is found to be, after all, only a poor, unwieldy being, who commits endless follies and indiscretions out of the redundance of his good qualities. For this reason he is often pitied, and sometimes reproached, by those who are intellectually his inferiors. His desires carry him away captive, through the strength and force of his imagination, which, without admitting any forethought, hurries him on to unlawful pleasures, before reason and common sense have time to come to his rescue; thus, with all the good intentions in the world to amendment, he sins on against Heaven, himself, his friends, and his country, who call in vain for a better use of his talents. If he does amend, as is generally the case, there is no man living who has a better capacity for rational enjoyment, or who can more easily adapt himself to the requirements of an improved condition of life. But if he does *not* mend, there is, on the other hand, not a being under the sun so miserable; he goes on in pursuits which he himself disapproves, and he has no real enjoyment but what is followed by remorse—no relief from remorse but the repetition of his faults. We are now, of course, alluding to the confirmed rake, than whom there is no character in the world more truly the object of our sympathy; he errs and repents, and repents and errs on. The man with a broken limb deserves our pity and our alms, by reason of his impotent condition; but the man who cannot use his own reason is in a much more lamentable state; for you see him, morally speaking, under more miserable circumstances, and at the same time with the remedy in his own possession, if he had only the power to use it. When he is himself, and unruffled by excesses, you can discern his natural faculties exerting themselves, and always attracting an eye of favour towards his shortcomings;—how many dull knaves are there that would feign be what this poor fellow hates himself for? Although he is admittedly his own greatest enemy, it is by the force of example such a man sins most; for who can recount the manifold evils that are caused by those paltry counterfeits who think it is “the correct thing” to mimic him, because he does everything with such a good grace? and who can say whether or not he that leads is not, to a great extent, responsible for the actions of those that follow?

A rake has, perhaps, more imitators than any other class of

men, and of all phases second-hand vice is the most repulsive and nauseous. What is excusable, from the force of circumstances, in one man, is a crime for another to imitate under opposite and different circumstances. There is no folly more difficult to account for, although we see examples of it every day, than the disposition to follow in a direction in which good sense would call us back; but there is a fatality under which many men labour, and often men of honest natures and good sterling sense, and that is desiring to be what they are not; this makes them go out of their own beaten track, in which they might shine and excel and be received with applause, into another, in which they invariably appear to have the air of strangers, unhappily out of their element. Of this class, unfortunately by far the most numerous and despicable, are those who try to counterfeit the rake, but let me assure them such detestable efforts are as ridiculous as they are hopeless. A man may drink, and smoke and brawl, and swear, and commit all the most novel and ingeniously devised excesses from now till doomsday, but he will never become a rake thus, unless he is born to be one; he will, as a matter of course, become what is far worse, from not following a better example; but a rake proper, according to the Steerforth type, he can never be, or aspire to be. In the case of the one, indiscretions are attributable to the influence of strong and irresistible incentives, and are, therefore, to an extent excusable; in the other they arise solely from the force of example, and are, therefore, altogether unjustifiable. The former looks upon life as a thing to be made the best of, and turned to the most agreeable account, and in his experiencies in it acts originally and according to the dictates of his own natural tastes and feelings; the latter, in a more cowardly and meaner way, essays to enjoy life through profiting by the experiencies of others, and for this reason he invariably fails to attain any results that he is capable of truly appreciating or enjoying.

It is a most difficult task to describe accurately the orthodox type of rakishness except in the abstract and by allusion to general and leading characteristics, because each and every individual example has its own peculiarities, which are conspicuous or otherwise just according to their nature and force of surrounding circumstances. We doubt not that most of our readers can call to mind some one or more tolerably perfect specimens of the class with whom they have sometime or other in their experiences become acquainted, and to whom these observations may, with more or less force, apply. In almost every novel of the present day, a rake is as important and indispensable a character as a lover, and he is not unfrequently introduced to answer the purposes of both. As we said in the outset, there are many wholesome lessons to be learnt in the reading and study of such characters. If they unhappily make themselves too

much the friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, we can see in their experiencies the consequences, and be enabled the better in our own to avoid similar results ; we can also discern to what extent they succeed in their undertakings, and follow their example only when it is to our interest and advantage to do so, avoiding, at the same time, the causes to which their more frequent failings are attributable. If only so much as this, they can by their example teach us at any rate how fatal it is to our interests and happiness to lead an indifferent and purposeless existence, by ignoring the responsibilities of life, and enjoying the present as if it had no possible connection with a future.

EDWARD LEE, F.S.A. SCOT.

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

BY THE COUNTESS VON LAUENBRÜCK

CHAPTER XXI.

WE were settled at X—— for the winter. With good fortune, great sorrow had also come upon us. Hilda had been at death's door; the Schloss was full of anxious faces; doctors, coming and going, shook their heads and looked grave. There were daily consultations, murmurs of "a sudden shock to the nervous system," "a naturally delicate constitution," and so on. Countess Lauenbrück, full of anxiety, had begged me not to leave her alone, for Fraülein von Wolfram had left on the second day of Hilda's illness. Graf Stralenheim had also departed, unnoticed, unthought of; Fritz had forgotten all ideas of vengeance in his anxiety for his wife. One evening, at the beginning of November, when Cuthbert and I were sitting alone in the library, Max and Hugo having gone out shooting, and Karl and Count Lauenbrück playing a dreary game of billiards together in the now almost deserted billiard-room, whilst Fritz and his mother were sitting in poor Hilda's boudoir, waiting for the doctor, Cuthbert startled me by saying, "How should you like to spend a winter in Germany, Mabel?"

"Not at all."

"But why not?"

"Oh, Cuthbert, how can you ask, when you know that I have been longing for weeks past to get home?"

"True; but it is getting late in the year for travelling."

"What does that signify? We are all quite well."

"Yes; we are all quite well."

"Then why should we stay, Cuthbert?"

"We will not stay, dear, since you do not wish it."

"How could you imagine such a thing probable?"

"I did not imagine it probable—scarcely possible."

"Still, I cannot imagine how you came to think of such a thing."

"I will think of it no more."

At this moment the servant brought in the letter-bag; and giving Cuthbert the key, requested him to open it.

"What letters? any for me?" But Cuthbert was so slow that I lost all patience, and sorted all the letters quickly myself, giving my husband the newspaper whilst I went to the window to read my own epistles by the fading light. A long one from Emmy: they had arrived at Mentone, and were enjoying the lovely warm weather

on the shores of the blue Mediterranean. "How we pity you amongst the ice-bears!" she wrote. "Pray take care of frost-bites. They say the nose and ears are the first to be attacked; a permanently red nose, or flaming ears, are afflictions of no light order. I entreat you to wear a double Shetland veil when you go out; but I hope you will only emerge from your present place of abode to brave the elements in going home." I laughed, and read the passage aloud to Cuthbert.

"Emmy fancies we are in the Arctic regions, at least," he said; "you must quiz her about her geographical blunders when you write, dear."

"And tell her that you proposed our staying here all the winter. She would think you had taken leave of your senses, Cuthbert."

Then I read further, and there was silence in the room.

"Now, Cuthbert, you may read the newspaper to me. You always smuggle it off into your own den for perusal. I must finish this piece of work to-night, and you can best help me by reading aloud."

Then I took up my work, and sat silently sewing, expectant of news. There was a strange stillness in the room. The newspaper ceased to crackle; I waited, but no news came.

"Cuthbert," I said at last, "is there anything the matter? Why don't you read?"

"I cannot."

"Oh, nonsense! Don't be so lazy. Stir the fire" (for we had fire-places, with roaring wood fires in them, at Lauenbrück), "and begin at once."

He stirred the fire, but he did not begin. His silence made me uneasy; but just as I had made up my mind to take no notice of his strange behaviour, he spoke.

"Mabel, come here; I want you."

I rose at once, and went to him. The sound of his voice made me do that. There was something wrong I instinctively felt.

"Mabel, I cannot read to you."

"Then don't do it, Cuthbert."

"That is not what I meant. I cannot see to read."

"Then wait till candles comes; but, in the meantime, tell me—tell me in the twilight, and by the fire-light, what is troubling you, Cuthbert?"

"I will, love. Come near to me, and give me your hand. Do you remember, Mabel, when I first came here, and the Grand Duke also came for the *chasses*?"

"Yes."

"Well, do you remember my mistaking Karl for the Grand Duke?"

"Oh, Cuthbert, don't begin to talk of that hateful time now. Tell me what is troubling you."

"But I must talk of that time. You were angry with me then, and thought me stupid, Mabel; you were vexed also that I would not go out shooting with the others. You were more than vexed, darling, when I went away to England without you."

To think of Cuthbert's treasuring up these fits of temper against me! But I only said "Very well," for I wanted him to come to the point.

"You are vexed with me now, Mabel, because I ask if you would like to stay here; and you were a tiny, tiny little bit cross, because I did not read the newspaper when you ordered me to do so." He was smiling now, I knew it by the sound of his voice.

"Not ordered, Cuthbert!"

"Well, you are a tetchy darling at times, you know."

"Don't say 'tetchy,' it's so pedantic, Cuthbert."

"Well, I will say 'touchy.'"

"Say anything, only go on with what you were going to tell me." For it suddenly seemed to me that Cuthbert was trying to delay his communication.

He sighed. "Yes, I must go on; but do you not guess what it is, Mabel, that I have to tell you? Surely you can guess?"

"No, Cuthbert, I cannot guess; and if I could, I would not; I hate guessing!"

"Mabel, I am blind!"

I have heard of people in some great sorrow being unable to realise their affliction. I realised mine, his, ours, in a moment. I saw, in one terrible second, all the lovely, tormenting past, all the long, dark, blank future. I felt all that he had felt in those solitary months of agonised toil; I knew all that he had suffered in the long, dark, dreary nights which were only forerunners of the longer, darker, drearier night that was coming. I saw the reason of his anxiety to get me away; I understood why he had clung to the idea of Uncle Halford's leaving little Cuthbert something. I saw, with a vision that seemed to have double acuteness, (perhaps the power of his lost eyes, who knows? combined with my own,) the toil and dreariness of the last few months; the fears of beggary urging on to a last desperate effort; his cares for me and the child driving him to an energetic struggle for the bread that was to feed us in those future years of blank and darkness. I understood now why he had been so annoyed at his own mistakes; why he had withdrawn from the shooting parties, on pretext of having letters to write; why he carried the newspaper off to read (alas, to read!)

in private ; why, even now, he had been silent when I had expected the sound of his voice. All this rushed through my brain in that one terrible moment of silence, whilst Cuthbert was waiting for my answer. But I was speechless, stunned.

“ My poor darling,” he said, tenderly, “ it is very terrible for you. I know it, and it is the thought of all that you will suffer that has kept me silent so long.”

“ Oh, Cuthbert, forgive me !”

“ I cannot forgive you where there is nothing to forgive.”

“ My selfishness, my blindness (ah ! what a new and terrible meaning that word had assumed in the last few minutes !) my cruelty in not guessing, my crossness ;” but the list was getting too long ; at the sound of my own sins of omission and commission, the merciful tears came, and I laid my head on Cuthbert’s shoulder, and wept.

Then he told me the whole sad story ; making light of his sufferings, (but I knew as well as though he had described them all what they must have been), and even cheering me with hopes of the future. Bertie knew all about it, he told me ; and then he said that his brother had softened old Uncle Halford’s heart with the account of the darkness that had fallen on his young, toilsome, courageous life, (not that he called it toilsome or courageous, but I knew), so that the old man, in dying, had provided for the nephew to whom his last words had been those of reproach. He had consulted all the best oculists, he told me. Bowman gave him some hopes of ultimate recovery, and those hopes had lately been confirmed by Bader ; but the time for operation had not yet come. Complete repose ; cheerful society ; exercise in the open air ; social amusements,—these were the doctor’s prescriptions.

“ It would kill me to go back amongst my friends and be stared at, Mabel ; it will be bad enough when we have tried everything, and know that there is no cure. Our seven hundred a-year won’t go far in London, when we think of what the operations may cost, and what I shall have to pay the doctors. Amusements would be out of the question. Amusements are luxuries for the rich in England, not possibilities for the needy. My greatest delight since I have been ill has been in the opera at X——. All my old love of music has risen up with double force ; I seem to have gained in acuteness of hearing all that I have lost in other ways. I have talked the matter over with Countess Lauenbrück, and she tells me we can live very comfortably and very moderately at X——”

“ She knows it, then ?”

“ Yes ! she knows it ; for, Mabel dearest, I could not guess that my wife was such a strong-minded little woman, and I thought some womanly sympathy and consolation might help her over this dark hour.”

Dear Cuthbert!

“But where could we live?”

“The hotels are good and cheap; they are not full in winter; we can have as much room as we want, at so much a week throughout the winter months. In the spring—”

But I did not want just then to hear about the spring.

So after all Countess Lauenbrück had been keeping us there on my account, and not, as she had said, on her own; she had talked over everything with Cuthbert, and all their care had been to save me pain. I thought over this silently, and quiet tears ran down my face. Misfortune is not misfortune, so long as love remains. Ill is not positive punishment and torture. And even this terrible affliction that had befallen us brought light and brightness with it. Did it not show me my husband's love? a love so forgetful of self, even in this hour of bitter trial, that it uttered no word of complaint, breathed no syllable of the terrors of the last months with the vision of utter darkness, approaching even more surely, nearer and nearer; but sought rather with loving care and eagerness to lighten my burthen, to soften my sorrow, to cheer and encourage and strengthen me? I felt at that hour, as I have felt ever since, that there is but one positive ill in the world—want of love. Loneliness, heart-loneliness, this is a positive evil—bitter, corroding, consuming. This darkens every other joy, poisons every pleasure, whispers weird reminders in one's ears when the song is at its gayest, and laughter most loud. There may be moments of forgetfulness, moments drugged into oblivion by the reckless mirth of a passing hour; but with a double sense of desolation and hopelessness the old grief returns again, to cast its shadow over everything, to make the heart heavy, and the soul sad. Loneliness!—this is positive ill! this is the most cruel torture that the world can give. To know that no answering smiles may ever meet yours; no responsive pressure answer your loving clasp; no tears commingle with your own; no prayers rise with yours on high. To think that every grief and trouble, every slight and scoff, must be borne alone, swallowed in silence, endured calmly, though the iron shall enter into your soul, and bitterness prey at your heart like a serpent, gnawing at the very chords of vitality. This is a living death. This is a sorrow far beyond that of the grave; for the grave is peaceful and quiet, but this is torment, is strife, is weariness, is passionate regret for unknown, impossible joys, is almost—despair. Therefore, even in this dark hour, I was cheerful. Cuthbert, blind, even hopelessly blind, could never be lonely so long as my love surrounded him, following him night and day, caring for him in small things, and in great, sympathising, softening, cheering. I also could never be lonely; for I felt that until death parted us, he could have no thought apart from me, that he would cling to me doubly

now ; that now I might prove my love, and perhaps make him some return for all his silent devotion. I sat thinking thus, with my hand locked in his, and my head on his dear shoulder, weeping gentle, grateful, loving tears over the noble heart beside me, and was almost happy. We were very silent. Cuthbert seemed relieved of an irrepressible burthen : from time to time he kissed my tears away ; but he did not tell me not to cry ; he was thankful that I could weep thus ; he had so long looked forward with dread to this moment, and now that it had come, it was so different to what he imagined it would be, that he, also, was grateful, and let my quiet grief have its way. Presently we began to talk again.

“They will be so glad to have you near them ; for, do you know, Mabel, Countess Irene expects great things of you. She thinks when poor Hilda gets better that you will be the one to whom she will turn ; she has always been so fond of you.”

Alas ! poor Hilda ! I had not much encouraged that fondness of which Cuthbert spoke, and I was ready to reproach myself for it now. I felt that the worst ill that could have befallen her had come to her young life, and that she was lonely indeed. That in spite of her apparent gaiety, of her love of pleasure, of her pretty liveliness and bewitching caprices, she was sad and solitary. What had passed between her and Graf Stralenheim I only learnt later. Fraülein von Wolfram had been as good as her word, and had departed in silence. Graf Stralenheim’s departure no one had noticed, and the brain fever which had attacked Hilda so absorbed everybody’s attention that they never thought of connecting the one circumstance with the other. She had undertaken too much, her mother-in-law said. The excitement of the past weeks had reacted on her nervous system, and brought on the terrible attack that had laid her low. That evening, when Countess Lauenbrück came down to supper, there was a ray of hope on her countenance, for the doctor had pronounced Hilda out of danger. Then Cuthbert told her that I knew all, and she took me to her heart and kissed me, and bade me be brave and of good cheer, for that with the returning spring there was every hope that my husband’s sight would be restored to him. She entered with eagerness into all our plans, and gave us many valuable hints for our guidance. A week later we were comfortably established in the hotel Z——, at X——, and I soon saw the wisdom of Cuthbert’s suggestion that we should spend the winter in Germany. Firstly, we were unknown, so commiseration and inquiries were spared us ; then the very novelty of the situation gave us food for conversation, and prevented us from dwelling too exclusively on the one painful subject. Though it was now winter, we had daily parade-music before the grand-ducal palace ; and thither Cuthbert would go, walking to and fro under

the shelter of the sunny wall, and enjoying the sweet sounds that met his ears.

By degrees, a few more intimate friends collected around us. Pretty little Frau von Strelitz and her husband would drop in for an hour's chat after the theatre; Captain von Zulau, always glad to hear news of Lauenbrück, would join our party; and Max and Hugo not unfrequently drove over to dine at mess with the officers of the grand ducal *garde*, and always came to tea with us. They brought good news of Hilda; she was out of danger, they said, though they had not as yet seen her. Count and Countess Lauenbrück were going south; they always wintered at Wiesbaden, and friends and relatives were anxiously awaiting them there. The two brothers were to remain as companions to Fritz until after Christmas, when their leave expired. Graf Karl had gone on a visit to Count Hohenstein.

One lovely, frosty day early in December, the Lauenbrück carriage stopped before the hotel, and Countess Irene, beautiful in blue, and splendid in Russian sables, got out, followed by her husband.

"We have come to say good-bye, dear; we are on our way to the railroad."

"So soon?"

"Our friends at Wiesbaden complain that we are so late."

"Well, I suppose so. How is Hilda?"

"Wonderfully better. Poor Fritz looks sadly, after his long anxiety; but he also will recover his good looks now that he sees her improving; *au reste*, I think it better for the young people to be alone."

"They will feel parting with you very much."

"Scarcely. Hilda is yet too weak to feel anything; as for Fritz, he, literally, only feels what *she* feels."

Some further talk ensued about our future plans. "We shall meet again at Coblenz in the spring, if not before. I still hope you will put yourself under Von Grœf; meanwhile, it is the greatest comfort to me to think you are so near Lauenbrück; it will be such a pleasure and comfort to Hilda later on."

After that farewells were exchanged, and we followed our kind friends downstairs to see them off.

"Good-bye! I rely on your going for the Christmas week to Lauenbrück!" Countess Irene had cried as they drove off down the ill-paved street, all white and sparkling with hoar frost.

"What a lovely woman your aunt is!" I said to Cuthbert, still standing at the door and looking after them.

"She was when I last saw her." Alas! that had been on our wedding trip, for I now know that on his first coming to Lauenbrück Cuthbert had been almost blind.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was Christmas-eve. In every cottage, however humble, the Christmas-tree was, or soon would be, lighted; in every house, however small or mean, there were rejoicings; in every family, however poor, there were gatherings; only the poor young wife, in whose life there were to be no Christmas-trees, no partings and rejoicings, no children's voices, no family gatherings, no warmth, no light, no colouring—only Mr. Secretary Fuchs' desolate young wife sat alone, brooding over her sad and silent lot, over all the gloom and dreariness of the future. Of her mother she saw but little; her husband took care that no maternal influence should interfere with, or counteract his marital prerogative. His rule was far from benign; but, like Alexander, he chose to reign alone, and we may conclude that his sway was a somewhat despotic one, and his yoke far from light. He had gone down to the village beer-place, though he scarcely expected to find any one there to-night. The sexton, the schoolmaster, and the postmaster—his usual familiars—were all married men, and had families of their own; but yet he chose to go out as usual, giving his young wife strict injunctions not to follow his example, as he should be home to supper at eight o'clock.

She sighed as he closed the door, then running after him, "May I not go down to my mother, Jacob?" she said; "she will feel so lonely this Christmas-eve. Let me go down to her."

"Let her come to you. Young women ought not to go gadding about at nights."

"Take me with you, Jacob."

"No; I have business to attend to."

"But you know she cannot come here, after what you said to her the last time she came."

"Then let her stay away."

The poor girl was almost crying now, but still, for her mother's sake, she persisted: "Think, Jacob, how lonely she is!"

Then he came back towards her, and grasping her by the wrist, led her into the room again. "No whining and whimpering," he said, brutally, speaking between his teeth; "I won't encourage this tittle-tattling and woman's gossip. What can your mother have to tell you? Pleasant news of your virtuous sister, hey? No, no; you are my wife, and your proper place is home, and at home you shall stay!" then he had flung her into a chair, and had gone out.

At home—home! Was this home? this place of cruelty and mockery, this place of misery and torment?—this home? Oh, better, better far be lying out yonder in the churchyard by the

hill; better be dead and at peace, than alive and—thus. Then the poor girl dropped her head into her hands and wept. She thought of her first love, and of the happy days following their betrothal; of the strolls on summer evenings, when the nightingale's song had hushed even their love-whispers; then the remembrance of their parting rose up before her—a parting full of bitterness, but also full of hope. Then came the terrible, blighting news of her sister's life; then that of her lover's inconstancy, then that of his marriage. "Oh, that I had been true to myself! oh, that I had been true to his memory! Because he was unfaithful, need I also be false?—false to the past—false to all I had sworn? Oh, dead, a thousand times dead, rather than lead such a life as this! Death is rest, is peace, is calm; there 'the wicked cease from troubling;' but as long as I live they will never cease to trouble me! There 'the weary are at rest,' but, as long as I have my being, there can no rest come to my life!" She sat down on the stone floor, and laying her head against a wooden settle, gave uncontrolled way to her grief. After a time, spent and exhausted, her face all flushed and tear-stained, she arose. The night was clear and star-lit; the heavy wooden shutters without must be closed, the lamp lighted, the stove replenished. Reaching the lamp down from a shelf, she proceeded to trim and light it. Once she looked up towards the window; then she drew the dying embers together, and laid fresh turf and wood in the stove, preparatory to going out for the purpose of closing the outside shutters.

All this time a dark figure stood silently watching her every movement, and two great gloomy eyes were fixed upon her, though she could not see them. Presently, putting her apron over her head, she opened the door and went out; but scarcely had her feet touched the crisp snow when two strong arms encircled her, and a hundred kisses were showered upon her lips, and cheeks, and brow.

"Marie, my own Marie! my darling! my love! Oh! Marie, when I saw you standing there, trimming the lamp, I thought my heart would burst! I saw the light, Mariechen, and that drew me to the spot, for I had missed my way in the snow, and was trying to steer towards your old cottage. Are you not glad to see me, dear Mariechen? Do you love me still? But I saw traces of tears on your dear cheeks as you stood by the lamp, my darling; I saw traces of tears, and then I said to myself, 'I shall kiss those tears away, and my Marie shall weep no more; I will kiss those tears away, and we will be happy for ever; I will kiss them away, and smiles shall grow in their places. But are you not glad to see me, love? Are you not glad to have me home again? See, Mariechen, I have so longed and prayed for this hour; do not be cold or shy, dearest; tell me just once that you love me; whisper

it once in my ear. Oh, Marie! nothing now can divide us; not even your silence and coldness, for I love you, my darling, I love you; and nothing shall make me unhappy!"

But no answering kiss or caress followed his passionate pleadings; only silence, a silence oppressive, unnatural.

"I have frightened you, Mariechen; forgive me, darling, and take me to your mother, for welcome. To think I should get home to-night!—to-night of all nights in the year! And you are my Christmas-box, Mariechen; you are my treasure, my jewel! But now take me to your mother."

The merciful darkness covered her face, or he had surely read in its agonised lines the hell that was raging within her. But his own joy, bright and transcendent, had dazzled and rendered him blind. With one foot on the threshold, and one arm about her, he paused for a moment. "Only say 'Welcome, dear Heinrich, welcome to my home and mother's!' and I'll be contented."

But then the poor girl sprang away from him, "Oh, not there," she exclaimed, "not there; that is not my home nor my mother's. My mother lives yonder, down by the well in the market-place: and I—I live here with the man I loathe and abhor, with the man I hate—but who yet is my husband!" And then, with a laugh that rung shrilly and weird in the darkness, a laugh that curdled the blood in his veins, the marrow in his bones, she sprang past him and disappeared into the night.

We had driven across from X——; had driven literally over the tops of the trees; for the snow had been falling steadily for more than a fortnight, and in many places had drifted to such an extent that the country was unrecognisable. On the high road, gangs of convicts were at work in their chains, cutting out huge, solid masses of frozen snow, like blocks of granite or marble; but on the cross-roads no such work had been undertaken so that our progress was slow and unpleasantly cold, in spite of the furs and wraps they had sent in the carriage.

We found Hilda lying on the sofa in her boudoir, painfully altered, and yet touchingly lovely. Her manner was even more changed than her face; there was a humility, a deprecating sadness about her, that struck me most painfully. She rose as we entered, and the colour in her cheeks became intensely vivid. She kissed me, and gave Cuthbert her hand; but there was no warmth in her welcome; no sign or trace of her former vivacity; no ray of gaiety or liveliness. Fritz watched her like a young mother watches her first-born. A thousand impossible fears, a thousand impossible dangers to be warded off, a thousand ridiculous apprehensions, kept him ever on the alert.

"How do you think she is looking?" he asked, the moment he got us outside the door; "not so very shady, eh?"

Poor fellow! I could not say she looked very sunshiny.

"Her voice is still very weak," Cuthbert had answered.

"Oh, yes, her voice was weak," Fritz had replied; "but that was nothing; she would soon come round; the weather was against her."

Then we had gone to our rooms, and had made ourselves comfortable; and as it was yet early, it was agreed that Fritz and Cuthbert should go for a walk, and that the tree should be lighted at dusk. "For Max, Hugo, and I have made no end of a tree," Fritz had said, "and we are going to have all the Herr Förster's children in when it's lighted, and all the gardener's little ones, and as many other stray piccaninnies as we can gather together. Bertie is quite a godsend, Mabel!" And then the good, kind-hearted fellow had gone out.

I must have fallen asleep, for it was quite dark in my room when I came to consciousness again, and at first I hardly knew where I was. Presently, tramp, tramp, tramp, a heavy footstep passing to and fro overhead fully roused me. I rose and lighted a candle, but the large room was none the lighter for the solitary little flame. Tramp, tramp, went the footsteps overhead in heavy monotony. I wondered who could be pacing the loft at this time of night. Cuthbert not coming, I resolved to go across to Hilda. With the flickering light in my hand, I passed through the great, desolate, empty rooms; I crossed the tapestried chamber, where Hilda had once so gaily chattered, showing me all its gloomy relics with many quips and cranks, across the great Ahnen Saal, where centuries of Lauenbrücks looked forth grimly into the darkness, through the dining and drawing-rooms, into Hilda's boudoir. She was lying on the sofa, just as we had left her—perfectly still, but not sleeping.

"May I come in, dear?"

"Pray do."

"But you must not move. You must keep quite quiet, or I shall run away again."

"Do not do that; I will be very obedient."

As I sat down I noticed that the firelight shone upon Fritz's and Graf Stralenheim's pictures. They both of them hung in the old place.

"Have you been asleep, dear Hilda?"

"No—have you?"

"I think I must have been. It's a strange thing, but when I awoke I heard footsteps overhead."

"Ah! you heard those footsteps?"

"But surely you did not hear them. They were at the other end of the Schloss, and appeared to me to pass over about thirty paces, and then to stop and turn round."

“ Yet I heard them.”

“ Impossible, dearest.”

“ I always hear them.”

“ How, always ?”

“ Every evening—every night.”

“ That is surely fancy, dearest Hilda ?”

“ So they tell me.”

“ But what do you think it is ?”

“ If I tell you, you will laugh.”

“ No ; I will not laugh.”

“ It is the beautiful Lady of Breekoe.”

Then I remembered the tale that Hilda had told me on that balmy summer's evening, coming home from our forest picnic, and I was silent.

“ She walked before poor little Nelly died.”

I made no answer.

“ She walks now before I die.”

“ Oh, Hilda, dearest, do not say such things! Think of Fritz !”

She answered nothing. “ Let us have some tea,” I said. And we rang for lights and tea. Presently we were summoned to the Christmas tree. Hilda was not well enough to go ; but I found the room full of servants and children, and was glad to shake hands with the Herr Förster and his wife, and to see the genuine hearty pleasure in honest Fritz's face as he showered bonbons and gingerbread nuts amongst the children, distributing dolls and balls, guns, swords, tool-boxes, whips, puzzles, and toys innumerable amongst the boys and girls. They did not remain long ; they all had Christmas-trees at home, and were eager to be off. When we got back to Hilda's boudoir again, I asked Cuthbert where he had spent his afternoon ; they had had a long walk, he said, and coming home had turned into Herr Pastor's. Being tired, he had lain down on his return, and had had a short sleep.

“ By the way, have you an amateur ghost here ?” he asked, laughing, “ for there was some one tramping to and fro in the loft for half-an-hour or more after I came in.”

“ Nonsense, Cuthbert ! Ghosts don't tramp, they glide.”

“ But this may not be a conventional ghost ; why should there not be some progress amongst ghosts in these days of civilisation ?”

“ The noise you heard is made by the rats,” Fritz said, rather anxiously. “ I'm going to have some of the dogs put up there ; it is an annoying disturbance, and makes me quite nervous.”

All this while a poor timid girl was flying through the darkness, flying through the cold and gloom to her destruction. Away past tree and house, past farm and homestead, past barn and rick, on

through the darkness, away from despair, away from temptation, from cruelty, and life, bareheaded, frantic, desperate, homeless.

If angels were abroad that Christmas night, surely they must take pity on her; or were they all in the homes of joy and gladness, where children's merry voices rang, where pleased fathers and happy mothers were rejoicing over the innocent joy of their darlings? On, on, on; for ever on; and yet not for ever. Past the churchyard where her father lay, (good, that he could never know her sister's shame, or her utter misery), past the church where she had prayed her simple innocent prayers, had been confirmed, had gone to her first communion—and, oh! hateful thought, had been married!—on, ever on; past the sexton's house, between the hedgerows (now covered with snow), up the bleak hill side, through the dreary moaning wind, to where the cliff was steepest, [the sea deepest, death easiest and surest. One moment more, and all trouble will be over; the wild throbbing of her heart for ever stilled, the surging too and fro of her brain at rest. Ah! how cool the water will be! how quiet the deep! There on a bed of seaweeds she will lie, and take her rest; the ocean shall sing her dirge, and the breezes sigh their lament over her; but she will hear neither dirge nor lament; she will be at rest. At rest, rocked to and fro by the gentle waves; sung into slumber by murmuring tides; ah, how peaceful will that rest be! On, on! let her gain it to-night; let to-morrow dawn on eternity—an eternity of peace!

A broad stream of light gleamed over the snow. The sturdy miller was showing the pastor out, for the Frau Millerin was ill, and had need of spiritual consolation.

“Great God, what have we here? a woman? Aye! a woman; one more unfortunate weary of breath! Take her up gently, good man! touch her with care; see how young she is—how young, and ah me, how fair! Think of what terrible misery must be hers, thus to drive her forth in the cold winter's night to seek refuge—where? Anywhere, anywhere; to her it is all the same, only this one condition is attached to it—that it must be ‘out of the world.’”

And they took her up tenderly. Tenderly they carried her—not home—not to that hateful abode from whence she had fled, but to her mother's home; and there they had laid her down, and had gone out silent and awe-stricken. Her pale rigid face had scared them, men as they were. Late that night, a haggard, bent, care-worn man left the pastor's house! the shadow, the phantom of that handsome youth, who had so passionately spoken his love to the silent girl in the darkness; who had so earnestly pleaded for a sign, or a token of love from her, and upon whose horror-stricken ears that peal of shrill earthly laughter had smote, and still re-echoed with such cruel mockery.

“ There has been foul play somewhere, Herr Pastor,” he said, as he went out ; and the Pastor acknowledged that there had been foul play ; but the care-worn, middle-aged man had said no more, he had gone forth over hill and dale, and wheresoever he went, that shriek of unearthly laughter sounded in his ears, and deadened the pulsations of his heart by its ever-recurring pitiless, weirdly-wild echoes.

BITTERNESS

THOUGHTS they come, and thoughts they go ;
 Calm I sit, nor reason why ;
 Watching this sad sunset glow
 In the chilly wintry sky.

Words they come, and words they go—
 Round them trembles many a sigh ;
 Fondest hopes they crush below,
 Which before were thronèd high.

Deeds they come, and deeds they go—
 Bearing many an ancient lie ;
 Bitter seeds they vowed to sow,
 And the reaping time is nigh.

Memories come, and memories go—
 From myself I *cannot* fly :
 Coldest hearts still colder grow ;
 Wearier grows the weary eye.

Madness now may come or go—
 Heed I not, nor make reply ;
 Angry winds around me blew
 In the desert. What care I ?

J. M. H.

STRAY LEAVES FROM AN INDIAN NOTE-BOOK

BY AN ARMY MEDICAL OFFICER

No. II.—“JOINING MY REGIMENT.”

SOME days elapsed after my arrival in India before I received any orders conveying to me the knowledge of my future destination, and it was during this time that I experienced the reality and truth of old Indian hospitality.

A stranger to the country, ignorant of a word of the language, bewildered by the habits of the people around me, I felt many misgivings as to my future prospects and happiness, and, as the steamer ran out her anchor, and came to the end of her journey, opposite the Apollo “*bunder*,” or “pier,” as the English have it, I regretted my departure from old friends, but determined to make new ones. Almost every one amongst my fellow-passengers had some friend coming to meet and to greet them, and to others, the sight of the cocoa-nut palms, and the swarthy faces of the natives, were a familiar, and even welcome sight. The father, puzzled somewhat to find his son, returning from school after a lengthened absence, and grown out of recollection; the husband, thankfully recognising his wife restored to health, and to himself; and the lover, almost delirious with joy at the termination of his patient self-denial, through the devoted affection and courageous resolve of his betrothed to join him at all costs,—are frequent spectacles to the officers of the P. and O. Company; and the merchant, rushing for the last quotation, the newspaper reporter, anxious to outstrip his competitors in the “latest news” at the “earliest period,” and the inquisitive military gossip, scanning the new arrivals, in hope of finding a friend, or food for light conversation, at the band stand or dinner-table, fill up the background of the picture of the “Arrival of the English Mail.”

Amidst such a bustle I stood alone and perplexed, until I was startled by the cheery voice of the dear old General, my fellow passenger, who addressing me, said, “Well, boy, and where are you going to in Bombay?”

Where, indeed! I had not the most remote conception where I could go to, so the answer necessarily was, “Well, I really don’t know.”

“So I thought,” replied the General; “you won’t find much comfort in the fort, so come with me, we can make you up a bed in the verandah.”

With pleasure I accepted this kind invitation, though I had

serious misgivings as to the capabilities of a *verandah* for a bed-room ! Before I could collect my scattered senses, however, my luggage had been lowered into a small boat, manned by natives, with curiously cut caps, and still more extraordinary clothes ; and the General and his friends were shouting out to me to take my seat in their midst, at the stern of another equally peculiar vessel, similarly equipped. A few strokes of the oars brought us to the steps of the *bunder*, and amidst a perfect Babel of indescribable noise, and to my ear " gibberish," we were hustled and jostled up the pier out of sight, though apparently much in the way. Without any effort, I was at last thrust into a handsome brougham, drawn by two grey Arab steeds, and found with me another of my fellow passengers, who, it appears, was also solitary, and therefore a fit subject for the General's hospitality. A moment was enough for both of us to see that the host who had thus befriended us was not in sight, and, naturally, we anxiously sought for him. He was soon found sitting in a hired " buggy" or cabriolet, waiting for the start. Simultaneously we exclaimed—" This is really too much, to turn you out of your own carriage ! Pray allow us to change places."

" Silly fellows," said he, " do you know where I live ? if so, come here, but if not so, my coachman does, and is the man to show you."

With this indisputable argument we were silenced, and relapsed into a comfortable and self-satisfied condition, amidst the cushions and comforts of an English-built carriage.

It is a curious fact that our countrymen, wherever they may go, always retain a partiality for their own productions, and, whether it be in the matter of food, dress, or mere luxuries, they evince a regard for English articles, although often sadly inappropriate to the climate and its surroundings. This characteristic is also imitated by the rich and better-educated class of natives in India, and British goods, carriages, horses, and supplies, are indulged in, often in direct proportion to the wealth that is associated with the individual.

An anecdote has been the rounds in India for some years which fully exemplifies this attachment. It is said that a young lady who was born in India, and had not yet quitted her native country, met an intimate friend just returned from his leave in England, and after many tender inquiries and anxious questions, said, " Of course you saw the Queen whilst at home ?"

" Oh, yes ; many times," replied the young officer.

" How nice !" remarked the impulsive lady ; " I suppose she lives on nothing but *hermetically sealed food* !"

Notwithstanding the unavoidable laugh which followed this primitive idea of royal grandeur, it really represented what is com-

monly acknowledged as a *burra sahib*, and it was not astonishing that Crosse and Blackwell's preserved meats should be associated with Buckingham Palace in our fair friend's thoughts.

The iced champagne and Oxford sausages, &c., that awaited our arrival at the General's house, just outside Bombay, were intended as special attentions by his butler, and although just then not peculiarly attractive to new arrivals, they became included in my list of luxuries long before I left the country to return home. It is, however, a great error to imagine that England is the only country where delicacies and dainty dishes are to be procured, and all Indians must acknowledge that the luscious mango, the delicate pomfret, the savoury floricon, compare most favourably with our British commissariat.

A fortnight very rapidly passed over, amidst luxurious indulgence and kindest hospitality, and it was with great regret I received my orders to move up country and report myself for duty with my regiment.

"Obedience is the first duty of a soldier," and so reasoning is put on one side, and simple acquiescence becomes necessary.

Let every man who intends going to India make up his mind that experience is to be purchased, and often in a very dear market. To go up country almost immediately after arrival is not a bad way to achieve this, and a more certain assistant than a servant who talks English can hardly be found. Why the fact of talking your language should, as a rule, add a grain of villany to any man's constitution is more than I can tell; it is, however, indisputable that those who know your language seem also to be conversant with the most approved form of imposition, robbery, and deceit, and, with an air of propriety perfectly paralysing, must you see yourself overcharged, and become accustomed to repeated inconveniences and annoyances. The domestic who, to-day, seems all attention and anxiety to please, who promises to be "very good to master," to "take great care of master," you may rely, will, the morning you expect to leave be taken suddenly ill, lose a mother, or in some way avoid the journey you are bound to attempt. After two or three such comforting adventures, I was fortunate enough to secure the services of a good man, a Musselman, who talked but little English, though he seemed to thoroughly understand deaf and dumb demonstrations, and to whom the march was advantageous, my regiment being stationed in his *muloch*, or native country.

The first portion of my journey was by railway, for civilisation has extended now for great distances into the interior of India, and the old bullock-cart, or *gharrie*, the palkee, or palanquin, the camel, and the mule, are disappearing before the iron roads traversed by engines and carriages, the result of English energy and British

ingenuity. What obstacles had to be overcome, and what difficulties surmounted, no one but those directly engaged can for a moment realise. The pace at which the trains travel seems to be exceedingly slow, and the time wasted at each station, to any one accustomed to home management, is remarkable.

For a long period after the introduction of railway travelling, it was superstitiously regarded by the native population, and their leaders and advisers, even, spoke against such supernatural work. At this time I know of many districts where the engine is completely feared, and its motive power ascribed to a satanic influence, rather than to simple mechanical arrangement. It was only by careful and slow management that confidence was established, and the *shytan ke kam* ("work of the devil") received by the people as a comparatively advantageous means of transit.

The carriages are, on most lines, built expressly for the peculiar climate of the country, having double roofs, large ventilating arrangements, and luxurious appliances, though much is still wanting to complete a satisfactory conveyance. The third class is almost exclusively confined to native occupancy; and although, on occasions, Europeans and natives are to be seen together, a mutual desire for separation seems to exist; and despite all Jamaica Committees, Exeter-Hall harangues, and popular clamour, there is a distinction acknowledged and carried into practice which is not permitted at home. It always must be so, and I am not at all prepared to admit that any evils result from this species of antipathy. From some practical experience, I can say that neither by nature, habit, or character, are white and black people associated; and although doubtless of equal importance in the great scheme of divinity, and worthy of mutual respect, yet on both sides there is always an amount of incongruity and *mésalliance* which jars and interferes with perfect reciprocity. A native prince instinctively avoids too close contact with Europeans really inferior to him in relative standing, while he irresistibly shows a fear and dread of his equal amongst our own nation. This is not, again, the result of forced submission as a conquered race, and it cannot altogether be ascribed to circumstances of position, advantages of education, or slow spread of civilisation; it rather belongs to that peculiar principle, which, in an underbred animal, always shows itself, and characterises the cur from the bloodhound, the jackal from the tiger.

The life of an engine-driver on many of the lines in India must indeed be a self-denying existence, surrounded with unusual risks, extraordinary dangers, and great miseries. Most of the men are Scotchmen; they certainly obtain a high rate of pay, and could doubtless, by steady conduct, amass a sum of money in a few years;

but they do not last very long, and the unusual surroundings often have an injurious influence on their habits and their health. At all times a peculiarly harassing life, much mercy must be extended towards any failings visible in the conduct of an Indian engine-driver.

My baggage being weighed and labelled, it was a very natural inference that it should be put into the van, and I therefore took my seat in foolish confidence. "Put not your trust in Hindoos" may safely be added to our school copy-books; for as the train was starting, to my horror I observed my bed, two boxes, and my tub (an essential in tropical climates more than even at home), on the platform, and the myrmidon quietly drawing his "hubble bubble" a few yards from them. Anathemas and strong imprecations aroused him—but too late! On we went, away from comfort, from rest, from clean clothes. The perfect harmony with which such matters are arranged in England contrasts most curiously with Indian habits, and it is high time that some energetic efforts were made to assimilate them as far as possible.

On one line of railway, it was a positive fact that no proper system of porters existed, even so lately as a year ago. Stray natives were pressed into your service, and of course looked for remuneration for their work. Woe betide the unfortunate married officer moving in that direction, and possessed of heavy baggage he is anxious to send on before, or leave for future despatch. This line of railway is much too independent to undertake any responsibility, or afford any assistance to such a traveller. You may certainly deposit your property in the luggage-shed, and receive promise of immediate passage for it. The realisation of such a comfort is mythological; and a document, which is a compulsory agreement, and must be signed by you before the company will receive your goods, removes all remonstrance, though it cannot add any solace to your troubled mind. What think our English friends of such a proceeding?

*"Memorandum of Agreement between _____ of _____, and
the _____ and the _____ Railway.*

"I, _____ of _____, hereby undertake to release and absolve the _____ Railway Company from all and any responsibilities, arising from any cause whatever, if they will undertake to convey my baggage from _____ to _____. I hereby further undertake to unload the same at _____, when required to do so, and in the event of my not complying with a request so to do, I agree to pay the sum of _____ rupees, five per day, for every waggon or vehicle occupied by me."

"Take care of No. 1!" should be the motto of that company, without doubt.

The railway companies in India are not, however, unmindful as a rule of the interests of their supporters and passengers merely, they show much carelessness as regards the welfare of their own servants; and, added to the evil effects of climate, are the difficulties of obtaining medical advice and suitable assistance in cases of sickness and danger. About forty miles had been traversed on this my first journey in India, when the European guard came to the carriage in which I was seated, and thus spoke—

“Are you a medical man, sir, for I see your luggage is marked ‘doctor?’”

“Yes,” was my reply.

“Oh, sir, would you be so kind as to look at one of our engine-drivers, who is dying, I am afraid?”

“Certainly; but where is he?” naturally I inquired.

“He is up the line, sir; we’ll stop the train when we come to the place; it won’t detain you a moment.”

“Up the line,” thought I; “what can he want there if he is so ill?” Another hour of progress, another twenty miles into the jungle, so much nearer the hot winds, and the fever-stricken districts, so much farther from home, from civilisation, from comfort.

“Up the line” we went, and at last we stopped in the centre of an uncultivated country, fully thirty miles from a town, or a white face, and the guard aroused me from my meditations by saying, “He’s lying in this hut, sir—I hope he’s alive.” Across some waste ground and we reached the spot, and knocked at the hut door. A slight noise inside relieved our anxiety somewhat, and as the door opened we could see a single figure sitting by a heap of clothes on a native bedstead or charpoy.

“Where’s Macdonald? This gentleman is a doctor,” said our friend the guard.

With significant gestures the native woman rose and pointed to the bed.

“Make plenty bobbery, sahib,” she said, as she made me understand the poor fellow was delirious. A glance, and I saw at once that remittent or “jungle” fever had got a victim. There lay a fine fellow with glazed eye, dry brown lips, and burning skin, shouting periodically, and restlessly tossing his aching head about, unconscious of anyone’s presence.

“He’s worse than he was, sir, on our last journey yesterday,” said the guard. “He knew me then, sir.”

I fortunately had with me some brandy and a small quantity of quinine, and mixing a very large dose of the latter with a fair quantity of the former, I raised his head and gave it him. With what eagerness did he swallow that draught! Unconscious as he

was, the parched tongue relished that moisture, and failing nature seemed roused to one more effort.

I left my small store of medicine in that hut, and giving as good instructions as I could to his solitary companion, we returned to the train. As I viewed that proof of the progress of civilisation, I could not but think with deep regret, that thirty miles from fellow Europeans, alone in the jungle, without medicine, comforts, or necessary assistance, nursed by strangers, and supplied merely with what could be procured from a neighbouring village or "gaum," there lay that poor Scotchman, the servant of one of the largest railway companies in India. Surely such an example should lead to the establishment of district dispensaries, and the employment of suitable medical assistance in connection with Indian railways and other large undertakings.

I met Macdonald again, after a lapse of two years. He was then well and hearty, and overwhelmed with gratitude for that visit which, under providence, we could but acknowledge had saved his life in the hut in the jungle.

At the time I went up country, the railway journey was performed in two distinct portions; a range of mountains or *ghaut* interfering with a continued course. Engineering skill and English energy have overcome that difficulty now, and railways go zig-zag to the summit, and descend on the other side, with perfect safety and great advantage to commerce and individuals. Palkee travelling will soon be a curiosity in India, I fancy. It is, however, very comfortable, if properly arranged, while it can become most miserable and disagreeable if badly carried out.

About twelve o'clock at night I arrived at the *foot* of the ghaut I had to ascend, and having provided myself with a ticket beforehand, I expected to meet with but little difficulty in obtaining a palanquin. Being, however, somewhat corpulent, perhaps I aroused in the minds of the bearers some misgivings as to the ease of the task they were about to undertake, and it was not until some authority was exercised that I could obtain the necessary number of bearers. I lay in the palkee some time, waiting for the start, and was highly amused at the noise, shouting, and curious effect produced by the bright flashes of the torch one of the number carried: in one hand he held the torch, and in the other a vessel of oil to replenish the flame. The palkee is an oblong box of either wood or canvas stretched over a wooden frame, open at the sides. A rest is placed for your feet, and a sloping board, cushioned or not, and capable of adjustment, receives your back and head. A small, round bolster is often provided for placing under your knees, which arrangement adds much to your comfort.

Let all novices beware of entering a palkee while supported

by the bearers. It is a feat only to be accomplished by practice, and rare fun can be obtained through the efforts of the new arrival. "In at one side and out at the other" is the general result of such rash endeavours, and it would not be a bad plan to practice privately with a hammock or swing bedstead, before you venture upon a public exhibition of your gymnastic powers. Comfortably seated, the pole creaked as I was raised from the ground, and the peculiar swing told that we were moving. Palkee bearers walk unevenly, and thus two are always in step at opposite sides; a level is thus obtained, and the movement is reduced to its minimum. It has been recommended lately that men should be taught thus to carry wounded men on a stretcher. The air got cooler and cooler as we ascended the road, and passing occasionally a fellow-traveller, or catching a glimpse of the valley beneath, as the moon shone out brightly, enlivened our journey considerably. The bearers are very lively fellows, and talk incessantly; this is not very soothing, but their monotonous song, which they indulge in as they come to the more difficult parts of the road, has had that effect on me, and I have had many a good sleep whilst thus travelling. We changed bearers half-way up the ghaut, and the scene of this halting-place was very picturesque. A good view of the country was to be seen below, with the numerous small villages, like spots on a map, and the rivers, not very full at this season, like silver threads spread indiscriminately about. Around you sat a noisy, indescribable lot of men and women. Some completely muffled in cloths, without any portion visible—all natives sleep with their heads covered up—others smoking a pipe in common round a few sticks burning as a fire. The pipe consists generally of a simple clay bowl, and each one forms the stem out of his hand, drawing the smoke through it, and passing on the bowl to his friend and neighbour; whilst others were paying their devotions to a scarlet-painted idol, remarkable for its ugliness, and feared rather than worshipped by its wretched votaries.

On again, the air getting colder rapidly, and the scenery becoming more and more grand. The day broke just before we arrived at the station, where the railway again commences. And such sights are indeed worth a journey. The clear atmosphere and perfect stillness of nature as the sun appears above the horizon, and the gradual warmth and life that seem to be imparted to every object as its golden rays touch upon them, until at last, amidst the warbling of birds, the buzz of the insect world, and the shaking of the leaves above and around you, it streams into your face, rousing you to another day, and calling you to recognise the reality of your existence, and the important responsibility and duty which lies before you.

As the indolent native unrolls himself, and waking gradually, stretches out his arms as if in search of more sleep, you feel that if any greater energy has been given to you, with it also has come that moral obligation that the time is not to be misspent, and that a stricter investigation will be made into your conduct and actions of life.

And now another journey by railway, during which no incident of interest occurred, performed during the day, and therefore surrounded by the discomforts of the hot wind, dry and scorching, and the glare of a tropical sun. About six o'clock in the evening we reached the end of the railway line, and though one or two of the more favoured travellers were permitted to extend their journey on the "contractor's" engine, I preferred remaining the night in a neighbouring house, kindly placed at my disposal by a friend, and continuing my travels by bullock-cart on the morrow. What a luxurious bed and glorious bath that appeared to me on that evening—hot, dusty, and sleepy as I was!

To get sufficient carriage for myself and my kit was not an easy matter in that jungle, and I had to be satisfied with three carts without springs, drawn each by two bullocks, that were not of the swiftest sort, and that, accustomed to one jog-trot pace, never succeeded in getting over more than two miles in an hour. This was also merely the result of continued goading, shouting, and tail twisting, by an equally indolent creature, who, more asleep than awake, supported himself on the pole with his feet in sufficiently close proximity to the unfortunate cattle to act as spurs and general irritators. Picking the lightest of these primitive carriages I managed by large quantities of hay, my own bed, and carriage-rugs, which had followed me fortunately from Bombay, to make a tolerably easy resting-place. A rush matting, fastened over wooden hoops, sheltered me from the sun in the morning and the dew at night, and a revolver and large hunting-knife showed to the natives around me that although ignorant of their language I was conversant with their dishonesty and general bad character. The jolting was a novel sensation, and it was a long time before I became accustomed to the repeated shocks to my nervous system and prominent corporeal developments, that were such constant accompaniments of that twelve miles. The carts are made all of one size, and tracks necessarily result from the constant traffic. Woe betide the wretched cart that gets out of the accustomed groove along those country roads. Should the bullocks sleep, or, what is more certainly the case, should the driver, or *gharry wallah*, forget his existence, one wheel may be at an altitude of a couple of feet, and the other in the groove at that depth, thus endangering the safety of the wretched occupants of the waggon. What matter!—a twist of the

tail of the offending bullock, a sharp pull at the cord running round his horns and through his nose, or a determined kick from the roused Jehu, and back goes the displaced wheel with a thud and jerk that disturbs anyone's equilibrium, and barely escapes fracturing a bone. There is, however, a good deal of amusement at times in thus slowly meandering along. You have novel scenery, time for reflection, and ample opportunity for testing your own resources. Travelling by night has also its excitements, and one or two fell to my lot.

After getting over forty miles or thereabouts, I became accustomed to the gyrations and antics of my primitive vehicle, and relapsed, in company with the bullocks and their proprietors, into a semi-somnolent condition. My thoughts had carried me back to England and my friends, and I was far from recognising my lonely and unprotected position, when I was aroused and considerably alarmed by a shriek from the *gharry wallah*. A moment, and we were going, at a greatly increased speed, at right angles to the road, over the roots and stones, now on one wheel and now on both, while the terrified animals, with tails erect and snorting nostrils, seemed completely beside themselves. "*Sahib! Sahib! burra bagh hai!*" ("Sir! Sir! there's a large tiger!") shouted the driver of the bullock-cart, and, in the distance, the scream was repeated by the others and my servant. I looked in vain for the glaring eye, and listened fruitlessly for the expected growl, whilst, with revolver and knife instinctively clutched, I began to realise my position. What was to be done? If the bullocks were unyoked they would certainly rush away, and attract the beast after them, but then my progression would cease. Should it so happen that the brute was near us, we might disturb him by moving further, or perchance in the dark be positively approaching him. Perfect quiet seemed the best line of conduct; and so, for some short time, we remained still, the bullocks trembling pitiably, but not more so than the writer of this sketch. If moments can be prolonged into hours, they were on that night. Can a shadow seem a reality? every rustle a distinct noise? and a whisper sound like a shout? Yes, under such circumstances, all this can be realised, and I pledge my word they were. Courage and confidence gradually returned, however, and as the expected evil is postponed, so does it lose its existence and probability.

Scepticism naturally follows a non-realisation of an idea, and the first impulse is to ridicule the thought of fear. "Bosh! tiger indeed, what a fool the man must be to say such a thing—I knew there was none!" Such feelings ran through my brain, though; since that time, I have seen more of the country, and firmly believe now that I had a very narrow escape from an early introduction to

that justly dreaded monarch of the jungle. With the greatest difficulty, we got the bullocks back into the road, and, covered with foam and still trembling with fear, they crawled along for some considerable distance, before they had recovered their sense of safety. The bullock can tell the presence of a tiger by some extraordinary and certain means, whether by smell or sight I cannot say; instinct, however, is rarely wrong, and whether the tiger had just crossed the path, leaving signs of his passage, or lay in ambush at the road side, is not very material—he was not far from us when those animals bolted.

Right gladly did I welcome daylight, and thankfully saw in the hazy distance the outline of some native habitation. After that fright, I determined on remaining some time near the village, and with my courier-bag, I sauntered amongst the villagers in search of a cool shelter, and some refreshment, feeling that personally I was more secure away from those tempting morsels to a tiger's appetite. I found that my presence was not a welcome one to the natives of Borawul, and from no one could I get either food or assistance. Coercion was useless, for I had no means of supporting it, and remembering that kindness more frequently succeeds than authority, I ventured to essay an act of friendship. Through my servant I got an interview with the *patel*, or head man of the village, and telling him I was a doctor, suggested an interchange of civilities. This offer had a surprising effect. A troop of sick, deformed, and wretchedly miserable people, were collected together, and into their circumstances I made a cursory examination and inquiry. Fortunately my friend of the railway had recommended my taking with me some quinine, a few Seidlitz powders, and some simple drugs, and these were, indeed, valuable adjuncts to my office of physician in ordinary. What would the council of the College of Surgeons, or the dons of the profession, think of the man who, in a native *serai*, sitting on a mud floor, could occupy his time by dispensing powders in small pieces of the *Times* newspaper? Should his name be erased from the Register? Has he been guilty of conduct calculated to bring his profession into discredit? However that may be decided, one thing is certain—such powders were dispensed and taken, and produced for the prescriber any quantity of milk, fowls, and *chupatties*, or native bread.

Having replenished my commissariat, and I think fairly so, I left the same evening, but not without fully proving that "a sprat may catch a herring," as the proverb has it. That evening was deliciously cool, and the bullocks seemed to go more smoothly after their rest. As the sun went down, and the twilight gradually lost itself in night, so did I feel myself becoming more and more drowsy, and a sound sleep of some hours' duration passed away the time

until we reached the fortified city of Booranpore. Entering through an old gateway, evidently considered as an insurmountable obstacle to the ingress of any hostile visitors by the architects of years gone by, but now of no earthly use as defence, and very much in the way of traffic, we passed in single file down the narrow and dirty streets of this once-famed city, rousing on our way the sleeping native on his ledge outside the house-door, and here and there disturbing a troop of the village dog or *pariah*, who greeted us with that customary howl that sounds so piteously in the silent night, and so unharmoniously informs the inhabitants of some living creature being about. No one but those who have been in India can realise the prolonged melancholy note that constitutes the bark of this jungle cur; a cross between a worn-out fox-hound and a jackall, describing it but imperfectly. To enjoy this to perfection, however, you must go into a purely native town, where these animals are allowed to go in myriads, and where, thoroughly neglected, they grow apace like weeds, and half-starved, diseased, and wretched, lie in every nook and crevice—some dying, and others, as it were, performing a requiem for their speedy repose.

We encamped at one o'clock on a green sward opposite the temple, which in the dim light was most imposing, and stood out from the surrounding huts in gigantic proportions. A short rest, a cup of tea made gipsy fashion by my servant, and on we went again through more of the narrow streets rendered highly odoriferous but immensely unhealthy by the unclean habits of the people, and entire absence of sanitary regulations, until we reached another cumbrous structure which this time stopped our progress, being shut and guarded by natives who had to be aroused, no easy matter, best accomplished by powerful chastisement with whip or boot. The creak of the rusty hinge and the shattered stone work around the archway gave one no very pleasant feeling of security, and it was with great satisfaction I found myself safely through the gate, and ascending a steep defile on to an open plain which commanded this citadel in a very complete manner. We had jogged on some distance when the other excitement of night travelling in India occurred. It was this. The three carts composing my calvalcade were journeying in single file about fifty yards apart. I was sleeping as well as I could in the first, and the second contained my heavy luggage, whilst the remainder of my kit was deposited in the third cart, and on the top of the boxes lay my servant, rolled in his "kupra" (cloth), and heedless of everything. I was awoke suddenly by loud cries behind me, and on rising up could see a number of figures surrounding the second and third carts, and my servant running towards me breathless and pale with excitement. A few words and signs, and I understood that these men had

stopped the carts, and after beating the drivers, were preparing to unload my boxes and traps generally. I rushed back in company again with my revolver and trusty hunting-knife, certain of some game this time; and to the astonishment of the natives, I fired one barrel of the pistol! but carefully into the air. This seemed to paralyse them for a time, and with much bravado I inquired who and what they were. The spokesman of the party replied, "they were ordered to stop all carts coming that way, as they were sepoys in the police." The absurdity was plainly seen, and the real nature of the ruffian's character as clearly visible. I asked this man,—“Have you any staff, clothes, or document to prove you are authorised to act as you are doing?” He hesitated, and said something to his three comrades; but perceiving them moving round me, I wasted no words or time on further conversation. With all my might I struck the first man between the eyes, and had the supreme satisfaction of seeing him fall to the ground. Turning rapidly round, I found the other men rushing on to me, and fortunately received another of them much in the same manner, firing another barrel of my revolver. He did not fall, but with a shout he took to his heels as fast as ever he could, followed by his companions, and they were soon lost in the darkness. Now, but not till now did the gharrymen and my servant shew themselves; and blustering about would have had me believe they had anxiously looked after my interests, and behaved with an heroism perfectly startling. I knew enough of native courage, however, to feel certain that they had religiously kept out of the way, and that the fugitives were safely defeated. One man was left, and to him my attentions were therefore directed. He was securely bound with some cords, and placing him on the top of the second cart, I gave my servant strict orders to sit beside me, and warn me of the slightest attempt at escape. We travelled slowly on to the next village; but as this event had thoroughly aroused me—and I always have been taught, “discretion is the better part of valour”—I walked most of the distance. Arrived at the place, I had an interview with the *Patel*, and then heard that no police were about on that road; that the prisoner I held was not known in that neighbourhood, and that more than one traveller had been robbed within a very short period. I determined, therefore, on taking with me my captive until I reached an English settlement, some twenty miles further on. We proceeded on our way; but when day broke, and we had reached our destination, my bird had flown; the cords were there, knotted as I had tied them, but no human form was bound by them; and my servant was strong in his asseverations that no one was seen escaping; in fact, he would have led me to believe that I had been dreaming; that the Daven-

port brothers were really true in their performances; that I had bound a spirit,—anything but the truth, which was, that I had fortunately escaped from a band of villains bent on plunder; and that—whether from fright or bribery, I know not—he had assisted, or at least permitted—justice to be robbed of a very worthy object, a highway robber.

The arrival at an English station was a great relief to my feelings, and the knowledge that I could be understood, and my wants supplied—a great satisfaction, after my five days in the jungle. What was my astonishment, however, on ascending the hill to the travellers' bungalow at Asseerghur, to find an English waggonette and pair of fine horses standing at the door, as if that outlandish place had been Belgravia. I was not long kept in suspense as to the ownership, for a brother officer and his wife made their appearance, and insisted on my joining their party for the remainder of my journey up country. A waggonette against a jolting country cart was too much for me, and I eagerly accepted their generous and hospitable offer. I never met with greater kindness, and I entertain a very vivid, and, I am sure, grateful remembrance of my trip in 1862 with Dr. Sanderson and his good lady.

Travelling by easy stages, and relieving the monotony of each day's journey by excursions after game, which was very plentiful all along our line of march, we were exceedingly merry. We managed, on more than one occasion, thanks to the correct aim of our sportsmen, to have our venison, and the commissariat of my friend even went so far as champagne to accompany the delicacies.

We crossed the Nerbudda without any mishap, although it was necessary to employ the large boat, in consequence of an increase in the flow of water. The temples that are so thickly scattered along the brink of this sacred stream, point out how much the Hindoos value the water; and although we did not receive any spiritual improvement from our acquaintance with it, we found it both sanitarily and sensibly advantageous.

Space forbids my dilating, at this time, on many points of interest that presented themselves whilst I travelled in this more speedy and luxurious manner, and I must therefore defer any notes on my first acquaintance with the vulture and his favourite repast a dead camel—with the gaudy peacock proudly asserting his sole right to the neighbouring plantation; or the mad jackal, that so often reappeared, and startled our nervous apprehensions.

Bulwara was reached shortly after our visit to the Burwai Iron Works, (an undertaking that to any ordinary observer would seem a certain success, but has proved itself far from a satisfactory investment for capital), and the view from the traveller's bungalow at

this spot, is really charming. A lake of considerable extent at the foot of the hill on which the resting-place has been built, reflects the golden rays of the sunset in brightest gleams, while the forest around, and the darker background of hills and mountains, throw out into prominence every feature, and completes a panorama of the most chaste description. Two dwarfs, acting as servants at the bungalow, amused us immensely with their quaint conduct, no less than by their startling anecdotes of tigers and other wild animals said to reside in the immediate neighbourhood.

None of these terrors disturbed our peace however, but here it was that I became acquainted with almost an equally formidable foe—which was fever. Never can I forget the throbbing temples, splitting headache, and burning thirst, that ushered in the following morning. Never did I imagine I could realise so thoroughly the comforts of kind attention and gentle words, and never did my heart yearn so towards the friendless and forsaken. The poor Scotchman “up the line,” came vividly before me, and as we were obliged to continue our journey, the sun, the road, the simplest movement, seemed so to aggravate my misery, that I would willingly have been left behind, nay, anything for quiet and relief. It is a most fortunate thing that human nature is so wonderfully elastic, and man’s spirits are so unquenchable. A cheering word and sympathetic smile are capital medicines, and rest is Nature’s true physic. I do not think this is sufficiently realised. Meddlesome doctors are a mistake, and I really believe we should rather seek to learn nature’s intentions, and help her endeavours, than imagine or attempt to show any independent feeling or action. Illness is in most cases merely the result of a disregard, often wilful, of the simple rules of healthy existence—and a cessation of such transgression is followed by recovery.

We had not by this time very far to go, and, in a few hours, I found myself at my destination, although too unwell to be moved from the house where we first stopped on entering the cantonment. My arrival was soon announced however, and before long, numbers of my future brother officers gathered round me, each anxious to assist in comforting me, and alleviating my trouble. A few days saw me restored to health, and able to mix with those who had so generously welcomed the new arrival, and had so cheered me up. Often since that time have I thought of the day I joined my regiment.

J. J. P.

A LIFE'S MYSTERY

BY CLINTON HOPE.

CHAPTER L.

LILIAS'S CONFESSION.

“WHAT I am commencing to write, the secret of which I believed would perish with me, will not be seen by you, my dear and generous husband, until I am removed alike from your fond care and the machinations of my enemy. You may bear the grief of my loss, but you could not support the ignominy that awaits me here. It is in mercy to you I take my life. You will not be wholly unprepared for the acknowledgment, that this paper recounts deeds of guilt as well as mystery; and in the task of unfolding them, I must strive to lose my identity, and relate events with the calmness of an historian. It must be my difficult task to forget that I am addressing my husband, whom I have wronged so fearfully, yet love so much. It is not with the vain thought of justifying myself that I write this: justification for my crimes is, I know, impossible; but you who have so trusted me, whose faith waned not when the most cruel charges were whispered against me, you it is right should know my story, divested of prejudice, and unvarnished by false representations. It would be impious to say aught which could be construed into blame of my dear father, whose love for me was his greatest delight, and which proved at length a terrible curse. But I cannot help thinking that my life might have been different if, in my childhood, I had not been allowed such complete power over my own actions, and over those also by whom I was surrounded. My every whim was indulged as scrupulously as if my future well-being depended upon the fulfilment of the caprices which followed quickly one after the other, becoming more extravagant as my age advanced. I was given to understand by my nurse that the world, and all it contained, was made subservient to my use, or abuse, just as I willed it; and I was not likely to contradict so flattering a theory, even had I perceived its fallacy. Thus I grew up with the notion that I was to be exempt from all cares and disappointments which assail other people—that in my favour a particular dispensation of good had been effected. I was consequently impatient of the smallest vexation, and could ill brook the trials I had been taught to consider would never fall to my lot. I do not believe I was ever tyrannical, and certainly I was not unfeeling. The pain of others affected me deeply, so that I always strove to my

utmost to alleviate it; and as the only miseries I ever witnessed were the melancholy of my father, or the occasional sickness of Sarah King, I was always successful in my efforts, if not to banish, at least to mitigate them by my endearments.

In addition to the belief I have just cited, that sickness and sorrow were to be kept at a distance from me, I began, from seeing that I was all important at home, and from being so much caressed and noticed, to think myself of great account: thus was encouraged a notion more dangerous to my future peace than vanity, that it was impossible for me to be other than beloved. While I remained at Sedgley this pleasing fancy did me no harm, but when I left my father to associate with strangers it was productive of much uneasiness to me, for though I was treated quite kindly there was an utter absence of affection in the attentions I received.

“The instalment at Blackheath school was a great epoch in my life. Amongst my new companions, I was not long in discovering that the world, even the school-girl's world, was very different from what I had thought it; continual deceits first shocked, and finally hardened me. Throughout my childhood I had been guided solely by the actions of those around me. I had no principles, no law of right or wrong, and it was scarcely likely that in a family composed of hypocritical governesses, negligent teachers, and thoughtless, sometimes evilly-disposed girls, I should be enabled to correct my former errors of opinion, and establish new and just ones. My faith in the perfect goodness of women was shaken; but this did not uproot my trust in the opposite sex, but one man, my father, being familiar to me. With what a yearning did I long for someone to love, and who would love me! I had my nurse near, and received frequent letters from home filled with tender assurances, still this was not sufficient; a painful void was in my heart, a constant craving for affection accompanied me in the solitude I ever sought after. In my morbid melancholy I tried to single out a being to whom my thoughts might always turn for consolation, one whom I could clothe with every imaginable perfection; but neither my father nor my nurse would serve for this purpose; my love for them was altogether different from that I felt within me, waiting for a fitting object upon whose head I might pour out the fond hoardings of my soul.

“When I was busy, trying to find some one suitable to be invested with all possible and impossible graces, there is great probability I should have lighted upon my old playmate, Owen Arnold, had not an event here taken place to put to flight the germination of such folly. What I refer to was the establishment of Ada Hartop at the Misses Majendie. She was then more than sixteen and I not quite fifteen, but I was older in thought than many of my com-

panions (with few exceptions my seniors), and felt myself entirely on a level with Ada, who, in truth, always seemed to place me above her. A violent attachment on both sides succeeded the first favourable impression. For months nothing but Ada's society could make me happy, a new object for existence seemed given me in her regard. But if my attachment for her was great, it fell far short of the romantic devotion she experienced for me. She cared for no one else, and was as completely enthralled as if I had bewitched her. I constituted her very speedily the confidant of all my schemes, the sharer of all my fanciful troubles, as she was of my walks and recreations. Oh, that I had never been other in action or thought, than I might without shame have confessed myself to her pure heart! Would that I could find time to delay the writing of what follows, but it cannot be, my pen must not stop till the sum of my concealment has been detailed. Guilt-stained or sinless, joyous or wretched, the hidden occurrences of my life are to be written; I must show myself no pity. Now and then I would ask Miss Magendie's permission to go to London for a day, of course accompanied by a teacher, and generally Ada would find a pressing necessity to match some ribbon or lace, in order to obtain leave to share my holiday. One day it happened that directly we reached the City, the teacher was met by a friend with the news that her mother, living in Camden Town, was in a dying state. The poor creature hesitated long about leaving us, and would not, I believe, at last, despite her agonised wish to go to her mother, have been satisfied without seeing us safely lodged within the school walls again, had I not assured her that I would take upon myself the responsibility, and inform the Misses Magendie, that I had obliged her to the step. For a minute or two after we had seen the trembling Miss Green driven away, we felt the saddening influence of her distress, but soon the novelty of our position claimed our undivided attention, and whilst sincerely regretting the cause which had led to our being thus left to ourselves, we rejoiced in the sweet sensation of liberty. Delightfully self-important we became as we strolled through the Pantheon, and in and out of the gay shops in Oxford-street, buying useless and expensive articles, for which there was no one to reprove us. We went to an hotel and had lunch, for the mere gratification of ordering it, and with a growing sense of dignity finally turned our steps to the railway-station. Ada, in too hastily entering the carriage, let her foot slip, and might have been cast under the wheels but for the interposition of a gentleman standing near, who gave his assistance before I could stretch out my hand to grasp hers. She was a little frightened, and her ankle was slightly wrenched, but she smiled with her old gaiety as she thanked the stranger. As the train was

about moving we got in, the gentleman following, when for the first time I looked fully at him. To say that he was handsome would be to convey a very poor idea of his personal attractions. There was, besides, a candour, an earnestness in his ever-varying expression, which made him irresistibly pleasing, and his manners were really perfect. The ice broken, we talked throughout the ten-minutes journey, Ada even relating to him the occasion of our travelling alone. When the train stopped he helped her to alight, for she still suffered slightly from her stumble, afterwards presenting his hand to me, and in so doing our eyes met, when I was annoyed to find myself blushing. I had stored in my mind a hundred far-fetched theories about sympathetic hearts and kindred fates, thinking upon some expected occasion I might meet with the man whom I was destined to love, and at the faint contact of his fingers, the exchange of a single glance, came trooping these mischievous notions to set my pulse beating faster and my cheeks burning.

“He wanted to procure us a car on Ada’s account, but she would not hear of it, declaring it would pain her more to step in and out than to walk; but as on the first essay, she found the sprain become more troublesome, she accepted the support of his arm on the one side and mine on the other; in which manner we proceeded to Clardon House. We were obliged almost to creep along, and during the time talked incessantly; our new friend’s remarks being addressed chiefly to me, and I thought he seemed more eager for my responses. Arrived at the school-gates, Ada reiterated her thanks, with frank heedlessness holding out her hand, and, as it would appear singular for me not to do so too, I followed her example. There was a deference in his behaviour as flattering as it was kind, which, added to the charm of his conversation and the graces of his person, could not do other than impress us favourably. Ada, indeed, showered endless eulogies upon him, and openly wondered that I did not express equal admiration; but though I more than participated in her feelings, by an instinct of contradiction, common in such cases, I would underate his fascinations, and scoff at her declaration that he agreed precisely with my oft-detailed idea of what a man should be. My long-buried romance was aroused, and once more I sighed for a love I did not possess. Ada began to appear not altogether what I required in a friend; and I found myself wishing every day more fervently for another opportunity of meeting the stranger. In about a week’s time I was gratified, as far, at least, as vision went. I saw him enter the residence of a gentleman near to the college, and a few days later encountered him leaving the same house. He was in profound thought, and I might, by crossing the road, have escaped his observation. I had never, however, been remarkable for

making any sacrifice I deemed not absolutely called for, and was unwilling in this instance to begin the attempt. Feeling at the same time I was doing wrong, I kept to the path, when, on coming close up to him, he raised his eyes and, with a pleased smile of recognition, bowed. He naturally begged to inquire after my friend, and to avoid the awkwardness of standing, we walked on together while I replied. We could not have conversed less than half-an-hour, and never had time passed so swiftly and so happily ; but no sooner was I alone, than I was beset by scruples as to the strict propriety of my conduct. For the first time in my life I listened to, and obeyed a voice which was not that of *will*, in rigorously confining my walks to those times when I was least likely to meet the object of my too frequent thoughts ; and, almost determined, if chance threw him in my way, to deny myself the repetition of a joy for which conscience had so upbraided me. Almost, I say ; alas ! there is always a drawback to our good resolves ; and against the magic of his accents, of what strength were my self-upbraidings and wise preparations ?

“ Meanwhile, Ada’s admiration, which had gradually faded, was completely gone ; she had even ceased to mention the event which for a few days had supplied a topic for private conversation to me singularly delightful. You can imagine what were the consequences of an infatuation so complete. After another accidental interview I ceased to think it right to avoid him ; and by choosing certain hours for my visits to my nurse, insured a meeting. I knew he came purposely to see me, even before he confessed so much ; and this conviction was one of rapture. By a chance turn of our conversation upon one occasion, I learned for the first time (he being somewhat reticent of his affairs) that he was in Parliament ; and I used afterwards to ask Sarah regularly to procure me the daily papers, that I might read his speeches. From the remarks I made to him concerning them, he was induced to show me a volume of his poems, observing that I might be better pleased with them than dry debates. It wanted but this discovery of his genius to exalt my admiration to worship, for amidst my dreams of self-achievement, the wild wish to become enthroned in the heart of one intellectually great, had shone forth pre-eminent. Beauty always won my love ; talent incited me to adoration.

“ My life about this time was a strange blending of ecstasy and pain ; a vision whose shiftings from one extreme to another were continual. Ada, I could perceive, felt acutely the reserve in my manner towards her, though unsuspecting of its cause, and it was for her I chiefly sorrowed ; but still, despite my concern on her account and the growing fear of discovery, I dwelt mostly under a spell of enchantment. The yearning of the last year was satisfied ;

I loved and was beloved. Not that I had been told so; the glance of my admirer's eyes, the modulation of his voice, the very touch of his hand, all had assured me of this, quite as fully as any open avowal. Finally that came, and the confession I received in words. He told me that I was necessary to his existence, and I eagerly believed what was more welcome than all the world to me. In token of my promised faith I gave him a ring, receiving one in exchange, which he said had been in his family very many years, and was so prized by him that to none but me could he have given it.

"My husband, you have seen it. It was the sight of it, I am well aware, that excited in you additional suspicions of my truth, and now you know beyond doubt the name of the giver. You have acknowledged his resistless sway over men's minds, and can you wonder at the extent of his influence over a young and romantic girl?

"A month past, during which we met daily—for I was allowed to go out when I pleased, under the pretext of visiting Sarah King—and also corresponded, but neither in our conversations nor in his letters did he speak of marriage. This was not remarked by me then, and had it been I should have experienced neither surprise nor alarm; my confidence, like my love, was unbounded. It was a wild ungovernable passion I felt for him: something too exaggerated to be termed love, which is often calm and holy, whereas my devotion carried all other feelings in its mad course, uprooted every contrary desire or thought by the force of its unchecked flow. Heaven knows, that if this intense fondness was a sin, I bought the pleasure of it at an awful price, the price of a life's peace.

"It was in May of 1853, that I consented to the fault from which my after-guilt all sprung. Norman, as I have stated, had not once alluded to marriage; but one day he suddenly asked me to promise that I would marry him in secret. I was alarmed, confounded, this was what I had never dreamt of. If my fancy had wandered at all, from the present to the future, it was to picture to myself a union at which my father should himself bestow my hand upon my lover. I could not bring myself to take so important a step without his consent, and firmly refused to entertain the idea.

"Norman did not interrupt me, but when I had finished speaking expressed his fear that my father would not sanction my marriage on account of my youth, and that if I persisted in my wish to consult him, we should be forced to part.

This completely silenced me; there was truly great doubt of my papa's consent, and as I felt to separate myself from Norman would be perfectly out of my power, I yielded to his solicitation.

My soul was painfully perturbed after that interview, for I could

no longer delude myself with the supposition that my father would easily be reconciled to my conduct. Instinctively I felt that he must be both very grieved and very angry when he learned all, yet I could not tear my soul from its thralldom.

“Norman had to make arrangements for our marriage, and I could not see him till the day before the one appointed for it; I therefore spent the hours of recreation with my nurse, whom I had much neglected of late. Until I told her that evening, she knew nothing of my attachment, and I was much startled by the effect my confession had upon her. She sued, on her knees, that I would not do anything without my father’s sanction; but I was made inexorable to her prayers by the promise I had given my lover. Seeing that she could not change my resolve, the faithful woman tried to re-assure me with hopes of all ending well, and offered her humble home, as an asylum, until I communicated the fact of my marriage to my father. This offer I accepted, knowing that, in all minor points, Norman’s will would not be in opposition to my own; and, in a state of painful foreboding, I returned to Clardon House, to be received with severe reproaches from Ada Hartop, for my inattention to her. The poor girl had borne her grief well, making complaints of my altered behaviour only when she could smother her distress no longer. It was with justice she accused me of being changed; none was so conscious as I of the wonderful difference which had been effected in me during the last few months. I had lost my usual buoyancy of spirits, and a prophetic dread ever hovered about me; without, however, lessening one iota of Norman’s ascendancy. Had I been convinced that he was leading me to destruction, still I think I should have followed him, so absolute was the dominion passion exercised over my reason. Ada had not, for a very long time, alluded to our first meeting with Norman; but upon that night she accused me, in disguised language, of having given to him—a stranger—the affection that had once been hers; for it is needless to observe that I had communicated to her no hint of our acquaintance, feeling, from the first, it must be concealed. The next day was one of exceeding uneasiness—it was the last in which I had the right left to act for myself; to-morrow, the duty I should owe my husband would be paramount to that now due to my father. I had no thought that Norman’s love would ever cool, or that I should find him other than my fancy, more than my experience, had drawn him. My anxieties were not upon his account, but were fixed wholly upon my father, whose trust in my obedience I had so ill requited.

“When we met in the evening, Norman’s spirits, like my own, were clouded, and, ascribing it to reflections similar to those which had excited my sadness, I brought forward, as a means of cheering

him, every instance of my father's tenderness, in support of my hope that he would forgive us. Often before had I been distressed by observing that, in the midst of our liveliest conversations, he would be assailed by fits of sadness, which became the more bitter if I inquired their origin, or aimed, by an exhibition of sympathy, to soothe them. The secret of these sudden moods of depression has been made clear to me since.

"Agitation kept me sleepless nearly the whole night, for in my heart I abhorred mysteries; and tremblingly, as soon as morning broke, I left the school, without alarming any of the inmates. My escape was made from the garden, on one side of which was a low wall, skirting the road. It must have been in mounting the wall that I lost Norman's ring.

"This history of unruly passion must be painful for you to read—and, oh, how torturing it is for me to write! but, as a slight atonement, it is due that, so long as my faltering hand can trace the words, and my distracted brain dictate, I should not pause.

"The arrangement to live with Sarah King, until some permanent one was arrived at, pleased Norman; and when the solemn compact was cemented, and with joined hands we had been pronounced man and wife, we returned from London to Blackheath. During the remainder of the day, I could dwell on nothing but the rapturous belief that we should never more be parted: no troublesome misgivings came to ruffle my soul's harmony. That never-to-be-forgotten day stands alone in my remembrance as perfectly blessed! It was the sunshine which precedes the hurricane—the joy the angels felt before being hurled from heaven to hell! My father came to Sarah King the following morning, almost wild with grief at my elopement. I was within the sound of his voice—saw that dear being upon whose face I had caused to appear an expression of despair! How even the promise I had given Norman—never, under any circumstances, to betray our marriage—had power to prevent me throwing myself at my father's feet, and imploring his forgiveness, I cannot to this day explain. It made me nearly frantic to hear of his grief, knowing that I was its cause. Already had my punishment commenced. Ah, me! how brief a respite from retribution does ill-doing afford!

"From that hour I wearied my husband with importunities that he would allow me to write to my father, but he made every excuse, and at length reproached me with want of affection for him. This was too severe when I had sacrificed so much for his sake; and in an agony of repentance, for what I persuaded myself was an injustice, I protested I would leave everything to his judgment, and never more harbour a wish displeasing to him. He seemed gratified with this proof of confidence, and tried me most sorely by proposing that

we should leave England. The motive for this request, to remove me for ever from my home, and secure to himself my entire regard and the guidance of my every action, seemed cruel indeed; and I replied in language of indignation. I expected, when I recovered my self-command, that he would be offended, but he only tried to soften my irritation, when, remembering my recent promises of submission, I was ashamed of my violence, and only restrained from consenting to his wishes by the recollection of my father. Norman appeared to think that his love was sufficient to satisfy my every want, that I could know of my father's misery and be at peace. And that his attachment was far more than an idle fancy, I am convinced, (for would he not by going abroad have had to relinquish the influence and renown he enjoyed?), but in conformity with his nature, it was of a kind that sought more its own gratification than the welfare of its object. He was a very despot in his fondness, and jealous that anyone should aim in promoting my felicity. He would have me blot out from my heart every image but his own; and except my father and Ada, I was willing to forget all I had ever before regarded. His imperiousness did not displease me, I felt it no degradation to be treated as a child, the rather liking the pettings and tyrannies that were my portion, and never dreamed of standing out for my rights of equality. He was, despite the flaws I could not but perceive in him, still the realisation of my glowing fancies, the hero of my romance; the noblest prince from fairy land; and any struggle to rise above the rank of his treasured plaything, would have appeared to me nothing short of a crime.

“Henry, greatly as I have wronged, wickedly as I have deceived you, if you but knew the bitterness of my repentance, you would yet pity me; yes, I am sure that in your noble heart the memory of my transgressions would be effaced by compassion for my sufferings. As I am recording the scenes of the terrible past, as terrible a present is mine; a present in which I behold a father's corpse, and have the harrowing consciousness that I have looked my last upon you and our child. A few hours more, and this frenzied heart will have ceased to beat, this bounding pulse be stilled for ever, when—but no, I dare not let my thoughts stray to the future. I have told as yet the less sinful and suffering portion of my history, but with what pain do I recall it! how then shall I be supported in the task still unaccomplished? I had been married about seven weeks when Sarah King went to London, where she proposed remaining until the morrow. I knew I should be alone that evening, for Norman designed speaking on an important measure in the House, and not even for the pleasure of his society would I have had him stay away. His fame was so strongly associated in my mind with himself, that could he have become

divested of it, I should have cared less for him. I was sad in my solitude, for my thoughts turned, with passionate longing, to my father, for whom, inconsistent as it may sound, my love increased each hour of absence. About ten o'clock I was surprised to hear my nurse's step upon the path leading to the cottage, and her knock—unusually loud and rapid—inspired in me a species of foreboding. I rushed instantly to the door, with an exclamation of astonishment upon my lips, for her unexpected return. Her appearance, however, checked my words; never had I witnessed so appalling an exhibition of grief. 'What ails you, nurse?' I cried, rendered hardly capable of speech by fright. 'Why do you stare so wildly? Tell me what has happened.' But she could not—the cause of her terror was too recent. She only moaned and beat her breast with her clenched hands, in token of her inability to satisfy me. Again I implored some explanation, for I knew her to be a woman of too sound sense to indulge in an excess of emotion without great cause. From her first broken words I gathered that it was on my account her faithful heart was wrung. 'For mercy's sake, tell me,' screamed I: 'does any evil menace my husband?' She replied with a decided negative, and I was eased from a fearful weight, only, the following moment, to be crushed beneath another dread almost as heavy. This time my anxieties pointed to my father, but Sarah satisfied me that she had heard nothing to justify my alarm for him. My husband and my father were safe; and, strengthened by this assurance, I thought I could bear anything, so begged to be kept no longer in suspense. Soon I knew all; how Sarah conveyed to me the news I do not remember, and why I lived to hear it I cannot fancy. Blameable as had been my conduct in marrying without my father's concurrence, I surely did not merit so terrible a chastisement. My nurse had returned from London to tell me that my husband, Norman Lyttleton, had been married several years. God knows how I bore the fatal intelligence; no clear recollection of the first few hours succeeding it is left me, but they were of more than mortal suffering. Sarah afterwards informed me that she thought, despite the care she had taken in imparting Norman's perfidy, it had slain me. Would to Heaven it had done so, and I had lost, in eternal sleep, the remembrance of the deadly wrong put upon me by the being I had so unreservedly trusted!

"It did not occur to me, in the first tumult of my woe, that my fair fame was blighted—I thought only of my outraged love, my abused confidence. How I passed that dreadful, dreadful night I cannot relate. It was not my lot to lose the sense of my misery in faintings, or exhaust it by tears; from the moment of my hearing the death-knell of my happiness, I had not been permitted an instant's suspension of

memory. I could not indulge in the hope that Sarah's communication was untrue—it had been obtained from incontestable sources. My despair allowed not the mitigation of hope; everything conspired to prove Norman's baseness, and nothing more fully than his repeated desire that I should forsake England, and go with him to some far-off land. It was plain now, that his promises of writing to my father, had been made merely to pacify me, and that he entertained no intention of keeping them; unless, perhaps, he should tire of me, and want to be rid of my company, when he might send me home, dishonoured and heart-broken. Oh, the world of bitterness contained in these reflections, which made me writhe with agony and mortification! There had been no gradual decay of my idol; it was not time that had worn away its covering of beauty, and displayed its real deformity to my affrighted eyes; with one fell swoop it had been thrown from its pedestal, at the very moment of my prostration before it, and been dashed into unsightly fragments. My gilded image was broken, and I, worshipping at its base, was almost killed by the violence of the fall. My affection, which I might fill pages in attempting to describe in its full intensity, was not greater than the sudden hate which sprung up within me, as I thought of the injury I had sustained. Every soft feeling of my soul was petrified, and love had given place to malignant abhorrence. The reaction was speedy and complete; not a vestige of pity was there in my breast for the base wretch who had used my love as the means of my destruction. All within me called for vengeance, and nothing could drown the relentless craving. In the madness of my wrath I forgot everything but the burning desire to satisfy the horrible passion which had taken so strong a hold upon me. Self-deceiver that I was, I could see no wickedness in my plans of retribution, and fancied that while obeying merely the unholy dictates of anger, I was doing what was justifiable in the sight of that God who commands us to love our enemies. I shut my ears to every warning, and, instead of striving to soothe my rage, all my endeavour was to inflame it. I meditated a terrible revenge, yet I scarcely knew what it should be; my mind was torn with conflicting schemes, and could decide in favour of none.

“With that species of injustice so common to the jealous, I detested the woman whom I in reality had been the innocent cause of injuring, and considered her as my foe. I could not then discern the folly as well as the guiltiness of this thought, for I had no control over my reason, and scarcely over my actions, rather resembling, in the tumult of my wild grief and fury, a person insane. I was in my bed-room, conning for the hundredth time my sorrows, and how I might avenge them, when I heard Norman call-

ing to me. I started with terror at the sound of his voice, and was forced to wait a few moments to steady my nerves before venturing to answer him. Surely I must have been mad, for no sooner had I recovered the first shock, than I did all I could to remove the traces of my anguish, and instead of going to him with an accusation of his perfidy, I strove to smile away the torments which racked my soul, and returned his embrace without recoiling. Something peculiar, however, must have struck him about my manner; for he inquired what ailed me, complaining that I was looking quite ill. I answered that I was not very well, having passed a bad night; and then, to divert him from the topic of my altered appearance, asked if I should order refreshment for him.

“ ‘No, Lilius, I have breakfasted,’ he replied; ‘but you had better take a glass of wine, for you seem in need of something.’

“He was mistaken; to have eaten or drunk would have choked me, but I did not answer him, and he rang for two wine glasses. The servant was some few moments before she returned; meanwhile I mechanically employed myself in turning over some articles heaped together in an open basket, which stood upon a side-table. My thoughts were far away from what I was engaged upon, but somehow I suddenly caught sight of a word written upon a small paper parcel which lay amongst the mass of odd things in the basket. The word I saw written upon it was the name of a fatal poison. The instant this caught my sight an awful thought suggested itself to me, one which made my heart cease its pulsations, and turned all the blood in my body to ice. By the use of this little powder I might earn my coveted revenge; a revenge easy and entire. After putting this into the wine which Norman was to drink, his wife would never, I thought, be in a position to triumph over me, nor he to perjure himself more. Had he taken from me my life, I should have had cause to bless him, but he had rendered it an accursed burthen. I had prayed for satisfaction; it now offered itself to me, and should I refuse it? I heard the step of the servant upon the stairs; I hesitated no longer; but removed the string and unfolded the paper. The girl entered the room and placed the glasses upon the table; I poured out some wine into one of them, and, with my back towards my perfidious husband, dropped the powder into it. A fiendish satisfaction, a most cruel joy, was mine for the instant. I tasted the sweets of revenge; the gall of the after draught has likewise been mine. Norman took the wine from me, smiling carelessly as he did so, and drank it at a draught. I averted my face as he put down the empty glass, and my brain throbbed to bursting. How I summoned the power to speak seems miraculous, but yet I did, complaining of weariness, and saying that I must go to bed. He turned towards me pity-

ingly, making use of one of the old epithets of endearment, which went to my heart like a dagger.

“‘Since you are tired,’ he said, ‘I will leave you for a time,’ and he took up his hat.

“I sickened with disappointment at what I construed as eagerness to escape, for, having wreaked my vengeance, somewhat of my former love had come back to my heart, and it was with more grief than wrath I fancied his attentions were already less ardent. At this time, when I can think with a greater degree of calmness, I do not believe his regard by any means diminished; inconstant as he was to others, treacherously as he had behaved to me, I did him an injustice in this respect. Before departing, he approached where I was leaning against the table, for I expected momentarily to faint, and kissed me tenderly. My God—my God! Thou alone can tell my unspeakable anguish during that brief moment! I was ignorant of the strength of the poison, but almost wondered not to see him fall dead at my feet directly he had swallowed it, and till I heard the gate close after him, expected he would be borne back a corpse. The remainder of that day, though ineffaceable in its horrors, is indescribable; my remorse and grief were more than words are able to set forth. My overweening hate vanished with the malignant pleasure I had taken in obeying its dictates. If my crime permits not of pardon, possibly it may of extenuation. Remember the magnitude of my wrongs, the ungovernable impetuosity of my nature, and the greatness of the temptation to whose whispering I gave heed, and, above all, the daily, hourly anguish which has been my portion since the commission of the awful deed. It was not the fruit of long premeditation, but of a wild, invincible prompting to revenge myself on one who had done me an irreparable injury, and immediately my mad rage had exhausted itself began the work of repentance. It would be impossible for me to give you any conception of the manner in which the succeeding days passed by. On the third, I gathered that Norman expired on the way from the station to his home, and at the inquest his death was given out as resulting from disease of the heart. This was the first time the thought had forced itself upon me, what consequences might ensue should it be discovered he had been poisoned. I never planned shielding myself from detection, giving no care to anything beyond the impulse to punish my betrayer, and, subsequently, all feelings were merged in regret. By means of the daily papers I learned all the particulars of his death, and through the same source was apprised when the funeral was to take place, and how deeply his wife and sister were afflicted; but what could their regret be to mine? Compared, it must have been what the gentle ripples of a lake are to the stormy waves

during a tempest. Upon the day Norman's remains were consigned to the grave, I lived over again all the horrors of my first desolation. The air was burning hot, so that with every breath I seemed to draw in fire, and evening closed with a terrific thunder-storm. On that night, resolved to destroy every vestige of my fatal love, I held the certificate of my marriage over the candle; but my nurse, who witnessed the action, rescued it before it began to consume, imploring me to preserve it, lest I should ever have occasion to prove that my infamy was not self-sought. I gave her my word, and now enclose it with my wedding-ring.

“I ought, in this place, to observe that Sarah was near arriving at a knowledge of all my guilt, by my changed looks on her telling me she had missed a little packet of strychnine, bought for the destruction of vermin. Her only way of accounting for its disappearance was, that her servant, who had just left for America, had thrown the poison away as dangerous. I wondered, in silence and terror, that she should never dream the truth.

“There was nothing now to prevent me returning home, except the dread of my father's questions, which I hoped to satisfy without giving any clue to my secret; but only by perjuring myself did I succeed in veiling it from his knowledge. Soon I became very ill, sleeping or waking I knew no peace, the recollection of my sin was ever with me. I hoped I might die, praying with the energy of despair to be released from existence. As the months tediously progressed, the certainty—of what as an awful surmise had been present to my imagination for some time—became apparent to me, that I was *enciente*. Frenzied with terror lest my situation should be discovered, I swallowed poison, which I had secreted for days. It is needless to relate how, through the interposition of my maid, I was restored to life, and that, in consideration for her faithful concealment of my attempted suicide, I took her partly into confidence. I told her of my clandestine marriage, but not of its illegality; and to her ready devices was chiefly indebted for the completeness with which I baffled paternal watchfulness or prying curiosity. It was strange that I did not make a second attempt to drown my miseries in death, since the same cause existed; but instead I began to strive for the mastery over the terrors of my position.

“To continue the course of my history as it follows, I must tell you that Dr. Darby, about this time, became aware of a portion of my secret, which I gathered from a few significant words he let fall concerning my prolonged indisposition. Oh, the dread and shame I suffered then! Here was another to whom I was constrained to yield a share of confidence! My fears of detection multiplied each day, and I racked my brains unceasingly for an excuse to leave

home. My father would not permit me to depart, and I dared not go away without his consent. At last I got him to acquiesce in my wish to visit my nurse. Once again brought in contact with the haunts of my fatal love, all strength forsook me; I no longer battled with my grief, but, weary of the part I had been playing, gave myself up unrestrainedly to wretchedness.

“Sarah beheld the poignancy of my distress without surprise; she well knew with what intensity I had loved my betrayer, and mistook the agonies of regret for my crime as sorrow for the double trial of his deceit and death.

“With what hopeful feelings I anticipated the birth of my child!—but not with the usual hope of an expectant mother; I looked forward to it as the probable means of release. My health was extremely delicate, as was my mother’s before my birth. She had died; why, then, I asked myself, should not I? In vain I dwelt upon the chance that I and my babe might sleep the sleep of death together. The time of peril went by without fulfilling my dreary wish. The child was a boy, who grew exactly to resemble his father. It is incomprehensible, perhaps, that this circumstance should endear him the more; but so it was. He seemed to be a part of what I had worshipped in Norman, without partaking of anything which in him had aroused my hatred.

“From this time a new life was infused into me; I no longer courted death; a strong devotion sprung up in my heart for the pledge of my unhappy love, and for the babe’s sake I was content to bear the sufferings I knew memory would ever entail upon me. Soon I was forced to leave him, but the soothing influence of my love retained the power to lessen my secret terrors. When I returned home, Dr. Darby was with my father. He knew what had taken me to the cottage, and promised to go there for the purpose of attending to the health of my child. From that moment, I felt bound in gratitude to him, and have never had cause to repent placing my confidence in his honour: yet I believe he suspected I had not been married.

“I had, as you may imagine, no inclination to enter society; but through the anticipation of frequently seeing my child, I was more pleased by my aunt’s invitation than I could have been by anything. The gay life we led presented few opportunities of escape, but still the rare and stolen joys secured a lull to my troubled spirit.

“Just before leaving London, I saw an advertisement to the effect that a lady without family desired to adopt an infant; and with a combined sensation of relief and pain, I put the paper down to reflect. Had there been the least likelihood of remaining near to Blackheath, I could not have planned such a sacrifice; but

as it was, I did not take long to decide upon my course. I thought, if I went to Rose Cottage, I should lose courage to carry out my resolve, and wrote to Sarah, instructing her to settle the establishment of the child with the lady, if she were assured he would be comfortable.

“Where, you will inquire, was my love? you will call me a monster of cruelty—an unnatural parent. I was all this, probably, and merited every harsh epithet that can be applied; but my position was so beset with difficulties. Already, strange rumours were spreading of my flight from school, and I dreaded the increase of them—trembled for the name which it was my father’s boast had ever been unsullied. I knew, whatever Sarah’s feelings might be, she would obey me unhesitatingly; and the thought that, in a few days, my darling would be placed far from the possibility of my again beholding him, so worked upon me, that despite the danger attendant upon such a proceeding, and the shock I knew it would be to me to tear myself from my child, I got up in the dead of night, and walked half-way (though it was raining heavily) before I met a car to take me to Blackheath. Sarah was watching the sick-bed of a neighbour, and after weeping over my sleeping babe for more than an hour, I returned without seeing her. In a few days I heard that the infant had been given into the hands of the lady, who had pledged her word always to protect him. I believed now all prospect of disclosure was past: except in conscience, I was the same I had been before meeting with Norman, and free to do as I pleased. It would be giving you a very wrong impression if I intimated that I did not yearn after my child. A thousand times a-day I regretted that I had not incurred the risk of Sarah King keeping him, for the sake of embracing him, though but once in a twelvemonth.

“In the solemnity of this dread hour I cannot surely delude myself. My conscience, greatly as it chides, tells me that my wickedness is not wholly without excuse; for it has been against my will, and not the result of an inclination to evil. From my childhood upwards I have been the sport of relentless circumstances. To you, dearest, to you alone of all the world would I venture to bring forward any plea in extenuation of the sins I have plunged into. I am now indifferent to the opinions of others; let them think me a cold-blooded murderess, a heartless mother, an infamous intriguer, so that you and my Maker acknowledge in me the spark of good, which I trust, throughout my miserable career, has not been quite extinct. Not long elapsed before I was introduced to you. Your rank was so high, I thought it would certainly shield me from the impertinent censures I was perpetually in dread of, and I concluded that, should your favourable impression result in leading you to propose, I would accept you. Yes, I was that lost to honour and delicacy,

to arrange in my mind to wed almost a perfect stranger. How can you ever forgive my perfidy?" Must you not abhor me, when you hear that I have deceived you in the tenderest point, professing an attachment I did not entertain? Nothing occurred to betray me, and you were happy in the belief of my affection, while I shuddered for the consequences of the vile imposition I had fixed upon you. I was entangled in the web of my own weaving, and could only let events proceed as they listed. I was ashamed to meet your glance, and could hardly bear to think of the union which, in my short sightedness, I believed necessary for the preservation of my safety. The night before my marriage I passed in reading Norman's letters, and weeping over my complicated treachery. My feelings were strangely commingled, but all were sad, irredeemably sad. If I turned to you, to my child, my father, or Owen Arnold, still I met naught but uneasy reflections. To all I had behaved most ill, and imagination pictured to me the hatred and reproaches that would be showered upon me, if fate revealed my guilt.

"You will wonder why I should retain the letters of the man to whose treachery I owe all my misery, whose betrayal of my trust made me the vile creature I had become. I can only say, in explanation, that Norman's letters appeared unconnected with his villany; and had I been unable to divide his affection from the injury he had done me, still I could not have given them up; they were the only tangible reminders of a too blissful and short-lived happiness. With women it is almost an instinct to preserve any mementos of the past, particularly those associated with the affections; and whatever their love may have been, whether fortunate or miserable, they cannot tear themselves from the memorials of it. Thus letters, miniatures, and rings are stored with melancholy pleasure, even at the risk of disgrace. I had preserved a lock of Norman's hair, and at the time I was about to commence a new career, under a new name, I could not bring myself to destroy it or the letters.

"I thought when I was married I had for ever done with my old life, and, greatly to my surprise, grew daily less unhappy, though occasionally I groaned over my misdeeds, vaguely fearing that retribution would yet fall upon me. The first intimation of new trials came to me when I met Hinda and Mary Lyttleton. The name was sufficient to tell me whose relations they were, had you not mentioned it. I leave you to fancy what was my horror. You will recollect how I resisted your proposal of their visit, only in the end to submit to my destiny. From the moment Hinda crossed the threshold I felt that an evil spell was upon me, and again my life was one of ceaseless pain. How she arrived at the conclusion that I had been connected with her brother, I know not, still less in what

manner she had come to suspect that he had met his death unfairly ; but she hinted that I murdered him.

“ Shortly Mrs. Lyttleton sent for her adopted child, whom, the moment I beheld, I felt instinctively was mine. If I had required proof of his identity, Hinda’s circumstantially detailed account of the manner in which her sister became possessed of him, would have been amply sufficient. The name, the date, all corresponded, and the love which had laid deep in my soul all this time for my deserted babe gushed up warmer and stronger than ever.

“ The next event that stands out prominently in my memory is a conversation with Miss Lyttleton. I cannot, dare not, attempt to think of what she said, for the terror of that hour is present with me. She threw off the thin disguise she had before assumed, and beyond declaring me to be her brother’s murderess, expressed her belief that I had placed the poison-labelled paper in his pocket to ward off suspicion. Thus you perceive how wrongly she judged ; awarding to me the most calculating depravity. I remember distinctly casting it on the floor, and conclude that he picked it up, under the impression that it was a memorandum he had let fall when taking out his watch.

“ Dear Henry, I am much exhausted, both in mind and body, and must pause a little before continuing my task ; my brain will not bear the strain much longer.

“ I have been trying to sleep, but cannot for a moment find forgetfulness. Thronging images of those I have wronged ever hover around me, defying repose. Will the grave be as unkind to me as my bed, and vouchsafe me no cessation from misery ? God forbid ! the thought alone is madness.

“ Wonderfully commingled in our hearts are good and evil. While I was filled with hatred of Hinda, and—oh, Heaven ! my senses reel at the recollection !—contemplated her destruction as a means of averting my own, I had not forgotten how to love. My child’s image was constantly before me, and with rapture I dwelt upon the assurance of his guileless affection. Poor babe, how unhappy for him may be the warmth of his impulses ! My darling child, my beloved Melbourne, I have seen you for the last time !

“ Sarah King came one evening in a fearful condition of mind, to acquaint me of Hinda’s visit to Blackheath ; where, failing to elicit anything from my nurse, she questioned the servant, and from her learned the secret I believed unknown to any living creature. The girl who left Sarah’s service for America the very day of Norman’s death had lately returned ; and when desired to tax her memory for events associated with that fatal day, recollected that she had seen me put something into his wine. Had she remained in England and heard of his sudden death, her

suspicions must inevitably have been aroused ; but ignorant of his decease, she had not regarded the incident as important, though through the relation of it my life was put into my enemy's hands. The agitation I was subjected to in this interview with my nurse occasioned the premature birth of our child ; I could almost say, would that it had caused its death !

“ Throughout the whole of our union I have been more or less harassed by secret cares, which have prevented me rightly understanding the state of my feelings with regard to you. Often, very often have I mourned over my unworthiness, yet thought not that I injured you as much by not returning the affection I was too vile to be blest with, as by withholding such great mysteries from you ; but when I had nothing to hope for, when doubt settled into certainty, and I was ever near you, the recipient of your fondness, my heart expanded, and against my knowledge you became most dear to me. Yes, though I dreamed it not up to the moment of parting from you, I loved you more truly, if less rashly, than I had loved before. Fearful as was the threatening tempest, I willingly blinded myself to danger, and saw nothing during that brief reprieve but the sunshine of your kindness. How I marvel at myself for having attained resolution to leave you ! It was agony worse than death ! I crave, with a craving only to be felt by the most wretched, for another look, another word of regard from you ! Must I die unpardoned ?

“ Before I conclude I have yet something to add ; a few requests to make, which, by the love you have borne me, I implore you to grant.

“ My father's will has, I know, been made for years, in which he has constituted me heiress of his personal property, with the exception of a few legacies. By law, I believe our child will inherit all that belongs to me, and I have therefore no power to make a provision for Melbourne, but beg of you to let him have, when of age, my marriage-portion. Mary Lyttleton will not, I think, like to part with him, even should she learn beyond question whose child he is ; but I wish, though he continue with her, that he be removed from dependance upon her. She will be, I am fain to confess, a better guardian of his youth than his guilty mother ; yet I fear for him, his situation is so strange. All I can do is to endeavour to interest you in his behalf. Farther than this, I have another petition, which, painful as the accomplishment of it may be, I have faith you will perform. It is that you write to Owen Arnold, saying it was my dying wish he should marry Maude Ashton. He appears to be still the victim of vain regret, and he is much too worthy to be permitted to waste his life in useless repinings. If I correctly interpret my cousin's feelings, he has

already won her heart, and they are in every way qualified for each other. My dear and faithful nurse is provided for by my father, but I trust you will not wholly lose sight of her. I beg of you also to bestow an annuity upon Emma Adams suitable to her station.

“My task is indeed over. I have finished my confession and my requests, relating fairly, not my transgressions only, but the promptings thereto; and now I come to that dreadful word—Farewell! Oh Henry, Henry! that I might speak rather than write it! To feel but for one moment the support of your arm, and hear your loved voice utter one word of pardon would take a little from the agony of parting. Though why do I say this? in addressing you here I can scarcely summon the resolution to bid you an everlasting adieu—how could I then leave you if you were with me? No, no—I would never go from you again; but gladly, after being forgiven, expire at your feet. I hear the clock striking the quarter, it is that to eleven, and will soon be time for me to take leave of existence. May God help you in this trial, and grant that you emerge from it unscathed! I would not that you should wholly forget me, were that possible; think of me, if you can, in pity, not in loathing; for though I have caused you such great misery, my last breath will be spent in calling down blessings upon you. For our babe’s sake, and may I say for mine?—for the sake of your own repentant and loving Liliias—do not let the distress consequent upon my confession make you unmindful of the many blessings you enjoy. You are without self-reproach, and may gain contentment, if no more. Where there is no sin, the capability to enjoy cannot be perfectly quenched; to the guilty only are the treasures of youth and health turned to curses.

“Once again, farewell! Guide the footsteps of our child—should it please Heaven to spare her—not merely with love but with judgment, and if at any time a warning be needed, to show her the fatal results of being influenced by passion instead of principle, tell her her mother’s story. But I do not fear on her account; under your care I am satisfied she will be shielded from the temptations which wrought my ruin. She will grow up to be your comforter, and in her affection you will find a grave for your present cares. The conviction that this will be so is balm to my bruised spirit; in the hope that your daughter’s goodness will compensate for my wrong-doing, there is a gleam of comfort.

“It is but a few moments of eleven as I write this, for I cannot proceed fast; every word I pen is at the cost of greatest agony which death alone can stife. The time of release approaches fast; half-an-hour hence, my beloved, your wife will be no more.

“LILIAS.”

CHAPTER LI.

CONCLUSION.

LORD WELGRAVE had read scarcely half his wife's confession when profound horror deprived him of consciousness. He was immediately carried to bed, where he remained for days, incapable of understanding anything that was said to him. By slow degrees he recovered, to exhaust the statement of the secrets which had cost Lilius both happiness and life.

The theme of his sorrow is too painful to dilate upon ; suffice it that, though he regained vigour of body, his mind received an impression of melancholy too deep to be totally eradicated, and to the day of his death the shadow of his early calamity must rest upon him. The babe, weakly as it was during the first few months, afterwards progressed rapidly in strength and loveliness, giving promise, by the fulness of its infantile tenderness for the marquis, to be all to him the hapless Lilius predicted.

The various requests made by his wife his lordship faithfully performed, and with respect to Melbourne proposed doing more than she had ventured to ask. He offered to ease Mrs. Lyttleton of the care of him, and to bring him up as a companion for his little daughter ; but this Mary would by no means consent to, and she still continues to be the guardian of her rival's and her husband's offspring.

Hinda, after learning that her labour was lost, and her vengeance frustrated by the death of Lady Welgrave, became nearly insane with disappointment and impotent rage. The first six months' subsequent to her victim's decease she passed in the greatest wretchedness, making her own life and every one's around almost insupportable. Mary bore with her as long as possible, but at last was compelled to seek another home, and leave her to her self-created misery. Time, however, which can heal the severest wounds, in some measure softened Hinda's unnaturally prolonged vindictiveness, and joined to the influence of religion, made her disposition more amiable than it had ever previously been. Gray-haired and gentle-mannered, the Miss Lyttleton of to-day is scarcely to be recognised as Lilius's remorseless foe ; and the harsh-tempered being who was once Mary's greatest terror is now her kindest friend.

Emma Adams is not likely to end her days in the miserable manner which might have been anticipated as a consequence of her ridiculous ambition. The melancholy fate of her mistress caused a very salutary change in her, and had the effect of checking, if not of wholly uprooting, her morbid aspirations for distinction. For

some time she lived as companion to a lady who ranked no higher than the widow of a retired brewer; and finally she married a thriving young tradesman, whose business, helped by her annuity, increases so as to keep pace with the wants of a fast-growing family.

Sarah King, Liliás's misguided but faithful nurse, did not long linger in the misery which the knowledge of her beloved young mistress's crimes and death entailed upon her. In less than three months she died, and, in accordance with her last request, was buried beside the tomb of the Marchioness of Welgrave.

Dr. Darby is changed a good deal, being now as remarkable for his reserve and gravity, as he once was for his vivacity and openness. He is seldom known to mention the name of his old friend, Sir Shenton; the slightest allusion to him awakening feelings of regret for his loss too keen to sustain with any appearance of composure.

Ada Hartop, or rather the Honourable Mrs. Randal, continues unconscious of her departed friend's secret life; she even believes her death to have been the result of a too poignant sorrow for the loss of her father, and dreams not that the calm waters she has often looked into so admiringly, served for her tomb. Happy in the ignorance of Liliás's sad fate, and blessed with the companionship of an adoring husband, Ada's lot is a most enviable one.

Owen Arnold, whose heart had already been unconsciously won by the subtle charm of Maude Ashton's beauty and innocence, yet grieved most deeply for the death of Liliás; and though acquainted with her wish, he could not for a long time bring himself to obey the promptings of his affections, and ask Maude to marry him, so fearful was he of doing her injustice by giving her a divided heart. Nevertheless, before two years had expired from her cousin's death, Miss Ashton was led to the altar by Owen Arnold, a very lovely and happy bride. Each had outlived a great disappointment with noble fortitude and pious resignation, and they received the reward of their endurance. Far from feeling any jealous fear that the influence Liliás, even in death, exerted over her husband, might lessen his affection for herself, Maude takes a frequent delight in recording the many instances of goodness she has been witness to in her deceased cousin, thus leading her memory to be, not the source of hidden bitterness, but of numerous righteous actions.

The morbid dread of visiting Sedgley, which at first was entertained by Owen, gradually faded from his mind, and was replaced by a stronger desire to revisit the scenes of his boyhood; therefore, in company with his wife, he repaired to Liliás's birth-place, and the Hall being shortly afterwards offered upon lease by

its new possessor, he became its tenant, Here then within sight of the ocean in whose depths the unfortunate Marchioness found a grave for her woes, the children of her cousin and early lover play their infantile games, which are oftentimes suspended through the interest excited in their youthful minds by the touching accounts of poor cousin Liliass's untimely death and wondrous beauty.

The Hon. Mrs. Ashton, having no daughter to marry, is unwearied in her researches after a fitting partner for her dear Frank ; and since she deems it necessary that in his wife must unite every imaginable good quality, and be a Venus and Minerva in one, it is highly probable that the search will afford her sufficient employment for her life.

Lady Drury and her daughter may be supposed, at last, to have attained felicity—the latter being engaged to a lord ; that his temper, constitution, and purse, have been lamentably damaged by a course of reckless gaiety, and that he is scarcely less than three times the age of his affianced, neither mamma nor darling Carrie permit themselves to think objections not redeemable by the privilege of speaking of my lord this, and lady that, as “ our relations.”

Once again we take a look at the Marquis of Welgrave, who finds a lasting source of comfort in promoting the happiness of those by whom he is surrounded, and particularly his daughter's, upon whose youthful features the melancholy expression of her babyhood remains, imparting a deeper interest to her mild beauty. Her love for her father, the kind Lady Christabel, and Melbourne, whom she knows to be her brother, is excessive ; yet, at times, a restless rolling of the liquid eyes conveys the impression that her mind is not perfectly at ease ; nor, indeed, is it ; for, child as she is, her pensive habits have matured her character, and given it a turn for investigation, which, without degenerating into curiosity, keeps her alive to every word spoken before her. She has heard of her mother as having died soon after her birth, and gathered indirectly that some painful concealment hung around her life. What that was, is a subject of serious inquiry to her—inquiry destined not to be satisfied, for her father resolutely abstains from mentioning her mother's name, and, even at this lapse of time, scarcely dare trust himself to recal the mystery associated with his lost wife.

CLIMBING THE FELL

IN the summer of 18— it was our good fortune to get away from the hurry and din, the thick, unwholesome air, and the everyday faces of the City, down to the quiet sea-coast, where the air blows fresh, and the lungs expand, and where the ever-changing face of Nature reveals to us her choicest pictures. Our holiday-home was the island of Arran, situated, as every one knows, or ought to know, in the Firth of Clyde. It has earned a wide reputation, not only for the salubrity of its climate and the splendour of its scenery, but on account of the ample field which it offers to the man of science, since it contains, within a circumference of seventy miles, a perfect epitome of the geology and botany of North Britain. It is not, however, our present intention to describe Arran, but to give to the reader some idea of its mountain scenery.

The highest peak in the island is Goat-fell, which rises to a height of nearly 3000 feet above the level of the sea. It is the centre around which all the other mountains of the island are closely grouped together. It stands on the north side of Brodick Bay—one of the most beautiful in Scotland—and has a very imposing appearance. When visitors come to the island, it is always a part of their programme to “do” the Fell; and although the dangers to be overcome in its ascent are by no means numerous, it has happened that an occasional tourist has come to grief among its cliffs; so that he who desires to climb the mountain is not without a smack of that pleasure which a reasonable amount of danger always engenders. Of course, the view to be seen from its summit is the chief inducement to those who seek to ascend it.

Our party, numbering three, had waited long in expectation of weather suitable for an excursion hillwards. We would rise on a fine morning, and find his eminence, the Fell, so radiant with sunshine, his bald head bare, and his whole aspect so inviting, that, without loss of time, wallets were crammed with the needful provisions, and, sturdy sticks in our hands, away we trudged for the mountains. All went merrily for a mile or two, and we had almost reached the base of the Fell, when—alas for the inconstancy of the weather!—we looked up, and beheld the face of King Mountain black with darkling rain-clouds, and the faces of the lesser hills veiled in mist. Shortly we had the full benefit of a downfall of rain, and, being minus umbrellas, were soaked through, so that the remainder of the day had to be spent in insane attempts to hang ourselves up to dry. Morning after morning, we watched for the propitious moment for renewing the attempt; but the day was

wet, or the scenery was hazy, or the hills were covered with mist; and it was not till almost a week after our first essay that we had a day suitable for the ascent.

On the south side the mountain bathes his old red sandstone feet in the blue waters of the bay; farther up, his loins are girt about with a kilt of trees; and above that, his broad breast, seamed with many a scar, lies bare to the sun. Just, as it were, on his left limb, which juts out like a knee, there stands the old castle of Brodick, the ancient home of the Earls of Arran, now in its second childhood, clinging to the knee on which it was reared. Beside it is the new castle, looking young, and strong, and handsome, yet not too proud to allow its elder brother to lean on it for support. Around these buildings the forests spread thickly for many a mile to the right and left. Our way lies through these woods, and as we pass along beneath their grateful shade, we are reminded of another climber who has often walked on this same path. He was, indeed, no common climber, for he has since mounted up the heights of ambition, and on their summit has found a crown and sceptre. Here it was that Louis Napoleon, then an exile, and while enjoying the hospitality of the late Duke of Hamilton (to whose family the island, for the most part, belongs), wandered up to the heights above, smoking a social pipe with an old friend, Donald, the boatman, who tells of his exploits with the Emperor to all who may be curious to hear about them. And, be it said to his honour, when old Donald, years afterwards, went to visit the third Napoleon, at his royal home in Paris, he did not disdain to meet and entertain him for the sake of "auld lang syne." But we digress.

Moving gradually upwards through the woods, we arrived, at length, on a field or park which surrounds the Duke's kennel. A pandemonium of din now wakes up the silence. The dogs set up a growling, snarling, howling, barking, whining, yelping din, reverberated by such a multiplicity of echoes, that we are almost led to fancy that the mountains are tenanted by millions of curs. Glad to escape this canine Babel, we begin to ascend the hill in earnest. Our friend John, who has pill-boxes, empty bottles, and a small vial of chloroform stowed away in his pockets, produces his butterfly net, and keeps his eye on the alert for those animated bits of colour that float about among the heather of the moorland. Robert has already opened his vasculum, and is on the out-look for the rarer mountain weeds, while I have to watch for anything scarce in the way of ferns. But we soon find that the work of climbing is sufficiently arduous to usurp our whole attention, and, besides, we are persecuted by hundreds of bloodthirsty flies, which keep settling on salient points of our persons, and drink at our expense, unless slapped dead by a clever stroke. The heat of the

day, too, is terrific, so that our climb fast becomes more a toil than a pleasure.

Hitherto we have seen nothing very remarkable, although we are now more than half way up the hill, for, since we left the woods, we have been climbing over a heath-covered moor; but there is a mountain turn which, at one end, has apparently been broken open by some awful storm, for great masses of granite lie scattered about in wild confusion. Now there is little water in it, and you can hear the outflowing stream trickling down into the valley beneath, and purring along its quiet channel towards the sea. But it is not difficult to imagine that when the mountain torrents come down and fill the lake, there will be a tumultuous rush of waters over those granite boulders, and then the swollen stream will roll along with a noise like thunder. Looking upwards, from this turn, we can see the peak above, and although it looks delightfully near, we know from experience that it is alarmingly distant. The view is wild and desolate in the extreme. It reminds us of the queer sentiment expressed by one of the earliest English travellers on beholding those hills. "I think," said he, "that when the work of creation was completed, the rubbish was all cast down here." And it certainly looks like it. Masses of granite lie tumbled about on heaps of granitic grains, and the *tout ensemble* gives one the idea that some Cyclopean building had, once upon a time, been erected here, and that at some period or other it had been shattered into ten thousand fragments such as now lie scattered over the space between our present position and the summit of the mountain.

We keep by the regular path, which is neither more nor less than a water-course, now dry, but which a passing shower may inundate. It was near this particular locality that we met with and killed a snake. Adders are very common all over the island, and, as there seems to be rooted in the human breast a horror at all serpents, from the Satanic snake of Eden to the very worm at our feet, it is always considered a matter of duty to slay the accused creeper wherever it may be met. Thus on a summer's day we have seen half-a-dozen decapitated adders on the road in the neighbourhood of Brodick. On the present occasion our insidious enemy had come forth to sun himself beside a little burn than ran over a bed of white granite *crumbs*. When first we saw his brown and yellow back we thought him dead, but he soon gave evidence of vitality by arching his long neck, or body, which you will, and showing in his open mouth a little barbed needle-like implement, which looked funny, but meant mischief. This performance was accompanied by a sound which is held to be a universal sign of disapprobation among geese, serpents, and men. For three grown

men to set upon this worm of the mountain did strike us as being a little odd; but then, stones were plentiful and adventurers were scarce. A few successful hits, and the adder had twisted his last. On measuring him, we made him out to be about two feet in length, and rather more than half an inch in thickness. Our entomological friend spoke of bottling the specimen, but he was too bulky and too much broken to preserve, so we left his mangled remains as a warning to his species.

After trudging for a quarter of a mile over a granite-strewn and heathery region, we seemed to be at the base of the peak. The way up appears short and easy, but the Fell will not be climbed but by the orthodox path, which leads us up to a long ridge—the shoulder of the mountain. Along the shoulder we must pass ere we reach the top. And such a road! It is craggy, ragged, edgy, bouldery, and dangerous, requiring, on the part of the traveller, as enormous an expenditure of puffing and blowing, as the steps of the Great Pyramid. Perspiring, panting, hearts beating, legs trembling; now up, now down with a thud; here stopping for breath, and there dragging ourselves up a boulder; we manage at last to reach the very chin of this Brobdignagian mountain. One struggle more, and seizing the giant by his heathery whiskers, we hoist ourselves up to his bald crown, feeling all the exuberance of accomplished victory. There, totally oblivious of all the grandeur about us, we betake ourselves to the contents of our wallets, and not till the cravings of appetite have been supplied do we behold and see.

Arran, on account of its mountainous character, may well be called the Switzerland of Scotland, and here we are on the summit of its Mont Blanc. True, we are only 3000 feet above the sea level, as already stated, and, at this season, there is not a handful of snow to be seen in our neighbourhood, yet, we have scenery truly Alpine in character. We fancy that if the sun were to denude the Swiss peaks of their leprous mantle, they would present a spectacle similar in appearance to that now before us, having, of course, the advantage of greatly increased height and magnitude. For, it is quite within the bounds of probability that the Arran hills, in the far ages of the past, were covered with the snows of centuries, since there are unmistakeable evidences in the valleys below, that icebergs were not unfrequent visitors to these parts. Besides, the ravages of storms will not sufficiently account for the extensive disintegration everywhere visible; and unless we suppose these hills to have borne the weight, and to have been eaten into by the agency of former snows, we can find no other explanation of their present extraordinary character. They have been split and cracked, and torn and worn, into the most rugged and fantastic shapes. Here, for instance, is a ridge, having all the appearance of a regularly-

built fortification, with battlements and embrasures, all complete; and, yonder, again, is another, which, in the distance, looks like a succession of church steeples; and as they are all grouped together, and reach nearly to the same altitude as the mountain on which we stand, the effect of the whole is singularly grand. These ridges branch away from the Fell, and are all of them so narrow at the top, that one might sit astride of them, with each of his legs hanging over a precipice more than a 1000 feet above the sea level. The slopes around us are so steep that, without any exertion of his own, a man might roll from top to bottom of them, without an abutting rock, a shrub, or a tree, to stop his progress. If one could imagine what the effect would be, if some monster with tremendous claws were to tear at a hill from the summit to its basement, and had given up in despair of being able to bring it down, he would have some notion of the red ruts and scars everywhere visible on the mountains around us.

Whilst we were contemplating these things, we saw the mists rising from the surrounding glens, and clambering slowly up the sides of the Fell. Nearer and nearer they came, curling round, and hiding from our view all the surrounding mountains, and, at last, enveloping ourselves in its cold and moist embrace. In vain shall we attempt to describe our sensations during the few minutes that followed. We could scarcely see a foot of solid earth on either side of us, and we knew well, that to move a few steps, in this direction or that, was to move towards certain death. So we sat closely together, on that which was now a lone island in a sea of mist, awaiting the issue. Here and there a break would occur in this cloud envelope, enabling us to see the black outlines of neighbouring peaks; but the motion appeared to belong to them, for they seemed to rise and fall, and move hither and thither, like awful phantom monsters, black and terrible. But, anon, the sunshine dispelled the mist, and we then felt we could breathe freely, and speak of that which we had seen, for, while it lasted, such a feeling of dread and awe had crept over us that it utterly deprived us of the power of speech.

But now let us look beyond the hills nearest us, and behold the gorgeous panorama painted on Nature's canvas on every side of us. Looking northwards, we see mapped out before us, on the waters of the Firth of Clyde, the long island of Bute, its highest eminence a mere mole-hill, as contrasted with the mountain on which we stand. At the far end of Bute, and beyond those narrows, called the Kyles, there are the mountains bordering on Loch Fyne, now brown with mosses, and blushing with heather bloom, while their appearance is further varied by the clumps of trees and shrubs which here and there fill up the little glens at their base. These

heights limit our view in this direction, as they stretch away, wave after wave, far into the blue distance, till hill and cloud become indistinguishable the one from the other.

Turning to the east, the view is more beautiful and varied, for here we have the broad valley of the Clyde, with its mountain embankments on the one hand, and its cultivated uplands on the other. The shores on either side are fringed with white villas, and here and there an overhanging cloud of smoke discloses the whereabouts of some manufacturing or seaport town. The blue waters of the Firth are studded over with vessels of all sorts and sizes. Here are pleasure yachts scudding before the wind; there are the rapid court-steamers fussily moving about from place to place along the shore; and yonder, in mid-channel, a large ocean steamer is sailing homeward, stately and majestic. On the east side of Bute, and almost in the middle of the Firth, lie the two islands of Cumbrae, one of them larger than the other. On Cumbrae major is situated the town of Millport, noted now for its episcopal college; and on the lesser Cumbrae, which is shaped like a wedge, lying on its side, there stands a lighthouse to warn the mariner against rock and shallow.

Slowly turning to the south, we can see the opposite shore, at a distance of about twelve miles. That is Ayrshire, with its busy little towns, beautiful, for the most part, to the commercial eye only, since a general smokiness appears at this distance to be their leading characteristic. Tracing this south-eastern coast-line past many a curving bay and far-shooting promontory, we find it ending in a thin, dark line, which we make out to be the Cumberland coast; so that we have before us a stretch of sea-shore nearly 100 miles in length.

On the south we have the lonely island of Ailsa Craig, a precipitous rock of columnar basalt, many miles from land, and mainly inhabited by Solon geese, gulls, and other sea-fowl that whiten its otherwise gloomy cliffs. Far beyond this isle, and visible only in a dim and shadowy way, are the shores of Ireland, exhibiting, however, none of those emerald tints which are visible on a nearer survey.

To the westward, and close at our feet, we have Brodick Bay, which is shaped like a horseshoe, and is surrounded by graceful hills and stately mountains. The west side of Arran is washed by a strip of sea which separates the island from the long, narrow peninsula of Cantire, which latter was, not long ago, immortalised by the modern "Bede." Across this land we can see the broad Atlantic, studded over with the mountain islands of Jura and Islay, and others of lesser size and note. But here we must call a halt. The glow of sunset surrounds us, and the approach of night is

being heralded by yon phantom moon sailing up the deepening blue of the east ; and so, downward and homeward, we must hie us away. The ascent of the hill was dreadful, but the descent is terrific. Upward, the walk was slow and fatiguing ; downward, it is rapid and killing. Leaping and striding over boulder and crag, across torrent-beds and empty water-courses ; past moss and moorland, with a speed too rapid for bloodthirsty flies ; down through the fields resounding with canine yelp and whine, to the grateful woods and more gentle slope we arrive at last, breathless and exhausted. A few minutes more, and we will gain the road that leads round to the other side of the bay, where our home is. But what need to tell you, O reader, of our walk home under the brightening stars and slowly-fading sunbeams, or of the savoury viands and delightful slumbers that followed ? Be it yours to come to this charming island, where you will yourself behold that scenery which the present writer has but faintly attempted to describe in the paper you have just read. *L'envoi !*

L

A LONG PENANCE

DEATH, we are told, by a famous Roman poet, knocks alike at the palace-gate and the cabin-door. Of the truth of this aphorism we see terrible proofs almost every day of our lives. Walking through the crowded and busy streets of the city, how often are we passed by a long *cortège* of carriages following a hearse with nodding plumes and sable-trapped horses, that bears to his last and long resting-place the scion of some noble family, or the prop of some wealthy house; and ere the thoughts which the sight occasions pass from our minds to give place to the thousand cares which the battle of life brings upon us, a similar procession wends its way before us, and the dilapidated, ricketty, two-horse hearse, as well as the few similarly ill-conditioned vehicles in its train, tell plainly that some poor soul who fought hard against the frowns of fortune has at last succumbed, and now enjoys equal peace with him on whom the world has lavished its favours in profusion, and fortune has smiled propitious. It has been in mercy ordained that we "know not the day nor the hour" when we, too, shall be borne away from all we hold most dear, and be given to the close and cold embrace of the earth from whence we sprung. Youth, health, and strength are but small security against the assaults of the invincible tyrant; with terrible impartiality he lays his skeleton hand on the shoulders of young and old, and beckons them on to the dark regions of the terrible and the unknown. Yet, like an irregular postman, grim-visaged Death at times makes strange slips in his hourly walks, and there are people who long await his advent with fearlessness to whom he cometh not; he is too busy culling the fair and beautiful blossoms that grow up around to smite the time-worn, knotted, and gnarled trunks which lie across his path.

Among the long list of "oldest inhabitants" who have been brought into public notice, there can scarcely be found one whose lengthened and prolonged career has been more extraordinary than that of a criminal who has recently been discharged from the *bagne* at Toulon, in France, and who was well known there by the *soubriquet* of "Bouffebarbe." We shall not attempt to anticipate our story by alluding just now to the crime for which he had been condemned to that place of punishment, but relate the history of his life as he himself has recounted it to one whose generosity induced him to unfold the tale.

On the 17th day of October, in the year of grace, 1764, in a dark, badly-paved, ill-lighted *cul-de-sac* of the good city of Paris, the wife of a poor labouring currier gave birth to a son. The

youngster grew up and waxed strong, despite the poverty of his parents, and the consequent hardships he had to encounter. When sufficiently old to learn a trade, he was apprenticed to his father, for the good man could not afford to keep his son long in idleness. So the young carrier worked hard all day long, and when the shades of evening fell, he frequented the theatre, imbibed more wine than he had any right to do, got into any number of scrapes, and fought some incalculable number of battles, in most of which, if he himself is to be judged worthy of credence, he was victorious. Like the great majority of his fellow-countrymen, Bouffebarbe was endowed with a heart highly susceptible of the influences of beauty; and our readers must not be astonished to learn that he had scarcely attained man's estate before his affections were irrevocably bestowed—in other words, before he fell over head and ears in love. The lady to whose charms Bouffebarbe rendered homage (and whose name we are sorry to say we are unable to gather) was young, pretty, and by profession a *revandeuse*—*Anglicè*, a stocking-mender. Now, it was in the year of grace, 1784, that Bouffebarbe yielded his heart to the seductions of his charmer. In those days stockings were a luxury; the toes and heels of them should have undergone far greater deterioration than at the present time is necessary before their possessor thought of throwing them aside, and consequently a stocking-mender of repute drove a thriving trade.

Bouffebarbe's inamorata carried on her business in an old hogs-head, which lay on its side at the juncture of two well-frequented streets. These streets we could name, but inasmuch as they have long passed away, and been numbered among the things that were, our information would be of very little use to the reader, so we pass it by. It can readily be imagined that a great deal of the success in business of a *revandeuse* depended upon her capacity of amusing her customers, by chatting affably with them, retailing all the petty gossip and scandal of the *quartier*, and standing well with all the neighbours generally. Here there was an absolute premium upon coquetry, a tremendous incitement to flirtation. When our reader knows that Bouffebarbe's sweetheart was *petite*, had a slim waist, brilliant blue eyes, and the light hair which then, as now, is the standard of beauty, the pink and acme of feminine attractions in the eyes of the Parisian; in a word, when he learns that she stood without compeer among the entire body of stocking renovators, he will readily understand that quite a number came to the front of the recumbent barrel whose stockings were in the best possible condition, and that a great many others hunted up right and left stockings which had been subject to hard usage, and bore the signs of it, simply, purely, and wholly because thereby they might purchase the pleasure of half-an-hour's conversation with *la*

belle revandeuse. Many a time poor Bouffebarbe's heart was with anguish torn when passing, midst the hurry of business, in sight of the barrel where his treasure lay, he perceived some masculine form bending low in animated conversation with the lovely inmate. The young currier had made great progress in the lady's affection, and soon reached that interesting and exciting stage at which a lover feels authorised to account himself the sole recipient and director of the minutest attentions of the fair one, and regards every male being who dares hold converse otherwise than in his own presence and under his own supervision as a mortal enemy. There was one person in particular whom Bouffebarbe thought visited the recumbent hogshead rather oftener than he had any legitimate business, and whom he therefore regarded with the greatest aversion. This individual was a military man, a member of *la garde française*. Everybody knows that, traditionally and conventionally, the men whose trade is slaughter are very successful suitors, and that they take a malicious pleasure in thwarting the loves of men of peaceful mood. Day after day, Bouffebarbe endured the agony of seeing this particular *garde française* before the barrel, showing off his uniform, clanking his sabre, and laughing long and loud. In time he imagined *la revandeuse* cooled somewhat towards himself, and preferred the company of *Monsieur le Militaire*. This was quite enough to inflame the rage of the young currier, and incite within him an intense thirst for vengeance. Revenge he determined to have, and he took a fatal one. Watching the soldier one afternoon, he saw him saunter up to the novel *boutique* of the fair inconstant. The chat which ensued seemed to the despised suitor more animated, familiar, and prolonged than usual. Bouffebarbe rushed up, with his keen currier's knife in his grasp, a few angry words ensued, and before the soldier could guess what was to come, the infuriated young man had stabbed him to the heart. The unfortunate *garde* fell without as much as a groan, and was dead before he came to the ground. Bouffebarbe's fiery French blood was now fairly up to the boiling point. Having thus murderously disposed of his rival, he turned to the old barrel, and with frenzy tore away the footless stocking which dangled from it as the fit emblem of the profession followed by the occupant. He then kicked the "shop" itself to pieces with his heavy *sabots*, and *la revandeuse* was rescued, in a swooning state, from the midst of the *débris* by the throng whom the news of the fatal affray had almost instantaneously collected. Bouffebarbe was quickly seized, the fatal weapon wrested from him, and he was borne off to prison. When his trial came on, he had no defence whatever to make, and only alleged as extenuating circumstances his wild jealousy and the mania excited by the sight of his hated rival thus engaged with his sweetheart.

The French courts, who have earned immortal fame for discovering *circonstances atténuantes* in cases where no other court under Heaven could find them out, took the state of his feelings into consideration, and, instead of ordering his immediate decapitation, condemned him to life-long labour in the king's galleys. Little the judges thought to what a protracted detention they adjudged him. In the vast majority of cases it meant some eight or ten years' hard work, and then a wretched death. In this instance it signified something very different, as we shall see. After his trial and conviction, Bouffébarbe was kept for some time in one of the Paris prisons, and what kind they were in 1784 it would not be difficult to imagine. He was detained there because the authorities did not deem it worth their while to send a military guard all the way to Toulon for the sake of poor broken-hearted Bouffébarbe alone; so they kept him in *durance vile* until a sufficient number of unfortunates had been sentenced to the same hard fate, The quota was not long in being made up, and the envoy started.

Bouffébarbe's description of the manner in which the criminals were carried would remind one of the transportation of a menagerie; and the caution exercised appears to have been much like that thought necessary in the safe keeping of wild beasts. The prisoners were conveyed from Paris to Toulon in a cart called a *hacquet*. It was much like a very long box, open at the top, the sides of which were composed of wooden railings. It swung upon a single pair of wheels, and was dragged by a sorry pair of horses. The unfortunates, *condamnés à travaux forcés*, had heavy iron collars round their necks, all of which were connected by a strong chain; so that if one of the gang attempted so much as to stoop he ran a chance of strangling the remainder. They were both handcuffed and fettered; moreover, they were firmly bound to the side of the cart; so that motion was impossible, and attempts at escape out of the question. The only excuse for treating human beings in this manner is that the criminals conveyed to the *bagne* were, with scarce an exception, a set of hardened ruffians, pretty sure to find out and make a bad use of any liberty or ease which humanity would be foolish enough to grant to them. However, it is beyond question that, if a royal commission sat, and held an inquiry as to what kind of vehicle was the most uncomfortable to travel in, would jolt the most, and be likeliest to upset, the *hacquet* would respond to their queries better than any ancient or modern machine of which account is extant. The safe-keeping of the criminals was by no means committed alone to the chains, and manacles, and fetters; a strong squad of dragoons, with drawn sabres, clattered along the road beside the cart, and made a regular uproar in each petty hamlet and village they passed through, with the rattling of their accoutrements, and their cries of *Vive le Roi!*

Long was the way, bad were the roads, many the delays; yet Bouffébarbe arrived at Toulon in the spring of 1785, to remain a toiling, wretched slave during the natural period of his life. How long was that? France was a kingdom, and his majesty Louis XVI. swayed its destinies. The terrible Revolution had not yet broken out; and only an attentive observer of things in general could detect the little commotion in certain classes of society—the increasing popularity of certain rival and dangerous doctrines, which preceded its advent like the rumblings of a distant thunderstorm.

Poor Bouffébarbe, in his one and twentieth year, found all his dreams of felicity dissipated, like a mountain-fog at sunrise. *La belle revandeuse* was lost to him for ever; and, though the hated *garde* was sent to settle his little account in the world that we ken nothing of, that, far from alleviating his sorrow, was, as we have seen, the chief cause of it. He knew enough of the world to tell him that the sweetheart, for whom he had brought such a terrible fate upon himself, would not redden her dear eyes by five minutes' crying for himself at the galleys, or the guardsman in his grave; but would procure a new hogshead, mend stockings as gaily as ever, and, in a little time, transfer her affections to another individual less ardent and more lucky than either. Doubtless, Bouffébarbe, gazing over the expanse of the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean, philosophised the matter out, and strove to be contented with his lot.

Then the Revolution came, and the ricketty throne of the Bourbons, propped up by bayonets, kept together by corruption and extravagance, was ever thrown and borne about on the shoulders of the Parisian mob in hideous riot and saturnalia. The well-meaning fool, Louis XVI., paid, on the guillotine, the penalty of the transgressions of those who went before him. His hapless queen suffered the same fate. The Reign of Terror commenced. The noble and proud, the titled and of high estate, the soldier and the priest, the orator, the statesman; women, young, beautiful, and talented,—were swept away by the hundreds, nay, by the thousands. Security and tranquillity were at an end, and murder reigned supreme. Toulon, too, had a guillotine of its own, and many were its victims of all ranks, of each sex. The young *forçat* might well have been happy and contented on board his hulk. Then the English came and established themselves in the town, and Bouffébarbe was transferred to a prison for safe keeping, while criminals far deeper stained with guilt, on whose head lay all crimson and heavy the blood not of one but of thousands of their fellow men, were at the head of the State.

A French army advanced against Toulon; batteries were planted in commanding positions. The siege commenced, and Bouffébarbe knew that a keen-eyed young Corsican, an adventurer in the French

service, called Napoleon Buonaparte, was directing their fire. The British were compelled to quit, after setting fire to the French fleet and the warehouses and arsenals on the quays. Bouffébarbe and the rest of the convicts were employed in extinguishing the conflagration.

Then after years had passed, an unusual bustle pervaded the dockyards, and the *forçats* were kept hard at work loading men-of-war with provisions, shot and shell, powder and ball: General Bonaparte was going to Egypt, to destroy the British power in the East. Again came the cry of *Vive l'Empereur!* More years, plenty of glory, and more than enough of fighting for Frenchmen, Bouffébarbe happily not putting himself forward for a share of either. Jena, Arcola, Auerstadt, Austerlitz, Salamanca, Vittoria, Badajos, Betadina, Moscow, Leipsig, Waterloo! With what grand contrasts of gloomy and brilliant shame, and glory, victory and defeat, French history was adorning her immortal tablets! And all the time poor Bouffébarbe was working away in the *bagne*. *A bas l'Empereur! Vive le Roi!* The Bourbons back again. Quaint-looking, prim old gentlemen, with grey hair or antiquated wigs, long strangers to their country, parade the streets of Paris with looks of quiet but heartfelt triumph. Bouffébarbe, visage darkened with exposure to wind and weather, and his hair lost shade after shade of its black,—Bouffébarbe is an old man, and his Majesty Charles the Tenth, in consideration of his advanced age and lengthened servitude, orders that a small quantity of tobacco be given to him every day, and his work reduced. Another revolution. Down with *Charles le Dix!* *Vive Louis Philippe, Roi des Français!* More years, more political changes in France; the monarchy is for a third time upset, and a republic established. Bouffébarbe saw all, and well might he smile at the inconstancy and mutability of things human. The democratic government is knocked on the head, and the Empire once more is dominant under the auspices of Louis Napoleon III., the *forçat* of Toulon a living witness of all. In 1864, Bouffébarbe completed his hundredth year, and the twenty-ninth of his *travaux forcés* at the *bagne* of Toulon. The attention of his Imperial Majesty was drawn to this singular instance of longevity, and he graciously deigned to decree that the venerable convict should be set at liberty. Bouffébarbe was free—free to come, free to go where he pleased. Liberty would have been of little use to him had not the Emperor generously awarded him a pension which, moderate as it was, amply sufficed for all his wants. After an absence of eighty years Bouffébarbe returned to Paris. The memory of his crime had died out more than half a century before. The place where it was committed had undergone such

changes that he could not discover its site. He then set about looking up his relatives, and he found them without much difficulty. The grandson of his elder brother was an aged man, and had his own grandchildren playing about him. He had heard in his youth of Bouffebarbe and his crime. The story of his life was like a dark tradition in the family, and many a moral lesson had been derived from it at the fireside. Judge their astonishment on hearing that the man who had been condemned to penal servitude four-fifths of a century ago was alive and actually in Paris. But Bouffebarbe would not accept their hospitality. Perhaps he thought that, however kindly they might treat him, they could never look upon him without thinking of his crime, and he preferred to live alone, face to face with the spirit of the departed dead and his remorse. Where was *la belle revandeuse*? The flowers had bloomed and withered full forty times over her grave, and her great grandchildren were married men and women. Alone, all alone in the world, was the slayer of the *garde française*. Not a single face in Paris was familiar to him. All his friends, his companions, had journeyed before him on the long road to eternity. Darkness and the shades of death hid them from mortal sight. Yet he lingered behind. The great reaper seemed amused at his own remissness, and toyed and coquetted with the old man, who awaited his summons with calmness. The grave was life to him; it brought him before the playmates he sported with, and the friends he loved. The spirit-land was peopled by all he knew or cared for. In this mortal world he was dead. His heart still feebly throbbed, his pulse beat slowly; but all that makes life pleasant or agreeable was buried with the past and its dead. What an essay on the littleness of human greatness is written in the life of the currier of Paris! Empires rose and fell, dynasties flourished and passed away, the face of the civilised world was changed; science grew more noble and art more divine while he wore away his eighty long years in the *bagne* at Toulon. Still he lives and moves, faint shadow and dim outline of an age gone by. Men look upon him as he creeps by, and though age is imprinted on his brow, and its iron weight bends him to the earth, they little think what vicissitudes of fame and fortune the world has gone through since that bowed frame was erect, that wrinkled countenance had the fresh bloom of youth, and he played, happy, and lighthearted, in the streets of Paris.

THE HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF THE ENGLISH
CIVIL WAR OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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PART I.

STATE OF PARTIES AND OPINIONS AT CHARLES' ACCESSION—PETITION OF RIGHTS AND GRIEVANCES AGAINST WHICH IT WAS DIRECTED.

IN reading the lectures of the brilliant Cambridge Professor of Modern History, I was struck by a quotation with which he commences a chapter. It runs thus: " 'I have taken in hand,' said Sir Francis Drake once to the crew of the immortal 'Pelican,' 'that which I know not how to accomplish, yea, it hath even bereaved me of my wits to think of it.' "

I gather confidence, however, as I learn from the Professor a lesson, which conscience confirms, that "events which to the theorist and the pedant are merely monstrous and unmeaning, may explain themselves easily enough to the man who will put himself in his fellow creatures' place, who will give them credit for being men of like passions with himself, who will see with their eyes, feel with their hearts, and take for *his* motto, *Homo sum; nil humani alienum a me puto*—"I am a man; nothing proper to man is foreign to me."

At the commencement of my undertaking I am beset by the difficulty of which honest John Rushworth complains in the preface to his laborious work. "My business in the coming work is to render a faithful account of several traverses of state, and of the most important passages in debate between the respective advocates for prerogative and liberty. If you demand why my collection commences so early, and starts at such a distance of time so remote, I must answer that it was at first my purpose to begin with the Parliament which met November 3rd, 1640; but after I had perused, ordered, and compared my printed and manuscript relations of the first year of that Parliament, I found they pointed at and were bottomed upon some action of the late king in dissolving the four preceding parliaments, and thereupon the zeal I had to clear the truth of the differences between the king and parliament forced me to a larger adventure."

A lecturer may be wearisome and yet useful, but above all things, he should seek after truth. And herein consists the greatest difficulty which besets my path. Strive as we will to be impartial in dealing with the character of the giants by whom the

royal prerogative was assailed and defended, our judgment is often the slave of our sympathies, and we make but slight distinction between the champions of fact and the heroes of fiction.

It has been suggested in the world of science that the sun does not set with undeviating regularity of motion, but rather moves by minute jerks, like the mechanism of a watch. So is it with history; causes gather intensity, and at intervals become events. The burthen of public oppression in the political, and of a narrow intolerance in the religious world, had been borne with increasing discontent, until, conscious of their strength, the people of England, sword in hand, sought redress of grievances. Some light will be thrown on subsequent events by a consideration of the state of the country at Charles's accession.

Prior to the Reformation, European sovereigns had—in theory, at least—formed part of a great commonwealth, presided over by the Supreme Pontiff. Under Henry the Eighth, this island, at no time very Ultramontane in its Romanism, seceded from communion with Catholic Christendom, and thereby incurred some secular, and much religious isolation. The Church of England, the not very robust offspring of the variance between English King and Roman Pontiff, remained, like Mahomet's tomb, supported by two factions; the one content to retain much of the tradition and ritual of the older communion, the other disposed to consider nought done, while aught remained to do, to complete the severance of Romanism and Protestantism. The High Churchman would fain leave the King in possession of as much of the Papal supremacy as was consistent with the existence of a Church; the Puritan recognised no authority superior to private judgment. The position of an English king was, therefore, at this period, little to be envied. To foreign potentates he must ever seem a setter-forth of strange doctrines, and to one section, at least, of his own subjects, he must ever be an object of suspicion. King Charles, on his accession, might have said, with Hamlet—

“The times are out of joint; oh, cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set them right.”

The cause of liberty against prerogative had never yet been directly at issue. A lively sympathy between sovereign and subject, an identity of likes and dislikes which Sallust assures us is the strongest bond of friendship, a few timely and gracious concessions to the rising power of the Parliament, had kept the nation loyal to Henry and Elizabeth, each English to the backbone. James, weak in character and undignified in appearance, was essentially a foreigner. During his inglorious reign the popular cause gained power; under his son it triumphed, and, to say the least of it, its triumph culminated in a blunder. Elizabeth had punished free

criticism by the mutilation of Stubbs, the author of an alleged libel; the victim, maimed of one hand, waved his hat with the other, and cried, "God save the Queen!" Prynne underwent the loss of his ears in a very different spirit. The sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and in the case of the Stuarts the foot of retribution was by no means lame. Charles succeeded, as by descent, to the follies of his sire, and to a position which involved the unhappy man in hopeless attempts to reconcile contradictions. A devoted, but not naturally an intolerant Anglican, he strove to encourage the growth of foreign Protestantism, with a due regard to the prerogative of Catholic monarchs; and, as a natural consequence, neither Protestant nor Catholic either trusted or feared him. He strove at home to make an antiquated theory of kingly supremacy consistent with the aspirations of a thriving, questioning people, but the new wine did not suit the old bottles. Priests and prelates were unwelcome pastors and masters to folks who refused to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely, and the charmings of Charles were not always wise.

Hudibras' commencement—

"When civil dudgeon first grew high,
And men fell out, they knew not why,"

aptly coincides with Lord Clarendon's remark that "the like peace and plenty, and universal tranquillity was never enjoyed by any nation for ten years together before the unhappy troubles began." Unfortunately for the apologists for the Royal cause, they prove too much. Nothing is more conservative than prosperity. Without great and urgent reasons, men of the stamp of Elliot, Hampden, Holles, St. John, and Cromwell would not have been found combating to the death the royal will. It is not very difficult to detect the connection between the prosperity of the realm and its discontent. Jeshurun waxed fat and wicked, and the state of the English people was that of Jeshurun. The classes whom the valour of Howard, Hawkins, and Frobisher, the enterprise of Raleigh, and the genius of Shakespeare and Bacon had respectively freed, enriched, and ennobled, differed much from those who had addressed the Plantagenet and Tudor princes in slavish tones of adulation; but it was too deep a thing for the Royal philosophy to appreciate the difference.

On the 17th March, 1625, died James the First, the British Solomon, and on his death the cry "The king is dead—long live the king!" pretty well summed up the situation.

The policy of Charles differed little from that of his father. "When the king succeeded to the throne," says Burnet, "he was at first thought favourable to the Puritans, for his tutor and all his court were of that way." James, however, not only left his son

the benefit of his experience, of his solemn "Treatise against Witchcraft," his "Book of Sports," and his "Counterblast against Tobacco," but his favourites and his debts. It seems to be well established that the young king dealt frankly and royally with his first Parliament, summoned on the 7th of May, and consisting of 494 knights of the shire and burgesses.

Concerning the opinions entertained by these representatives of the people, there appears to be some diversity of opinion in the views entertained by Anglican and independent authorities. The balance of testimony seems to support the opinion of the learned Dr. Vaughan, that the doctrines of the party denominated Puritan were, both in the house and in the country, somewhat in the ascendant; but the commons were dutiful and loyal. Hallam, in reviewing the result of the contest between the king and the commons, states that "there can be no more erroneous opinion than that of such as believe that the desire of overturning the monarch produced the civil war, rather than the civil war brought on the former." And, again, he maintains that the death of Charles I. was pushed forward rather through personal hatred and superstition than out of any notion of its necessity to ensure a republican administration. A dislike felt by the house to Buckingham seems to have been the exciting cause of the jealousy evinced by the commons towards the king. To his earnest appeal for funds to carry on a war undertaken against the great bugbear of Protestant England, the Spanish dominion, Parliament granted no greater sum than £112,000; not more than three months pay to the army which overthrew him.

However well or ill-founded, just or unjust, might be the prejudice entertained by the commons of England of what we should now term the foreign policy of the king, events went far to justify it. The glorious wars waged by Queen Elizabeth, however they might conduce to the power of the crown, certainly administered to the pride of the subject. The inglorious campaigns of Charles and Buckingham had no such conclusion. We can almost detect a vein of irony in Hume's assertion, that the Puritan party beheld with pleasure the king involved in a foreign war, which rendered him every day more dependent on the Parliament. Views on theology may change, but it is foreign from the nature of Englishmen, at all times, to glory in the shame of their country.

From whatever point of view we regard the conduct of the king at the commencement of his reign, there is much which deserves the severest censure. The attempt to exclude the Earl of Bristol from his seat in the upper house was as arbitrary as the idea of disqualifying leading members of the opposition, in the lower house, by conferring on them the disqualifying office of sheriffs, was disingenuous. The arrest of Sir Dudley Digges and Sir John Elliott,

again, seems to have been as much an act of folly as of tyranny. The most remarkable feature in the king's character indeed was his utter inability to read the signs of the times, and we note with amazement the singular fatality which attended his best endeavours at being gracious.

To err is the common lot of humanity; to be angry and sin not is a difficult task, but in us not altogether unjust anger. To offend almost all classes was a mischance peculiar to Charles I. There was, however, one section of the community to which the king was uniformly faithful; but, with his wonted ill-luck, the ruin of the cause resulted from the monarch's favour. "Save me from my friends" might almost form part of the liturgy of the Anglican Church, and from no friend had it greater need to be delivered than from its supreme head. In temporal matters the lot of the king resembled that of the buyer of the Sibylline books—every successive attempt at a composition made matters worse. Both in domestic and foreign policy the king was hopelessly at variance with the representatives of his people; every appeal for a supply was met by a demand for a redress of grievances. Dr. Vaughan well sums up the state of affairs during the session of the second Parliament in these words: "Moderate men might in some instances have suggested an abatement of the claims preferred by the commons, or rather, might have recommended their seeking a more gradual removal of disorders which had risen gradually, making a selection for the present from the multitude of existing grievances of such as were most pressing. But the same class of persons could not fail to admit, that a king who evidently scorned the prayer of his subjects ought not to calculate on being greatly beloved by them, or to expect implicit obedience from them. Were it certain that the patriots might have accomplished more, if they had attempted less, it surely is not less certain that the monarch who refused to hear them in anything, except when tendering him their substance, could not reasonably expect that any great sacrifices of that sort should be made in his favour. The advocates of the people, whom it was considered proper to treat thus distantly and haughtily, may have passed the bounds of prudence in one or two instances of their proceedings; but it is questionable whether, in a single instance, they had passed the bounds of constitutional right, and their seemingly unmanageable feeling should by no means be judged of apart from the temper with which they had to contend, a temper that bespoke nothing but faithlessness and enmity with regard to those liberties which to themselves were dearer than existence. To determine that nothing shall be granted, because too much is required, may be very common, and may, sometimes, be very foolish. Charles and his advisers should have known this."

The Constitutional issue, practically involved at this time, was limited to the control assumed by the commons over the revenue arising from tonnage and poundage. Previous monarchs had enjoyed it for life; it was voted to Charles but for one year, and its renewal, at a period of urgent need, could only be purchased by great and humiliating concessions. Every schoolboy is acquainted with the concise form of indictment—attempting to govern without the sanction of Parliament—on which Charles has, in the judgment of posterity, been convicted. But a little consideration will show how fatally his policy was calculated to unite the maximum of opposition with the minimum of benefit. At the risk of trespassing beyond the chronological order which I had intended to observe, I venture to call attention to the results of this short-sighted policy. A revival of almost obsolete feudal claims went far to alienate a loyal and contented gentry, grants of oppressive monopolies burdened the consumers of every necessary of life; the maritime population were vexed by grievous interferences with their trade, and a levy of ship-money on inland counties added their inhabitants to the already long list of malcontents. The roll of Charles's enemies was, however, not complete without the addition of the kingdom of Scotland and the City of London.

The arbitrary introduction of canons for governance, and of a liturgy for worship, by the kirk of Scotland in the year 1637, wounded the pride of the sensitive nation as much as it grieved the national conscience, while the city proper had just cause to complain of a ruler who, less scrupulous than William the Norman, rode rough-shod over its privileges, imposed a fine of £70,000 for an alleged breach of its charter; and in the most trivial particulars testified the utmost contempt for municipal rights.

The Parliament of 1629 was a notable one, not only for the sake of the measures it passed, but for the names of those who constituted it. In this Parliament, for the first time sat Oliver Cromwell, burgess for the borough of Huntingdon; nor were his associates unworthy of him.

In this year passed the Petition of Right, which may well be deemed a confirmation of the great Charter. It runs thus: "That no man shall pay any tax, or such like charge, without Act of Parliament, or be confined or molested concerning the same. That no freeman (a term borrowed from the Great Charter), be imprisoned or detained but in such manner as the law directs. That all martial law be revoked." One of the most outspoken supporters of this salutary declaration was Sir Thomas Wentworth, better known as Lord Strafford, of whom Carlyle says that he was the one supremely able man the king had.

There was but cold comfort in the terms used by Charles to

signify his assent to the bill. In lieu of giving the gracious answer, "Let right be done as is desired," the king spoke thus: "The king willeth that right be done according to the laws and customs of the realm, and that the statutes be put in due execution, and that his subjects may have no cause to complain of any wrong or oppression contrary to their just rights and liberties, to the preservation whereof he holds himself in conscience as well obliged as of his prerogative." Rejecting for some time the advice of his best counsellors, the king persisted in his answer only to yield ultimately as untenable a position he had deliberately chosen as a coign of vantage. On the 17th of June the commons carried their point; the royal assent, in the time-honoured form, was given to the petition. The following gracious words succeeded the delivery of it: "I assure you my maxim is, that the people's liberties serve to strengthen the king's prerogative, and the king's prerogative to defend the people's liberties; and now, if the Parliament have not a happy conclusion, the fault is yours, and I am free from it.

The fact that the king had, prior to giving his unconditional assent to the bill, obtained from the judges an expression of their opinion that its terms admitted of evasion, throws some doubt on the sincerity of the king's acceptance of it, and this doubt is confirmed by the circumstance that, in a number of copies circulated by his majesty, he made it appear that his first opinion of it had been his last.

It would be well, at this time, to give a brief account of the tribunals against which the petition was directed, by which tribunals money was levied, and freemen were detained. The Court of Star Chamber, of which we find such frequent mention in the histories of this reign, was an institution well suited, by the elasticity of its jurisdiction, to be made the instrument of despotism. The very origin of the name is lost in obscurity; some antiquarian deduced the term "Star" from a Hebrew word signifying covenant, and hazarded a guess that the chamber was so called from its having been originally a receptacle of Jewish documents. The mention of such a derivation conjures up thoughts of Shylock's bond. Fanciful as this parentage of the word is, Sir Edward Coke's imagination takes a higher flight, and he suggests that, haply, the ceiling of the chamber was decorated with stars. Haply it was. Much more pedantic is the definition given in Rushworth's "Memorials," that "the name is given according to the nature of the judges thereof, and it may be so justly called because the stars, in common opinion, have no light but what is cast upon them from the sun by reflection, it being a representative body; and as King James was pleased to say, when he sat there in person, representation must cease when the person is present." However the name may be formed, Hallam

leaves no doubt as to the reality of the power exercised by this terrible tribunal. He records the protest of the lawyers against its jurisdiction; and, indeed, we find Sir Thomas Smith, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, intimating his opinion that it trenched too much upon the common law of England. Hallam gives many instances of the subjects originally treated there—such as questions of prize, and other points of international law. Subsequently, perjury, riot, and all kinds of misdemeanors, were cognisable in the Star Chamber. The mode of process, we learn, was sometimes of a summary nature, the accused person being privately examined, and his examination read in the court. If he was thought to have confessed sufficient to deserve sentence, it was immediately awarded, without any formal trial or written process. It was competent for the Court to adjudge any punishment short of death: fine or imprisonment were, of course, the most usual; the pillory, whipping, branding, and cutting off the ears, grew into use by degrees. The reproach of arbitrary extension of jurisdiction does not wholly fall on the government of Charles; but, as far as a history of the proceedings in the Star Chamber is recorded, they seem much more numerous and violent in the present reign than in the two preceding. Such was the tribunal which inflicted on British subjects—Leighton, Prynne, and Bastrich, men of standing and culture—fine, imprisonment, and mutilation, of such a character as to evoke the indignant sympathy of men little inclined to concur in their sentiments. The most trifling loss of temper or breach of decorum on the part of those capable of paying was visited with exactions of a most iniquitous amount.

More allied to the Inquisition in its character was the Court of High Commission, established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as a kind of custodian of doctrine. Amongst kindred subjects of jurisdiction, it possessed power to inquire of all heretical opinions, seditious contempts, conspiracies, and slanderous words. In the constitution of this Court, the prelatie element was very strong. One Bernard, a popular lecturer, was fined £10,000, and excommunicated, for testifying a Calvinistic dislike to Laud and his doctrines; while Smart, a prebendary of Durham, was imprisoned for no less than eleven years, and that notwithstanding the passing of the petition of right. It was this Court, and not the Star Chamber, as stated by Hallam, which fined Sir Giles Allington £12,000 for giving his niece in marriage without the royal assent, and to the payment of the fine was superadded the condemnation to do penance at St. Paul's Cathedral, and at the Church of St. Mary, Cambridge.

The question of ship-money is, notwithstanding its intrinsic dryness, one bearing so closely on the fate of Charles, that I cannot escape the labour of giving some account of it. In the absence of

Parliamentary supplies to the king, such urgent need was there of funds that no claim resting in the remotest degree on legality or prescription could pass unnoticed. In itself, the obnoxious feature in the levy of ship-money by Charles was that he thought to extend its operation from the maritime counties, by which it had hitherto been borne, to the whole nation. It is admitted by Dr. Vaughan that the yearly revenue derived from it—some two hundred thousand pounds—was faithfully applied, as a fleet of sixty sail soon began to assert the supremacy of the English flag in the narrow seas. Prejudiced as Lord Clarendon has been considered in favour of the royal cause, a great constitutional question seldom fails to receive ample, and, indeed, courteous treatment at his hands. Scarcely a more eloquent and sustained piece of reasoning is to be found in our language than that in which he treats of Hampden's case. The fact is well-known that, after some years, Hampden stood forward as the champion of the popular party in refusing payment of a sum in itself ludicrously small—some twenty or thirty shillings. It must be borne in mind, however, that this assessment did not necessarily present the whole extent of Hampden's liability, and that the amount at issue was taken, as is frequently the case now-a-days, as a test of a larger question of legality. The county of Bucks was rated at £500, and Hampden was a large landed proprietor. On the case being argued in the Court of Exchequer Chamber—a perfectly legal tribunal, not to be confounded with the Star Chamber—seven of the twelve judges, namely, Finch, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Jones, Berkeley, Vernon, Crawley, Trevor, and Weston, gave judgment for the Crown. Brampton, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and Davenport, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, pronounced for Hampden, but on technical reasons, and adhering to the majority on the principal question. Denham, another judge of the same court, gave a short written judgment in favour of Hampden. But Justices Croke and Hutton, men of considerable reputation and experience, displayed a most praiseworthy intrepidity in denying, without the smallest qualification, the alleged prerogative of the Crown and the lawfulness of the writ for ship-money. The royal plaintiff took but little by his verdict. Clarendon avers:—"And here I cannot but again take the liberty to say that the circumstances and proceedings in those new extraordinary cases, stratagems, and impositions, were very impolitic, and even destructive to the service intended. And if the business of ship-money, being an imposition by the State under the notion of necessity, upon a prospect of danger which private persons could not modestly think themselves qualified to discern, had been managed in the same extraordinary way as the royal loan (which was the imposing the

five subsidies after the second Parliament, spoken of before) was, men would much easier have submitted to it, as it is notoriously known that pressure was borne with much more cheerfulness before the judgment of the king than ever it was after—men before pleasing themselves with doing somewhat for the king's service, as a testimony of their affection, which they were not bound to do; many really believing the necessity, and therefore thinking the burden reasonable; others observing that the advantage to the king was of importance, when the damage to them was not considerable, and all assuring themselves that when they should be weary or unwilling to continue the payment, they might resort to the law for relief, and find it."

The rest of his criticism is too prolix to admit of transcription, but his censure of the conduct of the majority of the judges is worthy of attention. "The damage and mischief cannot be expressed that the Crown and State sustained by the deserved reproach and infamy that attended the judges, by having made use of, in this, and like acts of power, there being no possibility to preserve the dignity, reverence, and estimation of the laws themselves, but by the integrity and innocency of the judges."

After this meagre triumph over liberty, Charles might echo the speech of Pyrrhus, "One more such victory, and I am undone;" but, unhappily, the next important occasion in which king and subject were at variance was not a victory, but much otherwise. The king at this time resembled strongly the image beheld in King Nebuchadnezzar's vision: "the head was of fine gold, the breast and the arms of silver, the belly and the thighs of brass, the legs were of iron, the feet part of iron, and part of clay." In Scotland, the clay part was sadly conspicuous. "The bishops of Scotland," says Burnet, "fell, on the passing of the liturgy, on a body of canons for the worship and government of that church. These were never examined in any public assembly of the clergy, but were managed by three or four aspiring bishops." Carlyle makes merry at the expense of the tulchan (dummy-calf bishops), whom James I. instituted as the champions of Episcopacy in the northern part of the island; but to his successor they appeared rather as the milch kine which drew the ark of the Lord, and Charles grievously erred in his estimate of their strength, and the affection with which they were regarded. The Service-book was a failure, Jean Geddes' stool hurled at the head of the offending dean in St. Giles's Church, Edinburgh, was only the herald of other and more deadly missiles. The Puritans of the south, holding Calvinism in common with the northern Presbyterians, but carrying their views of Church government much farther, must have taken hope as they heard of the presence on English soil of an army of Scots, successfully resisting

the king, whose ancestors had commanded the unreasoning devotion of their forefathers. The nature of the English levies may be surmised from Clarendon's remark, "If there had been none in the march but soldiers, it is most probable that a noble peace would have ensued, even without fighting, but the progress was more illustrious than the march, and the soldiers were the least part of the army, and least consulted with." What an anticipation of the march of the guards to Finchley!

Arbitrary power had been weighed upon the balances, and found wanting; the only expedient was the old one, the calling of another parliament, which had been now intermitted nearly twelve years.

The king it seemed had learned nothing, and forgotten nothing—note the speech from the throne. His majesty did not expect advice from them, much less that they should interfere in any office of mediation with the Scots, which would not be grateful to him, but that they should, as soon as might be, give his majesty such a supply as he might provide for the vindication of his honour by raising an army. Afterwards he would give them time enough to represent any grievances to him, and a favourable answer to them.

Few more momentous speeches can be called to memory than that in which Mr. Pym commenced his enumeration of grievances under which the realm laboured. Such a speech must have been well worthy of attention, for Pym was a man of mark in the house, no common brawler, but a master of verbal fence. Commencing his address with commendation of the virtue of his majesty, he ended by proving that virtue questionable. Even at this juncture peace might have been concluded, the lower house having amply vindicated its own dignity, displayed no factious spirit, and might have satisfied the royal demands for twelve subsidies, represented by nearly £900,000, to be raised in three years, but for the insolent expression by Sir Harry Vane of what purported to be the monarch's views. He said, that if they should pass a vote for the giving the king a supply, if it were not in the proportion in his majesty's message, it would be rejected. Whether or not Sir Harry Vane evolved this message from his own consciousness, or whether he exaggerated his royal master's view by excess of zeal, is a moot point of history. The result was, Parliament failed to effect the purpose for which it had been called, and, like its precursor, it was dissolved.

SOPHRONINUS

SOPHRONINUS was born at Thebes, a celebrated city, the capital of Bœotia, situate on the banks of the river Ismeus. His father, descended from an ancient Corinthian family, had settled there, where he died. His mother did not long survive the death of her husband; so that, at the age of twelve, Sophroninus was left an orphan without fortune or protectors.

Daily did the poor boy visit the tomb of his parents, where he would weep and pray. Not having the means of procuring food, he must have starved, but for the kindness of an aged man, a priest of the temple of Minerva, who, observing the destitution of the orphan, divided his scanty allowance of food, and gave to him a share. One day, while wandering through the city, he accidentally entered the studio of the celebrated sculptor, Paraxililes. He stood for a moment transfixed, when he beheld the wonderful works of art which were there displayed. The mighty master observed the devotion of the boy, who modestly and humbly approached him, yet with the boldness and grace which only belongs to childhood, saying—"Give me a chisel and hammer, and teach me to become as great a man as you are, and I will worship you as a god."

Paraxililes looked at the beautiful child; he was struck by his appearance; the fire which sparkled in the orphan's eyes charmed him. He called him to him, and embraced him caressingly and tenderly. "Yes," said he, "I will be your master; I will teach you my art, and perhaps some day you will prove yourself a worthy successor of me, when I shall be no more." The solemn tone of voice in which this was spoken affected the heart of the young Sophroninus—he wept, but they were tears of joy and gratitude.

The boy was now installed in the studio of the greatest sculptor the world had ever known; whose works were regarded by all with wonder; even at the present time few of our greatest artists can excel or equal the beauties of those statues which have been preserved and handed down to us. The orphan was now happy; he loved his master, whose friendship was unbounded. He showed his gratitude by earnest application to his work, and eagerness for the acquirement of knowledge. His talent for sculpture soon developed itself. At the age of eighteen he produced works which would not have shamed the hand of his great master.

When Sophroninus, cherished and encouraged by the good Paraxililes, was enjoying the applause of all who visited the studio, he was suddenly deprived of his patron and friend. Paraxililes died, leaving to his pupil and adopted son a large sum of money.

Sophroninus was inconsolable. Thebes became odious to him.

He resolved to travel into distant countries, and there pursue his profession, and study. Nature had endowed him with a love for the beautiful. Every day added to his knowledge. He worked incessantly, and every work he completed exceeded, in completeness and perfection, the one he had last finished; so that, at the age of twenty, he was looked upon and considered the most worthy and talented disciple of the great Paraxililes.

After some time spent in travel and study, he resolved to settle in some quiet city. He chose Milot, a Grecian colony on the coast of Ionia, in Asia Minor, a country always celebrated for the salubrity of its climate and the genius of its inhabitants. He purchased a small estate. The house or cottage was well adapted to carrying out his objects. It was quite secluded, placed in a lovely situation, commanding a view of the sea, surrounded by tall trees and flowering shrubs. He brought with him several large blocks of the finest marble, and, having arranged everything to his taste, he commenced a grand work. Reputation, sometimes too slow in following merit, was not so to Sophroninus. His works were admired, and eagerly purchased; his fame soon spread, and his studio was daily thronged, much to his annoyance and inconvenience, by visitors.

He made for himself a code of laws to regulate the hours of the day. He devoted eight hours in his studio, two hours to study and reading—his favourite author was Homer, from whose works he enlarged his ideas, and found new subjects for his works—the rest he devoted to exercise and rest.

Everything seemed to prosper with him. He was happy; his talent commanded the admiration of all who had seen his sculptures. After his day's labours, he retired to his couch; satisfied with the day's task, and prepared for that which was to come, he thanked the gods, and resigned himself to sleep. This happiness, however, was doomed to be marred. One day, Aristeus, the first magistrate or governor of Milot, visited his studio. He was accompanied by his daughter, Canita. She surpassed in beauty all the beauties of Ionia; to look upon her was to love her. The young artist became enamoured; he had never before beheld so lovely a face and form. It was his first love; and so deeply had the blind boy's arrow entered his soul, he could not withdraw it. Canita, at that meeting, conquered him. He vowed himself her slave, but dared not declare himself. Aristeus was rich and powerful, and he felt the barrier between himself and his idol so impassable, he could only adore in secret.

During the visit of Aristeus and his lovely daughter, Sophroninus was so charmed by the beauty of Canita, he was almost deprived of the power of conversation; he stammered and hesitated. Aristeus, attributing his embarrassment to modesty,

endeavoured to encourage him by kind words. "Show us," said he, "your most beautiful statue; the world speaks highly of your talent." "Alas!" replied Sophroninus, "I wished to form a Venus with which I was well pleased, but I find I have not been successful." Saying this, he cast a timid glance on Canita, who in an instant perceived his meaning; she felt the compliment, and admired the expression and manner of the young sculptor. Cupid had strung his bow, and his arrow had struck home.

Aristeus, after expressing his admiration of the works of Sophroninus, left the studio, promising to return shortly; Canita saluted the artist with a gracious smile, who, so infatuated, so filled with love for his lovely visitor, could not collect his ideas. The charms of Canita engrossed his every thought; his studio was neglected; the work upon which he was engaged, a statue of Apollo, remained untouched; he wandered about the city hoping to obtain a glance of the idol of his soul.

Good fortune smiled on him; his growing popularity opened the doors of Aristeus to him; he was invited to the palace and received very graciously. A most liberal offer was made to him by the governor, to induce him to execute a work which he desired to have to embellish the grand hall of audience. The work was to be done in the palace, and Sophroninus was to remain there as a visitor. Gladly and joyfully he accepted the commission; he would be dwelling under the same roof—he would be near his love. The gallery of the palace contained sculpture executed by some of the greatest sculptors, among whom were to be seen two of the masterpieces of his beloved master, Paraxililes. He gazed upon them with rapture; but his whole thought was of Canita.

He reflected upon his position. The object of his dearest, fondest love, was the daughter of the richest and most powerful man in the city. Dare he avow his love? After musing deeply, and considering how best to proceed, he at last resolved to write to her. With trembling hand and palpitating heart he wrote, pouring out his whole soul to her. He, by means of some pieces of gold, procured the aid of a female slave belonging to the household of Aristeus, to her he entrusted the billet to give into the hands of Canita. Having done so, how anxiously and with what trepidation did he await a reply. But alas! his emissary proved treacherous; the letter, instead of being delivered to Canita, was placed in the hands of her father.

Aristeus became greatly irate, and immediately resolved to use the power he had; he called together his compeers, and not revealing to them the actual cause for thus summoning them, he stated that he had great suspicion that Sophroninus was a traitor, and so prevailed that an order was given for expelling him the city.

This order was immediately put in force, much to the surprise and sorrow of the love-sick artist. With a heavy heart he prepared to quit the place where his very soul was enchained. "I have drawn upon myself this, by daring to address one so far positioned above me. I bow to fate; but, wherever I wander, oh, Canita! thy image will for ever dwell with me; although my body is banished, my soul will remain here!" Slowly, and with a sad heart, he made his way to the fort, and embarked on board a Cretan vessel. It was immaterial to him to what country it was bound.

Canita was surprised at not seeing Sophroninus as usual at his work, for she would spend many hours watching him during his labour, and listening to his converse. She remarked this to her father, who endeavoured to conceal from her the real cause of the absence of the artist, by saying that the seniors of the city, doubting his faith, had ordered him to quit the country. Canita listened with astonishment; she could not, would not believe Sophroninus was a traitor—no, to her he appeared the embodiment of truth; her heart assured her such was so. She had read in the eyes of the young Theban all that she desired—and loved him; but had not dared to allow him to know her heart was his. She wept tears of real sorrow, and retired to her chamber.

Shortly after the banishment of Sophroninus, an extraordinary event spread consternation in Milot. Some pirates of Lemnos surprised one quarter of the city before the armed citizens could assemble to drive them off. The barbarians pillaged the Temple of Venus, and carried off the statue of the goddess. This statue was the Palladium of Milot, to its possession was attached the safety and felicity of the people.

The terrified inhabitants sent ambassadors to Delphos to consult Apollo. The oracle replied, that Milot would not be secure, or in safety, until a new statue of Venus, as beautiful as the goddess herself, should replace that which had been taken by the pirates.

Immediately on the return of the ambassadors proclamation was made throughout Greece that the most beautiful female in Milot, and five talents in gold, should be awarded to the sculptor who would fulfil the conditions of the oracle. Several famous artists arrived with their works. They were exposed in the Lyceum. The magistrates and the people admired them. One was selected at the most beautiful, but so soon as the statue was placed on the altar a supernatural power overturned it. Terror reigned among the people; they now cried "Where is Sophroninus? He alone can fulfil the decree of the oracle." They demanded that he should be sought for; they threatened Aristeus for having banished him. Messengers were sent to the port, where they learned

that the Cretan vessel in which the artist sailed had been lost at sea, and all the crew drowned, off the Isle of Naxos.

The enraged Milonians accused their governor: first, for his want of vigilance in not preventing the incursion of the barbarians; and secondly, for the unjust banishment of Sophroninus. A tumult ensued; they surrounded the house of Aristeus; they forced an entrance. The tears of Canita—her prayers could not save her father; he was seized, loaded with chains, and dragged to a dungeon. The people vowed he should not be liberated till the statue of Venus was replaced.

Canita, in despair, resolved to go herself to Athens, Corinth, or to Thebes, to seek for an artist who could realise the decree pronounced by the oracle. Before departing, she took measures to alleviate as well as she could the position in which her father was; she procured the services of a faithful slave to watch over him. This done, the lovely girl embarked on her almost hopeless errand. The first few days of the voyage seemed propitious, when suddenly a dreadful storm arose, which drove the vessel from her course, and obliged the pilot to take refuge in a harbour quite unknown to him. So soon as the anchor was dropped the storm ceased, and the sun shone forth in meridian splendour. Canita, wearied by the voyage and her mind ill at ease, expressed a wish to land, so that she might rest awhile. Preparations were immediately made to gratify her wishes. When she was safely landed, she threw herself on a bank of moss and slept. Her slumber was but of short duration. When she awoke she perceived that her slaves were still sleeping. She would not disturb them. She wandered about the island, hoping to meet with some of the inhabitants, who might inform her where she was cast. She clambered over the rocks, she ascended the highest hills, but met with no one. At length she perceived a lovely valley, divided by two rivulets, and covered with fruit trees. She paused to contemplate this beautiful view. Nature was there in the first days of spring. All the trees were in blossom; the drops of rain from the late storm still hung on the leaves; the butterflies with their golden wings fluttered around her; legions of bees hummed through the trees, not daring yet to touch the flowers, fearing to wet their transparent wings; while the birds of every hue, recovered from their fright, awoke echo with their songs.

Canita was entranced with the scene. She descended into the valley. Crossing the mountain, she perceived a small cottage, surrounded by trees, which concealed the entrance. She listened to the murmur of a small brook which meandered near to her, when she was startled by the sound of a lyre, the tones of which mingled with murmurs of the brook. Presently she heard a sweet and

tender voice. She listened, enraptured. She recognised the voice—it was that of her lover, Sophroninus. She screamed aloud. Our hero, alarmed, rushed from the cottage. He was struck, as if paralysed; but seeing Canita about to fall, he hastened to her, and clasped her in his arms. He could hardly believe his happiness reality. She had fainted. He bore her gently to the edge of the rivulet. A little water sprinkled on her beautiful face soon recovered her. He conveyed her to the cottage, with tender care. Refreshments were placed before her. The young Theban was mad with joy. In a short time, Canita recovered, and proceeded to relate the circumstances which had brought her there, and spoke of her father's imprisonment.

Sophroninus listened eagerly to all she said. At length he exclaimed—

“Take comfort, my beloved. I have the means to restore thy father to thee, to unfasten the chains that bind him, and free thy country from the terrors which afflict it. I have here a statue which will satisfy your goddess as well as your citizens. It is yours, Canita. I make but one request, which is, that you do not uncover it until it shall be placed on the altar of the Temple.” This, of course, was acceded to.

The lovers now began to relate their adventures since they were parted by the cruel edict of Aristeus. Sophroninus told how he had embarked on board the Cretan vessel, not caring whither it was bound; of its being driven ashore; of the death of the crew; and of his being saved, as it were, by a miracle; of his good fortune in recovering from the wreck, which was driven far inland, a block of marble and his tools; of his building his cottage, and commencing working at the statue, which he had but lately completed. Canita was entranced. On looking round, turn which way she would, she saw her name inscribed.

“Oh! let us hasten,” she said, “to find my slaves. They will convey this blessed treasure on board the vessel. Once there, let us pray the gods to waft us quickly to Milot. You, my best beloved, shall bear me company; and, whatever may be the event, nothing shall ever separate us.”

Sophroninus was transported. They set out for the beach; on the road they met the slaves, who, alarmed at not finding their mistress when they awoke, started in search of her. They were led back to the cottage, and bore the veiled statue to the vessel. Sophroninus, before leaving his cottage, thanked the Sylvan divinities for their care and protection; he laid all his tools on the altar on which had stood the statue, and consecrated them to the god Pan; he afterwards knelt and kissed the threshold of the door. He then embarked on board and set sail for Milot.

The voyage was soon accomplished, the wind was fair. It soon became known that the vessel approaching the port had on board the lovely daughter of Aristeus. Had she been successful? Did she have with her an artist whose talent would appease the anger of their divinity? When the name of Sophroninus was proclaimed, the air was rent with shouts of joy, the citizens became almost delirious; they knew full well his marvellous talent, and felt assured he was their deliverer.

With great care the statue, still veiled, was landed and borne to the temple; the people rushed in crowds thither, the interior was filled with anxious spectators. The statue was placed on the altar, but before it was unveiled Sophroninus desired that the imprisoned governor Aristeus should be present when the veil should be removed. The old man was soon conveyed to the temple.

Sophroninus, amidst a breathless silence, approached the altar. He ascended the steps, and, with a steady and firm hand, although his heart throbbed, he raised the veil, and discovered a magnificent statue of Venus—but the features were those of Canita!—they were so engraven on his heart, that though she was not near it mattered not, she was always present to his mind.

The goddess accepted the offering, the high priest proclaimed that the oracle was accomplished. The people rent the air with acclamations; they surrounded Sophroninus, and desired him to claim the reward. "Deliver Aristeus," he replied, "and I shall be well paid!" Some of the citizens hastened to the old man, but Canita waved them back: "No," said she; "let his deliverer set my father free." She led Sophroninus towards the old man; the gyves were soon unloosed; Aristeus, overcome by emotion, embraced the artist; for a moment he could not speak—his heart was full. At length he said, "Pardon—pardon my cruelty in banishing you! But Canita here shall thank you." Saying this, he placed her hand in that of Sophroninus, and prayed the gods to bless their union. All rejoiced in their happiness; they swore eternal fidelity at the foot of the statue. Joy reigned throughout the city.

A PEDESTRIAN'S FORTNIGHT ON THE COASTS OF DEVON AND CORNWALL

I SUPPOSE walking is the earliest mode of locomotion with which we mortals are acquainted; at any rate it certainly is the pleasantest, partly because of the exhilarating influence of the muscular action, and still more on account of its entire freedom. I cannot conceive a healthy being who is insensible to its fascinations, and these culminate in the very idea of a "walking tour." Nevertheless, twenty-five or thirty miles on a hot day in June, with a tolerably weighty knapsack on your back, is, at the beginning, no trifling work. And though, to the insinuation conveyed in the question—"Have you insured your life?" which was put to me, while expatiating warmly on the subject, a short time since, when the present tour was still in contemplation, I of course replied with the fitting amount of indignation, still I hardly felt quite so satisfied on the point as my words, no doubt, implied.

The projected trip was my first venture of the kind; and there is a mist of uncertainty always overhanging first ventures. On the other hand, my chosen companion appeared to have not the least hesitation at the idea of thirty-mile walks (he had been under training at a celebrated gymnastic establishment for some six months previously, which may perhaps in some measure account for his intensely athletic taste); and he used to observe most patronisingly—"Trust me, my dear fellow, thirty to forty miles a day is nothing, absolutely nothing, I assure you." Without exactly crediting his statement in its entirety, I yet shared fully in the longing for a free ramble in new scenes, and the more I revolved the scheme in my mind the more I was attracted by it, till at last, throwing aside all doubts, we agreed to devote a fortnight to our plan, and to start on a certain day in June for the little town, or village, of Watchet, in Somersetshire, thence to continue our course along the coast of Devon.

It was rather discouraging that the day should turn out miserably wet; nevertheless we met at the station considerably before the appointed time, and each perhaps somewhat inclined to show the "white feather," but each certainly anxious lest his misgivings should be suspected.

Watchet, which we reached about nine o'clock the same evening, is remarkably small, remarkably quiet, and, I regret to add, remarkably dirty. The chief occupation of its inhabitants appeared to be the loading and unloading of certain collier-traders. Watchet has one inn; perhaps there are more places called by the inhabi-

tants of that coally region "inns," but there is notably only one inn that anybody can stop at; and that inn boasts but one bedroom and one sitting-room for its visitors, who, however numerous, must perforce be content with their share, or trudge back three miles to the next village. We concluded, in the interests of morality, that females do not usually journey to Watchet.

On our arrival, in utter darkness, and still in pouring rain, we found a stout, bald-headed "commercial-man" in possession, and, being unacquainted with the aforesaid peculiarities of the place, were about to retrace our steps in search of some vacant shelter elsewhere. But the young and pleasant-looking landlady informed us with a smile that "She'd ask the gentleman," whereupon we deposited our bags, and patiently awaited the gentleman's decision. After surveying us steadily from head to foot for about five minutes, much as a drill-sergeant might be supposed to inspect two very raw recruits, he grunted out, "Well, I suppose I don't mind," and we sat down, much relieved. After a supper of bread and cheese, which was all the inn afforded, we retired, to prepare ourselves for the morrow's exertions. Our—I beg the "commercial gentleman's" pardon—*his* bedroom, was small, low-ceiled, with one little window, almost closed by dressing-table, glass, &c., and with two beds, both completely enclosed with curtains. The weather was hot. The room was carpeted. The gentleman was stout. Ventilation was imperfect, to say the least. And the inhabitants of Watchet don't use sheets, or, if they do, they are of a kind aptly denominated "blanket-sheets." So we cannot confess to the guilt of sleeping too soundly. However, I believe we did doze a trifle—and then it was morning. We were entertained during the process of dressing by an illustration and explanation, on the part of the tenant of the room, of a very ingenious method of fixing a false set of teeth, by suction, the repetition of which, at intervals of about one minute and a half, appeared to afford the "gentleman" intense satisfaction. Having thoroughly digested the new method, we strolled round the village to get an appetite for breakfast. Our impression of the place is given above. At 11 A.M. the pedestrian part of our trip began, with the best wishes, and frequently iterated directions of the landlord and landlady of the "Greyhound." We were accompanied by a considerable part of the population to the limits of the village. The first half-hour, the peculiar feeling produced by the knapsack was hardly one of pleasure; as we warmed, however, that feeling gradually wore off, and we rarely, unless very tired, suffered inconvenience.

And now we tasted some of the peculiar enjoyment of our trip. The weather, through the rain, had cooled considerably. We had been recommended the coast road, as far as a place called Blue

Anchor, as being shorter than the main road and more picturesque; and it certainly afforded us the benefit of continual variety and the fresh breezes from the channel. We trudged on, chatting and laughing, our spirits brightening with every step of the way, through Blue Anchor village to Dunster, with its curious tower rising on a wooded hill, and its finely-situated castle and extensive park, of both of which there is a good view from the road. Minehead, a mile-and-a-half farther, lying at the foot of a little promontory, showed its white houses glittering in the sun. About 1 p.m. we reached Porlock (thirteen miles), where we purposed resting, having fixed on Lynton as the limit of our first day's journey. There are few spots of interest in Porlock. It is a straggling, old-fashioned village, at one time rather important in county history. We lunched at a very respectable inn, "The Ship." On leaving, a steep climb of one-and-half miles up a most execrable road, brought us to the face of Exmoor, a wild, uncultivated district, covered with short grass and furze, and where the only signs of human handiwork were exhibited in the rough boundaries of the different "lots"—they could not be called fields—and the collections of fresh-cut and fresh-burnt turf at intervals. We looked in vain for the shaggy ponies which we had been led by our "Murray" to expect. The views along the channel from this point were very fine; and, on the other hand, the moor, stretching away as far as the eye could reach, and interspersed and undulated with heath-covered mounds, and with numerous roads striking off in every direction in white, winding stripes, made a charming variation. The guide-posts were in a somewhat neglected condition, inasmuch that, in one instance, we were completely at a loss how to proceed, and wandered some distance with no sign of help, but fortunately, however, at last striking the right track.

We traversed the moor for, I suppose, near upon nine miles. Somewhere in the middle of our way we reached the turnpike-gate dividing the counties of Somerset and Devon, where we rested a little, my friend recruiting himself with the only beverage obtainable, ginger-beer, while I, who have an unconquerable aversion to that description of liquor, reclined upon a bank close by, lying on my back on the incline in such a position that my knapsack, besides supporting itself on the turf, formed a kind of pillow for my shoulders, which method I found extremely resting, not only at that time but often subsequently. Here our long walk, loaded as we were, began to tell, more especially on myself, as I had unfortunately been persuaded to fill my knapsack with several "necessaries," such as a spare pair of trousers and a thick bathing-towel, articles which experience proved to be mere encumbrances; however, it would not do to give up now, so, bracing our energies with

determination not to allow ourselves to be vanquished at any cost, and mutual assurances that it was only the natural effect of the first day, we pushed on with what haste we could for Lynton. About ten miles from Porlock the road began to descend and wind round the side of the cliffs, and we soon came upon a small stone church standing by itself in a field, a farm-house being the only other building near. Passing this a short distance, a sudden opening showed us Lynmouth, the beauty of the situation of which passes description. It nestles at the entrance of a charming valley, between two high hills, one of which we were then descending, while on the side of the other, immediately fronting us, stood the tiny village of Lynton, more than half concealed by the thick trees that clothe the whole of the valley and the mountain sides with impenetrable verdure. Facing Lynmouth is a small bay in which lay at that time several little vessels, besides one steamer at anchor, just beyond the harbour.

Wearied, as we undoubtedly were, and glad to see our destined resting-place, we yet lingered with undisguised pleasure on the lovely scene, opening out more and more as we descended. At last we arrived, and, crossing a bridge over the noisy Lynn, from which the place takes its name, we deposited ourselves and baggage at the Lyndale Hotel, a handsome building, recently erected to accommodate the numerous visitors flocking in the season to this deservedly far-famed spot. We had done twenty-five miles clear walking, and were glad to retire, after a comfortable meal, and a very short stroll in the village. On the following morning—having ascertained the “lions” of the place—we climbed the hill-side towards Lynton, and, taking a winding path, formed round the cliffs for about two miles, reached the “Valley of Rocks.” Here there is one considerable piece of detached rock, called the “castle,” which we mounted, and from which we obtained a good view seawards, but, otherwise, we certainly did not consider the open space of shore, with here and there a few scattered pieces of rock—though designated by the high-sounding name given above—as much worth notice. Returning, the village of Lynton, with its pretty church, two hotels, and innumerable lodging-houses, next attracted our attention. Its situation is, however, its chief recommendation. We then descended to the beach at Lynmouth, and my companion bathed, but the water was very cold, and the beach rough and shingly. Afterwards continued our ramble, back through the village—which is also remarkable in itself, chiefly for the abundance of lodging-houses—to the Valley of the East Lynn, and on by the side of the river to Waters-meet, a spot where the waters of a mountain-stream fall into and swell the torrent of the Lynn. This walk was superb. The river, descending from the Devonshire mountains, winds con-

tinuously for several miles, sometimes over immense boulders, forming tiny cataracts, and anon calmly as a silent lake. It is crossed at intervals by rustic bridges, and two or three pretty cottages, environed with gardens, at that time in full flower, stood by its banks. On either side the hills tower perpendicularly to a great height, and were actually loaded with trees, and thick with foliage; involved, too, by the winding of the river, they sometimes presented to the eye apparent walls of brightly varied green, rising several hundred feet above the bed of the stream. The silence, only broken by the song of numerous birds, the rustle of the waters, and our own voices, breathed over all a delicious stillness enough almost to make us forget that we were still in bustling England, and almost within sound of the shriek of a railway-train. At supper that evening we heard much of the Valley of the West Lynn, which was described as even surpassing in natural beauties the one we had just visited. That, however, did not prove to be true. We spent some two hours of the early part of the next day there, and found the course of the river, which falls more abruptly, breaking frequently into sparkling cascades, extremely interesting, but altogether on a smaller scale. It passes, too, through private grounds, gaining thereby, perhaps, slightly in ornamentation, but losing the lofty natural grandeur so characteristic of the East Lynn.

About 10 o'clock A.M. we left for Ilfracombe, passing again through the Valley of Rocks, and by the ruins of Ley Abbey, the sacred walls of which have been degraded, some to the simple purpose of training fruit, and the remainder modernised, to form a dwelling for the utilitarian proprietor, and so along the coast to the old-fashioned village of Martinshoe; thence over the common, and down a steep incline to where, lying in the bed of the hollow, we found another tiny hamlet, quite hid away amongst the trees, and called Trentishoe. Up again over the steep hills—so steep that it is a wonder vehicles can ever traverse such a road—up, up, and then down, down, only to climb once more, but all the while well repaid by the splendid views breaking out on every hand. At last we reached Coombe-Martin, a Devonshire town of considerable size, but somewhat decayed appearance.

Here we lunched at the "King's Arms," a curious old house, formerly the seat of some great local family, but long since converted to more "public" uses. It has very much the appearance usually attributed to a fortress, being built with a tall, square chimney at each of the four corners of the two upper stories, instead of towers, and with a small wooden bridge over—what might be—a tiny "moat," leading to the entrance. From Coombe Martin the distance is only about five miles to Ilfracombe. When near the village of "Hele"—pronounced by the Devonians "Hayle"—we

encountered a gentleman of shrewd, decidedly Devonshire aspect, with a large straw hat like a Yankee overseers', and a donkey. The latter he was riding in a "free-and-easy" style, mounted on the bare back. We inquired in very civil terms, "How far we were from Ilfracombe?" to which he responded hastily, adding the query, "Going to stay any time, gents?" we replied, "Not long, only a day or so." "Oh! now did we like bathing?"—this with great interest. "Yes." "To be sure; well, he know'd a nice place for bathing! wouldn't we like to stay a bit out of the town? Ilfracombe itself wasn't much of it." We dared say the gentleman knew more about the place than ourselves, but we shouldn't care to go very far. "Very well, just as he thought; now he didn't like to see strangers bamboozled by them 'hotel people;' he could show us a downright comfortable place, only one mile out of town, where we could have accommodation of the first class for one day or twenty, just the identical thing." We thanked him cordially. "Oh! 'twas nothing now to thank him for—he'd do more than that for a stranger, any day; here was a card with the address, 'Mr. —, Hele, near Ilfracombe. Furnished Apartments.'" We took the card, and were resuming our journey, much impressed with the genial good nature of the "children of Devon," when he shouted after us, "Don't forget the address, gentlemen! I know you'll like the place! *I keeps the house, gentlemen!*" Moralising much on the universal similarity of "human natur"—as Mr. Slick has it—we arrived at Ilfracombe.

The two most noticeable features of Ilfracombe are the tunnels and Capstone Hill. The tunnels are merely long passages cut through the rock to enable bathers to reach the beach. There is nothing remarkable about them save the unthrifty judgment that could have decided on so great a comparative outlay to secure so small a result; and the beach, when you get to it, affords wretched accommodation. The provision, by-the-bye, for this peculiar pastime along the coast of Devon appears to be everywhere very poor, which is the more inexcusable as it forms quite the chief object to the generality of visitors. Capstone Hill rises at the mouth of the harbour, and affords from the walks around it, a very fair view of the town. The "torro" paths over the cliffs are, at present, also a favourite and fashionable resort, but they are fast disappearing before the innovations of the builders. A large hotel is in course of erection over against the beach, which, it is to be hoped, will fulfil its promise of "good and reasonable" accommodation—the best hotel, at present, in the place, the "Royal Clarence," being mostly "commercial" in its arrangements.

Barnstaple, the next on our list, was reached after a pleasant walk of ten miles, on the afternoon of the day following our arrival

at Ilfracombe. The road, winding along the sides of the hills, is prettily varied with ascents and descents—the views, particularly for the last two miles, being very interesting. Passed a curious country church, about three miles before entering the town, but nothing else deserving notice. Barnstaple does not show even to fair advantage from this road, and it is extremely flat and dull on closer inspection. With the exception of the Exchange Piazza, erected in Queen Anne's time, and the principal entrance of which is surmounted by a statue of the "good queen," it has absolutely nothing to repay a visit.

Next day we left for Bideford, which affords a fine contrast to its sister town. It is pleasantly situated on the side of a hill, down which the streets run in some instances at a very sharp incline. A broad river faces it, spanned by an immense bridge, from the site of which, the "Old Ford," the town derives its name. There is a pretty promenade by the river side, and a good view of the place and neighbourhood may be obtained from the windows of the "New Inn." Along this promenade we strolled on our way to the "lion" of Bideford, the Northam Burrows, with its curious pebble ridge. The Burrows are simply downs, having a substratum of sand instead of earth, and being covered perhaps rather less thickly with grass. But the ridge must at times well merit its fame: it is a natural embankment, formed of large pebbles rolled up by the sea, and stretching the whole length of the Burrows. It is said to be twenty feet in height and two miles long, and the pebbles are mostly oval in shape, and from three or four inches to, perhaps, one and a half or two feet in length. In winter, when the big waves wash right over it and on to the downs beneath, it must form a spectacle of great grandeur. While in Bideford we were persuaded to deviate somewhat from our programme so as to include Clovelly, described as being the loveliest spot in Devon.

Accordingly thither, about ten a.m., next day, we bent our steps, and after a bright and cheerful walk of some eight miles reached "The Hobby," a romantic roadway winding for about three miles around the cliffs and under the trees, and, in addition to the fine peeps at the coast line, affording a grateful shade. About three-quarters of a mile from the village the first glimpse is obtained through the trees, when its white houses and their peculiar position produce a pretty effect. It lies in a little fissure of the rock, and consists of one street leading, by a series of long steps, to the sea, where there is a tiny pier and harbour for fishing vessels. The houses—or cottages, more correctly—are built irregularly, but have all little terraces in front, enclosed by green railings; I presume not for ornament only, as from the door of one to the door of the next is a descent of several feet. The one street was largely

decorated with bunting of various hues and sizes—a tolerable flag, by-the-bye—easily occupying the whole width of the street. There is, of course, a little inn and a little post-office. (Query? Does not this description answer for a spot referred to, in one of his Christmas stories, by our prince of novelists? We were both immediately impressed with the strange similarity.)

Hitherto our walks had been according to an arrangement fixed upon before leaving home; and though in one or two instances tolerably long, had not greatly wearied us. Now, however, we must either stop a night at Clovelly—which would have robbed us of a day ill to be spared farther down—or else strike across country, and endeavour to find the road to a place called Holsworthy, on our way to Launceston, there to take up the thread of our route. And this latter course we decided on, though the afternoon was threatening, and we had already walked some twelve miles.

Accordingly, we left Clovelly about 3 p.m., and, after considerable difficulty, retracing our steps in several places, and travelling full seven or eight miles with a good deal of rain, we succeeded in finding a sign-post, on which, to our incalculable disgust, we read—“11 miles to Holsworthy.” It was now too late to think of abandoning our scheme—in the middle, too, of a dreary common, with scarcely a house in sight; and so, with wearied limbs, and rather depressed spirits, we gathered ourselves to our work. But it was discouraging—decidedly discouraging—that, after covering as far as the eighth mile-post, and still keeping exactly in the direction pointed out, checking ourselves too, at intervals, with a pocket-compass, we actually arrived at no less than three “posts,” whereon, reading with anxious gaze, to see how much we had done, we found still, “8 miles to Holsworthy!”

Further on, we met with another peculiarity of Devonshire country-roads, thus: we reach a place where, say, four roads meet; we seek our guide, and surely there it is; but, instead of being firmly fixed, like the good pastor of old, who “pointed out the way, but didn’t go himself,” it is evidently wearied of inaction, and leans in a dependent, not to say inebriated, attitude right over the hedge, with the useful fingers veering to any part of the horizon, or pointing generally straight up and down! At last, even “guide-posts” were conquered, and, with no small satisfaction we hailed, through the darkness, the lights of Holsworthy, where we found, to our surprise, a very good inn, called the “White Hart,” and on the worthy landlord’s downy pillows, soon obtained needful repose.

Holsworthy, though by no means meriting in any other county but Devonshire the title of “town,” is yet a considerable village, and boasts a respectable old church, two hanks, and a square, containing several good shops. We set off for Launceston about one

next day, in pouring rain, which happily ceased in a little while, so that we were enabled, without much wetting, to reach our destination in good time for a view of the town before the train left for Plymouth. Launceston is more picturesquely situated than any other place in Devon or Cornwall. On the summit of a beautiful hill stands a round, old Norman castle, one of the outposts of former days, and below, on every side, from the foot of the hill upwards, rise the houses, the streets encircling the mound. Away in the distance stretch other hills, and rich valleys lie between, forming a splendid set-off to the picture. We saw it as the sun broke slightly out from a rain-cloud, and the shadow of light displayed the place to great advantage. The "line" from Launceston to Plymouth runs through splendid scenery, passing places of great interest, at which we should have stayed had time permitted.

On reaching Plymouth, we put up at the "Royal," which is very conveniently situated in the principal part of the town, near the railway-station, and not far from the post-office. Though an immense building, it is wonderfully well regulated, and the attendance—usually so imperfect in large hotels—is everything that could be wished. One fault we must find, and only one; a pint of wine, we opine, should be, as called, a *pint* of wine. Now a pint at the "Royal," meant in our case, barely half, and the price, three shillings, though moderate enough for the full measure, became thereby in these days of low duties, by no means fair; perhaps, however, our case was exceptional. About noon next day we left Plymouth, by rail, for Penzance—passed over Saltash, that royally-honoured triumph of engineering, and through very pleasant scenery as far as Truro. Thence the country changed, and became less attractive to any minds other than those of a mining tendency, till we reached Marazion.

The chief peculiarity of this line is its continuous viaducts; the surface of the country being extremely irregular, the traveller passes from hill to hill at a considerable height, and sees, in some instances far below him, roads, and villages. At Marazion we resumed our knapsacks, and walked to the front of "St. Michael's Mount," having some intention of crossing over, but found we were too late for admission to the castle. The "Mount" is a small rock in the sea, separated now from the mainland, though report says not always so. It is about a mile in circumference at the base, of a conical form, and its summit is crowned with a fine old castle. At its foot is a little fishing-village of white houses, and a miniature harbour. From Marazion we walked round Mount's Bay, a large, sandy bay, to Penzance, and adjourned to the "Queen's," on the esplanade.

Started the following morning for Land's End; chose the cross-

road by the water, so as to include the Logan. On our way, noticed particularly the "nakedness of the land," exhibited in the gradual substitution of stone fences for the usual boundaries to the fields, and the adoption of granite planks, let into holes in the ground, and forming large stepping-ridges in lieu of gates. As we journeyed farther, the trees, too, disappeared almost entirely, leaving thinly-covered fields, forming one great, level plain, varied only by a few scattered clusters of houses, with frequently a spire in the middle, and solitary pieces of granite, rising, "without rhyme or reason," just anywhere, all over the scene. We came upon one large Druidical circle, and in several places we found stones, evidently of considerable antiquity, inscribed with rough crosses, and fixed in the ground—one of these had a time-defaced, but still tolerably legible, crucifixion on it; all of which we, of course, inspected with the usual enraptured curiosity, though why sensible people of the nineteenth century should be supposed to go into ecstasies over such clumsy and useless memorials of our forefathers' ignorance and superstition, I, for the life of me, cannot determine. The Logan Rock, with all fit reverence for what it has been, we must confess to be an imposition. It is *said* to be so nicely balanced *by nature*, that although many tons in weight, a man can shake it with the hand! As I said before, I have all fit reverence for what *it has been, if it ever was so*; but, now, the fact is, it is fixed in a slightly inclining position, and *supported by an iron "rest,"* and can only be moved by a trick of the knee, by the insertion of which, under a projecting ledge, the rock is slightly raised on that side, and falls again by its own weight. Nevertheless, putting aside the marvel, the rock and its neighbourhood, as a bit of exquisite scenery, is worth any man's while to visit. The views seen from it are most lovely; the sea varies its hue from a rich green in the sun to a deep blue beneath the shadow of the rock, and the sandy bays glitter and sparkle like beds of jewels.

We descended to one of these bays, and my companion bathed; but as we were unprovided with such articles of comfort as towels, &c., I—being, I suppose, of too luxurious a temperament—though sadly tempted by the beauty of the water, resisted the inducement. The beach, which appeared at a distance as if composed of fine white sand, proved on closer inspection to consist of innumerable particles of many coloured shells, bright and glossy in appearance, and, in the aggregate, soft as velvet to the touch. At the "Land's-End Hotel" we took tea, our windows looking on the broad sea stretching away to the horizon; while a little distance from the shore stood boldly out the lonely "Longships." On the rocks—running out here for a great distance at low tide—we laid down, and dreamt again the dreams of childhood, when "John o'Groats" and

the "Land's end" were charmed spots, on which imagination often feasted. At the old "last and first inn in England," now eclipsed by its younger rival, we partook of ale as a memento of our visit. Returned by the ordinary Penzance road through a complete change of scene. After a mile or two the barren character of the country, which on our way out could scarcely be considered an improvement upon the mining districts, entirely ceased. Thick groves of trees appeared in the little valleys; the flatness of the land gave place to Devonshire ups and downs; trees grew plentifully by the roadside; large ferns—as in Devon—adorned the hedges, until, as we got within a short distance of Penzance, we might have fancied ourselves in some stately, ancestral avenue, so fully were we arched in on all sides by the branching foliage. Penzance must be a pleasant town in which to spend a summer's holiday. In the bay, fronting our window, we had all day long the pretty fishing-boats with their tiny white and brown sails, going and returning, while the little pleasure-skiffs were slowly plying up and down. The Esplanade, a broad, well-kept walk above the sands, stretches for a great distance round the bay, and there at all times the people may be seen, singly and in groups, strolling, leaning, sitting, chatting, amusing themselves in their various fashions, some for health, some but on pleasure bent.

Returned next day to Plymouth. At "The Hoe," a considerable plot of ground, arranged in walks and facing the harbour, we had a good view of the Breakwater; in which, however, I must confess to the bad taste of not feeling much interest. I suppose it to be like all other breakwaters, only of greater size than usual; and what, after all, is the difference between a breakwater and a big wall, which with no great effort of fancy you may suppose to be, in the sea instead of on land; except to engineers and people who are said to have a "mechanical taste," which, as it develops itself usually either amongst noisy odorous cogwheels and flywheels, or on perilous heights, or in perilous depths, and in unpleasant and perilous positions in general, I thank goodness, I don't possess. Still I am aware my taste is, of course, execrable. But the truth is, while my companion in a most top-heavy looking craft, made his inspection trip, I contented myself with a stroll through the streets, and a glance at two or three as interesting specimens of natural female humanity as are to be found, even in far-famed Devon. He was satisfied, and so was I.

A walk of twenty-two miles to Totness was pleasant enough, but did not afford much matter for noting. In this walk we decided on a bad course, but the sun was hot and chiefly to blame; we decided on taking liquid refreshment at every village we passed. About halfway we fell in with—or rather he *fell* in with us, for his manner

was by no means indicative of strict sobriety, and his gait was, to say the least, uncertain—a military individual, who had obviously been adopting the same bad course, and with whom my companion immediately fraternised with great cordiality. He was on “leave of absence” so he informed us, and was bound to the house of a brother whom he had not seen for many years. He volunteered a large amount of army information, the general tenor of which was to prove that “all is not gold that glitters” even in the Queen’s favourite service. He obtained a most extraordinary degree of attention from my friend; but this I attribute mainly to the influence of the aforesaid bad rule, from the effects of which we were, perhaps, neither of us so keenly alive to the respectability and credility of our associates as we should have been under other and clearer circumstances. We parted with this thirsty son of Mars in the sandy parlour of a roadside “public,” where he bid fair to end at least that evening, and not improbably his three-days furlough! and, after this one trial, we decided on amending our new refreshment rule for the future.

Totness is remarkable chiefly for its age, and I think I may add, for its dulness. Not being aware of anything to tempt us to deviate from our course, we kept almost entirely to the main street. It was market-day, and yet there were no people. The street is long and narrow, with many of the houses projecting their upper stories over the pavement in the true “time-of-my-grandmother” fashion. They were, however, evidently free from the peculiar feminine weakness of that much revered dame,—and, for the matter of that, I suppose, dames in general, if report speaks truly,—I allude to their reticence on the subject of age. They had evidently no shame upon the point; on the contrary, they seemed to take a pride in sticking it up in big figures in the most prominent place over their doors. Across the centre of the street is an old archway, under which we passed; and turning a little to the right, along a thin avenue of trees, we came to the wharf for the Dart steamer. And, now—oh, ye muses!—help me to add my mite to the praises of the much-lauded Dart! Ye sublime inspirations, impart to me the proper thing to say, and the proper words to say it in! For, oh, I blush with shame; I hide my face in my confusion; I went down the Dart without seeing anything of its wondrous beauties! And my excuse is *weak* I am aware, for was it not of that fragile sex which attracts to it ever all the chivalry of masculine nature? I beheld a delicate female, unsoothed by feminine companionship, unprotected by man, take her place upon the lonely deck. My heart yearned to comfort her in her lonesomeness, and I took my seat at her side. She shivered with the chillness of the gathering evening, and I wrapped her closely round. I looked into her face,

and—and—we arrived at Dartmouth! And so the Dart was passed, and I had seen none of it; after coming, too, twenty-two miles out of my way to that express end. How vain are the purposes of man! Dartmouth is just like Totness when you're in it, so we got away as soon as we could. But after crossing the harbour to King's Weare in the early morning, the aspect entirely changed. Like so many other Devonshire towns, Dartmouth is built upon a steep incline, which always produces a picturesque effect when seen from the water. The mouth of the river here, too, is very broad, and the spacious harbour appears quite enclosed. We heard, after leaving, that there is a fine castle in the neighbourhood of the town. We wished we had seen it. The walk round Torbay did not equal our expectations; still it was extremely pleasant, and the appearance of Torquay, as we entered on this side, was very elegant. Passing along the bay, the tourist finds himself in front of the best parts of the environs. The houses are light and pretty, arranged for the most part in terraces, and some are of considerable size. We did not stay sufficiently at Torquay to go much in the neighbourhood, but the portions visited did not impress us as at all extraordinary; indeed, we could only come to the conclusion that the finest spots had escaped our observation, and that the society of the place must be very excellent, as otherwise we could by no means account for the multitude of visitors who flock to this fashionable resort throughout the season. A walk of eight miles, the following morning, brought us to Teignmouth. This little town is noticeable only for its immense iron bridge, said to be the longest in England, which crosses the mouth of the river, and connects the two sides of the town, called respectively East and West Teignmouth. The place is flat and quiet, but the broad Esplanade forms a pleasant stroll. Two and a half miles farther we came to pretty, quiet, rural Dawlish, with which we were much delighted. A little stream, very much smaller than Teignmouth river, runs down between two hills to the sea. On the banks of the stream, just before it falls into the greater waters, a tiny ornamental pleasure-ground has been laid out, while from side to side are thrown at intervals rustic bridges. Outside the railings of the "park," divided only by a narrow roadway, stretch for some three-quarters of a mile the houses and shops of Dawlish. Fronting the sea is, of course, an esplanade, with the railway-station close at hand; and there is good accommodation for bathing. The town, or village, whichever it is, is innocent of gas, and its repose and stillness of a summer's evening affords a strange contrast to the bustle and noise of Torquay. We thought it the prettiest of the watering-places on this coast.

And now our' trip drew nigh its close. A short railway ride next day to Exeter ; a stroll about the city, including, of course, a visit to the Cathedral ; and then home again, where we arrived that night in the glow of health and spirits, depressed only with the thought that our trip was ended, and unequivocally pronouncing it a complete success. Having spent just a fortnight in "doing" it, during which we could safely affirm we had not experienced one dull hour ! It is true we had not by any means always fine weather ; but we made up our minds at starting not to be put out by trifles, but to take things a bit as they came ; and we enlivened our walks as best we could ; when everything else failed, there were always gates, and bars, and sometimes even benches, and the knapsack was soon off, and the fruits of "gymnastic" training—particularly in my friend's case—soon displayed themselves ; generally culminating on his part in an immense amount of animal exertion expended on the aforesaid gates, bars, or benches, in the execution of a feat technically known as "doing the back-lift."

Besides, uninterrupted sunshine would almost necessarily have been attended at this season with uninterrupted heat ; and though perhaps from the sun's brightness the varied scenes would have derived additional charms, and though certainly had the weather been warmer and more settled we should have with greater frequency indulged in the luxury of a bath in the briny waters, yet that continued heat with all its advantages, would have scarcely repaid us ; it would have so seriously interfered with the prosecution of the one all-important object of our trip, which gave to it its peculiar character as a "Pedestrian Tour."

J.

THE WINDS

WE come ! we come !
 From our mystic home,
 No sprites so glad as we ;
 And we wander still,
 At our own wild will,
 The symbols of the free.

We burst the cells
 Where the lightning dwells,
 And we fan her smouldering fire ;
 And wildly illumine
 The gathered gloom,
 With the light of her living ire.

And madly leap
 Down the sky's grey steep,
 On the back of the sombre cloud ;
 While mortals wonder,
 We shake the thunder
 From out the awful shroud !

What joy to roam
 Over fields of foam,
 Self-made on the pathless sea !
 To dash the spray
 In the face of day,
 As we dance to our minstrelsy !

How we chase the barque
 Through the waters dark,
 To her home on the distant wave !
 Or howl a dirge
 Through the seething surge,
 As she sinks in her weltering grave !

We calmly loll,
 Like a kingly soul,
 On the sea's unrippling breast ;
 And watch the glow
 Of the world below,
 As it dreams in its realms of rest.

And we bring the rain
To the sapless plain,
From its fount in the pale blue skies ;
And as we rove,
We fill the grove,
With our perfume-laden sighs.

Then lowly we bow
On the streamlets brow,
As it twists through the spangled shade ;
And we bear its song,
To the love-sick throng,
Of flowers in the distant glade.

We softly croon
To the light-robed moon,
As she drives through her hosts of stars ;
And we sport and run
Round the captive sun,
As he glares through his prison bars.

We come! we come!
From our mystic home—
No sprites so glad as we ;
And we wander still
At our own wild will,
The symbols of the free !

HENRY JOHNSTON.

THE GAMBLING-HOUSES OF NEW YORK

NOTWITHSTANDING the law being against gambling, it prevails to a very great extent in New York. There is scarcely a street without a gambling-house—all private, of course, but well-known to those who indulge in that excitement. The game played is generally “Faro,” and the stakes vary according to the class of house in which the game is played. In some of the lowest gaming-houses the stake is as low as five cents, and limited to a dollar—that is, the player cannot stake more than a dollar at a time, and not less than five cents. These latter houses are frequented by the very poorest workmen, discharged soldiers, broken-down gamblers, and street-boys. I think of all the street-boys in the world, the New York are most precocious. I have seen a shoeblack, about three feet high, walk up to the table, or “Bank,” as it is generally called, and stake his money (five cents) with the air of a young spendthrift to whom “money is no object.”

The most aristocratic—if I may use such a word when speaking of a republican people—faro bank, or gambling-house, is John Morrissey’s, in Union-square, close by the head-quarters of the Fenians who believed in Head-Centre O’Mahony. I have often sat in the windows of this gambling-house, and listened to the wild harangues of the Fenian senators and centres, &c., next door, and watched the upturned faces of the Celtic dupes who, with mouths and ears wide open, swallowed everything they heard, and subscribed their hard-earned dollars to support, in luxury and extravagance, the unprincipled adventurers who, under the name of patriots, preyed upon their ignorance and credulity. John Morrissey was originally a prize-fighter, and lived by teaching the young Americans the noble art of self-defence, as he was not one of the leading men in his profession, and seldom ventured on a public fight. He afterwards set up a “Bar,” or public-house, and over this he established a small “Faro-bank,” which he enlarged and improved by degrees until it became well-known, and was very much frequented by the gamblers of New York. He succeeded so well at this business, that he was able, last year, to go to Saratoga; and, when all the country was flocking to that fashionable summer resort, he, having taken the largest house there, opened an immense hotel, ball-rooms, and gambling-rooms, and it is said he cleared a profit of two millions of dollars during the season. He is now mentioned as one of those who pay the most income-tax. His gambling-house in Union-square is magnificently furnished; at all hours of the day or night tables are laid out with every description of refreshment, which any

frequenter may partake of. The wines are very good. Almost every game of chance is played there, and the stakes are very high and unlimited. The frequenters of this house are the wealthy and wild young men of New York, and, occasionally, a southern-looking man who, perhaps, has saved some of his property, and the everlasting professional gambler.

It is very easy to distinguish the professional from the ordinary gambler. The latter has a nervous expression about the mouth, and an intense gaze upon the cards, and altogether a very serious, anxious appearance; while the professional plays in a very quiet manner, and seems to care but little how the game goes, and his desire to appear as if the game was new to him is almost certain to expose him.

Previous to the struggle for independence in the South, there were many hundreds of gamblers scattered about through the Southern towns, and the Mississippi steamboats used to abound with them. In the South a gambler was regarded as outside the pale of society, and classed with the slave trader, who was looked upon with loathing by the very same men who traded with him; such was the inconsistency of public opinion.

When the war broke out, and there were no longer any passenger steamboats on the Mississippi, the gambler's "occupation was gone" in the sunny South; patriotism he knew not of; and fearing conscription, he made his way to the less hospitable and more frugal North. The large cities were, of course, their principal meeting places: New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore were filled with them. The great inflation of the currency, the chronic state of excitement brought on by the war, and the large bounties issued to recruits, made those cities good fields for gambling operations. The American gambler differs from his European brethren in many respects; he is very frequently in education, appearance, and manner, a gentleman; and if his private history were known, it would be found that he was of good birth, and was at one time possessed of considerable fortune, but having lost all at the gaming-table, he gradually came down to the level of those who proved his ruin, and having no profession nor means of livelihood left to him, he adopted their mode of life.

On one occasion I met a brother of a Southern general (very famous in the late war, and still a wealthy man), who at one time was one of the richest planters in the state of Louisiana, and now acting as an agent for a set of gamblers to decoy young men of means from the several hotels in New York to their gaming-house. After losing everything he had, he became a croupier in a gambling-house in New Orleans, and afterwards plied his trade on the Mississippi for some years; then went into Mexico, and finally went

to New York, where he opened a house on his own account. During the war he speculated in "greenbacks," and lost all his ill-gotten gains, and had to descend to his present position.

There is nothing very interesting in this house of John Morrissey's; the same flocks of well-dressed and fashionable-looking men of all ages pass in and out all through the day and night; tens of thousands of dollars are lost and won; the "click" of the markers never cease; all speak in a low tone—everything has a serious, quiet appearance. The dealers seem to know everyone, and nod familiarly to all who approach their tables. John Morrissey is occasionally to be seen walking through the rooms, apparently a disinterested spectator. He is a short, thick-set man, of about forty years, dark complexion, and wears a long beard, dresses in a slovenly manner, and walks with a swagger. Now and then he approaches a table, makes a few bets, and is then lost in the crowd.

After the Opera-house and theatres are closed, this gambling-house becomes very full. In fact, the best time to see it to advantage, is about two or three o'clock in the morning.

A little below the New York Hotel, and on the opposite side of Broadway, there is a gambling-house, not quite so "respectable" as the one I have been describing, here the stakes are not below a dollar, and not more than twenty-five; there are no refreshments gratis, and the rooms are not so well furnished. The men to be seen gaming in this house, differ but very little in appearance from those in Union-square, but there seems to be less *discipline* amongst them, and more noise and confusion. It is a rare thing to see an intoxicated man in a gambling-house, the door-keepers are very particular as to whom they admit, and any disturbance which might call for the interference of the police would be ruinous to their business. The police are undoubtedly aware of everything going on in these houses, and do not interfere, so long as everything goes on quietly. Now and then a clerk spends his employer's money, and it is discovered where he lost it, then a *raid* is made by the police in force, the tables and all the gaming paraphernalia is carried off, and the proprietors heavily fined.

I witnessed a case of this: a young man, in the employment of a commission merchant, appropriated a large sum of his employer's money, and lost it at "Faro." He was arrested, and confessed what he had done with it. The police at once proceeded to the house where the Faro Bank was kept, and the scene, when it was known that the police were below, beggars description. The tables were upset, and notes and markers were flying about. Men, sprawling and scrambling on the floor, fought with one another for whatever they could seize; then the police entered and cleared the house, having arrested the owners of the bank. This was in one of

the lowest gaming-houses, where "skin" games (cheating games), are practised.

In the gambling-house in Broadway, near the New York Hotel, I have often noticed a young man, apparently of some eighteen or twenty years of age, fashionably dressed, and of prepossessing appearance. On some days he would play very high, and seemed to have most remarkable luck, but he always played with the air of an old gamester, seeming careless as to whether he won or lost. One night he lost so heavily, that he attracted the notice of all the players, every stake of his was swept away, and he still played on until his last dollar was lost; then he quietly walked out, whistling a popular Yankee air. He was there next day, minus his great coat, and watch and chain—he lost again, went out, and returned in his shirt sleeves, having pawned his coat studs and everything he could with decency divest himself of. He lost everything, and when I next saw him, he was selling newspapers in front of the post-office.

The mania for gambling is a most singular one. I have known a man to win a thousand dollars in a few hours, and yet he would not expend a dollar to get a dinner, but when he felt hungry, he went to a baker's shop and bought a loaf of bread, and that same night lost all his money at roulette.

There is another house on the corner of Centre and Grand streets, open during night and day. The stakes here are the same as in the one in Broadway, which I have just mentioned, and the people who play are very much the same—in fact, the same faces are constantly to be met with in all the gambling-houses, from the highest to the lowest. When a gambler has but small capital, he will go to a small house, where small stakes are admissible. I saw a man win fifty or sixty dollars at this place, and then hand in his checks (markers) to be cashed. The dealer handed him the money, and said, "Now you go off, straight away to Union-square, and pay away all you have won from here to John Morrissey. That is the way with all of them, they never come here until they are dead broke, and have only a dirty dollar or so to risk." There was some truth in what he said, but, notwithstanding, he managed to keep the bank going on.

There is a great temptation to a man who has won a sum of money at a small gambling-house, to go to a higher one, as he may then at a single stake win as much as he could possibly win if he had a run of luck in a dozen stakes at the smaller bank.

The house in Grand-street is painted a bright green, built of wood, and has a rather quiet bar downstairs. There does not seem to be very much done there in the gambling way, as half those who go in do not play. They stand around the tables, looking on, while not more than a few venture a stake on the game.

In No. 102, in the Bowery, there is one of the lowest of the gaming-houses I have seen in the Empire City. The proprietor is an Irishman ; he employs three men as dealers, and they relieve one another every four hours during the day and night. The stakes here are of the lowest, and the people to be seen here of the most rough [to be found in the City. The game is "faro," as elsewhere.

In this place I met an old friend with whom I had served in the army of Northern Virginia, under General Lee, in his Virginia Campaign of 1865. He told me he had been in New York since the end of the war, and lived a very uncertain sort of life. Whatever money he could earn he spent at the gaming-table. Sometimes he had a run of luck, and whilst it lasted he dressed well, and stopped at the most expensive hotels. One night he would sleep at the Astor House ; and perhaps the next night he would not be able to pay for his bed, and would stay all night in the parks. Strange to say, hundreds live in this way, which is vulgarly called "scratching" in New York. I afterwards saw my friend driving an omnibus ; and when I could speak to him, I found that he was still attending the banks with every cent he earned.

It is amusing to watch the proprietor of this place at the Bowery ; he has a joke for every one he sees. "Hallo, old sport!" he cries ; "come and try your luck—you look lucky this evening ; and if you make a good run you may sport a gold watch and chain, and a velvet vest, like myself." Then to another, "Young clear-the-way, you look down at the mouth to-night ! come along and have a turn ! and never mind your supper to-night."

In this way the days and nights are passed in those gambling-houses.



WAVERNEY COURT

CHAPTER I.

WAVERNEY.

I AM not one of those enthusiasts who conceive that all things that are beautiful belong to the past, and that the present is productive of nothing poetical, romantic, and good. To-day will be the past for our grandchildren; and maybe they will sigh for the times that have departed—the “good old times” to *them*—even as we in our sentimental moments sigh for the return of so-called “happier days,” which were most likely no better than those we enjoy. It is a favourite theme with some to linger with delight upon pictures of English villages; of rustic pastimes, and the swains and the lasses dancing innocently upon the village green. Dear reader, if “sweet Auburn” is “deserted,” and if the maypole is erected in the thoroughfare of the now populous Strand no more, there is still many a spot of rural beauty remaining, that will vie even with the “loveliest village of the plain.”

Has the reader ever heard of Waverney? Possibly not; for it is only a small, though charming place, and, consequently, not over well known. 'Tis situated a few miles from town, and is approachable therefrom by the North-Kent line. Perhaps its obscurity accounts in some measure for its rurality; for, look you, to be pleasant and well-known and near the metropolis, is nowadays to be built over and to become speedily overwhelmed by the palatial mansions of our merchant princes, who love to sleep in the bosoms of their families, far away from the bustle and confusion of cities and towns.

It is at Waverney, and on a summer morning in the year 1861, that the present story opens. Let me endeavour to give the reader some notion of the scene.

To the right, upon a gentle hill—such a hill as charming Kent abounds in—behold a windmill—a real old-fashioned, Conservative-Tory of a windmill, with its sails turning sturdily in the wind, as though it were determined, so far as it (the mill) was concerned, to oppose any Radical or Whiggish introduction of steam, or any other new-fangled motive power, for the purpose of grinding corn, which, as all the world knows, can be ground very well without it. Along to the left stands the village, with its quaint old houses, irregular in form, and scattered here and there. Beyond, and down in a gently sloping dale, a not very large, but pretty mansion, surrounded by well-planned gardens and a park in which are many ancient trees. Midway between the village and this mansion, and standing back a little from the high-road, is the church, its tapering spire peeping picturesquely through the trees. Through an avenue of limes and crumbling gravestones, you may approach from the highway the time-beaten porch, and may examine, if curious, the grotesque carvings of the same,—the stone effigies of infant angels with puffed-out cheeks, and the Maltese cross atop, the remaining product of some monkish hand. Then, turning off down a path to the left, you may approach the Rector's well-trimmed garden. You may see the Rectory also from the road, and often, indeed, did the traveller, passing by, halt to gaze at and to yield a tribute of admiration to the teaming beds, the blooming roses and flowers of various kinds, which the Rector tended well, and which were the good man's constant care, when more important duties left him leisure; for the Rector loved these beautiful gifts of God, and looked upon them almost as his children.

But upon the present occasion, you may also behold the Rector himself. Here comes he forth, bearing a mighty watering-pot to emulate the rain, and rake and hoe, with other implements of gardening, in his hands. With these, for full an hour the Rector laboured manfully, as was, in truth, it must be said, his wont with all he undertook. Sometimes, as through an open window in the Rectory, a peal of girlish laughter issued forth. He rested for a moment from his toil, and looking up, a melancholy smile, yet kind withal, would steal athwart his face. "Poor things!" he said, almost sadly, as he wiped his brow. "Poor things! Two things can change our bitter tears to cheerfulness—religion, and the practice of our daily toils. One brings us hope, the other breeds forgetfulness. Well, well!" And then he fell to work again upon his flowers, as though *he*, too, possessed some inward grief, and sought, by occupation of his mind, to drive it from him.

The church clock gave its well-known tinkling chime, and then struck eight.

"Father," cried a fresh, girlish voice, "are you not coming in to breakfast? mother has already called you twice." And a fair young girl—Grace Evelyn was not yet eighteen—came tripping down the path, and then clung fondly to her parent's arm.

"Has she, my child? I heard her not. I was busy—busy working and thinking, my dear. Why—bless us, it is eight o'clock! Let us come. I heard my little Grace laughing through the open window, though." Pinching with playful fondness his daughter's ear, the Rector put down his hoe; and the girl clinging to his side, the two traced their way along the sward, peeped in the window where the tempting early meal was spread, approached the door, and so they entered.

For the moment all traces of the shadow had vanished from the Rector's brow. Reader, grief has one balm besides the two the Rector named—the society and endearments of those who love us, and whom we love.

In the breakfast parlour, bustling about, and anxiously arranging and re-arranging cups and saucers, bread, butter, and water-cresses, behold the Rector's wife—as buxom a little body, with rosy cheeks and curling flaxen hair, not yet turned grey, and light blue eyes, as ever honest rector's arm need wish to clasp.

"My dear," said the lady, with a shade of matronly displeasure—as who is not displeased whose spouse delays the morning meal?—"my dear, the breakfast has been ready these ten minutes, and now the tea is cold."

"Well, well, my dear, never mind," said the reverend gentleman, smiling good-humouredly, as he took some bread-and-butter on his plate; "if the tea is cold, that is no reason why my little wify's temper should be so hot—eh, my dear, eh?"

But the lady deigned to make no answer to this little playful turn, but poured the tea into the cups with energy, as though that beverage might regain its heat by violent friction. To let the reader into a secret, the report went in the neighbourhood that Mrs. Evelyn, though a very worthy woman, kind-hearted and simple beyond doubt, and a good wife, who submitted generally to her husband's will, and much admired his sermons at all times, was somewhat irritable when anything in her household duties put her out. But the pair got on very well together, and, indeed, set an example that their flock might imitate with advantage; for, on such occasions, the good clergyman ever acted on the precept that "a kind word turneth away wrath." For how, except for these little things, could the Reverend Andrew Evelyn have ever acquired that reputation for patience and Christian meekness which

all the village gave him if his temper had never been tried? Where is the credit of refusing to rob one's neighbour if you do not want his money? Where is the merit of him being temperate who has not acquired the taste for alcoholic drinks? Where is the mighty virtue of doing one's duty where you are not tempted to err? I suppose there would have been few saints in the calendar if Christian gentlemen had not enjoyed the advantage of the rack, the stake, and the gridiron, to test the strength of their enthusiasm, and so to render them such. So, on this occasion, as usual, a domestic storm was averted, peace was preserved to the family, and the cozy meal went on.

Now, the excellent lady having her attention diverted from her teapot, it naturally wandered to the various occupations incident to her position as the parson's wife. How Farmer Smith's child had the whooping-cough, and how, therefore, Grace, dear, had better take over some embrocation, and a few tracts for the little man; how Miss Phillips was making a pair of rose-coloured slippers—"Such darlings!" interjected Miss Grace—for the youthful curate; how Mr. Gideon, the Dissenting minister, was moving heaven and earth for subscriptions to send out a mission to Peking for the conversion of the Celestials, and provide the benighted Malays with flannel to clothe their newly-born babes; how &c.—and, I am afraid, a good deal of the local scandal besides.

But let not the reader despair in the beginning. This history is not to record the small-talk of a village. Its pages will be engrossed by a far more lofty theme. Since, however, it was necessary I should introduce the Rector, his wife, and charming daughter, how could I do so better than beneath their own roof, and amidst their little domestic "breezes" and familiar chat?

It happened, however, that Mr. Evelyn did not appear to take his usual interest in the Chinese missionaries, or even in the Malay babes. While his spouse kept talking, his head bowed down, and rested on his hand, as he looked upon the floor, sadly. He was conscious of those large blue eyes which were regarding him fixedly; and even as he sat, Grace uprose quietly, and placing her arm fondly round her father's neck, burst into tears.

"Ah! my child, are *you*, too, thinking of the absent one?" said the father, rousing himself. "Let us trust, my dear, that One who can protect her has still the erring one in his keeping and ever-guarding care." And then, with a sad smile, he sought to dry his daughter's tears.

By this time the light pink cheeks of Mrs. Evelyn were also suffused. She who, but a moment before, seemed to have no care in the world beyond her teacups, was now stricken helplessly with

some deep-rooted grief. "*Varium et mutabile semper femina,*" Virgil says.

"My poor darling Em—Emma! I—I wonder where she is?" sobbed the elder lady, in her cambric pocket-handkerchief. "There is no one who—who misses her so much as—as I do. She was sit—sitting where Grace is now, and letting down the—the flounce of my old gown that I had last winter, and—and—oh! dear, I wish I'd nev—never been born!" With which the poor woman was quite carried away, and sobbed hysterically upon the table.

Miss Grace quickly dried her own eyes, and, trying to be cheerful, besought her mamma "not to give way so," but "to hope for the best," and so forth.

"My dear," added the Rector, half sternly, half kindly, "this is surely not the fortitude which becomes a clergyman's wife."

Until within two years of the time our story opens, the Rector's family had consisted of *two* daughters, of whom Grace was the youngest by one year. Emma was the exact contrast of Grace's soft and Saxon beauty. Dark as the night, with jet black eyes, that seemed to flash fire when her lip curled with scorn, or to melt into tenderness and love, she was indeed a child of passion, and often in her childhood would her father say, as he stroked her glossy curls, that if Emma ever loved, it would be with all the ardour of her soul. Little did he then suspect to what that love would lead. With such a disposition she grew to womanhood.

One bright spring morning, two years before our story opens, Emma had passed her time, as usual, in some industrious occupation. In the afternoon she was missing; nor did she return at night. Her parents were distracted. The poor old clergyman called for his broad-brimmed hat and steady-trotting mare, and, late as it was, rode a good score miles, seeking to find the whereabouts of his missing child; but all in vain. Wearied and hopeless, he at length returned. In his absence a little note had been found, addressed to him. It was from Emma, and was very short; but short as it was, it left but little doubt that she had been betrayed, and now had left her home with her betrayer. It deprecated her father's anger, and begged him not to curse her. She said, she knew she could never look upon his face again, and ended with a blessing on his head, her mother, and her sister, Grace. Since that day nothing had been seen or heard of her; nor could they find any clue, or even guess, as to where she was; nor yet who was her betrayer. This is the sorrow that oppressed them, and the mystery which enshrouded the poor girl's disappearance is one of *three* which it is appointed to reveal in this history.

While the Evelyns were still loitering over their breakfast, which the above little ebullition of grief had disturbed, the clang

of the Rectory garden-gate was heard, and the loud, clear whistling of "The Young Recruit"—at that time a popular street melody—fell upon the ear.

"Here comes the postman with a letter. I wonder from whom it can be?" cried Miss Grace, starting up, all life and expectation.

There is much virtue in a postman. Everybody, except an insolvent debtor, likes to have a letter. Miss Grace received it demurely enough; read the superscription with a mischievous pout, and then handed the epistle to her father with a ringing laugh.

"To the Reverend Andrew Evelyn, Esquire!" she cried, merrily. For so the letter was addressed.

"Bless us! it is rather a curious manner of addressing me, my dear. Who can write to me in that style? Let me see." Whereupon he gaily took this strange missive, quietly broke the seal, and glanced wonderingly at the contents.

"Why, Gracie, the inside is worse than the outside!" said the Rector, scratching his head in perplexity. "I'll be hanged if I can make it out, my dear!"

"Let me look, sir, and try to help you," returned the little lady, imperiously; "but you mustn't say 'you'll be hanged!' it's unclerical, sir!"

"And you—you impudent little puss!—mustn't poke fun at your old father. It's undutiful, miss."

Then the two set their wise heads together to make out the contents of the epistle which puzzled them. Long, however, before they had deciphered to the end, Grace sank back into a chair, and the Rector's hand trembled violently.

Here, however, is an exact copy of the letter itself:

"RESPECTED SIR,—I have the honour to adress you, being requested to rite to you by a young lady named Miss Smith, which says she is your daughter; she is now occupying apartments at my house, and is very hill, and is not expected by the doctor to recover. The poor thing has something on her mind, and in her deleerum raves about you, shocking to heer. I found your adress on an envelope which my wife found in her (Miss Smith's?) pocket. And so I thought I'd better write to you.

"Respectfully soliciting your orders,

"I have, sir, the honour to be,

"Your obedient servant,

"OBADIAH JONES."

"*Note Bene.*—Note the adress, the "Little Tea Chest," Paradise-row, Mile-end—near the gate."

"What is it all about, my dear?" demanded Mrs. Evelyn, with curiosity and wonder. She had taken up the letter when it had

fallen from her husband's hand, and gazed at it vaguely upside down."

"It means, my dear, that our unhappy child is dying, and in the house of strangers—that is what it is about," replied the other, calmly.

"The Lord have mercy on us, Andrew! You frighten me to death!"

The poor lady looked frightened, indeed. The pink had quitted her comfortable cheeks and left them pallid. She dropped helplessly into her chair, and there sat, unable to utter another word, until she saw her husband seize his hat and gloves and stick.

"May I go with you, father?" murmured Grace.

"No, no, my child; it would do no good. Stop with your mother, and comfort her. I must go to the village first. The clergyman has duties which even the father must not forget. Then I will hasten to the train. Kiss me, darling; and now, good-bye!"

"Oh, dear!" ejaculated Mrs. Evelyn, apathetically, as the Rector kindly bent to give her also a parting salute.

Mr. Evelyn hastened to the village, and having despatched his business, proceeded to the Waverney Junction station, caught the 2.25 up-train, and was carried to London at the rate of thirty miles an hour.

We must not, however, at this moment follow him; for that night there happened at Waverney an event of great importance to this history, and which threw the whole of that quiet village into astonishment, confusion, and alarm.

CHAPTER II.

ALONE IN THE GARDEN.

"If she'd only have come, and died in her own bed;—and—oh, dear! I put away all her things, and everything, thinking she might come back some day;—if she'd only have come home, and died in her own bed, comfortably, with me near her, I think I could have borne it better. But now, poor thing, she won't know how I got everything ready for her; and the people (I wonder if they're clean and particular) won't even know she ever had a mother to look after her at all. And—oh, dear!—so as I've always striven to do my duty to my children, and to bring them up clean and particular, and in the fear of the Lord!"

Such were the whimpering complaints of poor Mrs. Evelyn all that day, after her husband's departure from home. Grace did the best she could to comfort her, though, Heaven knows, she wanted

comfort enough herself, and that the cheerful aspect she assumed was but the outward disguise to an anguished heart. Fortunately there was always plenty to do at the Rectory, and fortunately, also, Mrs. Evelyn would have deemed it an unpardonable breach of duty to permit even her maternal distress to hinder her from her occupations. So her fretful spirit was somewhat pacified until the evening set in.

The moon rose brightly from her eastern realms, and as the evening advanced, the stars peeped out of the obscurity one by one. Grace wished not to expose to her mother her own melancholy thoughts; she went out, therefore, into the garden, that she might nurse those thoughts in solitude, with only the great, calm moon looking down upon her, and the tranquil stars, that seemed to sympathise with her in her lonely mood.

"These," she thought to herself, "these have been the companions of how many thousands of men and women, who have sought communion with them when communion with any human mind has been denied. I look upon the same bright orbs that poets have praised and philosophers studied—that have beamed down for ages, calmly and dispassionately, upon deeds which have driven the world to enthusiasm, or at which it has shuddered with dismay; which lovers have sworn by, and which have been called to witness vows of hatred and revenge. Yes, to this same moon, perhaps, Antony may have compared Cleopatra's eyes, and by its light Adam have plighted his troth to our mother Eve."

I have said that Grace *thought* all this; but I don't mean to say that she thought all this aloud, nor yet even exactly in these words: firstly, because young ladies do not usually think aloud, unless they are *very* romantic; and, secondly, because I am not sure that Grace had any distinct knowledge as to whom Antony and Cleopatra really were. But this was the *purport* of her thoughts.

The fresh summer breeze, rustling the foliage of the elms, through which the moon-flood glimmered, casting upon the gravelled pathway and the lawn a thousand ever-moving forms, would sometimes startle the girl. In her present anxious state of mind every little incident was fraught with import. Her mind was far away, with her father and her dying sister; but every now and then, the falling of a leaf, the rolling of a stone her foot, perchance, had kicked, would recal her to herself, and make her tremble.

"I feel"—and here she shuddered—"as though something dreadful were about to happen. I wish my father would *return*. I would sooner know the worst than linger in suspense."

Then, as she glanced nervously around, the shadows of the tall rose-bushes, quaintly elongated athwart the lawn—now dark, now

standing out in startling vividness, according to the ever-changing light, and moving at the dictates of the restless wind, appeared to her excited fancy like goblin forms, whose large, terrific heads, upon long, slim bodies, with no legs, were nodding at her most malignantly. The openings, where no leaves were, she pictured as their eyes, the nostrils of their noses, and their gaping mouths. Then, from the garden's further end, she thought she saw a white dress waving, and that it was her sister's. At this she could have sworn she heard her sister's voice, calling her "Gracie!" as often it had called her in the old times. And the goblins absolutely grinned at her then, maliciously.

"It was only fancy," she thought, trying to re-assure herself. "It is only a paper-bag, to keep away the birds. Pshaw! what a foolish girl I am!—and—and—yet—it seemed so real!"

Whereupon this imaginative young lady shuddered again, and looked backwards towards the Rectory-window, where a flickering light was burning, and through which she could sometimes see the shadow of her mother's form flitting across the room. The church-clock chimed and struck the hour.

"Nine o'clock!" said Grace, aloud.

The sound of her own voice alarmed her. Five minutes longer she continued pacing up and down, the struggle between her superstition and her better sense agitating her bosom.

"It is very chilly to-night. I think I will go in-doors," she said, at last.

You see, Miss Grace didn't like to admit that it was her own vague terror that drove her in-doors, but attributed it rather to the chilly night. I fancy Grace was not the first person who has endeavoured to put off the effects of his own little foibles upon extraneous causes. Perhaps Grace felt a little of the want of candour to herself, and was ashamed of it; for instead of returning that instant to the house (as I am very sure, in her heart, she would like to have done), she turned resolutely back to take one more turn round the garden. As she reached the extreme verge of the grounds, and peered over the palings which separated the domains of the Rectory from the high road, the sound of approaching footsteps along the latter fell upon her ear, and immediately afterwards the tall figure of a man turned a corner of the road, and came fully into view. The new-comer had just reached the spot where Miss Evelyn was standing, and she was about to turn away, when the former, who was a rather young man, drew up suddenly before her, raised his hat, and with a pleasant smile, wished her "Good evening!" addressing her by name. He then drew nearer, and frankly extended his hand.

"Do you not remember your old acquaintance, Miss Evelyn?" he said.

Grace started, and with a smile of recognition, accepted the hand he had offered her to shake.

“Captain Lee!” she cried.

“That is right. I am glad that you *do* remember me. I am coming to stay at Waverney Court for a short time, and I hope to have the pleasure of renewing our old friendship.”

The speaker was a tall, military-looking man, of perhaps nine-and-twenty or thirty years of age. As the moonlight played upon his countenance, it revealed features of singular and softened beauty, which, were it not for the carefully pencilled moustache, might seem almost feminine in their outline.

He continued chatting with the girl for a few minutes; inquired after the Rector, her mamma, and her sister Emma, of whose unhappy history it seemed he was unaware. He had tact enough, however, to perceive from Grace’s manner that something unpleasant had happened in regard to the elder sister, and quickly turned the conversation into another course; and then, again extending his hand, and reiterating his hope that during his sojourn at Waverney Court he might see her again often, he wished her good-night, and resumed his way.

Now it happened that as the hand of the young man pressed that of Grace, and as his soft, deep eyes gazed into hers, she felt a peculiar thrill pass through her frame.

I wonder if one mind has any controlling influence over a weaker—I mean apart from that exerted by acts and words? Perhaps the real secret of her trepidation at her short dialogue with the handsome young man, who, it appeared, was not entirely a stranger to her, might resolve itself into the fact that it is by no means an uncommon occurrence for the hearts of young ladies to flutter with emotion when a pair of fine eyes are looking, as it were, into their very soul. Still the girl lingered a moment, watching his rapidly retreating form.

“He is certainly very handsome!” she thought; and then she sighed as the thought escaped her.

Just at that moment she heard footsteps behind her, and she perceived her mother approaching from the Rectory, her pocket-handkerchief thrown over her head, and carefully fastened under her chin.

“Grace, my dear,” said she, with volubility, “why *don’t* you come indoors? you’ll be catching your death o’ cold; and *there’s* your father will be laid up too, if he don’t mind; oh, dear! I wonder whether he’ll come home to-night and bring poor Emma with him? I’ve been upstairs and got everything ready in case. Dear, dear! there’s nothing like having everything ready for everything!”

Grace replied that she did not think the Rector would return

that night, since he had left the matter rather doubtful; but had promised, if he did not, he would send a telegram in the morning.

"And then," returned Mrs. Evelyn, "we shall know all about it. Oh, oh! I do feel so uncomfortable in my mind, just as I did when your father, my dear, invited the Bishop to — Dear me, what—what was I going to say when I came out? Bless my heart! I have forgotten all about it!" Whereupon the good lady, leading the way, and tapping her forehead to collect her scattered thoughts, went slowly towards the house.

"Oh, Grace, my dear," she said, suddenly.

"Yes, mamma," answered the girl, who had by this time again fallen into a reverie, whereof the stranger formed the subject.

"I remember what it was now."

"What was it?" demanded Grace.

"Didn't I hear you speaking to some one in the garden, my dear?"

Grace seemed very suddenly to recollect that little fact, and answered with admirable carelessness and great rapidity—

"Oh, yes;—who do you think it was?"

"Lor', my dear, how should I know?—not Mr. Barber, no Mr. Phillips?"

"No; you will never guess."

"It wasn't Sir William, my dear, at this time of night, surely?"

"It was his nephew, though; do you not remember Captain Lee, mamma?"

"Captain Lee, my dear? Ah, I remember Sir William saying he expected him; but—good gracious me! what is that?"

The distant report of fire-arms from the direction of Waverney Court, and its oft-repeated echo from a dozen hills, was the cause of the sudden interruption of the lady's speech.

"Poachers, I suppose," was the answer of the girl, who was certainly as startled at the unwonted sound.

"Poach—," began Mrs. Evelyn, gazing round her quite scared; "well, yes, my dear; I suppose it *must* be poachers; that is—hem! I don't know what it is if it isn't; unless it is—unless it is the kitchen boiler blown up, and—and—dear me! (here the good creature sniffed very vigorously in the direction of her own culinary establishment), I declare I can—yes, really I *can* smell the soot; can't you, my dear?"

Grace laughed so heartily at this notion, that her mamma was almost afraid she would choke herself, and had half a mind to slap her on the back; and when the young lady sufficiently recovered her gravity, she insisted upon the impossibility of this theory, inasmuch as the sound came from exactly the opposite direction.

“Well, my dear, I daresay you are right,” returned the other, still only, however, partly convinced. “But that girl is so careless about that boiler, that I’m always telling her some day—but let me see,—oh, yes, poachers! It is a great shame, my dear, nothing can be done to do away with these godless men, who fearlessly break the laws. If your father would be ruled by me, and preach a sermon especially to them, it might do some good; but he won’t listen to anything *I* have to say, and I’m almost afraid to utter a word.”

At this moment the shouting of men was heard far off in the distance; then two or three fellows, running breathless, dashed along the road.

“Whatever can it all be about, my dear?”

“Here comes some one. Let us ask him.”

For they had now got back once more to the gate at the roadside.

“Young man,” cried Mrs. Evelyn, glancing benignly at a clod-hopper who was hastening past. “Young man, can you tell me what is the matter?”

“I’m dashed if I know, old lady—that’s just what I’m going to find out,” was the blunt reply, as the man hastened along the road.

“You might be civil, I think, young man, at all events,” cried the indignant lady, in a treble key.

“Let us send John; he will find out all about it in five minutes,” suggested Grace.

“A very good thought, my dear; so I will,” returned Mrs. Evelyn, eagerly, her curiosity being much excited.

John was the Rector’s gardener, groom, and Jack-of-all-work—all in one, and the ladies having by this time re-entered the house, and discovered this youth, he was speedily made to comprehend his errand, upon which he departed, by no means loth.

Mrs. Evelyn and her daughter awaited his return with considerable anxiety. In about a quarter of an hour their Mercury returned breathless, his eyes starting from their sockets, and his fat cheeks flushed with mingled wonder, importance, terror, and yet delight.

“Well, John?” his mistress demanded, with a vain attempt to disguise her impatience.

“Oh, lor, mum!” But John had to puff and blow before he could proceed. “Oh, mum, whatever do you think?”

“What?” cried the ladies, in a breath.

“I couldn’t learn any perticklers, mum, but they say—look, mum, you can see the torches which the people have got burning in the park—they say that poor Sir William Lee *is murdered*, mum!”

CHAPTER III.

THE LEES OF WAVERNEY.

THE Lees had lived in Waverney almost as long as Waverney had existed, and they had been a "family" from time immemorial. In early days, the Lees had sallied forth, clad in bright panoply of steel, to fight the battles of their kings and country. Some of them, indeed, had fought for their country against their kings. Indeed, of Sir Roger Lee—the first and famous founder of the race—there was the much-cherished tradition in the family, that he was one of those generous upholders of his country's rights who dared to assert their independence even in the days of that proud and prosperous king, Edward I. And when his noble namesake, Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, the Marshal of England, and Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford, the constable, being commanded by the haughty monarch on a service in Flanders, which these two nobles thought they were not bound to fulfil, flatly refused their liege's commands; and when the haughty king, addressing himself to the not less haughty constable, had said, "By God! sir earl, you shall either go or hang!" and the constable returned, "By God! sir king, I will neither go nor hang!" and had thereupon departed from the court with many powerful barons,—Sir Roger Lee, I say, was rumoured by tradition to have been among the number. Another Lee had fought and fallen on Bosworth Field, having had the honour of being stricken to the earth by the mighty hand of the humpbacked king himself.

In more recent times it would appear the Lees displayed more loyalty than their ancestors; for one had died in exile with Charles II., and another had been hanged by the Duke of Cumberland, after the disasters which befel the Young Pretender, and his ancient mansion at Waverney had been burnt to the ground by an angry "no-popery" mob of ruffians. But in this case, as it will be perceived, though the said Lee was fighting for one king, he was fighting also against another strongly established, so that his loyalty was, in this instance, a matter of opinion after all. Since this, nothing very valorous had been achieved by any of the family. Sir William's father (who had rebuilt the present modern structure of Waverney Court), had certainly fought a duel, and was famous for his friendship with George IV., when Regent and Prince of Wales. But as he had spent a considerable portion of his patrimony on account of that connection—indeed, somewhat mortgaging his estate—and had lent that wild prince a trifling loan of five thousand pounds, which he had never got back again, his descendants had little reason perhaps to rejoice. And on the whole,

a scion of the race of Lee, looking back upon the history of his pedigree, might perhaps come to the conclusion that it was rather more profitable opposing a king than befriending him.

When Sir William Lee had come into the paternal estate, thirty years before, he was a wild youth of eighteen or thereabouts, and, by raking about London, had speedily contrived to get his estate still further embarrassed than he found it. A few acres here, and a few acres there—which, though not belonging to that portion of the estate which was entailed, had been in the possession of the family time out of mind—came to the hammer, or were “disposed of by private contract,” with a rapidity that promised little would soon remain.

At this portion of his career, in which he may be said, according to the common phrase, to have been “sowing his wild oats,” the young baronet bore such an ill reputation amongst the surrounding gentry, that few discreet fathers cared for his acquaintance for their sons, their daughters, or their wives. But as Sir William grew older, it is to be presumed he grew wiser, as, during the last fifteen or twenty years of his life, no man could have enjoyed a better reputation. Settling down into a respectable country gentleman, he had devoted himself with laudable zeal to the improvement of his property, and its liberation from the burdens which encumbered it. But this was not all. Not only did he gain the character of a prudent landlord, but of a good one. Perhaps, after all, it was only a matter of prudence which led him to identify his own interest with that of his tenants. Certain, however, it is, that many were the bronzed, hard faces which melted into softness at the mention of his name, and many good words were said in his behalf by those who had little reason to speak well of the rich in general—the labouring poor.

Of course, in a little country place like Waverney, a man who has no decided opinions, political and religious, is nothing. In politics, Sir William was Conservative, as, for the landed gentry, is quite proper, and he, of course, supported Lord Derby in all things, greatly admired Mr. Disraeli as an orator and financier, and was an emphatic abhorrer of Mr. Bright. In religion, he, of course, belonged to the Church, and was on intimate terms with the Rector and his family, being an especial favourite with Mrs. Evelyn, for whom he had ever a polite compliment and a friendly word. Such a man was he whose shocking and untimely end has been referred to in the concluding words of the preceding chapter.

The heir, and now the possessor of the title and estate, was the deceased baronet's nephew, Mr. Walter Lee, or Captain Lee, as he was generally known—the young gentleman, in fact, with whom Miss Grace Evelyn had that brief interview at the gate of the

Rectory garden. As this gentleman is to play a very considerable part in the drama of which these pages are the history, it will be well for me to state to the reader as much as I am at this time able, in regard to his character and antecedents.

His father was the only brother of Sir William, and one year only the latter's junior, who, marrying very young in life, led the fate which often pursues such, and had to struggle pretty toughly for his living until his death, which, in his case, was not long in coming. His wife died in giving birth to his only son, and the sorrowing widower only survived his wife about four years. This son, Walter, who was thus left to the protection and charity of his uncle, was adopted and reared by him with a kindness which, for a young man of such reckless habits, was remarkable. When the baronet had sobered down, his anxiety for his little nephew's welfare, if possible, increased. He sent him to a good private school, and afterwards to Oxford. At this famous seat of learning, however, Mr. Walter Lee had first exhibited the symptoms of viciousness which, in former years, had characterised his uncle, and which, at the time our story opens, had gained for himself no very exalted an opinion amongst the steadier of his friends. In fact, he had been but a short time at Oxford when he found it expedient to quit the university with precipitation. Being supplied liberally with funds by his uncle, who, despite all these extravagances, still loved him as a son, the young man, upon quitting the university, travelled upon the Continent, in the society of one or two choice spirits of his own quality and tastes. Seized by a military freak upon his return to England, his uncle procured for him a commission in one of the foot regiments, and perhaps the one bright spot in his career, and which gained the young scapegrace golden opinions from the gallant English gentlefolks of Waverney, was that he distinguished himself much by personal bravery during the Crimean War. Towards the close of that terrible contest he had returned to his native land on leave of absence, having received a slight wound in his arm, which incapacitated him from active service. From the time when his regiment had also returned, he had been with it, sometimes at one place, sometimes at another, occasionally coming to visit his uncle at Waverney, and stopping with him often a month or so at a time.

During these brief sojourns at his indulgent uncle's residence, young Lee had become acquainted with the Evelyns. His cheerful conversation rendered him a favourite with Mrs. Evelyn, and his personal attractions, his reputation for military prowess, and, perhaps, also, his gallantries with the fair sex, made him equally so with her daughters. For there is no virtue in a dashing young gentleman so precious in the sight of modest young ladies as his

little vices ; and perhaps with nine extremely proper young damsels out of ten a handsome scamp will make greater progress than a plain man who has got only his virtues to recommend him. With the Rector the scampish young soldier was not such a favourite, but perhaps this only contributed to exalt him in the good graces of the Rector's wife.

For about two years prior to the opening incidents which occur in these pages, young Lee, somewhat strangely, as Mrs. Evelyn thought, had never paid even a flying visit to Waverney.

CHAPTER IV.

GRACE'S DREAM.

WHEN it is necessary in the course of my narrative, to acquaint thee, gentle reader, with scenes and incidents occurring in divers secret and sacred places—as, for instance, in the little *sanctum sanctorum* of the Rectory, known as “Grace's room,” and in which my beloved heroine was wont to pass the night with the happy dreams which ever attend the pillow of innocence and youth ; and the summer evenings sometimes, in waking visions, happy, perhaps, and cheerful, though often not untinged with melancholy,—when I have to record such things, I say, it must not be presumed that I have actually seen and heard—Heaven forbid !—but, rather, let the truth be understood, that I enjoy some wondrous power of knowing all I want to know, whereof the world of ordinary men and women must needs remain in ignorance. I know, then—but let not the reader be inquisitive as to how I know—that on the night which was of such moment to the people of Waverney, and long after all the rest of that generally quiet village had given themselves to slumber, forgetting even that such an event as a murder had been there committed, Miss Grace Evelyn sat in her chamber, looking out of the window, with the moon-flood bathing her pretty face, and suffering thoughts to steal into her head which her worthy mother, had she known of them, would have thought had no business there. If she had been entirely thinking of her poor, dying sister, Mrs. Evelyn would doubtless have deemed it quite proper and sisterly. If she had been thinking of the unfortunate baronet lying under the trees in his own park, and weltered in his own gore, she would have deemed it at least natural. But for a young maiden, the Rector's daughter, too, to fall into romantic fantasies anent a handsome young man with deep blue eyes, and goodness knows what personal attractions besides, was it not highly improper, indeed ? Yet I am ashamed to say that Miss Grace was that night guilty of such improprieties. When she had retired to her little chamber, which

overlooked the long walk of the garden, it was ten o'clock; yet, as the church clock struck eleven, the clear, soft sounds stole along on the still night air through her little window—for that window was still open, and Grace was still sitting there. Her little, dimpled chin was still resting on her hand, and she was humming, in her soft, musical voice—what does the reader think?—well, a song which that dashing young Walter Lee used to sing at the Rectory when he came over there sometimes, two years ago, and when poor Emma used to listen to the young fellow's manly voice, apparently as pleased as Grace was. Then, all at once, Miss Evelyn burst into a low, ringing laugh, such a genuine laugh, that it was lucky for her her mamma did not hear it—at that time of night, too! “What a merry young fellow he was!” she said, half aloud; “he seems to be much graver in his manner than he used to be.” The fact was, she was thinking of a certain romping little party at the Rectory, at which a certain game of forfeits was played; and how she, a school-girl of about fifteen, had, according to the laws of that game, to submit to the salute of a certain gentleman, who happened to be no other than Mr. Lee. The young lady had, upon that occasion, of course struggled and attempted to hide her face, but 'twas all in vain; and as she at last stood vanquished, had haughtily declared herself “too old” for that sort of thing; to which he had laughingly replied, that he hoped he should have the pleasure of kissing her when she was a good bit older. And, to conceal nothing, Miss Evelyn was just then wondering whether the prophecy would ever come true, and wishing rather, I suspect, that it might do so. So the girl went through her past life, even up to the present, comprising that night, with all its horrors. As the clock struck twelve, she closed the window and retired to rest. Sleep did not come to her eyes immediately; and even when it came, it was but a disturbed sleep. She felt hot and feverish, and ever and anon she turned from side to side restlessly. And then she had a dream. Was it a prophetic dream of horrors which were to beset her in her future life? Often and often, in aftertimes, when hemmed in by the concatenation of strange events, of which these pages are the record, did the poor girl think so. It was a vague and uncertain dream; a dream which left its traces on the memory, scattered and indistinct.

She fancied she was wandering along a pleasant grove, through which a placid brook meandered with a low, plaintive sound. The tall trees, in which a thousand birds of various hues and forms were carolling, were fragrant with aromatic perfumes, the odour of the nutmeg mingling with that of the orange with a voluptuous effect which seemed to intoxicate the sense. Bright stars were spangling the firmament, and she thought that her sister Emma, in the first

blush of womanhood, was on one side of her, and Sir William Lee, chatting in his usual kind and affable manner, was walking on the other, when, all at once, a strange, mysterious terror stole upon her. She felt its secret influence creeping—creeping, like an *approaching shadow*; but she could not see what it was—she knew not whence it came. She strove to cry out for help, but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and was silent. Her knees trembled beneath her, and she was sinking to the earth. Her blood curdled, and was chilled. It seemed as though *a blight were on her*.

Meanwhile, changes unaccountable had been taking place in the various objects around her. Glancing up with foreboding at the heavens, she perceived all the stars moving themselves out of their spheres, and lo! stretching right across the sky, they formed, in fiery letters, these dread words—

“THREE CHILDREN OF ONE FATE.”

As she was gazing at this spectacle with a new terror, her sister appeared to be carried away, by some invisible power, from her side; and, stretching out her arms towards her, as if in supplication, disappeared into the obscurity. Her other companion, at the same moment, fell back into the brook, a bleeding corpse; while all the birds in the trees changed their piping melody into mocking laughter. The prattling streamlet suddenly changed its elfin music into a deeper and more sonorous strain. It sounded, first, like the harmony of Æolian harps played by the zephyrs in a distant spot, and then gradually merged into a better-known strain. *It was the song Grace had been humming; and it was sung in the voice of him whom she had first heard sing it!* The perfume exhaling from the exotic plants came in a soft puff against her cheek, and then she became aware that this aromatic scent had changed also; and now it was *human breath*, and she felt a pair of large burning lips, which seemed almost to suffocate her, pressing upon her own. Unconsciousness came upon her, and she knew no more.

Recovering at length, she again saw the stars shining brightly in the dark sky, and now in their wonted position. But as she looked at them, another transformation happened, and behold! all the constellations, except two, died out in the misty sky. But these two which remained appeared to grow amazingly large and brilliant, and as she still looked, they grew larger and larger, until nearly the whole expanse of heaven was filled with them; and out of their extreme edges a thin halo spread, and at last it circled round them like a thin, pale rainbow. And Grace knew very well that the two brightest stars were now *human eyes*, gazing at her, and peering into her inmost soul, reading her inmost thoughts, and drawing her on to some unknown end by the influence of a mysterious spell.

Now that same dread feeling of horror which she had experienced before, again overcame her. Her heart was sinking, her blood was chilling, her very will, under the sway of the spell which was upon her, was inactive and powerless. Consciousness was quitting her, when she was awakened from her dream by a piercing scream, which, in her terror, burst from her lips.

She was still staring, terrified, around her, when Mrs. Evelyn, who had been aroused from her sleep by her daughter's shriek, came rushing, in a sad state of *déshabille*, into the room.

"Dear heart alive, my dear! what is the matter?" she cried.

"I have had such a—such a terrible dream!" the frightened girl returned, faintly. "It must have been a dream, and yet—and yet it seems so fearfully real."

"A dream, my dear?" echoed the elder lady, soothingly, but with curiosity also. "What was it about, my dear?"

"I—I don't know," was the reply, with a shudder. "I can't—I dare not recal it to my mind."

"Well, well, silly child, never mind! Dreams always go by contraries, you know. Not that it always happens that way, as I know instances otherwise; for when you had the measles—it wasn't you, Grace; it was your sister Emma, I think, my dear—I dreamt that——"

"What is the time, mamma?" the girl interrupted, still too occupied by her late alarm to heed her mother's irrelevant prattle.

"It must be nearly half-past five, my dear."

Grace looked out of window, and saw the bright sun had long since risen.

"What a long time I must have slept, then!" she said. "I—I think I will get up," she added, with a shudder; "I feel afraid to—to sleep again."

Miss Evelyn was very silent during breakfast-time, and her mother had the conversation pretty well in her own hands. Not that the worthy lady suffered any inconvenience on that account, since she was quite as capable of maintaining a conversation with herself as if she had a room full of listeners.

"Not but what, my dear, it is very proper to attend to the wants of the poor pagans," she said, in continuation of a lengthened peroration upon the proposed Chinese and Malay Mission, in which the Dissenting minister was taking such a prominent part; "but, for my part, I think there is a good deal might be done without going quite so far to do it. But some people, my dear, who consider themselves sound Christians, think, as long as they send their tracts to poor ignorant creatures who can't read 'em, and a few blankets which they don't want—as well they mayn't in those hot parts—that they've done all that ought to be expected of

them ; and that they're self-sacrificing martyrs when they give the Sunday-school children a feast on a bun and a mug of milk-and-water, without reckoning that the poor little creatures want something stronger in their stomachs, if it was only to counterbalance the waste of strength by perspiration in carrying those heavy poles and flags, which, for my part, my dear, I look upon as so many labels, with golden letters, carried about in self-praise and glorification of their patrons. Not but what there are many Dissenting ministers quite as good men as there are in the Establishment—no disrespect to your father, who is a good man and an excellent husband, as I always will say. There was a young man who paid attention to me when I was a girl of about your age, my dear (no—let me see—I must have been younger than you, for I remember very well I wore short frocks, with a pink sash, and sandle shoes: dear me, how the time goes by!), and he went abroad somewhere as a missionary, and was eaten by the cannibals."

While this conversation was progressing—if conversation that can be called in which one talked incessantly, and the other scarcely spoke a word—a light, quick footstep sounded on the pathway, and a low, yet remarkably sweet voice, was heard, humming an air. Mrs. Evelyn, who recollected that on the yesterday morning, about the same time, she had heard the postman approaching in a similar manner—only whistling, instead of singing—concluded that this was the postman also, and said so. Grace, however, who had been listening intently from the first moment the plaintive sound had fallen upon her ear, knew that it was not the postman, for she recognised it as the *same strain she had been singing the night before, and which had somehow become associated with her dream*. Before she had time to recover herself, young Lee appeared at the breakfast-parlour window, the French sash of which was standing open, and nodding familiarly to them, he wished them "Good morning!"

"My dear Mrs. Evelyn," said he, "I must really apologise for this unceremonious fashion of renewing your esteemed acquaintance ; but I wanted to see the Rector on important business, and so I thought I might venture upon dispensing with a little formality."

Mrs. Evelyn, whose favourite the young man had always been, heartily invited him to enter, and was profuse in her entreaties that he would not be ceremonious with them, and so forth, and was going on this way when she was interrupted by an exclamation from Lee, who had now turned to Grace.

"Good heavens! my dear girl, what is the matter with you?" he cried, catching hold of the girl, and supporting her with his strong arm. "How pale you are! you tremble like a leaf!"

Grace was indeed pale and trembling; for at the sound of his voice her dream, with all its horrors, came crowding upon her recollection, and as she gave him her hand, it quivered convulsively at his touch. She dared not raise her eyes from the ground, for she dreaded to encounter the deep light of his.

“Grace, my dear!” ejaculated her mother, in astonishment. “Why, what, for goodness’ sake, has come over the child?”

The girl made a great effort to control herself, and faintly smiled.

“It is nothing—nothing at all! I shall be better in a minute,” she murmured, almost inarticulately.

“You seem frightened at me,” said the young man, smilingly. “Upon my word, Miss Evelyn, I almost wish I had kept away from Waverney.”

“No, no!” interposed Grace, hastily. “The fact is, Captain Lee, I was alarmed last night by—by the report——”

“Ah, you have heard, then, that my poor uncle is dead?” Lee interrupted, quickly, perceiving that she hesitated.

“We have not heard any particulars, Captain Lee,” said Mrs. Evelyn, in a soothing tone. “Really I never knew such a shocking thing in all my life! I couldn’t get a wink of sleep all the night; and Grace was as bad as I was. Is it true that poor Sir William was murdered?”

“It is but too true; at least, there is little probability it can have been otherwise. He *may* have died by his own hand, certainly,” interrupted the young man, hastily.

“Dear, dear! it is very sad indeed!” returned Mrs. Evelyn, compassionately. “But, captain, what could be the motive? Who could have done the horrible deed?”

“The murderer and the motive must both remain a mystery, which it is, at present, impossible to penetrate. I suppose we must leave these things to unfold themselves,” returned Sir Walter Lee—for such we may henceforth call him—in the same rapid utterance as before.

“Time reveals all things; doesn’t it, captain? But really, sir, I beg your pardon. Do take a seat.”

“Thank you!” said Lee, seating himself very leisurely. “The fact is, Mrs. Evelyn, my present visit is merely one of business. I want to see Mr. Evelyn, and to ask him to advise with me under the unfortunate circumstances which have happened yonder. Really so many responsibilities have devolved so unexpectedly upon my shoulders, and I am so totally incapable of acquitting myself of them without some one to aid me, that I determined I would come over here at once and consult my old acquaintance, the Rector. I know of no one better able to help me, and I am sure he will do for me what he can.”

Mrs. Evelyn said she was sure her husband would only be too happy, only that at present he was away from home, having been called unexpectedly to London. She expected him back that day.

"In that case I think I will not wait," said the young baronet, again rising; "more especially as I fear my visit has rather disturbed you and Miss Evelyn."

The elder lady begged him not to think such a thing for a moment, and Grace very earnestly entreated him to the same effect. Poor Grace, indeed, had all this while been making heroic efforts to vanquish the emotions which the associations of her dream had awakened, and, perhaps, the confusion also which a very handsome young gentleman of twenty-nine might naturally create in the bosom of a young lady of eighteen. And, truly, she had succeeded, at least apparently, in regaining her confidence and self-control. If her face before was pale, now it was suffused with a deep flush; but it was the flush of excitement, as, indeed, her manner showed, for the sprightliness of the conversation which she now maintained was only too evidently assumed.

"Tell me, do you believe in dreams?" she demanded suddenly of her guest in the midst of a string of light compliments he was paying her.

"Dreams?" he repeated, in surprise.

"Yes; tell me if you think our future is ever revealed to us in our dreams?"

Sir Walter laughed. It was a low, musical laugh that was peculiar to him. It sounded mockingly upon the ear; and yet it was not a rude laugh, and no one could feel offended at it. "What have you been dreaming?" he said, smilingly. "I wonder if any young gentleman was so fortunate as to be mixed up in your dream? Upon my word, Miss Evelyn, you, the daughter of a clergyman——"

"And yet wise men have believed in dreams," the girl interrupted, petulantly, and tapping her little foot upon the carpet.

"And many not very wise young ladies have believed in them also, and have paid pretty dearly to certain old ladies, called 'wise women,' to have the said dreams interpreted. Haven't they?"

Grace made no reply to this, but presently changed the conversation. Shortly after their guest took his leave, stating that he would call upon Mrs. Evelyn later in the day.

CHAPTER V.

THE RECTOR ON THE RAILWAY.

WE must now, however, return to the Rector, and proceed with him on his journey to town, where he expected to find his

unfortunate daughter seriously ill, perhaps dying, for aught that he could tell. Having despatched the professional duties which called him to the village, he repaired to the Waveney Junction station, took a return-ticket, and catching the 2.35 p.m. ordinary train, was conveyed thereby to London. Seated in a second-class carriage—for the income accruing to the Rector of Waveney was not a large one, wherefore Mr. Evelyn never patronised first-class railway travelling, at least, when he was by himself—Mr. Evelyn gave himself to his solitary reflections.

“Let me ascertain where it is I am going to,” he muttered to himself. “I hope I haven’t left that letter behind me, for I declare I have quite forgotten the address. Somewhere in—in Mile-end, I think it is called; and where that is I am sure I know no more than the man in the moon. Oh, no; here it is. Now let us look.”

Producing the curious document which had called him away from his quiet home, and which he only discovered after a protracted search in several of his pockets, he proceeded carefully to con it over once more. Nor could he refrain from a smile, though he felt in no cheerful mood, at the peculiarities displayed in the composition.

“The wording is not very clear, certainly,” he thought; “but its sad import is but too apparent. I suppose the writer must have entertained the same opinion as that arch deceiver, Prince Talleyrand, that words are given us to conceal our thoughts. Poor child! to think that she should have fallen into the hands of such illiterate people as this. Not but what the ignorant and poor are often kinder and more generous to their fellow-creatures in distress than the educated and the rich; too often, indeed, have I beheld this, even with my small experience of the world.”

With a sigh at the ways of men, and resting his venerable face upon his walking-stick, the Rector relapsed again into his silent meditations upon the present, the future, and the past.

Ah, me! gentle reader, we most of us get sentimental sometimes; and in the retrospect, I suppose there are few of us that are quite exempt from some trifling emotions of sadness. I daresay the Rector, in those few minutes when he was totally lost to all around him—the puffing engine, and its screaming voice; the jolting of the carriages, and even to the lovely Kentish scenery through which he passed,—I daresay that the Rector had travelled over the whole history of his existence with a rapidity to which that of the speeding engine was but a snail’s pace. I daresay he fancied he was a young man at Brazenose College, perhaps, and a mad-brained young scamp, too, for that matter; or, maybe, he was a young curate, with enough to do to make the two ends meet, and to seem a gentleman upon nothing a year worth speaking of.

Ah, my reverend friend, you sigh! Does that little token of emotion in any manner typify that your mental retrospection has now arrived at that interesting and romantic period of your career, when the charming Miss —, well, my dear sir, never mind her name; I don't suppose the reader will be impertinently curious about that point,—when the charming Miss —, with the glossy black ringlets, and the laughing eyes, was something more to the young curate than I fancy the Reverend Andrew Evelyn would care to let the wife of his bosom, the present Mrs. Evelyn, know. Well, well, my reverend friend, you may rest at ease on that score. Be sure the present historian will never betray to mortal man or woman the little secrets of your own heart, which you may wish, for prudent reasons, to keep concealed in that dark casket.

What! sighing again, my dear sir? Oh, now you are a married man, a steady, reformed, and benevolent benedict, are you—the Rector of Waverney, stout and hearty, and dandling a brace of chubby-cheeked children upon your knee? Well, it must be confessed the change is for the better. And now, I presume, you are meditatively indulging in visionary castles in the air, whereof those two chubby-cheeked children are the installed mistresses, with—are they princes?—no by Jove! but mitred and mighty bishops for their loving spouses, and they actually dandling other chubby-cheeked children upon their knees. And now,—why sir, pray, are you passing those sleek fingers of yours across your eyes? A cinder from the engine? Ah, well! But what were we thinking about just then? Dear me, yes—the chubby-cheeked children, so we were; if I am not mistaken, sir, you were just then beholding a vision in which those chubby-cheeked children had grown to womanhood, and were chubby-cheeked no more, but beauteous blushing girls. I am right! but, alas! where are the mitred bishops? Alas! they are not, nor do other little children play in the palace halls, which the dreams of the grandsire had raised for them in Fairyland. And one of those two—I will not say the best-beloved, because I know, good sir, you always strove to love your children both alike—but one, the elder of them, is now—*where*? Have you—but it is meet we should all have our crosses, my friend, as often you have told your flock at Waverney. Shoulder thine, Andrew, across thy reverend shoulders, and bear it with fortitude to town.

Mr. Evelyn was roused from the depths of his reverie by the conversation of a fellow-passenger, who sat on the seat opposite to him, and who, by the way, had got in with him at Waverney Junction.

“They do say that Sir William is a very excellent and religious man,” said the stranger, who was a jolly, rosy-cheeked Saxon, probably a farmer, who shouted out his remarks in a loud treble key.

The other gentleman, to whom this remark was addressed gave a lengthened sniff, a sniff which implied as plainly as words could have expressed it, that his companion's remark might very possibly be true, but that, so far as he was concerned, he was sceptical about everything in general, and about there being such things as excellence and religion in human nature in particular.

"No doubt of that," he, however, said. Then, immediately seeming to think that the admission was rather too liberal, he gave another sniff, which seemed to add, "that is of course as the world goes."

"And they say that nephew of his—Walter, I mean—is a devil of a young scamp."

There was no incredulous sniff this time; but a row of sharp little teeth, that seemed as if they wanted to bite somebody, and that somebody would know it if they did, grinned very plainly their owner's opinion that he could quite believe that. He, however, contented himself with the laconic reply—

"I don't know much of the young man myself."

"They must be talking of Sir William Lee and his nephew," Mr. Evelyn thought to himself. "Really, I am in a very awkward position; I don't like being a listener to these sort of things; but they talk so loudly, especially that gentleman with the rosy cheeks, that upon my word, I can't help it." Whereupon the conscientious parson gave a loud *ahem!* and made a great rattling with the window as he pulled it down, in order that the others might be reminded of his presence in case they had forgotten it. All this, however, only brought a pair of sharp, weazle eyes upon him, which seemed to say—

"I know you, my boy. I've got an eye upon you, though you mayn't observe it. I'm quite aware you're a clergyman by your white choker, and I know very well that clergymen are no better to be trusted than other folks. I'm not going to say anything I mind you hearing, you may depend upon that."

Whether the Rector thus interpreted the glance with which he was favoured I am not prepared to say. Certainly he shifted about uneasily upon his seat, and dared not raise his eyes again until he felt the sparkling little optic of the other had been moved. Gradually becoming reassured on this point, Mr. Evelyn was impelled by an irresistible curiosity to examine the other personalities of an individual whose nose and teeth and eyes had worked such remarkable effects upon him.

This person was a small, wiry little man, with a bald head, round which bristled a few iron-grey hairs. He wore a black frock coat, a trifle too long for him in the back, and his trousers were of a large check pattern, and pinched him somewhat about

the knees. His arms were remarkably long in proportion to his body. His left hand was encased in a rusty black glove, and he held in it the glove of his right hand, which was gently caressing a blue bag standing upon the feet by his side. He seemed to sit restlessly, his feet continually shuffling upon the floor in unison with a motion of his fingers, which appeared to twitch in every joint.

"A very singular man, really!" Mr. Evelyn thought, as he slunk away into the further extremity of the carriage. "A man rather calculated to impress a nervous person with the notion that he might fall into pieces. I don't think I should like to preach a sermon, knowing him to be among the congregation."

Meanwhile the conversation between the little gentleman and his companion thus went on:—

"Well, I can't say that I know much about the Captain, either;" said the Saxon-complexioned gentleman, after a minute's silence. But I tell you what, Squelch. A friend of mine was asking me the other day what I knew about him, for that he'd got two or three of his bills that he'd discounted, that amounted together to a pretty tune."

"More fool he, then; and if the young fellow's uncle pays them, he's the greatest fool of the lot!" answered the little man, his eyes peering out like burning coals. "I hear the young fellow is a sad rake; not that I suppose he's worse for sowing his wild oats and have done with them."

"By no means," assented the other, drily. "But," added he, his hard, dry face contracting into a sarcastic leer that corresponded well with his twinkling eyes, "the crop, my dear sir, does not generally add to the value of the estate."

"Squelch," muttered the Rector, "I think that is the name of Sir William's solicitor."

A desultory conversation ensued, and continued until the arrival of the train at London Bridge. But as the above is all that bears in any way upon the subject of this history, it is all I have thought fit to record.

Presently the engine gave a prolonged scream, and gradually slackened its speed, and the train soon after drew up at the arrival platform.

"Good-morning, old fellow!" cried the Saxon, as his companion scrambled up his blue bag and bundled out of the carriage like a man who had plenty of business and very little time.

"Morning!" Mr. Squelch sententiously returned.

"You'll attend to that little case of mine, then—you won't forget?"

"Certainly not," was the brief reply; and as he nodded adieu,

the little eyes gleamed out; "I never do forget anything;" and his nose seemed to sniff—"If there's anything wrong about your adversary's case, as no doubt there is, I'll smell it out for you;" and his teeth grinned as plainly as possible;—"and in that case, I'll give him such a grip that he won't forget it very soon!"

"He *is* a lawyer, then," the Rector mused, as he too stepped upon the platform.

Mr. Squelch and his companion having separated, were quickly lost in the throng; and Mr. Evelyn, having engaged a cab, directed the driver where to take him.

"And now for the meeting, which I long for, yet dread," he said, as he sunk into the seat. Trying to be cheerful, he repeated with a grim smile the words of Virgil:—" *Ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.*" Then his thoughts reverted to his late travelling companions.

With the hearty Saxon, who was only [one of Mr. Squelch's country clients, we shall have nothing more to do; but Mr. Squelch will appear again upon several occasions in these pages. Meanwhile, it is important we should keep company with Mr. Evelyn.

THE AUTUMN OF THE HEART

THE corn bows its head to the sickle,
 The nightingale's murmur is hush'd,
 Rain tears from the arbutus' trickle,
 Beech fruits in the forest lie crush'd.
 We have fought, but the battle is ending ;
 We are wounded and sick from the fight ;
 Blue shadows around us descending
 Breathe kisses of night.

We have journey'd not heeding our danger,
 Cried in wild supplication above ;
 We have loved till our eyes lost their anger,
 And hearts became sleepy with love.
 Red roses are dying which wreath'd us,
 We are stamp'd with the iron that sears ;
 Dead love in compassion bequeath'd us
 Its relic of tears.

Ah, me ! but the summer was pleasant ;
 Shall we die and lie dreaming again ?
 Would we yield the dull days of the present
 For an hour of the past and its pain ?
 Do we hunger for kisses that stung us ?
 Or long for the lips that have lied ?
 Must we stoop for the gauntlet they've flung us ?
 Weep ? creep to their side ?

We cringe to these sowers of sorrow,
 We cry for a-blighted caress ;
 We dream for a night ; on the morrow
 We gather the tares of distress.
 We bow to our grief and privation,
 We pay for the pleasures that cloy ;
 Our work is to build the foundation
 They love to destroy.

Oh ! women with hearts brimming over
 With passions we never can feel,
 The world is too weak to discover
 The mystical love you conceal.
 Our sorrow, not ours the reproving ;
 Your triumph, and ours the defeat ;
 Our lives are made bitter from loving,
 Why are you so sweet ?

CLEMENT W. SCOTT.

OLD NEWSPAPERS

PART II.

WHAT an inveterate gossip was he who first thought of writing a newspaper, and what help he has given his brother gossips to prattle! Now-a-days we cannot turn the corner of a street without meeting some country politicians; and where would these learned gentlemen be if they had not their newspapers? "At sea," most decidedly. Such were the moral reflections I made after smoking two long pipes (a strong incentive to philosophy), on resuming my old newspapers, and my arm-chair, on the following evening. Being resolved to have no disturbances, I had banished my favourite cat to the marked attentions of Mrs. Pipchin, my housekeeper—good creature!—which attentions chiefly consisted in the hurling of a series of old pokers, javelin-wise, at, and the throwing of numerous basins of cold water upon, that unfortunate animal.

I turned over my newspapers for some while, and noticed nothing in particular until the following met my eye. They purport to be letters from the celebrated poet, Alexander Pope, to Sir Hans Sloane, and are forwarded by a contributor to the "Saint James's Chronicle." The fame which justly belongs to that great poet induces every one of his admirers to look upon anything coming from his pen as a choice and rare curiosity:

Twickenham, March 30, 1742.

"SIR,—I am extremely obliged to you for your intended kindness of furnishing my grotto with that surprising natural curiosity, which, indeed, I have ardently sought some time. But I would much rather part with anything of this sort which I have collected than deprive your most copious collection of one thing that may be wanting to it. If you can spare it, I shall be doubly pleased in having it, and in owing it to you.

"The further favour you offer me, of a review of your curiosities, deserves my acknowledgment. Could I hope that among the minerals and fossils I have gathered there was anything you could like, it would be esteemed an obligation (if you had time, as the season improves) to look upon them, and to command any. I shall take the first favourable opportunity to inquire whether it may be least inconvenient to wait on you, which will be a true satisfaction to

" Sir, your most obliged, and

" Most humble servant,

" A. POPE."

May 22, 1742.

"SIR,—I have many true thanks to pay you for the two joints of the Giant's Causeway, which I found yesterday, at my return to Twitnam, perfectly safe and entire. They will be a great ornament to my grotto,

which consists wholly of natural productions, owing nothing to the chisel or polish; and which it would be much my ambition to entice you one day to look upon. I will first wait on you at Chelsea, and embrace with great pleasure the satisfaction you can better than any man afford me, of so extensive a view of Nature, in her most curious works.

“I am, with all respect, Sir,

“Your most obliged and humble servant,

“A. POPE.”

These epistolary communications of Pope's show us, I think, plainly enough, that he was not in prose what he was in poetry, and that however elegant and easy his style of composition in essay and poetry was, his letters were laboured and heavy. Our fancy can easily picture Pope's Grotto, and himself, with deformed figure, with that painful, pensive, and yet expressive countenance, sitting in it. When we recal the great and lofty thoughts that inspired his brain, the picture rises up unbidden before our eyes. When we consider that he was but twelve years old, and at that age he wrote his “Ode to Solitude;” at thirteen, his “Alcandor;” at fourteen, his satire on Elkanah Settle;* at fifteen, his “Pastorals:” do we not (and how can we avoid it) form a *great* conception of the mighty genius of the man?

But we must descend from Pope, and come to that which (in comparison to him) is of very minor importance. The following verses, selected from the Poet's Corner of my old newspapers, are forwarded by one of those unfortunate “sentimental” gentlemen who are always inscribing nauseous sonnets to their lady's eyebrows, &c., and may be regarded as unmitigated nuisances. They are addressed to a lady “who is going to bathe in the sea,” and any love-sick serenader, who likes them, has only to get a guitar, set them to music, and he can go down to the ladies' bathing-machines by the sea-side, in the summer, and sing 'em away like fury. The scene would resemble “Orpheus and the Nymphs.”

I.

“The shades of night are passed away,
Nor could my prayers prolong their stay,
Too soon the morn I see:
The morn! that brings this last adieu,
Who knows, alas! that ever you
Will think of absent me?”

II.

“With folded arms, and downcast eye
Each silent glen and path I'll try,
Or carve the smooth rind tree.
The shrubs you loved my lips shall press,
Mournful! each favourite dog caress,
But you'll ne'er think on me.”

* Dryden's butt, in his “Satires.”

III.*

“ I'll bid Sabrina's refluent waves,
 In whose mixed stream thy bosom laves,
 Convey my tears to thee :
 And to her boisterous surge I'll cry,
 ' Is my love false, or else I die ?
 And does my love, love me ? ' ”

The fifth line in the second verse of this effusion puts one in mind of the old proverb, “ Love me, love my dog ; ” and the “ charming fair,” to whom these verses are addressed must have been extremely flattered when informed that the lips which once kissed her lips were now kissing her dog. But anything, people say, is excusable in a lover. He has a sort of licence to say and do things that would be regarded simply as acts of madness in differently situated people. He may sing songs, scale walls, write sonnets, and sigh all day long—it's only right he should, of course !

Here is another effusion from our old friend, Mr. Evans, the perfumer, whose language is most original. He informs us that he has a preparation, called “ The Balm of Lilies,” which “ re-
 vives the spirits ” and “ creates a lively and cheerful countenance ” —in short, the best thing in the world, at only 4s. a bottle. After which he mysteriously imparts “ that this valuable article is to be had only of E. Evans, Perfumer to Her Majesty, *and from no one else,*” where may be had likewise very curious lavender water, drawn from the real flowers, at 3s. 6d. per pint. (Mr. Evans was moderate in his charges.)

Gravediggers must have been curious gentlemen in days gone by. This it appears was one way they had of getting their living : —“ A species of robbery has lately been discovered in Dublin of a very singular nature. A woman, who kept a cellar in Charles-street, took a quantity of lead to Mr. B——t's house, in Fishamble-street, where she disposed of it. On his opening the parcel, he observed his own mark, and the inscription of his wife's coffin, who was interred, in Mary's Churchyard, about seven years ago. He had the woman immediately apprehended, and lodged in the new jail, and we hear she has given information against the grave-digger of the parish, who, she says, has been a constant customer of hers in that line of traffick.”

Be thankful, O reader, to the present wise system of legislature which has made provision for you to rest in your grave without disturbance !

* Here the ancient editor of the “ Saint James's Chronicle ” affixes the following note :—“ The tide comes up the river Severn with a head six feet high, and carries the natural stream, and everything before it with great velocity. It proceeds some way above Gloucester, when its force subsides, and the Severn flows back uninterrupted.”

My comfortable position, the pleasure I felt in reading my old newspapers, and a clear conscience, induced a snooze; and, after a while, I fell into a deep sleep. I dreamt—and a curious dream I had—I was snugly seated in Pope's Grotto of Curiosities, and by-and-bye in came Mr. Evans, who said he was going to give me a "lively and cheerful countenance." I believe I was very agreeable to the operation, when, all of a sudden, Mr. Evans vanished, and an old lady appeared, holding up the plate of his coffin, with his name written on it, who immediately began to rave at me in a most insane manner, and as

I awoke to consciousness, and the tones of the dealer of coffin-plates dissolved themselves into Mrs. Pipchin, who had just succeeded (after a preliminary of abuse) in driving my cat out, and shutting the street-door after her.

C. J. C. P.

A BIT OF BULGARIA

THE autumn of 1865 was undoubtedly prolific, to an unusual extent, of British tourists. Lordly, respectable, cloudy, and snob-bish representatives of Her Majesty's dominions were found in most capitals and countries of Europe, from August to October inclusive. North, south, and west were tolerably well invaded, and the valiant Britisher, from the Duke of Diamonds to John Short, the lawyer's clerk, enriched hotel keepers in many lands. But that big stalking-horse, cholera, was abroad, and all were glad to keep him at an eminently respectful distance. And so, having set face eastward, and started, literally post-haste, by Dover and Ostend mail one fine morning in August, I enjoyed the occasional society of many fellow-countrymen who were refreshing themselves in their own peculiar fashion about Belgium and Germany. Brussels, Cologne, Mayence, and Frankfort swarmed with excursionists of various hues and grades, but the wave of English life grew fainter as we travelled eastward, and, arriving at Vienna after a rapid journey of forty-eight hours, but one other Englishman (and he of the commercial order) discharged himself and baggage at the terminus. A rush to The Archduke Charles' hotel, a wash, breakfast, and stroll, the whole comprised in three hours, and I was off again, still bearing east. And here the excursionising element, English and foreign, was totally absent. The Danube, with its magnificent scenery, is still beyond the means or inclination of many English tourists, who do not care to face three days in a railway carriage in order to enjoy bits of scenery that, in this galloping age, can be seen, perhaps, in as many hours. The Austrian railways are painfully slow, and though the occupants of our carriage were cosmopolitan enough and lively enough to keep rolling among them the ball of conversation, that single line of rails between Vienna and Baciasch (where it meets the fast Danube steamboats), is a weary way after all. Travelling by the bi-weekly mail-train, Pesth is reached at midnight; you struggle, push, and squeeze into a villainously close and stewy restaurant, and claw your roll and coffee as best you may; clamber up again, and get over the night by alternate smokes and dozes. On this occasion the journey was varied by a general smash of the up train, into which we narrowly escaped running at about three in the morning. This train was intentionally, and of malice aforethought, upset by some ruffians of the district, who had (as we were politely informed) unintentionally operated upon it in lieu of the mail train, in which we were seated. This was consoling, and, as no lives were lost, and a certain number of soldiers were raked up from some-

where and sent away, evidently with the express purpose of not finding the culprits, we submitted perforce to a mild delay of eight hours, were transferred, or rather transferred ourselves to a special train sent from Basiasch, and reached that place late in the afternoon.

I am sure that few gatherings, in a limited space, are so various and polyglot as on a Danube steamboat. Although the epidemic that was then raging eastward lessened the number of travellers considerably, the Turks must have their envoys, the Russians and Wallachians their soldiers, Bukarest its ballet dancers, Braila, Galatz, and Odessa, their merchants. All these were here represented, with two or three sprightly little Polonaise, a few sufficiently dirty Germans, and an infusion of demi-monde peculiar to Roumania. The mail-boats of the Danube are, I believe, considerably above par as compared with all other river vessels of Europe and Great Britain, those on the Clyde only excepted, and though extraordinary demands are sometimes made on their powers of accommodation, inducing peculiarly close proximities as to sleeping quarters, the general verdict as to build and arrangements must be one of approval. We steamed a few miles down the river as soon as the usual luggage business, with attendant vernacular, was concluded, but speedily brought up at the quay of a little coaling village, and lay alongside the smaller boat in which we were to proceed next morning. Laudatory themes about clear skies and moonlit nights are well-nigh knocked out of time, but a night on the Danube in this part of its course can justly claim a large amount of enthusiastic, if not moonsick, praise. We are off again at daybreak, and the fairer portion of the community must needs on this occasion be enrolled among "the great unwashed;" though it is a fact that foreigners, male and female, show with an absence of all ablution to less disadvantage than Britishers. After two hours' cold journeying through some of the most beautiful river scenery in Europe, we are again bundled, bag and baggage, into a still smaller boat than the last, and this time with no cabin accommodation at all. A four-paddle boat, flat-bottomed, and drawing only a few inches of water, is necessary for some six or eight miles of the journey, in order to pass a shallow called the Iron Gates; it is in fact the place where this large watercourse bursts through a gorge in the Balkhaus before spreading out into the plain beyond. The water bubbles and rolls over these shallows in a style that, as you approach them, is far from pleasant, but the danger, if any there be, is quickly over, and the admirable handling of the boat is sufficiently evident to inspire confidence, if confidence is needed. The beautiful scenery of the Danube ends here. We change boats, for the third and last time, at Orsova; a maniacal rush is made for berths, and the flesh asserts itself by

most audible grumblings until breakfast is announced. I have heard Englishmen inveigh against these steamboat meals on the Danube as nasty conglomerations of filthy messes, bad wine, wooden toothpicks, mixed pickles, and very mixed society ; but taking these unsavoury components (as we may most assuredly do), with several grains of salt, there are, among them, morsels to be picked out and digested with a great amount of satisfaction. Thus, it is perfectly clear that the fat coarse woman from Odessa, who uses her toothpick so freely, and her napkin so sparingly, is playing her daughter upon the good-looking Caucasus officer with no mean skill. It is equally patent that the Rouman dragoon in blue and braid has it in his mind to do a little with the Russian on his left at picquet, and finish the evening by moonlit meanderings (albeit limited) with the Frenchwoman on his right. You can take stock of these and other little things, *sui generis*, and can, in some sort, digest the solemn and solid remarks of the pasha on one side, and the pretty *naïveté* of the two fair Polonaise on the other ; though, of these latter, you can't, for the life of you, make out whether they be sisters, or mother and daughter—however, that's neither here nor there. It may be urged, reasonably enough, that a berth tenanted by three others besides yourself, with one small wash-stand among the lot, whether they be Rooshian, or whether they be Prooshian, —(in this case, by the way, they were both)—is not the most comfortable resting-place in the world ; but there are, as we shall find anon, worse quarters than this in the East, and my reminiscences of the Danube boat are by no means unpleasant. Widdin, a large, straggling, fortified Turkish town on the right bank of the river, was passed at dinner-time ; but no one bestowed so much as a glance at the place, and with prandial duties before us, my curiosity about the geography was evidently looked upon as a sign of intellectual weakness. Nikopolis and Sistova were treated with the same supreme indifference, and, in truth, their exteriors are by no means interesting. On the morning of the second day, we brought up off Rustchuk, landed some five or six distinguished natives, and crossed to Giurgevo, the port of Bukarest. Here the gorgeous military element, and the ballet-dancers, both with an infinitesimal quantity of baggage, were eliminated from the party, which process, by current report, greatly conduced to the purity of the air between decks. On again, through a flat and intensely uninteresting district, past Silistria, of war notoriety, and at four on the same day my river travel was, for the present, brought to a close by our arrival at Tchernavoda, a small village on the right bank of the river, and now forming the terminus of the Kustendjie and Black Sea Railway. A Turkish pasha, a

Russian officer on leave, and a German commercial traveller, formed with myself the quartett of departures here, and the jealous care taken to keep the steamboat clear of the shore and all its belongings indicated that cholera was still present at Tchernavoda. Having landed in a canoe of primitive description and leaky condition, and being, by reason of the paucity of inhabitants, mercifully delivered from the usual army of touters, we found that the Kustendjie train had just left. A very cute Scotchman in charge of the works (why does the thistle, in the outlying districts of British colonisation, always take the lead in our leafy trio?) telegraphed for another, and meanwhile we looked around in search of the picturesque. The search was vain. A big hill bounded our view to the east, on which are built the cottages of the railway employés—built and abandoned, as too far from work, so that their habitations now abut on the river's bank, and ague, cholera, or any other malady finds them an easy prey. There are but few trees in this district, and nothing, in fact, in the landscape to attract or please; but our friend, the Scotchman, pointed to the granaries and wharves with pride, and went through statistics, bewildering at any time, and vastly so to listeners with very empty stomachs and very bad tempers. However, we are off at last, and travel on the first iron road made in the Ottoman Empire. This railway was constructed to form a quick route from the West to Constantinople, by connecting the Danube and Black Sea, and so avoiding the tedious passage by the tortuous mouths of the river. This route is now available for about nine months of the year. The river boats are worked by an Austrian company, and are said to pay exceedingly well, though it may be doubted if the through route to Constantinople is (exclusive of the mail subsidy) sufficiently developed to influence the success of the river traffic. The number of travellers is as yet inconsiderable; it is something to acquire and maintain a reputation for working well a route that unites the extreme boundaries of Eastern and Western Europe, though the recent opening of the Varna and Rustchuk railway has now taken away much of the passenger traffic as well as the mails. The line is about forty miles in length, and runs through a tract of low-lying hills covered with scanty herbage, beyond which there are increasing evidences of tillage, and of that rapidly advancing system of agriculture naturally produced by improved means of intercommunication. We reached Kustendjie after dark. After cautiously winding down a very steep gradient, the town and harbour came into view by moonlight, and we stopped under the only Anglicised hotel in the provinces of Turkey. Clean, comfortable, and airy rooms are adjectives that can seldom, in verity and truth, be applied to hotels in the Ottoman Empire; and it

is no small praise to say that this Kustendjie hotel can claim them all without exaggeration. Situated on the brow of a hill, it overlooks a crescent of cliff, the concavity of the latter being towards the sea, including in its wide sweep port and harbour, railway and works, heaped-up native village on the left, with the lighthouse farther on; and, lastly, the houses of English residents scattered about the same level as the hotel itself. Some half mile inland are two graveyards, bearing sad traces of cholera and its ravages, for Kustendjie was more severely dealt with by the stalking horse of 1865 than any other colony in the East. It is scarcely pertinent to these jottings (which do not profess to treat of subjects medical) to discuss the direct cause of this sad scourge. The native town, though tolerably close at hand, is quite distinct from the works of the Company, and the dwelling-places of their servants, and few situations can be more salubrious than those of the latter. But it may be confidently asserted that the cholera, or any other epidemic, will, in future, find Kustendjie forearmed against their ravages to good purpose; and the Company's officers have wisely used energetic measures to induce various sanitary conditions, necessary in England, and doubly so in a country where skilled labour is superlatively valuable, and the tendency to a total disregard of smells and their causes normal and natural.

Another chief object of the railway between Tchernavoda and Kustendjie is to convey grain from the Principalities and other districts around the Danube direct to the Black Sea for shipment. There is no doubt that the ultimate result of this part of the traffic will be a great success, and the following statistics show how largely the trade of Kustendjie has increased since the opening of this railway. The quantity of grain exported increased in two years from 2,000 to 48,000 quarters. In the year 1864, 283 vessels cleared out of the port, and the total quantity of grain exported during that year amounted to 576,444 quarters, three-fifths being the produce of the Principalities, and the remainder that of the districts immediately around Kustendjie. It is certain that the financial success of this Company must, in a great measure, depend upon increased facilities for exporting grain speedily from the Principalities, and so gaining ground at the expense of Ibraila and Galatz, both of which towns are closer than Tchernavoda to the mouths of the Danube.

The construction of the Kustendjie line was, at the outset, attended with great engineering difficulties, on account of the very varying level of the water in the Danube. These have been overcome by building a long dam along the bank of the river at Tchernavoda, which effectually prevents any flooding of the land traversed by the railway.

Bulgaria Proper is bounded by the Danube, the Black Sea, and

the Balkhan range severally on the north, east, and south, and is divided for the purposes of government into two pashalics or districts, those of Widdin and Silistria. Each district is administered by a mushir or pasha of three tails, and the head-quarters of these mushirs are now at the cities of Widdin and Rustchuk. The population of Bulgaria is estimated at about two millions, one third only of which is Mahomedan. The valley of the Dobrudscka comprises the northern division of Bulgaria, from the mouths of the Danube to a point a little beyond Trojan's wall, which latter is said to have been built across the country between Tchernavoda and Kustendjie. It is said that there are in the valley of the Dobrudscka upwards of eighty villages, not one of which contains a mixed population. These villages are peopled severally by Turks, Bulgars, Tartars, Circassians, Armenians, Greeks, and Selaves, with two or three other races in comparatively small number. An even partially complete history of these tribes would form a labour of many years, and no book gives even an approximately correct account of them.

Since the termination of the Crimean war, many villages of Crim-Tartars have arisen in this district, and their neighbours would do well to take a leaf out of the book of this industrious people in the arrangement of habitations. A Tartar settlement can be distinguished many miles off by its regular lines of huts, each with an equal interspace and boundary, the whole generally forming a square or oblong. If the community be large and flourishing (as, for example, at Varna), one or more large block of houses, higher and generally more pretentious than the rest, indicate the residences of the wealthier section of the community. The Tartars are all Mussulmans, and their settlement in Bulgaria barely counterbalances the recent and unfortunate immigration of the Circassians. The late inroads of this latter people into this country, and the cause thereof, are known to most of our readers, and Kustendjie was favoured with a large importation, bringing misery in its train. A few villages belonging to this eminently wretched people are scattered over the Dobrudscka, and a tribe of them has settled in a beautiful glen near the track between Kustendjie and Varna. But the predatory habits of this miserable race render them utterly averse to any regular system of existence. Sometimes mounted on horses as bare and bony as their riders, with high sheepskin caps, long tattered coats, and haggard faces; carrying a long gun, which is scarcely ever used without a rest, they wander up and down the country, begging, borrowing, or oftener still stealing a geese out of the many flocks belonging to Turkish and Tartar villages. Their women are seldom seen, and certainly, in these days, never to advantage. It was my fortune to meet,

at various times, some six or eight of them, and have never observed in savage or civilised life specimens of feminine humanity so utterly degraded in manners and appearance. The immigration of this people is one of the gloomiest episodes in the modern history of the Ottoman Empire. Tracts of land were allotted to them in various district of Asia Minor; but, in most instances, they were dissatisfied with the plots granted, and endeavoured to take possession of other portions belonging to the older inhabitants. This was especially the case at Samsoun, and other towns on the southern coasts of the Black Sea, where they took forcible possession of adjoining lands, and were, as a necessary consequence, ejected with violence and bloodshed. Their hand appears to be against every man, and every man's hand against them, and the eventualities of this unhappy race are still an unsolved problem in the rôle of Eastern politics. The native town of Kustendjie contains, in common with all other large places in Bulgaria, a mixed population, but in not sufficiently large numbers to be divided into quarters, as at Varna, Rustchuk, and elsewhere. Of drainage, or the ghost thereof, there is literally none. An infinitesimally small sum would remove all undesirable material from the surface, and carry it at once into the sea; but as Kustendjie at present exists, it is marvellous how, when an epidemic commences, it fails to decimate entirely so insanitary a population. I rode inland for some few miles, and found a large lake, the waters of which would be a great boon to the inhabitants of the town and the railway employés. In the middle of this lake is a small island, round which hovers a cloudy classic notoriety, it being the reputed dwelling-place of Ovid for some years of his life. Wild fowl of all kinds abound here, there is plenty of work for a good shot.

To the Englishman in Turkey, comfort is scarcely compassed without the aid of horseflesh, and I found the "horseback" mode of travelling by far the pleasantest. But a relay of quadrupeds is required, or you progress but slowly; for as horses here very commonly perform a journey of from forty to fifty miles daily for a week together, anything like pace is out of the question. The "triple" is usually preferred by natives and others who are constantly making long journeys; but as many horses cannot triple at all, you must often be content with the bad substitute of a jog-trot, which some riders, curiously enough, persist in calling an uncomfortable pace. You must, however, unless very rich in horseflesh, go chiefly at this pace, or you will soon cease to go at all. There is no other country where the proper care of horses is so necessary. Good grooms are scarce, of course, here as everywhere, but a clever Turk will—at all events in Eastern Europe—make a much better

groom than any Englishman. It is the plan here, and, I believe, all over Turkey, to shoe horses with a wide, round rim of iron, very much like a perfectly flat quoit; but, with the exception of simplicity, I failed to see any advantages over the English method, and it is certain that stones are very apt to become impacted in the centre hole.

After a stay of several days at Kustendjie, during which time great kindness and hospitality were shown by the English residents, I set face towards Varna, a journey of about one hundred and thirty miles. The "horsey" element was scarce, so it was determined to perform the distance by araba. This elegant vehicle was brought up to the door of the hotel one fine morning, and comprised a very dirty-looking hooded waggon of small dimensions, with no springs to speak of, with wheels of the shakiest, and gear of the most piecemeal description. The quadrupeds were in every respect worthy of the carriage that they were doomed to draw, but were loaded with all kinds of impossible harness; for your Turk is fond of great display in trappings, and evidently thinks that there is nothing like leather. My driver—duly got up for the occasion, with brodered jacket, shawl turban, the usual loose nether garments, and feet in very dubious order—cast an admiring eye over the equipage, and surveyed the arrangements for departure with that calm satisfaction peculiar to the Turk. The vehicle was filled up with hay (a most necessary proceeding), and with portmantéaus for pillows, and various surroundings in the shape of pipe, books, and flask, I tumbled in, and prepared for a prolonged jolt, with intervals, of sixty or seventy miles. The suite was completed, at the eleventh hour, by a body-servant, engaged for this journey only, who sat on a primitive box-seat with the driver, amid sundry pots, kettles, and victuals, and who beguiled the tedium of the journey, and got rid of superfluous energy, by assisting, in the whip department, our means of progression. Beware of bells. Unless a very positive order (almost amounting to a threat) be given to the contrary, before commencing a journey by araba, the chances are ten to one that you will find yourself behind six or eight little bells attached to various parts of the harness, making day and night hideous with infernal jingling. The driver, of course, likes this noise immensely. The more they jingle, the more he grins, and at last will, as you proceed, turn round with a quietly triumphant air, evidently proud of having devised some sort of noise that has cost him in the making no personal trouble or inconvenience. We went off merrily enough, for the day was very fine, and, barring dust, the track tolerably clear. The way skirted along cliffs overhanging the Black Sea, over low sweeps of bare hill-ground, and by the side of interminable posts, belonging to the Indo-European telegraph. A

stray horseman met us now and then, doing his journey of forty or fifty miles at "the triple"—a pace, I believe, peculiar to Turkey, and pleasant enough on a clever horse; past long lines of bullock arabas, giving forth that peculiarly disagreeable wooden creak so well known throughout the Ottoman Empire; past numerous villages, chiefly Turkish, where the most prominent features of the scene are wells, geese, and dogs, the latter at constant internecine war. My attendants smoked their cigarettes, drank water copiously, and indulged in occasional vernacular, addressed to the animals under their charge, and at about one o'clock announced that a halt would be necessary at the village then just a-head. We halted accordingly; I lunched sufficiently off chicken and claret, and having expended half-an-hour usefully, and three half-hours wastefully, we got under way again. The cattle certainly behaved well, in spite of their rueful aspect; but a jolting novelty at a jog-trot pace soon loses its charm, and in happy ignorance of what was to come, I was heartily glad as our trysting-place hove in sight.

We drew rein in the middle of a cluster of hovels, called by courtesy the village of Durankeuy, and crawled into the yard of a most unpromising-looking hostelry therein situated. Go into the heart of a tract of marshland called Whittlesey Fen, and find your way to the smallest and dirtiest farm-yard in that still benighted district of East Anglia. Ignore the farm-house altogether, add an extra modicum of agricultural mud, and you will have a clear idea and a clean edition of our resources on this occasion. Mine host came out of what was, in fact, barn and tenement; greeted us with native dignity, raked up the fire that burned on the mud floor, and delayed his supper of melons to assist our proceedings. After exchanging courtesies with several other native occupants of the room, who were feasting frugally, I put down rug and blanket on the floor, ensconced myself thereon, and was speedily served by the domestic with an admirable supper of eggs and chicken; the culinary process having been, and still being, an entire mystery. Coffee followed; my tobacco bag went round and returned nearly empty; mine host was very talkative for a Turk, and all appeared to be going smoothly. By the time, however, that my Turkish vocabulary began to show decided signs of weakness, I began to be unpleasantly conscious that animated nature in shapes other than the human variety occupied the building. Rain, however, was now audible outside. The wood and tobacco-smoke made all things dim; so I sat resolutely and puffed calmly on. But the enemy advanced, and after a ghastly attempt at mirth with my now convivial and thick-skinned companions, I beat a retreat into the outer darkness, bearing many traces of the energy and numbers of

the foe. I returned to the araba, but slept not; and this, the first among several subsequent experiences of roughing it in Bulgaria, taught me that skins must be very tough indeed to resist the united attacks of so much lively material as is always found at these resting-places. My body-guard, however, evidently felt no inconvenience from these little peculiarities. They turned out very leisurely indeed shortly after sunrise, and with the wonted deliberation of Mussulmans, wasted at least two hours before effecting a start. Some twenty miles beyond Durankeuy, the track passes across a ravine of several miles in width, beautifully wooded on either side. At the bottom of this ravine is the Circassian village before-mentioned; and the view, as seen from either height, is the one picturesque panorama on this otherwise monotonous journey. Scrub and brushwood are tolerably plentiful between this glen and Varna. We pass the police-station, are there regaled with the inevitable black coffee, and, late in the afternoon, after many jumbings, shakings, and innumerable halts made on the most frivolous pretexts, we are at the edge of the heights, overlooking a plain on the sea-board of which Varna is situated. A good bird's-eye view of the town is gained from this coign of vantage; and as is most emphatically the case with respect to all inhabited places in the East, distance lends much enchantment to the view. The town is built close to the water's edge, and the roadstead occupies an interval of some two or three miles breadth of water between its walls and the lighthouse that is built upon the southern heights. For Varna is bounded from the edge of the Black Sea, north and south, by two ranges of hills, that, after encircling a tolerably large lake as they proceed inland, gradually merge into the slopes that form the watershed of this district.

This bit of view is well seen before descending to reach the town. The latter is about four miles off, and with a steep zigzag incline in front, our driver was seized, for the first time during the journey, with a fit of intense energy, which fit came on so rapidly that we were rushing fiercely down the slope before I had time to guess the cause of this paroxysm of activity. I am still in a fog as to the reason why; for, as we had three collisions on the way down, and a great many minutes were thereby consumed in the ebullition of bad language, the time saved was inconsiderable. My Varna friends suggest that *backsheesh* was at the bottom of it, and I incline to this solution of the mystery, for, in verity and truth, few present or prospective facts will induce haste in a Turk. As we descend the road, now no longer a track, runs between vineyards, which are here ornamented with kiosks of a more or less pretentious character. A pleasant summer garden is thus formed, and a great deal of rural felicity takes place here, both on the Turkish and

Christian sabbaths. I was fortunate enough to be in the country during the grape season, and we passed a motley throng of gatherers, who were returning to the town, laden with the results of their day's labour. After an exchange of confidences between our driver and the sentry at the gate (the latter a most disreputable-looking fellow), we cross the drawbridge, and are fairly in one of the dirtiest cities of Europe. The main street—if street it can be called—leads, at first, through the Bulgar quarter; and, as the wretched horses are flogged and flounder through the strata of mud in which this and every other portion of the town is hopelessly involved, you wonder that equine legs can be found capable of draught under such circumstances. We get along, however, though that spasm of energy on the part of the driver has long ago effervesced; push our way through bullock arabas, among Bulgars returning from work, fierce-looking Tartars, sauntering Greeks and smoking Turks, and find ourselves at length in the Armenian quarter, which may, I suppose, be described as “West-end.” Attentive friends had engaged part of a house for me here, and a Greek servant, was in waiting. This fellow had a most extraordinary combination of qualities—good, bad, and indifferent—and was, in many respects, a very great knave indeed. He spoke five languages decently, and two others partially; and having served a great variety of travelling Englishmen, particularly during the Crimean War, he had acquired an easy, *nonchalant*, and (with his own countrymen) patronising air, that was intensely amusing. But no man, when on the road, could cook a dinner better. With no culinary utensils whatever to speak of, you might bivouac under any tree, or in any wretched khan about Bulgaria, and, well-nigh before you had performed such ablutions as were possible under the circumstances, this man would have placed before you, *seriatim*, a savoury omelette, a chicken, cutlets, and grapes; these discussed, your *café noir* and pipe would be ready at hand, and, long before the latter is finished, mats and rugs would be duly arranged for bed. I cannot endorse the opinion of travellers who consider that a servant is necessary everywhere. In some places, particularly if an Englishman, he is a positive nuisance; and I am quite sure that the most accomplished British valet would be eminently useless in journeying about this country. But, under these latter circumstances, a good Greek servant is invaluable, and as you know (or will soon discover) that cheating is the creed of all their tribe, the wholesome docking of at least one-third off weekly bills will do much to keep your man in order.

Varna was very little, if at all, known to the general reader until the year 1848, when it burst into notoriety as the place in and around which were enacted the first scenes of the Crimean

War. The presence and conduct of the Allies during that struggle must have mightily astonished and bewildered the worthy inhabitants of this primitive town, and there are many of them who still speak with awe, trembling, and intense dislike of the people who were by no means punctilious in assisting themselves to the varieties as well as the necessaries of life. Varna, however, was unfortunate in being the first camping-place of the Allied armies, and was consequently visited, with the unhappy effects of any shortcomings in their commissariat departments. It is evident that the French, here as elsewhere, were much cleverer in their *minutiæ* of arrangements than ourselves, and written evidence of this still remains. I found myself in temporary possession of a house that was, during the war, occupied by the head-quarters of the French commissariat. The houses in this street are all numbered, and at the end of several other streets in the quarter wooden boards still remain with "Rue du Temple," "Rue de la Poste," "Rue d'Angleterre," &c., rudely carved upon them. Without such aids to geography, the messengers of the executive departments would have wasted many hours on their road from one office to the other, for the topography of Varna cannot be learnt in a day, and a shrewd Scotchman, who has lived here now nearly two years, told me that he was still occasionally nonplussed as to his whereabouts. The entrance to most houses in Turkey comprise a little door and a large *porte cochère* in close juxtaposition, both of which open into a yard of greater or less extent, where is stored wood for the winter, and in one corner of which the kitchen is built. Many houses indulge in a balcony, which overhangs the yard, and verandah blinds are almost universally used. The balcony arrangement gives you an admirable view of your neighbours' premises, and the heterogeneous way in which the houses are built favours this advantage considerably. It is evident that the art of privacy, if it be valued, is not studied, and so, I am thereby enabled, by a simple turn of the head either way, to see the inmates of four neighbouring houses and their doings. The women are all engaged about something, for Greeks and Armenians are very active in their habits of life, and Turkey would thrive but poorly without them. Some of my neighbours are weaving cloth with a primitive loom for home use; others are cleaning the grape tubs in readiness for the pressing. Their eyes and profiles are beautiful, and their hair is braided into two large richly-full plaits, which hang at length over the shoulders, partially covered by a white, or, more rarely, coloured handkerchief, with one corner hanging between the tresses. They wear a little jacket, embroidered, with close sleeves, full trousers (pink being the commonest and most becoming colour), and slippers of a particularly

loose type. Despite an utter absence of what we call complexion, and a general fading of all good looks after twenty years of age, the Greek women are decidedly the most interesting of their sex in Turkey, and their holiday costume is certainly the prettiest (except, perhaps, one or two of those in Wallachia) that I have ever seen. The Greeks occupy here, as elsewhere in the East, a very important commercial position, and indeed there is no doubt that the Ottoman Empire would soon cease to exist without them, and without other races, the men of which, though still denied the privileges of citizenship, are really the thews and sinews of the empire. There are in this country about seventeen millions of Greeks, Bulgars, Armenians, and others, while the total number of Turks does not exceed three millions. Nearly all the commerce, wealth, and intelligence of the Porte belong to the former classes, who have, nevertheless, no share whatever in the councils of the nation. It would be well if Turkey would look to herself on this head, for, by admitting the mercantile community to a share in the duties and privileges of citizens, the Sultan would add a powerful element to his list of advisers, and one that would prove eminently serviceable in helping to clear up the financial dangers and difficulties that have always obscured the political horizon of Turkey. It is a matter of congratulation to all concerned in Turkish credit that Fuad Pasha is again in the list of the Sultan's ministers. He is one of the few Turks who have very acute powers as to figures, and, at the same time, energy to work out a system of finance against the united opposition of old and vested interests.

Yellow, blue, pink, and green are all colours affected by the Varniotes as to their house exteriors, and, as may be supposed, a most medley aspect is the result. There are seven or eight consulates (each indicated by a tall flag-staff), that of Her Britannic Majesty's representative being, for some inscrutable reason, by far the humblest and dirtiest of them all. Varna contains about 30,000 inhabitants, 12,000 of whom are Mahommedans. The ecclesiastical requirements of the place are provided for by three churches (one of which ranks as the metropolitan), one Armenian church, and eight or ten mosques. The Bulgarians proper are all members of the Greek Church, so that the people of that persuasion form here a large majority of the inhabitants. Varna possesses six gates, four of which are open all the year round from sunrise to sunset, after which it is presumed that no person but the Pasha and his attendants can enter or leave the town. The law as to carrying lanterns after dark still holds here, and my friend Barkley, among other excellent peculiarities, prides himself on having the biggest lantern in the town. In sooth, a light of some sort is needed; for the muddy and stony perils of the way (to say nothing of dogs, rats,

and donkeys) are by no means small. It is not at all uncommon to bivouac the last-named quadruped just outside the house-door of his owner, and, as the width of the street corresponds, on an average, with the length of the animal, the result to a pedestrian who desires to pass, is not always happy. It is evidently bad breeding to go out at night here at all, but, as I preferred to dine in company as often as possible, these plodding walks home by lantern-light, though at first novel, were soon one of the most disagreeable episodes in the day's programme. Abdaraman Pasha, the then mirmidar of Varna, was certainly not the beau ideal of an active magistrate, and, from all accounts, his reign is neither prosperous nor satisfactory to any concerned. In one of the several interviews with which I was honoured, he took occasion to represent that the immunity from cholera enjoyed by Varna was entirely due to the activity of the scavengers under his command. I was bound to congratulate His Excellency on so happy a result; but from ocular and nasal demonstrations of a very obvious and particularly disagreeable description, I am compelled to decline an endorsement of the Pasha's opinion on this question. The commonest, and probably best, articles of food exposed for sale in most quarters of Varna are grapes, melons, and bread, the last in large rings hung upon a horizontal pole. The grapes of Varna are certainly the sweetest and best as to flavour in Bulgaria, and I am sure that, with ordinary care, good wine might be made there, though the mode of its preparation is, up to the present day, coarse and clumsy in the extreme. A lot of grapes, with their stalks, are thrown into a big tub placed in the yard of the house; these are trampled by the unwashed feet of the owners, and the juice runs out of a tap-hole at the bottom into casks placed below. These casks being filled, corked, and cellared, the operation is complete. No process whatever of refining or clarifying is practised, and the wine is thus left to ferment and be consumed as occasion requires. It is a necessary consequence that no decent wine can be obtained in or near the town. None can be bought elsewhere, and so, unless you can secure a supply of French wines from Constantinople, you must perforce be absolutely limited in your drinks to tea, coffee, or water. Of the last there is an abundant supply. The springs in and about the town are excellent, and are certainly one of its redeeming features. Indeed, the fountains of Turkey, particularly those of its capital, are a study, about which many pages might be written; for there are few countries where water is more rightly appreciated, and where such very complete provision is made for its ready enjoyment. From the elaborately beautiful tracery found on the fountain close to the mosque of Sultan Achmet the Second, in Stamboul; to the humble tap, with its plain stone surroundings, seen everywhere, the care and watchful

supervision of water-springs have always been a meritorious employment to the Turk; he knows their value, and guards them accordingly.

To go through the *rôle* of daily occupations in a place like Varna, you must rise early: turn out a little before six, get coffee, and, if you are a new comer, five or six grains of quinine at the same time, for, in the matter of ague, as of most other ills to which flesh is heir, prevention is better than cure. Make your way to the Turkish bazaar, and you will there see polyglot Varna of the plebeian varieties alive and astir. Those impassable creatures who sit smoking in the dirty divan of that miserable khan must surely sleep there, and in that position, if they sleep at all—for I have been here now three weeks, and have seen the same old faces, with the same old chibouques, in the self-same position, every morning. They never speak to passers-by, or to each other, and an earthquake would, I ween, barely induce them to uncross their legs.

On the opposite side of the road, which is now a sea of mire from last night's shower, are sellers of bread, bawling with all their might—Greeks or Bulgars, of course, for your Turk would never so demean himself. The latter, as a trader, whether he be a cobbler among his shoes, a fez-maker among his blocks, a vendor of old iron, seeds, sweetmeats, or tobacco, sits silent and dignified in the midst of his wares, and, instead of thanking you for custom, makes as though his office of a seller was exercised, for the moment, as a particular favour to yourself. There is more real activity exhibited in the bazaar quarters of an Eastern town, between five and eight in the morning, than at any other time of the day, and thus few Englishmen manage to see it.

Let us get away to the outskirts of the town, and, passing by the old barracks, which formed a temporary resting-place for part of the French army during the war, and which is now partly a prison and partly a Circassian caravanserai, we soon reach the Tartar quarter, which is entirely distinct from the rest of the town. As before mentioned, this colony is a thriving one, and the really substantial blocks of houses on one side of its square attest the prosperity of the inmates. This "quarter" is situated close to the walls, between which and the rest of the town is a large area of ground, sufficiently spacious to parade and review several regiments. A long line of bullock arabas is slowly dragging through the gate, inward bound, laden with corn from the surrounding districts of Devna. Each waggon-load, as it passes the portal, is poked up and down, through and along, by the officer in charge of the gate, to see that nothing contraband is concealed among the corn. This practice, which is performed in a most absurdly rough fashion, arose

from a habit in which the Bulgars indulged of concealing butter in their arabas, and selling it clandestinely in the town. Butter is an exciseable article, and this practice is now severely punished. Indeed, these wretched Bulgars, as the conquered race, are subject to extortion of all kinds. False weights and measures, bullying and threats, are still the order of the day, and the vendor of corn may think himself lucky if he returns home having sold his produce to the merchant for half its real market value.

The working dress of a Bulgar is by no means ornamental. He wears a loose serge jacket of no particular shape, and of uncertain proportions and condition; loose nether garments of the same material, and a variety of rags, tied by a variety of strings, round the legs and feet. A coarse skull cap, coated with grease, completes the costume, and several layers of dirt are usually included, for Bulgars, among the tribes of the district, in this particular most decidedly bear away the palm. But with all the extortion to which he is subject, and all the disagreeable pills that he has to swallow, your Bulgar thrives tolerably well. As Farley felicitously writes, "He tickles the earth for his daily bread;" and, in sooth, the earth, with this mild mode of husbandry, yields him a bountiful return. The long train of corn-laden arabas that daily wend their way into Varna attest indubitably the wonderful richness of a soil that, with a most miserably surface system of tillage, gives back to the husbandman so largely. The chief aids to agriculture are, oxen and buffaloes. It is estimated that there are in Bulgaria at least one million of the former, and two millions of the latter animals. The value of an ox is £14, and of a buffalo, £20, and a very large proportion of both belong exclusively to Bulgars, so that their lowing is less to be despised than their rolling stock. The latter are confined to some few arabas, built entirely of wood, and in the rudest possible manner, and two or three very primitive ploughs. A large exportation of buffaloes has lately been going on from Varna to Egypt, the Viceroy of that country having encouraged the trade as much as possible to assist in filling up serious gaps made three years ago by the cattle plague. It does not appear that Bulgaria suffered at all from this epidemic in 1864, though, in former times the disease occasionally crossed the Danube, and visited this country with severe effect.

A bird's-eye view of the district immediately around Varna shows very little, and very feeble evidences of cultivation. Many acres are subject to some sort of agricultural process, but no order or method is observable, each man tilling precisely what he likes, and where he likes. There is no room for doubt that want of good roads is the curse of this country to the present hour. The

Sultan, goaded into some sort of action by repeated representations on this head, ordered a road to be made, some three years ago, from Varna to Rustchuk *viá* Schumla. "Make it straight," said His Majesty—"straight as an English railroad;" and straight as the iron road it was accordingly made. Up hill and down dale it runs an undeviating course, with incipient trees along its sides, and huge break-neck stones along its causeway. Levels are scorned, and cuttings are never thought of. You can see, from the watershed of Bulgaria, a long white line winding over the hills and across the valleys, bearing off in the direction of Schumla, and coursing round again towards the north—a witness to the engineering impotence of Turkey. The road, of course, is never used, and, in its present state, never will be to the end of time. Tracks are made on its either side, which diverge to avoid the natural difficulties of the ground. The imperial highway, however, objects to take this latter course, and the inhabitants, as naturally, object to urge their beasts of burden up an incline at an angle of forty-five degrees, when, by a slight *détour*, the hill can be got over with a much milder expenditure of ox-flesh.

In opening out the natural resources of Bulgaria, and other districts of the Ottoman Empire, the making of roads should precede that of railways. An immense development of the corn trade would follow, for, during many months of the year, the Bulgars, despite their mere "scratchings" of the soil, are frequently unable to get to market more than half their year's produce. Railways will enable them in great measure to do this; but the capital so expended will be very large, and many years must elapse before railway traffic in Bulgaria can be conducted on a really profitable basis.

Varna is a capital headquarters for an enthusiastic sportsman, who may hunt, fish, and shoot large and small game, of most kinds, to his heart's content. My enterprising friend, Henry Barkley, whose kind hospitality made my visit to Varna a red-letter event, has got up a most successful, though limited, pack of hounds, including a few good "bloods" from our own midland counties. Many a morning, at sunrise, have we trotted off to the hills, with this little pack, and a "find" was always very soon effected. "Gone away," however, was a far different matter. We wanted numbers to rattle him out. The covers are so thick and extensive, and the foxes so numerous, that I think even our old friend, Tom Carter, with his staunch Fitzwilliamites, would find it pretty stiff work to keep his pack well together here. Be this as it may, we had lots of fun, having with us one or two men who had ridden in the good grass country more than once in their lives, and enjoyed none the less these jolly little spirits in the early

morning, for "cub-hunting hours" are kept here throughout the season. To him of the gun, snipe, swan, eagle, wild duck, partridge, and quail, give, it must be owned, a tolerable variety of sport. If you like to camp out for a week, with some good beaters, and two or three clever copoys, there are lots of deer and a fair number of wild boar to be "potted" on the hills; but this is hard work, and you must be prepared to rough it to a certain extent. My own sporting tendencies were chiefly confined to the meets of the Varna pack; but my hosts have had happy experiences of this hill work, and I am sure that it must have very superlative attractions to a good shot.

The town of Varna must not be left without a glance at the roadstead. This forms, at the best, but a tolerable shelter for ships, as it is completely exposed to the north-east, from which quarter the wind often blows most fiercely over the gloomy Black Sea. But as the railway is now completed, and the harbour about to be constructed, the port should thrive extremely well. Its chief exports are wool, corn, and cattle. In the year 1864, 621 vessels were cleared, the gross tonnage of which was 169,923. But the number of British vessels at present trading to Varna is as yet inconsiderable, and a great proportion of the above tonnage is made up by the boats of the Austrian Lloyd's and the *Messageries Imperiales*, and two or three English-owned screws that trade regularly between Constantinople and the ports on the Black Sea. Varna has, on account of a central position, many advantages over Kustendjie to the north, with its harbour and railway, and Burgas to the south, with its admirably sheltered harbour, and its villainously bad roads. If the commercial spirit of the Greeks be allowed full play, the future of Varna, commercially speaking, should be prosperous and successful.

After a stay of some weeks, arrangements were made to proceed to Rustchuk, taking Pravadi, Jenibazar, Shumla, and Rasgrad *en route*. The courtesy of the railway authorities enabled me to make use of their ballast-engine for some twenty miles. The railroad skirts along the lake of Varna, avoiding, rather than going through, or under, material obstacles, and finds its way between the hills to Devna. At and about this village the British army encamped for some weeks, and there are still sad, though fast-fading evidences, of the ravages that disease at that time made among them. On the opposite side of the lake, to the left, hills rise clad with fine wood from the water's edge upwards. For several miles the scenery around is very similar to that of our English lakes, and by no means inferior in beauty. My servant had been sent on with the baggage the night before, and having arrived at the then terminus of the line, I found horses waiting, led by a

Turkish attendant, whose sole business consisted in riding about the country with messages and letters, or escorting his master for the time being on a journey of this description. He was a smart fellow, with turban jacket and loose trousers of the conventional Turkish type, but in tolerable clean order, and a formidable array of knives in a very conspicuous waistbelt. These men sedulously cultivate a ferocious aspect, but possess it not; and I very much doubt if the swagger with which this youth accompanied all his performances of duty would have stood the test of a brush, however slight, with any of the robbers who still infest these districts. I was fortunate enough to be mounted on a smart little cob, who tripped well, and we soon reached Pravadi, a thoroughly Turkish town as to mud and minarets, but beautifully situated in the bosom of an amphitheatre of hills, which enclosed it on every side except that towards the west. I lunched here with the local manager of the railway works, who, to beguile stray hours, and relieve a monotony that must have been sometimes wearisome, had established a species of menagerie in the courtyard of the house, consisting of wolves, vultures, horned owls, and other smaller fry. From Pravadi we pushed on to Jenibazar, leaving the woods behind, and gradually mounted up towards the high plateaux that form the middle districts of Bulgaria. The views to the left, going west, are very beautiful, for soft and rough scenery meet you by turns, and here, as always, a distant view of the villages in and about the slopes and at the bottoms of the valleys is always pleasing and successful. At Jenibazar, a miserable village, with one wretched khan, I met the araba, and, having taken coffee and rested awhile, left the horses to find their way back to Varna in charge of the groom, and took road in the araba to Shumla, a short journey of about fourteen miles. This, as far as my own experience goes, is about the only decent bit of road in Bulgaria. We trotted along quite merrily, but it was almost dark before the long lines of tents indicating the camp in front of Shumla came into view. After the usual modicum of jolting through the town streets, we reached the house of one Vassil, and were lodged pretty decently for the night.

Shumla, as to the defences and strength of which we have constantly heard and read so much, does not at all convey, to the general observer, an idea of impregnability. The town is built within a huge hill crescent, and this latter is completely isolated from the surrounding spurs of the Balkans. Both horns of this crescent, as well as its entire ridge, command the plains beyond the town, as well as the camp scattered over the open edge of the crescent. There are powerful batteries on and about this half-moon of hills, and it is said that, as all the approaches are

thoroughly commanded, and as such approaches must be made over an open plain from any and every side, the town is well-nigh unassailable. It was once taken by the Russians, some twenty years ago, but, in their many incursions, has always been the great stumbling-block to success in way of conquest. I received much polite attention here from a German colonel in the Turkish army, who provided me with a horse and trooper, under whose auspices I saw barracks, hospital, and lines of defence. There is an air of vigour and show of energy here that strikes the observer at once in this country of listless deliberation, and the activity of Ali Pasha, one of the military chiefs, has done much to keep the garrison in good working order. The Pasha of Shumla should be possessed of many tails, for he inhabits a palace second only to those in Constantinople, though yet in an unfinished state.

I left Shumla about mid-day, and made way over a wretchedly rough track to Rasgrad, the horses being lazy, and the driver obstinate in an intense degree. The country was dull, hilly, and stony, so that we groped our way through the darkness into Rasgrad in no amiable frame of mind. We should certainly have best consulted comfort and cleanliness by camping out. The accommodation was, perhaps, two shades better than that before described as existing at the village of Durankeuy, but in saying that it was on a par with all the khans of this country is uniting in one assertion a vast *rôle* of dirty discomforts in manifold forms and varieties. A Frenchman was then living at this inn, and appeared to farm the house. His particular object in life was a mystery to me, for he was not connected with the railway works, and nothing but dire necessity, or an intense love of foul odours, could have induced continual residence in so vile a den. With such a resting-place, it was no hardship to get up at daylight. The inhabitants of Rasgrad are all Turks and Bulgars, it being a less mixed town than any in this province. A great fair is held here annually, and it is said that, on these occasions, except to a native, the condition of the streets and roads adjacent thereto is disgusting beyond measure, for most of the visitors to this fair camp here, there, and everywhere in and about the town. The nasty drinks of the country, and the still nastier importations, are consumed with great activity, and, as the cavasses (native police) are powerless to keep any kind of order among such numbers, a general chaos of dirt and confusion is the inevitable result. A great deal of wool is bought and sold on these occasions, and as much as 40,000,000 of pounds are annually exported from Bulgaria. The railway misses Rasgrad, and touches at Senova, about six miles off. It is a long pull from Rasgrad to Torlak, and little to see by the way. There is an exception, however, about midway in this stage, where the road winds down a steep

ravine, and leads to a pretty group of houses and watermills entirely hid by the surrounding hills. One of those maniacal fits, that seem to attack Turkish drivers at irregular intervals, occurred here. The wretch urged his horses furiously down the bank, and was brought up, more suddenly than pleasantly to those concerned, by a big post near the bottom of the hill, in very close proximity to the river. Remonstrance is useless on these occasions; you must grin, bear it, and inly invoke Allah for safety. Torlak came into view about mid-day, and one of those interminably long halts was perforce endured, for which an unlimited consumption of cigarettes is the only antidote. A solitary object of interest here appeared in the shape of a flock of geese of very dilapidated appearance, looking as if promiscuously and partially plucked by an unskilful operator. They belong, however, to a variety of the bird originally imported into this country from the neighbourhood of Belgrade, their rough and tattered appearance being perfectly normal.

We arrived at the ground above Rustchuk in due course, and saw from thence many miles of the winding Danube, with the plains of Wallachia beyond. A large walled town, built on a low cliff close to the river's edge, lay beneath us, but Rustchuk, from its very flat outlines, rather fails in the picturesque, as compared with a bird's-eye view of most oriental towns. Its streets are wider and cleaner than those of any other place in Bulgaria, but there is a dull and depressing sameness in its construction, relieved only in the quarter where the well-to-do Bulgars live. Here, in many instances, a garden partially surrounds the house, and white or pink is the prevailing colour of its exterior. Rustchuk contains a great number of comparatively wealthy Bulgars, and their women, though largely formed, are by no means uncomely. The native holiday dress is most becoming, scarlet being the prevailing colour among the lower classes. It consists of a close-fitting, high, white-sleeved chemisette, more or less embroidered about the neck and shoulders; a jacket, usually without sleeves, of dark colour, and generally braided; a scarlet or particoloured skirt, with trimming of various hues and designs near the lower edge. A gay coloured scarf is sometimes worn round the neck, and the head is often covered cleverly with a brodered handkerchief, or oftener still with nothing at all. The adornment of the lower members is certainly a weak point in their costume, for pedal elegance is utterly ignored. A daily market is held here in the chief street. In a morning walk, at about six o'clock, you may watch its full swing, and will see, all along the length of the street, the Turkish sellers (chiefly women) ranged on one side, and the Bulgarian dames on the other. The long line of white yashmacs and sad-coloured robes of the former

contrast strongly with the gay skirts of the latter, and emphasise the line of separation that will, we must suppose, always continue to exist between the Turk and the infidel. A vast amount of bantering from the Bulgars, and of quiet chatter from the Turks, goes on unceasingly here for some two or three hours, the former dealing in very mild varieties of vegetable food, the latter chiefly engaged in the negotiation of wearing apparel in the raw state. The Bulgar element prevails so much at Rustchuk that this town is really astir for some hours of the day, and, as it is now the headquarters of a pashalik, and often occupied by several regiments, it may be classed as the most important town of Bulgaria Proper. The postal communication with Western Europe is during at least eight months of the year very good, and it had a great advantage over Varna, in this respect, until the opening of the railway.

I took advantage, at this time, of the close proximity to Wallachia, to cross the Danube, to spend some days in and about the capital of this country. Though full of interest, it must be left unnoticed here; and we must turn eastward again to finish our journey. The railway between Varna and Rustchuk, which is now completed, will, in its route, give the traveller a fair idea of Bulgarian landscape, with most of its varieties. And, as to this landscape, a great deal of deserved praise might be bestowed. When Shumla is past, and we wend our way across the watershed of the country, there are points of view, with the Balkhans for their boundaries, that can be admired and enjoyed by any lover of nature, however extended his experiences of the vastly grand, or of the softly beautiful. It was my good fortune, on the return to Varna, to reach the summit of this watershed as the sun was rising, and I looked down upon a brilliant foreground of wide-stretching hills, wooded half-way to their summits, and a grand middle-ground of rocky crags merging into, and mounting up to the snow-tipped peaks of the Balkhan range beyond. An opening towards the left gave a magnificent view in the direction of Pravadi, with its minarets gleaming in the sun, beyond which was seen, in the far distance, the lake and bay of Varna.

"When shall we arrive?" is the query oftentimes repeated to civil and surly sons of the ocean by the vast majority of those whose business or pleasure obliges them to go down to the sea in ships. This question had often been asked and answered, as we rode at anchor in the bay of Burgas, having arrived just after sundown, and so failed to get pratique. Dominoes, picquet, and talk (the last particularly indifferent), are the order of the night, and the party of mixed nationalities assembled on board the Austrian Lloyd's boat "Mercury" appear more than usually odoriferous. Of what, by the way, is the unctuous, semi-oily odour composed, that pervades

all steamboats of Eastern Europe, from stem to stern? It is utterly innocent of tar, hemp, or machinery. Cunards' know it not, but Cologne, with its unenviable notoriety, may vie in vain with this unhappy result of many unhappy causes. The comparative absence of Englishmen from the Black Sea boats last year rendered any peculiarity of this kind the more glaring, and the prospect of a night at anchor was by no means alluring. Talk and write as you will, the free use of soap and water has by no means, as yet, become general in the east of Europe, and the fact that most of your travelling companions (who have not, to your certain knowledge, performed any serious ablutions) look as fresh in the morning as they did the night before, is proof positive that Greeks, Germans, Wallachians, and many others, may still be included among those who think cleanliness by no means next to godliness. The night was on this occasion divided between sleeping, waking, and walking the deck; the sun rose and gave us a view of the most eminently wretched seaport on this coast. It is, nevertheless, the real port of Adrianople, and exports annually about 300,000 quarters of grain. As it was the goodwill and pleasure of the quarantine authorities that we should complete a stay of twenty-four hours, a landing was effected, and some hours spent in wading through streets literally steeped in mud, though this was said to be the cleanest month of the year. It is really astounding that commerce can exist at all under such difficulties, and it is almost impossible to conceive how those wretched bullock arabas, and that crazy wooden pier, can succeed in clearing from this country an amount of produce valued at more than a quarter of a million sterling. Such, however, is the case, and there is no doubt that, if assistance were given to the inhabitants of the country around by means of good roads, the export trade would soon be doubled and trebled. I called upon the medical officer of quarantine here, who is an Italian, and, I found by glancing at a rough lithograph of Orsini on the wall of his room, and by sundry remarks thereon, a great admirer of that deceased conspirator. He had, indeed, evidently put the deceased among his Lares and Penates, and mourned the fate of his hero, as he testified hatred to the present reigning power in France. Burgas possesses several consulates, mostly of minor European states. Of lions there are none. I got on board again and forgot *ennui* in the twenty and one courses of an Austrian Lloyd's dinner. On again through the night, skirting along the western shores of the Black Sea, and darkness was yet visible when we sighted the lights on either shore, and passing between them entered the Bosphorus.

The Bosphorus is described in many books of travel. You can read of it as seen by night, and muse on it as viewed by day. It has been eulogised, with varied effect, in the rays of the rising as

well as of the setting sun. We hear of the castles of Europe and Asia, with villas, minarets, and mosques, studded with Nature's fairest foliage, rising on each side from the edge of the blue water, and forming in one harmonious whole, a wondrously beautiful scene. But all writers agree to assert that he is as yet unknown who has described graphically the beauties of the Bosphorus, and I am fain to cast in my lot with these candid scribes. The vast majority of my fellow-travellers had seen this glorious panorama lots of times before. The Greek was evidently counting his prospective gains in Galata, and the Germans had already moved their scanty baggage close to the gangway, probably with a view of escaping the steward's fee. Everybody was cold, and that icy reserve, which partially thaws during a voyage, now began to surround us, each in an atmosphere of his own. The morning coffee had been given, and a gentleman of the Hebrew persuasion had had his little growl about the non-appearance of breakfast. However, we soon steamed past the Sultan's new palace and came to moorings at the Golden Horn. Everything on the water, and from the water, looked bright and picturesque, though it was now the end of November; but after the preliminary custom-house skirmish, Turkish mud, in the passage through Galata to Pera, again announced its stern and dreary realities. Of Misseri and his hotel little need be said. He is as well-known to travellers as Folkestone Pier or the Bois de Boulogne, and was, on this occasion, suave and urbane as ever. That small section of the inhabitants of Pera representing the British nation were then rejoicing at the advent of Lord Lyons, as well they might. A week was passed pleasantly enough in sauntering through the bazaars, glancing over the ruins that the big fire (the only effectual scavenger of Stamboul) had made, and dining at hospitable houses. From Constantinople to Trieste, in which journey I made the acquaintance of an admirably good second edition of Albert Smith's engineer, and hereby thank him for many amusing chats. From Trieste to Venice, at which latter place there were positively no English at all, except the consul. And so on to Milan, across Mount Cenis to Paris, and home in good time for the oysters and the turkey.

I fear that, after looking over these pages, you will not, in planning your next autumn tour, choose Turkey as the scene of action. If comfort, unalloyed, be your object, most assuredly not. If hotels at stated distances, good eating and good liquor, be desiderata with you, studiously and religiously avoid, for the present at least, the Ottoman Empire. There is, of a truth, abundant scope for the study of carnivora, but it is all of a minute description, and, like many other experiences, more honoured perhaps in the breach than the observance. But, if you desire to see many varieties

of men and manners, if you carry a gun and know how to use it, if you can live on fowls for a week, and can sleep in your clothes occasionally, by all means gird up your loins, take at least two months' leave, and I am sure that you will lose much flesh, and gain much that is healthily enjoyable by journeying through a bit of Bulgaria.

MY HEART IS SAIR

My heart is sick an' sair, Willie,
 An' dowie ilk a day ;
 There's naethin' noo but care, Willie,
 Where'er my feet will stray.
 The flowers that smile on sunny leas,
 An' fling their fragrance to the breeze,
 An' woo frae far the hummin' bees,
 Smile sweet nae mair ;
 Their bloom is fled, their leaves are shed,
 Aboon the happy, happy dead—
 Our happy dead whose feet noo tread
 Where comes nae care.

O' a' the flowers we reared, Willie,
 There's nae ane noo to share
 Our sorrows, or to smile, Willie,
 Awa thae clouds o' care.
 Our Jamie, jist out twenty-three,
 A happy-hearted lad was he,
 Was lost ae stormy nicht at sea,
 Far frae the shore.
 Aboon his grave nae flowerits fair
 Woo the wild bee, or scent the air ;
 The yellow sands amang his hair
 For evermair.

J. F.

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

BY THE COUNTESS VON LAUENBRÜCK

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRISTMAS DAY dawned fair, and we all went to Church—all except Hilda, who was even less well than usual from the excitement of the preceding evening. As we passed beneath the snow-laden linden trees over the pure white crackling snow, it seemed to me as if the earth had put on new chrisom robes of innocent white, wherewith to greet the glad tidings which had come to her. The service was short, but well attended; and after it was over, the pastor joined us, wishing us all the compliments of the season, inquiring after Hilda, and all the absent members of the family, with special warmth and friendliness. Then he had spoken a few low words to Fritz, and the two had gone on together conversing earnestly. That afternoon Fritz told us the tale of woe and misery that had been confided to him in the morning. How the young lover had come home, full of joy, to claim his betrothed, and with what greeting he had met; how the pastor and the miller had interrupted the flying girl, and had taken her home to her mother. The young emigrant declared that he had written regularly up to about six months previously, when the letters of his betrothed had ceased, or almost ceased; in the later ones, scrawled, she said, at intervals, between nursing her mother, she told him he must not expect to hear regularly, for that she had taken a situation in a distant part of Germany, and should not be able to dispose of her own time. In another letter she said she was on the point of starting, and that she would write again when she had been in her employ long enough to tell him how she liked it. Then he had gone far up the country on business, where no posts were; but, previously to going, had written to say she need not be alarmed at his silence, for that, if his expedition were successful, the end of the year would see him at home. And so, on Christmas Eve, home he had come, his heart full of hope, and the first person he met was his love. That she had proved false to him, Heinrich never for an instant believed; that some four net had been spread to entrap her innocent feet he never for an instant doubted. "Have you got those letters?" the pastor had asked him, as he finished his narrative. Yes, he had them. "Then give them to me, and then, in God's name! go, my son. The evil and mischief that have been done can never be repaired; but add not to the sin, lest worse

things happen unto thee. Give me the letters, and go. The evil cannot be undone; but, for the sake of others—for the sake of justice and truth, the evil-doers must be unmasked." Then Heinrich had gone forth into the winter's night, heavy-hearted and sorrowful; and his weary feet bore him he knew not whither, and he cared not where.

I was almost sorry that Fritz told the story before Hilda. Her excitement was something painful to witness, but it was impossible to calm her.

"You will sift this thing to the bottom, Fritz?" she said, eagerly, as he finished his tale.

"Certainly, dear; the Herr Pastor will show Marie Eckstein the letters to-morrow, and hear if they are in her own handwriting; then (if she still have them) she must produce poor Heinrich's last letters, and we will inquire what has become of the missing ones, if any are missing. The postmaster must know something of this, and will be held responsible."

The following day the Pastor was closeted with Fritz. The letters were forgeries. The last received from Heinrich was dated a year and a half previously: the poor girl had given them all to her mother on her marriage. "I dare not keep them, or read them now," she had said, "yet I cannot burn them; but, mother, you keep them; and when I die, let them all be destroyed." So the letters had been kept, and were now given into Herr Pastor's hands.

"Let Frau Eckstein and her daughter come up to me," Hilda said. And they came. The poor, foolish, stricken mother; the rigid, tearless, white-faced daughter; very humbly and silently they entered the room, and very modestly they waited until Hilda should speak to them. She asked them to sit down; and then, very tenderly and sympathisingly, she began to question them. The mother answered; the rigid, white-faced girl sat immovable and expressionless as stone, and never spoke.

"We cannot tell how this great and terrible wrong has been done," Hilda said, "but I do not doubt that it will yet be discovered: meanwhile, Frau Eckstein, let me entreat you not to let your daughter return to—her husband;" she said the word with an effort, and then continued rapidly. "We have always taken a deep interest in her; before her marriage, I felt that she was throwing herself away, from some mistaken notion of duty, and I went to her I warned, and entreated her to pause. I spoke words that I had perhaps no right to speak. [Alas! poor Hilda, those words spoken in eager warmth for the poor desolate girl's ear alone, had fallen on other greedily-listening ones, and had worked evil, undreamt of, for you!] I told her how unnatural, how unhappy such a union must be. She gave me no answer—and she married.

I told her, in parting, that if ever she wanted a friend, she would find one in Countess Lauenbrück, or failing her, in myself: but from that day to this she has never been in the Schloss, and I felt that she was *forbidden* to come. I do not enter into this to reproach her. I fear she has been cruelly treated; nay, I am sure of it; but I entreat you, on no account to let her go back to—her husband. He will drive her to some desperate act by his cruelty, or, perhaps, out of her senses, by his persecutions.”

Poor Hilda's pale face was flushed, and her eyes full of tears; “If you want a refuge, an asylum, there is room for you here, in the Schloss,” she said, gently; and then lay back on her pillows.

Then the rigid, white-faced girl arose; she came towards Hilda's sofa, and knelt before it, and kissed her hand: “I dared not come,” she said, hurriedly; “he forbade me to do so; he was afraid lest I should complain, for he had overheard all your words to me, as we stood by the blossoming cherry-tree in my mother's garden, and he told me of it the very day of my marriage; he told me many other things he had overheard, he said, and he swore that he would be revenged upon you, gracious Gräfin. He watched and dogged your footsteps, and he poisoned others against you, [Hilda turned pale], and presently he said that your fall was near, for he told me there was a handsome Graf at Lauenbrück with whom you were in love, but who did not love, though he might amuse himself with you—”

“Marie, Marie!” cried the terrified mother, “hold your tongue. You forget yourself; you forget what you are saying!”

“Nay, let her go on,” said Hilda, calmly, “let her tell me all she has to tell.”

“Yes, mother, I will go on: I have borne the torment of silence, but now I will speak; I will speak, that the truth may be known, and that punishment may reach him. He told me that another beautiful young lady was at the Schloss, and that—though he did not love her either—Graf Stralenheim meant to marry *her*, for that her fortune was large, and would help to pay his gambling debts; but first he meant to punish you, gracious Gräfin, for having boasted to Graf Fritz that you had refused him, to marry our young master. [How well I remembered poor Fritz's innocent pride in his wife, and my caution to him to be careful, as the shadow of the misshapen scribe had fallen athwart our conversation!] But Graf Stralenheim had lost large sums to Count Max at billiards, and he could not wait for the money until he was married. One dark afternoon he came down to the cottage, and I was sent out. When I came home, I heard his parting words: ‘You get me the money—never mind the cost; charge your own interest; Gräfin Stralenheim's fortune will bear your beggarly claims. As for the other one, she shall writhe yet for her trouble.’

When I went in I said what I had heard, and he (my husband) struck me in the face for coming back so soon; but afterwards he sat down and told me all, uttering curses on you, gracious Gräfin, for all your haughtiness and pride towards him, and for having warned me against the misery of my life if I persisted in marrying him. Then I said I would go to you, that I would tell you all; but he laughed in my face—he scoffed and jeered at me. ‘*You go to her,*’ he said, ‘why she would call her lacqueys to turn out the sister of her husband’s mistress.’” [Alas, alas! poor Hilda! these were sharp arrows and piercing swords; but she bore herself bravely, and however bitter her inward humiliation, made no sign to stop the frantic creature before her.]

“Marie! Marie, stop!”

“Nay, let her go on,” Hilda said again; and the frenzied girl went on.

“He took pleasure in telling me all his devilish plans, for he knew that I was powerless to counteract them, and that they made me miserable. He locked me up, and beat me; he prevented my going to my mother, and he would not allow her to come to me; I was nearly mad in my solitude and utter loneliness. But, day by day, he came home, recounting with fiendish glee all that was going on; and the beginning and end of everything was, that a fall was coming to your pride, gracious Gräfin. But one night he came back, and there was a smile on his face that terrified me. ‘How long is it since you have taken to letter-writing?’ said he. Then my heart sank within me, for I knew I was discovered. During his absence, I had managed to write you a letter, gracious Gräfin, warning you of mischief, and, waiting my opportunity, I had carried it to the post. I bought a stamp, and walked a mile further on; and then, as I came back, I posted it. I thought no one would see me slip it into the box, for it was nearly dark, and how should any one know which was my letter? I did not dare to sign my name, for I thought that would be an insult to you, and that you would not believe me, or testimony of mine. But, that night, when he came home, he had the letter in his pocket. ‘So these are your tricks!’ he said; ‘well, I must look sharper after you. A good thing that I have friends to help me!’ and then he took the letter out, and read it aloud, scoffing, and jeering, and taunting me. ‘A nice thing it was for me to write,’ he said; ‘for my sister’s sister, above all others!’ And then he struck me again for my interference, and I was so terrified that I fell at his feet, and begged his pardon, and promised never to disobey him again. But from that time he was harder and more cruel to me than ever, and I ceased to care what became of me.”

There was a pause. Hilda was deathly pale; there was iron in

the girl's words—iron that had entered deeply into the pale invalid's soul ; but she was calm, courageous, unselfish, even in the midst of her pain. After a silence of a moment or two—"The postmaster must have given—your husband that letter," she said ; "but how did he know your handwriting?"

How he came to know the poor young thing's handwriting was presently to be revealed ; how, bribed by the misshapen dwarf, he had abstracted her letters, suppressing those of her lover ; how, together, they had forged the scrawls that had been sent in her name to her betrothed ; how they had circulated the report of his marriage ; how the worthy accomplices had recognised the poor girl's handwriting in the anonymous scrawl she had sent to Hilda, and how they had abstracted it from the post-box.

"My devotion to the house of Lauenbrück is too well known and too well proved to be affected by the silly prating of an insignificant, white-faced fool like yourself!" the amiable husband had said to his victim. Then she had felt indeed that words of hers were worse than useless, and she had thenceforth kept silence, by reason of her weakness and her helplessness.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE mysterious footsteps still continued to pace to and fro, but no further allusion was made to them ; sometimes they came at dusk, sometimes at midnight ; and, on one occasion, Cuthbert, whose hearing had been painfully acute since his loss of sight, started up in the small hours of the night, exclaiming, half-asleep and half-awake, "There they are again!" I also sat up, and listened ; and at length, unable to bear the monotonous torment any longer, I arose, and clad myself in warm garments, and, taking a book from the shelves above the sofa, had tried to read. "It's only the rats," Cuthbert had said, hearing me move ; but I disbelieved the rat fiction, and was silent accordingly. The next day, Hilda, lying on her sofa, pale and languid, said to me—

"How tormenting those footsteps are, Mabel! I could not sleep for them last night, and got so nervous at last that I very nearly came to your room."

Then I also repeated in turn the unbelievable rat fable, confessing, at the same time, that my rest had been greatly disturbed, and that I had arisen, and sought distraction in reading. It was now the 27th of December. We were to leave Lauenbrück, and return to our comfortable quarters at X— on the first day of the new year.

I had had plenty of opportunity of observing Hilda and Fritz ;

and the result of my observations was not altogether satisfactory. Notwithstanding his devotion to her, and her entire gentleness, and submission to his wishes (which were only for her good), there was a restraint between them more easily felt than defined.

“How do you think she is looking?” Fritz had asked of me on the day of our arrival at Lauenbrück, and he had repeated the same question as often as he found himself alone with me every day since. But Hilda, often as I had been alone with her, had never mentioned Fritz’s name; and our conversation had been on indifferent subjects, such as the length of the winter, the duration of the cold, our arrangements at X——, and baby’s teeth. Once she said to me—

“You go every evening to the theatre, I hear. How does Cuthbert like it?”

“He is enchanted with the opera,” I answered (for on Mondays and Wednesdays we had operas; on Fridays and Sundays, dramas, comedies, and vaudevilles, at X——); “and we both find our German improving rapidly, from constantly hearing it spoken on the stage. We manage to read the plays that are given, either beforehand or afterwards, and that is a great aid to enjoyment.”

“Is the Eckstein still acting?”

“Yes.”

“And is she so very beautiful as people say?”

“Not beautiful—certainly, not beautiful, but dangerously fascinating, I should think, if, in private life, she in any way resembles the enchanting being she is on the stage.”

Then there had been a silence. Hilda had cleared her throat once or twice, as though about to speak; but she uttered no sound, and I went on working, not very well knowing what to say. I was thinking of Fritz’s frequent visits to X—— in the autumn of this year, and of Hilda’s more hinted at, than openly expressed, suspicions. Then I thought of her long illness, and his untiring devotion; how, since the night when she had run out of her room, wildly screaming for help against some unknown foe, he had never left her; and I could not help wondering that this devotion, the long *tête-à-tête* of the young couple, the evident anxiety he felt for her, and her gentleness and submission, should not have brought them nearer together—have united them more firmly than before.

A sob roused me—a sob from the slight, girlish figure on the sofa beside me.

“Hilda, dearest, what is it? you are not well?”

“No, Mabel, I am not well; but do not mind me; I am weak, and weary, and stupid. Leave me! go to Cuthbert—go to Bertie.”

“I will not leave you, Hilda; you are unhappy; you are suffering. Hilda, dearest Hilda, how can I help you?”

“ You cannot help me—no one can help me.”

The words were ungracious, but the manner was not so ; I felt very acutely how little I could do to help her ; how the time when she had been disposed to turn to me for help and consolation was gone, and I remained silent.

“ Mabel,” she said, after a few minutes, “ do you remember asking me about those pictures ? (pointing to Stralenheim’s), and when I began to tell you, how you said you would not hear anything, and told me to ‘ remember Fritz ? ’ ”

“ Oh, Hilda, dearest, forgive me if I wounded you then ; I have so often repented of it since ! I only wanted to stop you from saying things which you might afterwards regret having told me.”

“ I know : you said ‘ remember Fritz.’ The other day, the first one that you entered this house again, when I told you I was going to die, you said once more, ‘ remember Fritz.’ ”

“ Oh, Hilda, do not talk in that way, I did not mean to hurt or offend you ; I only thought of what his misery would be if he could hear you.”

“ I know ; but he could not hear me. When I am dead Fritz will be happy ; he can never be so whilst I am living.”

“ Hilda, if you talk in this way, I will leave you.”

“ No ; you must not leave me,” she said, quietly ; “ you refused my confidence once, you are bound to accept it now. It will not compromise you, Mabel,” she added, a little bitterly ; “ but when I am gone, you can tell Fritz all that I have told to you ; it will not be difficult or painful to tell, but I should like to think he knew it ; and it will come best from you.”

I dared not refuse to hear ; she was so strangely calm, so different from the Hilda of old.

“ I need not go back to the time before my marriage,” she continued—“ you know all about that ; but those words that he—that Graf Stralenheim had spoken, accusing me of having ruined his fairest hopes, blighted his brightest visions, did not pass without leaving their burning scar behind them. I had been hasty in misjudging him, I had been wrong in accepting Fritz. ‘ I wish you every happiness,’ he had said in leaving me. ‘ Your betrothed is richer than I am ; he will be able to gratify all your desires.’ Then I swore to myself that I would accept nothing at my husband’s hands ; that it should never be said I had married him for his money. Fritz gave me many presents ; I accepted them, because I was obliged to do so ; but I put them away, and wore neither gewgaw nor gem. I began to reproach myself with every innocent pleasure ; it seemed to me a sin that I was committing against his—against Graf Stralenheim’s memory—and I avoided amusements, and eschewed society. You, Mabel, will not be able to understand such a perverted frame of

mind; I do not ask you to understand, but I ask you to listen. There were times when my husband's patience and affection touched me; but the remembrance of that broken heart (broken by my pride and faithlessness) rose up to reproach me for my weakness, and I crushed it down, and became cold and hard towards him again. His society wearied me. Why should I deny it? I sent him out; I promoted his amusements, whilst I remained at home, and they all praised me for being such an unselfish wife. When I heard Graf Stralenheim was coming here, I tried to say something to Fritz about him, but I could not: I could not say that I was repenting of what I had done. I could not say I loved Graf Stralenheim; I did not love him; but I had a great fault towards him to expiate, and the remembrance of this made my heart tender towards him. I tried to speak to you. You would not hear anything. He came; and we were thrown entirely together. Fritz was frequently absent at X——. He who had been as my servant, faithful like some trusty watch-dog, now suddenly deserted his post. He seemed to have eyes for nothing at home; he was absent, pre-occupied—yet what right had I to speak? Had I not been silent also, and absent, and pre-occupied? Then Graf Stralenheim taunted me with these frequent absences, scoffed at Fritz's 'theatrical penchants;' made allusion to his love of the *coulisses*, and his weakness for the drama. The first spark of wifely feeling was kindled in my breast at these insinuations. I determined to show that I was no *femme délaissée*, letting concealment prey upon me 'like a worm in the bud.' You know whether I flirted! At times I wondered that no one attempted to interfere. But as long as Fritz was blind, it was no one's duty to see. Any romantic notion that I might have had about Graf Stralenheim's breaking his heart was entirely dispelled. I saw him as he was, a cold, calculating man of the world—and, such as he was, he suited my purpose! But there came a time when I knew him still better. On the night of those theatricals, when I won such applause, I overheard, against my will, a conversation between him and the wretch who is now convicted of his evil deeds. I was dressing, when the Secretary said he wanted to see me. After that he went away, and I, missing some part of my costume, necessary to the completion of my toilette, crossed the Ahnen Saal, and went into one of the temporary dressing-rooms, that had been erected behind the stage. My own name caught my ear: and in two minutes I had heard enough to make me see how heedlessly I had been running into dangers, undreamt of by me. Do you remember how I acted? Those words had worked like some intoxicating maddening draught; I was possessed; I was determined to conquer Fritz's silence, to provoke an explanation, to win his admiration, to show to Graf

Stralenheim that I was not the vain, silly moth he thought me, nor my husband the 'simple fool' he had called him. My challenge to Fritz was simply defiance of Stralenheim. I was half mad, I think. I laughed, and jested, and flirted with the man I hated and despised; my brain was on fire. He flattered and cajoled me, little thinking that I had heard words of his that were imprinted like liquid fire on my brain. At length I even went so far as to ask my husband whether I were not as charming as—as—that woman whose name I abhorred; and a start of surprise seemed to pass over all around me. I gloried in my daring. They might put it down to ignorance, to pique, to what they would. What did it matter to me? Nothing, less than nothing! Let me do what I would, Fritz would not quarrel with me. I was too proud to beg his pardon for my reckless behaviour; he had not even seemed to notice it; what then could I say to him? I began to see all his good qualities; to appreciate his honour and truthfulness; to admire his single-mindedness, that thought no evil, and suspected no guile. I began to love him, Mabel—nay, I had begun to love him long ago; a phantom had come between us, but with Graf Stralenheim's presence that phantom had vanished. But it was too late; I had driven my husband away from me, nothing could bring him back again; he had comprehended that I had not married him for love, and he had withdrawn. In vain I flirted; in vain I racked my brain for caprices, that were, in fact, no caprices at all; he let me go on. It was impossible to pique him. Fritz has no vanity. Graf Stralenheim was vanity alone; and, being vain, he determined (when he found that, far from loving, I saw through him) to punish me for my clear-sightedness. And he bitterly humiliated me—humiliated me before another woman, before the woman it now suited him to profess to love. I had already tried to warn her, but she looked on me with eyes of suspicion; she had seen my flirtations with Stralenheim, and had drawn the natural conclusions. He overheard bitter truths that I spoke of him, dreading lest, in her innocence and youth, she should fall a prey to him; he overheard, and did not hesitate bitterly to humiliate me. What proofs had I against him? None, absolutely none! Fraulein von Wolfram looked upon my accusations as the ravings of a jealous woman; she was polite, but I saw that she disbelieved me. Could I tell them that through all my folly and recklessness I had loved my husband? had first truly loved him, and learnt to know what his honest, upright nature was worth? Count Stralenheim would have laughed my words to scorn, would have sneered at my 'hopeless attachment.' Besides, my feelings were too sacred for me to profane them by utterance, least of all in such a presence as his. Then Fritz came. I turned to him in my despair; but

though he shielded me from further insult, I felt that I was degraded in his eyes, and that a generous impulse alone prompted him to succour me. After that came a blank of weeks. But since then I have had time for thought; ample time for reflection."

"And you have said nothing of all this to Fritz?"

"How could I? Is it likely he would believe it? Is it probable? Is it possible?"

"Think of how he has nursed you."

"And heaped coals of fire on my head; but though he has nursed me, Mabel, he has never spoken in the old familiar tone of other days. He has been kind and gentle, but his very kindness and gentleness have been like icebergs between us."

"You surely do not believe, Hilda, after Fritz's devoted care, that he loves any other than you? You cannot be guilty of so great, so cruel an injustice."

"I neither believe nor disbelieve. There may have been a time when, wearied out by my moods and caprices, Fritz sought momentary amusement elsewhere. I do not know—I do not think of that: I think only of my own faults and shortcomings towards him. When I am dead and gone, Mabel, tell him that I loved him; tell him that, with stupid vanity, I at first thought myself superior to him, only soon to find out how infinitely I was his inferior in all that was good, and noble, and pure. Tell him that I saw my mistake too late, and sought to win his heart back again by waywardness and recklessness, growing all the more wild, and all the more reckless, as I saw it was too late—that he no longer felt or observed conduct which, even in my maddest mood, I knew was inexcusable. Tell him this, Mabel. Tell him that I would not take advantage of his generosity; and ask him to take back his worthless wife to his truthful, honest heart (for I have never been worthy of him—now less than ever). But tell him that, in spite of all, I was true, and died blessing him for his manly tenderness and pity."

"Oh! tell him this yourself, dear, dearest Hilda! Tell him but the twentieth part of this yourself, and see how happy you will make him!"

"No," she said, sadly; "silence must be my penance. Did you hear what that poor, unhappy girl said the other day? Am I fit to be Fritz's wife after that?"

"Hilda, those were not her words; they were the words of that spirit of evil whose retribution, let us hope, is near at hand."

"And yesterday, when all the evidence turned against him, proving the crimes of which he had been guilty, what did he say? Oh! Mabel, pity me—be merciful! He turned like a serpent upon Fritz, and hissed forth words at him that froze the blood at

his heart, and blanched his honest face ; for my name was amongst those words, and they were very terrible to hear. They all heard them—Max, and Hugo, and the Herr Pastor, the forester, the lawyer, the postmaster. Can I ask Fritz to take me back to his heart after my name, his name, has been thus polluted, thus degraded? Never, Mabel ; I love him far too well.”

“ You wrong him by your silence.”

“ Silence is the only justice I can do him now. When I am dead, you will tell him all, Mabel.”

“ But you will not die, Hilda ; when spring comes, you will grow well and strong.”

“ Hush !” she said, raising her transparent hand, “ there are those footsteps again. The beautiful Lady of Breekoe must be almost tired of her warning walk.” And overhead, dull, heavy, monotonous, with regular, wearying tread, the mysterious footsteps passed up and down, and Hilda, spent and exhausted, lay back on her cushions, and—listened !

A STORY OF A PICTURE ON A VASE

WE were two brothers, orphans, having none
 But our two selves to love and rest upon.
 And so as one we grew, yet differing
 So much in character that what one lacked
 The other was possessed of. I, reserved,
 Contemplative, and pensive, viewing all
 The fair domain that spread around us wide—
 The swaying forests of gigantic trees,
 The noble river flowing 'neath the bridge
 That bound our old ancestral castle wall—
 More with a poet's mind and painter's eye
 Than should the heir; while he, the manlier boy,
 His pulses throbbing with exuberant youth,
 His sunny face ne'er seen without a smile,
 Would shame the lark in joyousness of song
 At dawn of day, ere bounding o'er the moors
 (The hounds behind him scarce more swift than he),
 He tracked the game, and bore his booty back.
 Or, when the mellow harvest-time had come,
 And all around the yellow corn was bowed,
 When, teeming with the busy reapers' throng,
 The wide estate awoke to work and life,
 Foremost among the toiling human bees,
 That gathered golden honey from the fields,
 To hive away in barns, he gaily moved;
 His coat discarded, and his strong white arms
 Wielding the glittering hook; while round his head,
 From which the hat had long been thrown aside,
 The autumn breezes played, waving his curls
 In fitful lights and shades; and his eyes danced
 In time with the sweet music of his laugh.

Such were we. I admiring his bold life,
 His open heart and childlike levity;
 And he my graver thoughts, my deep-stored mind,
 And specially my painter's skill, that gave
 The riches of the distant woodland scenes
 We loved to range to decorate the home
 So dear to both. Such were we many years.

Once, when the growing spring was in its prime,
 And he had left me for a little space
 To cruise upon the coast, a book in hand,

I sought a favourite spot, not far from home,
 To sit awhile and read. 'Twas where a bank,
 Rich in luxuriant mosses and soft grass,
 Jutting from the wide river's bed, stood out
 To greet the other side. There shelving rocks
 And smooth, round pebbles bathed their polished cheeks,
 And broke the tiny wave. There, too, a grove
 Of shrubs, that nestled to the water's edge,
 And elms, whose infant leaves were young and green,
 Danced in the sunny light; and stretching high
 Across the spanning arches of the bridge,
 Above the castle clock-tower, strove to reach
 The distant mountain peaks that rose afar.

Now, while I read, and paused, and read again,
 My eye oft ranging back upon my home,
 The castle walls and thickly-planted park,
 Sudden a light sound smote upon my ear,
 A gentle rustling of the half-pressed grass,
 And, gazing, I beheld the fairest form
 That ever gladdened sight of mortal man—
 A maid, such as my fancy oft had traced
 In poet's dream, or artist's reverie;
 But never in my wanderings, short and few,
 Had seen embodied. She, perceiving me,
 Was basting on, when I delayed her flight.
 "Your pardon! just one word. Until to-day
 I thought I knew each face in all these parts.
 Are you a stranger?" At the words, she turned,
 Resplendent in her beauty, full on me;
 And bending slightly her imperial head,
 Answered, with blushing cheek: "No stranger, sir;
 But I have been away for five long years,
 And only now returned. My aunt is dead,
 Or I had stayed still longer from my home;
 So much my father, Farmer Rogers, wished
 To educate me like a lady born."
 "What! Farmer Rogers!" Well I knew the man;
 One of my richest tenants, and as proud—
 Ay, prouder than a king! Small marvel now,
 Since his home-casket held so rare a gem!
 Next day I sought the farm, and more than once
 Supped at the farmer's board; then, with each day
 As intercourse revealed her stainless soul,
 And showed the treasures of her guileless mind,
 My heart went out to her in a deep love,

That flooded life in unextinguished light,
 And changed my very being, with its pow'r,
 Into a thrilling, palpitating hope.
 Whether the farmer marked or guessed my thought
 I knew not ; for he never showed surprise
 At my strange freak of visiting the farm,
 Keeping his counsel. I reckèd not nor cared
 What any thought ; I but resolved to wait
 Till one spontaneous smile was mine, before
 I asked her for my wife. Often I pondered
 On all the sympathy and glad surprise
 Nearing me with my brother—his delight
 And glory in my happiness. And when
 The news of his approach was borne to me,
 My cup of bliss seemed filling to the brim !
 He came. His ever-light, elastic step
 Was music to my ear ; his merry eye,
 And careless, joyous laugh, were all unchanged.
 And pouring forth a ceaseless flow of talk,
 Startling adventures, risks, experiences,
 Or calmer cruises, sudden he grew grave,
 Saying, " But I have something more to tell,
 Important, yet most sweet."

" I, too," I cried,
 Have somewhat to relate——"

" Yet, hear me first,"

He pleaded, smiling ; " for it is a tale
 To suit a poet, brother, such as you—
 A tale of happy love !—the hero, I !
 Nay, interrupt me not till you know all,
 And give me your approval and good wish,
 I cannot listen. Few shall be my words,
 For earth contains no language to describe
 Her I have wooed and won ! Yet I would crave,
 Ere naming her, to cast your mem'ry back
 On glorious lessons that your lips have taught—
 How worth is wealth, and virtue nobleness ;
 Riches alone no honour, rank no crown ;
 But merit—each and all ! So should you learn
 That hitherto her purity has blessed
 A lower sphere than ours. I met her first
 Not far from here, in the small town that lies
 Where this fair river flows into the sea ;
 And when I came to tell her of my love,
 I found her love was mine. ' Why am I here ?'

Your eyes ask me the question ; I reply,
 'She, too, is here, a tenant on your land—
 Daughter of Farmer Rogers !' ”

As the deer,
 Weary and panting from the long day's chase,
 Yet seeks the deepest thicket to conceal
 The deadly wound that eats away her life,
 So, at these words—with one convulsive grasp
 Placed on my heart, to keep the life-blood back,
 The while my tongue clave to my parching lips
 In burning, maddening agony—I strove
 To hide the death-blow, saying, “ I am sick ;
 To-morrow I will answer—but not now ;
 Early to-morrow, if you will—not now.”
 And he, all grieved and sad to see me thus,
 Forgetting aught but that I should take rest,
 Left me, with a caress that through my frame
 Shot frenzy ! But I kept my secret safe.

Through the long night I wrestled with despair,
 Writhing and struggling 'mid the sable hours ;
 Anon a prey to thoughts of hellish hate,
 So vivid, that they grew in shape to forms,
 And phantomed all the room—tossing my soul
 In riot wild of bitterness and wrath—
 Impersonating mem'ries torture-fraught
 With all my outraged love ; till, in my pain,
 I swore aloud to sate my hungered ire,
 To cool my fever'd agony in blood,
 And wreak a great revenge !

Anon, unnerved,
 Weary and spiritless, and all unmanned,
 Prone on the ground I lay, empty of tears ;
 “ What was his love ? ” I moaned, “ a puny thing,
 Small part of a small whole ; honest, perchance,
 For all his nature was as true as steel,
 As brittle and as cold ! His love to mine,
 A reedy sapling to a giant tree,
 An infant to a warrior in his strength,
 An insect to the monarch of the plains !
 To yield to such were weak, were womanish,
 He should know all, and leave us.” Then there came
 A whisper through the air, with icy breath,
 From some near fiend, “ She loves you not ! ” And I,
 Staggering 'neath the stab, I whispered back,

" If never to be mine, then never his—
 One anguish might be borne, but that one not."
 Thus did I battle through that lurid night,
 Battled and conquered. For when sleeping dawn
 Awaking, oped her eyes, and it was light,³
 From the far rose-tipped hills, ere yet the vale
 Had felt the morning breaking, straight there came,
 Upon the first beam of the new-born day,
 A presence to my chamber—felt, not seen,
 Pervading space, yet all intangible,
 It hurled the demons back. And in a trance,
 Wherein the angels of good deeds gone by,
 And, fairer still, the spirits of those acts
 Of hidden sacrifice of self (from men
 Concealed, but shared with God),
 Fixing upon me their balm-laden eyes,
 Passed by me—and I slept. When I arose
 The sun was high in the unclouded heavens,
 And armoured for my task, I hastened forth
 To clasp my rival's hand. I found him pale
 With long hours waiting; and, withal, concerned
 For my strange sickness.

" Question not," I said ;
 " The autumn glow invites us to the fields,
 We can talk better when away from home :
 Follow me."

And, without a word, he came.
 Then, by the water's brink, and through the trees,
 I led him to a spot where Nature wore
 Her chiefest garb of loveliness. A bank,
 Rich in luxuriant mosses and soft grass,
 Jutting from the wide river's bed, stood out
 To greet the other side. There shelving rocks,
 And smooth, round pebbles bathed their polished cheeks,
 And broke the tiny wave. There, too, a grove
 Of shrubs, that nestled to the water's edge,
 And elms, whose leaves were dark with summer green,
 Danced in the sunny light; and stretching high
 Across the spanning arches of the bridge,
 Above the castle clock-tower, strove to reach
 The distant mountain peaks that rose afar.
 Meetest that spot—too burdened else by dreams
 Of the young spring-tide of the now ripe year—
 For such renouncement. There the glowing Hope
 Had shaped itself to being: meetest there

Its ashes should repose : that hallowed still
 I inwardly might deem it as the grave
 Of one poor human heart. So, for a space,
 Briefly, I, pausing, struggled, while my soul,
 Bleeding with agony, sobbed voicelessly :
 " Oh, fatal scene ! here, as of old, I stood
 Alone in wild, entrancing ecstasy,
 Blessing thee for the gift then brought to light ;
 So now I stand, and render back the gift
 Once more. Alone, and evermore alone !"
 Then, lest my silent mood and haggard face
 Should wake suspicion in my brother's breast,
 And, by betrayal of my misery,
 Should dim the destiny of cloudless joy
 That beckoned him and her—I framed my speech
 To leave him all unconscious ; yet the while
 To lay, by that supremest sacrifice,
 My disembodied heart beneath the sod.
 Few were the words I chose to veil the deed
 Of that sad burial service.

" Go," I said ;
 " Be happy with—your wife. You have her love ;
 Cherish it. One condition is attached,
 And only one—we separate. Speak not ;
 It must be so. From this there's no appeal—
 At least, for many years. Choose from the world
 A home—any but this. And one request :
 Ask me not why—remember that you bear
 Your compensation with you."

Then I raised
 My hand, and pointing o'er the fair domain,
 The distant woods, and fertile river's banks,
 That owned me for their lord—" Of all," I said,
 " Half from this day is yours. And, now, farewell !"
 Then, as he dallied—" Go ! I would be alone,
 Brother. Once more, farewell !"

So, lingeringly,
 He left me. And upon the senseless earth,
 Free to pour forth my pent-up grief, I sank,
 In solitude, beside a new-made grave—
 A grave where buried lay, in those calm words,
 My happiness in life for evermore.

When Time had passed his finger o'er my brow,
 And I had laboured at the painter's art

To ape perfection ; then on gilded vase—
Meet for the boudoir of an eastern queen,
But destined to my brother's children—I
Enamelled my life's tale—tracing the scene
That bore the sacred trust ; not at the hour
When, bursting on me in her loveliness,
She came—not that, O God ! But at the time—
The memory of which no lapse of years
Can quench the anguish of the struggle—when,
Raising my hand towards the fair domain,
The distant woods, and fertile river's banks,
That owned me for their lord—"Of all," I said,
"Half from this day is yours." And those who gaze
See only imaged there a simple scene
Of brother's love ; while, all invisible,
The unwrought tomb that shrouds a pulseless heart,
The hallowed birthplace, and the unseen grave
Of one stray beam from heaven, will descend
An honoured record to posterity.

A. H. W.

THE POOR CLERGYMAN'S TALE

PART IV.

“PENDING the trial, Henry Armitage had also fixed his headquarters at the assize town, which happened to be Taunton—a town historically famous as the scene of Blake’s exploits against the Royalists, and afterwards as an arena in which the infamous Jeffery wallowed in the blood of the men who fought in Monmouth’s rebellion against James II.

“Henry was indefatigable in visiting the father of his old sweetheart—he was never weary in praying with him, and in exhorting him to repentance; but all, I fear, to little purpose. Mr. Barrington’s devotional fit had burnt itself out. A near view of the scaffold had put to flight all his religious enthusiasm. Life, now that it was really in jeopardy, seemed unspeakably sweet. The hot fit had passed—the cold one had come on. Poor Armitage had often to complain that the old man’s heart was ‘hard as the nether millstone.’ ‘I *cannot* repent,’ the prisoner sadly cried one day when Henry and I were in his cell; ‘but I would give all I have for *life*—a little more enjoyment of the sunshine and the sweet air. What would I not give for one more look on those green fields at Whitecliff! Repentance means confession, and confession means hanging. If *you* forgive me, Henry Armitage, I am satisfied. I trust the Lord will. But I can’t put the rope round my own neck—it’s too horrible.’

“As we returned from the jail, Henry, as usual, began lamenting Mr. Barrington’s hardness of heart. ‘What if he should go out of the world without having repented?’ he exclaimed.

“‘Henry,’ I answered, ‘the repentance which springs wholly and solely from a dread of punishment is nothing in the sight of God. Poor Barrington no doubt sorrows after a fashion, but I fear more because of the punishment which sin entails, than by reason of its inherent loathsomeness in the sight of Heaven and of all purified creatures.’

“‘Yes—yes. But the “terrors of the Lord”—you forget that passage. Hold a man over Hell. Let him have a glimpse of the bottomless pit. There’s nothing like *that* to bring poor sinners to repentance.’

“‘Verily, friend Armitage,’ I answered; ‘I believe that is about the sum and substance of thy unauthorised teachings. However, this is no time to discuss that matter. I would give all

I have if to-morrow were come and gone satisfactorily. This suspense is so hard to bear.'

"'Brother Brydges, be calm. Mr. Barrington must be *saved*. He must not die in this impenitent state—he shall not. Save him I must—that he may yet live to repent. Sleep I will not until I have devised some scheme whereby to effect his deliverance.'

"Hardly, however, had the kind-hearted enthusiast reached the door of his inn ere he was accosted by a messenger, who politely begged his acceptance of a slip of paper. It was a *subpœna* to appear and give evidence on the pending trial. There was another slip for myself.

"That very night (the night before the trial) the usual quietude of Taunton Jail was startled by the tones of a hymn which sounded forth from the cell of the man who, on the morrow, was to be tried for his life. Armitage's deep, manly voice, and Lucy's rich, flute-like tones blending with the prisoner's, were heard resounding through the dim arcades and through the vaulted cells, in long-drawn, mournful cadence. They were singing one of the penitential psalms. Solemnly and slowly the measure rose and fell; and again and again was repeated, until all was concluded. Then, after praying long and fervently together, the two visitors went their way. Mr. Barrington was left to his meditations, and silence settled over the scene. The inmates of the building were more or less edified by the instructive example of the venerable prisoner.

"The next morning beheld Mr. Barrington in the dock, the centre on which were fixed hundreds of eyes, for the Court was crammed. His demeanor was calm and collected. His face was pale, but did not indicate overwhelming anxiety. Altogether, he looked the very picture of a respectable man whose ill-luck it has been to become the victim of a concatenation of events which certainly have an ugly look; but which, nevertheless, can easily be explained away. He pleaded 'Not Guilty.'

"The counsel for the prosecution opened the case very moderately and judiciously. He narrated the facts connected with the murder of the late Mr. Armitage; admitted that the prisoner bore an excellent character; and then went on to detail the circumstances which supported the charge against him, and which, he said, he should be able to prove in evidence. He sat down at last, but presently rose again, and called his witnesses.

"After proving the murder, the finding the body, &c., by the evidence of old Joseph and the maidservants, the next witness called was Jem Ward, the Whitecliff smuggler, who had been fished up somehow by the detective at the eleventh hour. He deposed that he remembered the night of the murder, and that he happened to be in the neighbourhood of the mansion on the very

night in question. Saw Mr. Barrington going towards the house about eleven o'clock. Was quite sure it was *him*, though it was rather dark. Knew him more by his figure than his face. There was a glimpse of moonlight just as he passed the place where witness was standing. Had no doubt it was the prisoner. Sailed in the 'Saucy Sally' that very night, and had never returned to Whitecliff until lately. Had got pressed on board a man-of-war, and had deserted at Malta. Had been knocking about ever since. Heard that the ship had been paid off, and so came home again.

"(Cross-examined by prisoner's counsel.)—At the time I saw the prisoner, as I have described, I was a smuggler; perhaps I might become one again. Did not see the harm of 'running' a few kegs of spirits. On the night of the murder was coming from the Manor House. The cellars there had not been used for years; they were very convenient for hiding smuggled goods, and were sometimes used for that purpose when the revenue officers were very busy on the coast. They never once thought of paying a visit to the Squire's cellars.

"Mr. Henry Armitage was then put in the witness-box, and sworn. He was examined at great length on the circumstances attending the finding of the body of his father. Was not on good terms with the old gentleman; in fact, had been forbidden his father's house. Had reasons for seeing him that particular night on which he was murdered; declined to state those reasons. It was about twelve o'clock when he went to the back door. His father was in the habit of sitting up till one or two o'clock in the morning. Thought he was sitting up, because he observed a light in his room. When he entered the room, he found the old gentleman evidently just murdered. As he entered the house, saw a muffled figure pass him in the doorway, and disappear in the darkness. Did not recognise the person—he was so disguised. The only thing missing from the room was a small metal cash-box, which usually contained money. Thought there must have been money in it when it was stolen, because he had observed an entry in deceased's cash-book of rent paid that very day. Should know the cash-box if he saw it again; there were certain fanciful devices upon it, worked in metal, and deceased's name was written with a sharp point inside the lid. I produce the cash-book referred to. There is a memorandum of the numbers of the notes received that day. The amount paid to my father on that occasion is set down at £384 5s. Soon after the murder, I caused handbills to be issued, giving the numbers of the stolen notes. These handbills have lately been reissued, at Mr. Leversedge's suggestion. Hitherto, nothing has been heard of the stolen property.

"Nothing very particular was elicited in Mr. Armitage's cross-examination.

“The Bow-street officer was the next witness. He proved that he had been employed by Mr. Leversedge to collect evidence about the murder. Had been very diligent in making inquiries, and had left no stone unturned to procure evidence. The murder was committed on the 12th November, 18—, and it was the 16th February before he began his inquiries. In the fir plantation, at some little distance from the house, was shown a ruinous shed, in which, concealed in a heap of dead leaves, a dark lanthorn had been found. In the shed he also found a piece of a metal tip, such as is usually worn in the country on the heel of a man's boot. Went to Ezra Hopkins, the village shoemaker, and found a tip which exactly corresponded with] the piece he had picked up. (Pieces produced.)

“Ezra Hopkins, the village cobbler, swore that about the middle of November the prisoner brought to him a pair of boots to be mended. There was a broken tip on one of them. He took off the piece which was fastened to the heel. Believes he put it into a box of old metal which he kept for saving odds and ends. Put new tips on the boots and sent them home.

“Henry Armitage, recalled: I recognise the dark lanthorn as once having been my property. Believe I left it at Mr. Barrington's, but not quite sure. Have no idea how it came into the hut, as described by last witness. I am the owner of Armitage Hall, my father having left it me by will. I am a preacher amongst the Methodists. Have been in America, where I met with certain professors of that creed, and became of their way of thinking. Have returned to England for the purpose of preaching. Remember the 18th of June last. Was preaching near Langside, on the Mendips. Mr. Barrington was there, and after the preaching appeared to be suffering from great distress of mind, and then and there confessed before the brethren that he had been guilty of murder.

“Cross-examined: Did not say whom he had murdered. At the time, no doubt, prisoner was labouring under great excitement. The next day I saw him again; he was then in a state of delirium arising from fever. In his delirium he often muttered the word ‘murder,’ but never in connection with the name of the supposed victim. Was present when Mr. Barrington was brought up before the magistrates; he was then entirely recovered from the fever. He denied any knowledge of any murder in which he had been concerned.

“A dull-looking labourer was then placed in the witness-box. He produced a short thick stick, loaded with lead. ‘My name,’ he said, ‘is Daniel Richards. Have been lately employed working in the grounds of the Manor House, at Whitecliff. Was at work there on Monday week, cutting down the old laurel bank on the

right side of the terrace. Found this bludgeon among the roots of an old shrub. It has something sticking to it that looks like iron-grey hair. There are a few dark spots on the bludgeon. When I found it I took it to Mr. Leversedge. Mr. Leversedge showed me a small silver plate let into the stick, with something written upon it. Asked me if I could read. I said, No. Mr. Leversedge rubbed the plate a little, and said he could read it, but he did not say what the name was.'

"A horrible conviction flashed through my mind at this instant. All at once it rushed into my recollection that this bludgeon was mine, and that I had given it to Mr. Barrington a long time since. It was strange how the sight of that ugly weapon brought back the circumstance to my memory, as fresh as though it had occurred but yesterday.

"I was in too confused a state to attend to the cross-examination. I heard the words, indeed, but could not attend to their sense. I felt dizzy and dimsighted, and had some ado to keep myself from falling. When I recovered a little, I heard the counsel for the defence trying hard to upset this damaging piece of evidence, which had evidently taken him by surprise.

"And so you found this stick or bludgeon, as you call it, at the root of one of the shrubs?"

"Ees, zur—my lord,'—with an awful look at the judge.

"Never mind his lordship now, but look at me. Describe the position of the walking-stick. Was it lying down on the soil, or was it standing upright? or how was it?"

"It was standing uproight, just oonder th' fark o' the laurel shrub. The head was buried in the ground loike, and the top part stood upright, leaning against a branch. Seemed as if it had been thrown there, zur.'

"I recollected now how Mr. Barrington had more than once been seen foraging about the grounds, as though in search of something, until the singularity of the proceeding began to attract attention. I saw it all now at a glance. He must have gone there in hope of finding this very weapon, which doubtless he must either have lost as he rushed away in his mad fright, on encountering me; or else, hardly knowing what he did, perhaps fearing pursuit, he must have thrown it into the laurels. How the recollection must afterwards have tormented him, that the stick was marked and identifiable! No wonder he had been so restless and miserable, not knowing but that this damning witness of his crime might turn up any day, and so lead him to the gallows! No wonder he had haunted the spot in hope of recovering it.

"Nothing more could be got out of the cross-examination. In fact, the counsel soon began to see he was doing more harm than good.

He sat down, after eliciting the fact, that the laurels were so thick and luxuriant that no weather could penetrate this dense foliage, and that the bludgeon was so situated that it would be nearly dry in the heaviest weather.

"A scientific man, in spectacles, proved that he had microscopically examined the bludgeon produced. The hair adhering to it was human hair, and the dark spots were the stains of human blood. He was followed by another scientific man, in a beard, without spectacles, who proved the same thing. Then I heard my name called, and it flashed across me at that moment why I had been served with a subpoena. I got into the witness-box, and felt all the misery of a life-time concentrated into that moment.

"The counsel for the prosecution held the weapon in his hand.

"'Mr. Brydges,' said he, after a few preliminary questions, 'take that bludgeon into your hand and examine the small silver plate let into it near the thick end.'

"I did so. My worst fears were confirmed. I trembled as I looked at the ill-omened weapon, and recollected that I had just called God to witness that I would tell the truth.

"'Will you have the goodness to read to the Court the name engraved there?' said the counsel for the crown.

"'It is my own name,' I replied, in a voice which seemed to come from a distance, it was so unlike my own. An uneasy sensation ran through the Court, and I felt that hundreds of burning eyes were reading my secret in my scarlet cheeks.

"'Pray, Mr. Brydges, can you give us the history of that very formidable-looking weapon? Rather a strange one for a minister of peace to have in his possession? eh?'

"I made an effort to control myself, and answered him—

"'The stick, or bludgeon, as you term it, certainly did belong to me some years since; but it ceased to be mine long ago. I gave it to Mr. Barrington.' I dared not look at the prisoner as I said this.

"'You gave it to Mr. Barrington. Will you be kind enough to say whether or not, when you gave it to him, it had those marks of blood and those shreds of hair on it?'

"'Certainly not. It was an old companion of mine during certain pedestrian tours I took when a young man, at Oxford. It was bought by me as a weapon of defence in case I was attacked on the highway. I took a fancy to the stick, as an old companion, and got my name engraved on the plate. After I came to Whitecliff, I had no need of it, and Mr. Barrington one day admiring it, I made him a present of the stick.'

"'It is weighted with lead, is it not? and is a very formidable instrument?'

“ ‘It is.’

“ ‘Quite sufficient, in your opinion, to cause a man's death?’

“ ‘Certainly.’

“ ‘You may go down.’

“ ‘Gentlemen,’ cried the prisoner, ‘I call God to witness that I lost that stick some time before the murder of Mr. Armitage. My lord! my lord!’ he went on wildly, pointing to a young man who stood in the Court, and whom I had not observed till now, ‘I am innocent! *There—there stands the slayer of John Armitage!*’

“ ‘All eyes were turned on the young man, whose confusion was evident, and who hastily endeavoured to leave the Court. He was stopped, however, by the constables (the ‘new police’ had not then been heard of), and every one looked at the judge in a state of breathless expectation. I could see that the young man cowered before the steadfast look of the whole assembly.

“ ‘My lord,’ continued Mr. Barrington, ‘it is true that, while delirious and out of health, I falsely accused myself of murder. But I am not answerable for what I did when out of my senses. Last night I dreamed that I was present in this Court. Everything seemed as plain to me as it does at this very moment. I thought that very man stood exactly where he is now standing in reality, and that a voice spoke to me, and said, “There stands the murderer of John Armitage!” I dreamt that he confessed his guilt, and I was just about to be released, when I awoke. Strange to say, there stands the man—the very man. The face, the dress, the same as I saw in my dream. My lord, I beseech you put some questions to him!’

“ ‘At that moment Mr. Leversedge stepped up to the counsel for the prosecution, and a whispered conversation ensued. The counsel then looked up to the judge, and there was an uneasy pause.

“ ‘My lord,’ said the barrister, ‘a very extraordinary circumstance has occurred which may have a material bearing on this case. I have it on good authority that, whilst the prisoner has been in prison awaiting his trial, two of the notes known to have been stolen at the time of the murder have been passed in this very town.’

“ ‘From which you infer that the prisoner must have had confederates,’ replied the judge.

“ ‘Your lordship will remember that no proof has been produced that the prisoner ever had possession of the stolen money.’

“ ‘His lordship mused a little, and then said he would consult his brother judge on the civil side as to the best course of procedure.

“ ‘But before the judge could leave his seat, the strange young

man had thrown himself on his knees before the Court, and in a piteous voice, which sounded strangely familiar to me, cried out—

“ ‘My lord, I am indeed guilty of Mr. Armitage’s murder! I was poaching, and found that loaded stick in Whitecliff woods. One night I saw a light in Mr. Armitage’s room. I got through a back window, and crept into the room, and dashed out the old man’s brains before he could give the alarm. The table was covered with red baize; that baize was redder before I left the place. I stole the cash-box, that stood at the old gentleman’s elbow, on that very table. Then I threw the bludgeon away, and ran across the country for miles, fancying I heard voices calling after me, and hallooing to one another. When morning came I was many miles away from Whitecliff. I slept all the rest of the day at a public-house. I wandered about for days, and at last found myself at Taunton. Every one was talking about the murder; so I took some of the gold out of the tin-box, and crept out of the town one dark night, and buried it in a field, at the foot of an old ash-tree, near some brick-kilns. With some of the gold I bought a pedlar’s stock, and wandered up and down the country, but never making any profit by my trade. Sometimes I used to get frightened lest the box should be discovered. Then I would come back to the place where I had hid it—weary journeys, miles and miles in length—and creep to the place at night, and get out the treasure. In this way I used to shift the box from place to place, for fear I should be detected. One by one, I spent all the gold pieces, but the notes I left till last, because I was afraid they would be known. But, after all these years, I thought I might venture to pass some of them, especially now that another man had been taken up for the murder. So I passed two of the notes. The rest are all safe, and I will give them up to the constable, if you will send one with me. I cannot describe where they are, but I will show it.’

“ ‘Stop!’ said the judge; ‘you have not yet told the Court who you are. What is your name, and where do you come from?’

“ ‘My name, my lord, is Hoddinott—Richard Hoddinott, at your service—and I am a pedlar. I have no settled dwelling-place.’

“ ‘And do you, Richard Hoddinott, mean deliberately to accuse yourself of that most fearful of crimes—murder? Do you wish to represent yourself, and do you wish us to believe, that you are the actual slayer of that helpless and infirm gentleman, Mr. Armitage, of Armitage Hall?’

“ ‘I do, my lord.’

“ ‘Have you reflected on the awful consequences which may result to yourself from making this statement? Do you know that you are accusing yourself of a crime which, if proved against you, must result in your ignominious death?’

“ ‘ My lord, conscience will not let me be silent any longer ; I am prepared to take the consequences. Will your lordship send a constable with me ? ’

“ There was no more to be said ; so the judge pondered the matter for a few minutes. Then he stopped the trial, and directed two constables to go with the self-accused culprit.

“ Mr. Barrington was then put back, another case was called on, and Hoddinott was taken out of court between two stalwart constables.

“ Another prisoner was placed in the dock, and another jury was sworn, and a barrister got up and made a speech, and then witnesses were called ; but what the nature of the charge was I had no idea. I heard the voices indeed, but I could attach no meaning to them ; my thoughts were so intently occupied with the strange turn that Mr. Barrington's trial had taken.

“ But great as was my astonishment at what had already occurred, it was heightened to an intense degree when I beheld the prisoner, Richard Hoddinott, return into Court with the constables, one of whom, with a vast deal of self-importance, placed before the Clerk of the Court an old-fashioned, inlaid, and highly-ornamented metal box. There was perfect silence—silence of breathless expectation and suspense. Strange to say, Hoddinott appeared to be the most self-possessed person there. With singular coolness he produced from his pocket a small key, with which he unlocked the box. Then lifting the lid of one of the compartments, he displayed a large roll of bank notes. These he placed on the table, and then stood back between the constables.

“ *The box, the notes, were indeed the property of the murdered man !* An hour afterwards Hoddinott was committed on the judge's warrant, and my father-in-law was ‘ out on bail.’

“ That evening, as little Georgey lay on the sofa in our lodgings, near the jail, he heard a step upon the stairs. The sound roused him (he afterwards told me) from a reverie—one of those waking dreams of which weakly but precocious boys are so fond. He started with surprise, for he knew the step, and the next moment his grandfather entered the room.

“ He was rushing up to his beloved grandson with all, and more than all, his fiery warmth of love for him ; but the boy rose to his feet, and with a motion of the arm and a glance of the eye checked the old man's approach.

“ The grandsire's eye met his, and quailed before it. ‘ What, Georgey ! ’ he said, ‘ won't you speak to poor grandpapa ? ’

“ ‘ I have no grandpapa, or ought not to have one. Everyone says he ought to be hung—and so he ought.’

“ The boy had found out the truth, notwithstanding the care we

took to keep it from him. How was it possible to do so when we were living in lodgings, and the whole town was talking of little else than the tragedy at Whitecliff?

“The old man advanced one step nearer to his grandson, looked beseechingly into his face, as though hoping to see there some signs of yielding, but he saw none. Presently he said, sadly, ‘My time is short. Here I must not remain. Oh, George, have you no love left for me?—you whom I loved as my own soul—you for whom I would have laid down this wretched life? There was a time, George, when I had a hope, or a delusion (for this poor head was sadly wandering at that time), that you, in your holy childhood, might have brought down a blessing on my sinful soul. That hope was vain, for never did I receive strength enough to part with the accursed money I had perilled my eternal happiness to obtain. I lamented the crime, and often sent up agonising prayers for forgiveness; yet I could not part with *that*. Thank Heaven, the price of blood is no longer mine. It has been given up to the Crown, and very soon will be paid over to its rightful owner. I can now pray for forgiveness with clean hands.’

“‘And have you really given it up of your own free-will? I am glad of that. Oh, grandpapa, you may yet live to find peace.’

“‘I bought my liberty with it, George; but for all that, it will—it must find its way into the right hands.’

“‘Then you did not give it up to him, as you ought to have done? Grandpa, you are deceiving yourself and me. You would still have kept the bloodstained money if you could. It was not freely given up, as a sign that you repented and wanted to restore all that you could.’

“‘George, if Heaven forgives me, surely you can. To-morrow you will know all; but to-night time presses—the minutes—the moments are precious. Oh, George, before I say good-bye for ever, let us pass our last few minutes in kindness and love.’

“‘No,’ replied the lad, firmly, but not unkindly. ‘No; there can be no more love between us. I shall never think of you but with horror. Love you I could not. That word must never more be mentioned between you and me. How could I touch that hand? how could I kiss that face? Never can we be friends again!’

“The old man burst into tears, and cried out bitterly, ‘Alas! alas! I had not expected this! I thought that my little Georgey would have been mine, let what would happen to me. George, it was your love that was the only bright spot in my darkly miserable life, and now you have put out even that. Oh, I am utterly childless, hopeless! wretched in this world, miserable in the next!’

“‘You have been very wicked, and you must bear the punishment.’

“ ‘ George, one word—only one kind word before I go. Remember me I know you will—you have too bitter a cause to do so; but promise that when you think of me, you will think of me as I was in my best moments. Recollect that, though not always kind to others, I was always kind to you. Remember our quiet walks on the sea-shore, and our strolls through the beechwood and the heather; and the long, quiet talks we used to have of an evening, as the sun was going down, and the ships first became gold, and then sailed away into the darkness. Ah, those were happy days, were they not, George?’

“ ‘ They were, indeed!’ said George, moved by the recollection of his doting old grandsire, as he used to be before those dark and troublous times had come upon his young life.

“ ‘ If I had died then, you would have loved me?’ asked the old man, faintly, as though even this were now too much to expect.

“ ‘ I should, indeed!’

“ ‘ Then look on the day of my imprisonment as the day of my death. Bury everything since then in silence. Think of me only as I was—your playmate, your friend, your dear old grandpa.’

“ ‘ Oh, grandpa, you are not all bad! I will try and do as you wish.’

“ The old man sprang forward, seized George’s hand, and covered it with kisses. George covered his face with his other hand, and when he withdrew it, his old friend and companion had gone for ever.

“ I came in soon **after**, and found him in tears. As he finished narrating the conversation, he wound up sadly by saying, ‘ Papa, are all men self-deceivers, like grandpa?’

“ ‘ My dear boy,’ I replied, ‘ no doubt the best of us is but too apt to take a false **view** of our own motives and actions.’

“ ‘ Poor grandpa! when he could keep the money no longer, he made a virtue of giving it up, and thanked Heaven that now he could pray with clean hands. That is what I call buying pardon with what costs him nothing.’

“ That night Mr. Barrington was on his way to Bristol, as fast as four post-horses could put their feet to the ground, whilst Hoddinott occupied his place in the county jail.

“ Late next evening I got a letter from my father-in-law, dated on board the ship ‘ Avon,’ and telling me he was just on the point of sailing for America with the next tide. It enclosed a kind message to his daughter and grandson. As Mr. Barrington’s tale is now told, I may add that the ship got safely to New York, where all traces of him were lost. To us he was as one dead. It seemed, indeed, as if he did not wish us to know whether he were living or not. And so he gradually passed out of remem-

brance—he and his crime—until both became a mere tradition in the neighbourhood where he once dwelt, to be told over a winter's fire, a terror and a warning to the 'rustic moralist.'

“‘My dear Lucy,’ I said to my wife, as we sat down to a late dinner the very day on which the Assizes were brought to an end; ‘really that male attire is so becoming to you that it is almost a pity to change it for petticoats. At all events, I propose that you wear it to-day.’

“This little scene occurred in our lodgings at Taunton, where a pleasant dinner had been laid for four, to which we were in the act of sitting down when the above remark occurred to me.

“‘Mr. Richard Hoddinott,’ said Mr. Armitage, ‘I drink to your very good health!’

“‘Mamma, mamma!’ cried George; ‘look at mamma with that funny wig on!’

“But it was no wig. It was only her own beautiful hair, cut short, and dyed black.

“‘It *was* the hair,’ I said, quickly. ‘It *was* the hair that baffled me. I am sure I should have known her if it had not been for the black hair.’

“Just then a cheer from the crowd who had assembled outside our lodgings rang through the house. ‘Lucy,’ I said, ‘you must go and speak to them.’ So, taking her boy by the hand, she went to the small balcony and bowed her thanks with the air of a queen.

“Richard Hoddinott disappeared that very evening, but Lucy Brydges ‘reigned in his stead.’ And a loving and true-hearted wife did she ever prove to me until her life's end.

“Never did I see Henry Armitage after that night. He, too, went his way, and I saw him no more. Sometimes a letter reaches me from the ‘far west,’ where among the sons of the wilderness he is still known as a field preacher of great eminence, not unmixed with a considerable spice of shrewdness and eccentricity. My wife was accustomed to say of him, when speaking of that memorable trial, ‘The plot was Henry's; it was he who planned it. Acting the pedlar's part was easy enough. I shall never forget the dismay depicted on the face of that ‘learned judge,’ she laughingly used to add, ‘when the discovery was made that the ferocious cut-throat was poor little *me*.’

“‘I don't wonder at it,’ was my answer. ‘He must have felt completely nonplussed. His lordship made a discovery then which could not fail to be useful to him in his subsequent career—namely, that a woman's wit, sharpened by a love strong as death—a love which survives disgrace, and outlives a felon's shame—could outwit a learned judge, a king's counsel, and twelve honest jurors to boot!’”

The threadbare parson here paused, and I woke up from a brown study into which the monotony of his voice had somehow thrown me. Pouring out a glass of wine, he emptied it, and then added, in a low, quiet tone, "Lucy and little Georgey are in heaven long since. Barrington's crime was the ruin of us, after all. It somehow found me out wherever I went. No rector would employ me, for any length of time. By degrees we sank into poverty, and then Georgey sickened and died. His mother followed him to heaven, and left me the desolate being you behold. The dying man's curse lay heavy upon us all. The whole family of us, all but one, have disappeared from the earth, and I hope soon to end an existence which has nothing to offer but sorrow in the present, grief for the future, and regret in the retrospect."

With these words he rose, bowed slightly, and went out quietly as a shadow, and never again did I behold the *Poor Clergyman*.

A GOSSIP ON THE PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT

THE most eventful session of Parliament for many a year was, a month back brought to a close, after a sitting protracted a good fortnight beyond the usual time. For a month, at least, Paterfamilias had been left alone in London, to the full enjoyment of his club, and the rigid performance of his parliamentary duties within the fane of St. Stephen's, while his wife and daughters have gone before him, to prepare his way in their distant country home, where, under the pleasant shade of the ancestral trees, they are wont to pity his protracted sojourn in hot, dusty, deserted London. But the owners of much-coveted M.P.-ships do not always recline on a bed of roses, and they are forcibly reminded of the unpleasant fact many a time in early Autumn, though a vast number of them ignore their scruples concerning their public duties in the face of the more pressing claims of family and tenantry, and the urgent calls to Scotland for the destruction of the very few grouse to be found there just now.

So it happened, that when the last scene of the eventful drama had to be played, there were very few present when the curtain fell; and, indeed, unlike performances on those limited stages, the closing tableaux is of little interest, shorn, as it now is, of the gold and the gorgeousness which signalised it of old. Now, it affords scarcely anything which would amuse the most inveterate of sightseers.

According to the constitution of the country there are three ways of proroguing the imperial Parliament—viz., by the sovereign in person, by commission, or by writ under the Great Seal. It is the second of these methods that is adopted now-a-days. It is a very tame affair indeed; it even creates no sensation amongst the mob outside, who, on the occasion of any great debate or division, assemble in Palace-yard by hundreds, and cheer, or groan, as the unpopular, or popular members pass into Westminster Hall. There may, perhaps, be a dozen ladies in the gallery which surrounds the House, and a hundred peers on the benches, who assemble about two o'clock, as soon as the last stroke of business of the moribund session is concluded. Then the Lord Commissioners don their robes, and the Lord Chancellor reads the speech, a duty which always devolves on him at a prorogation, whether the sovereign is present or not. The Speaker hears it from the bar of the Peers' Chamber, to which he is summoned by the Usher of the Black Rod, an appointment now held by Sir Augustus Clifford, the senior of

the Queen's Gentlemen Ushers, who is exempt from his attendance on her, in order to fulfil the duties which fall to him here, which principally consist in being the messenger between the two Houses of Parliament. A few of the "Faithful Commons" accompany the Speaker to the Upper House, and hear with him, on behalf of their illustrious body, what Her Most Gracious Majesty may be pleased to say to them, now that, for a time, their services are no longer required; the Speaker duly re-reading the same in the House of Commons, when he returns there.

It is scarcely needful here to dwell on the nature of a Queen's Speech. We know that it is the joint concoction of a Privy Council, under the immediate supervision of the sovereign; that it usually refers to the events of the past session, and concludes with thanks to both Houses for the efforts they have used for the promotion of their country's welfare.

After all, a prorogation is, to the members of the legislature, much the same thing that the final recitations, prior to the "breaking-up," are to the boys at our public schools—a temporary release from daily duties very acceptable to both, and accepted visibly with the best heart in the world, and a great deal of glee. Then law lords venture on a harmless joke or two, ministers and ex-ministers fraternise round the table of the House; and it is with something of the joyful hilarity of youth that they turn their backs for a good six months, at least, on the scene of many a weary hour's debate, and many a hardly-contested party struggle.

More than once of late years I have been one of the few spectators of what, as far as the ceremonial went, was but a dreary spectacle. True, the House of Lords itself looked handsome and imposing as ever, though its size seems so small at first sight that one forgets the richness of its details in the cramped aspect it presents. A more intimate acquaintance with it, however, develops its full beauty—a beauty that grows on one every moment. The light struggles through fine painted windows, containing portraits of most of the kings and queens who have reigned over us; and sheds a dim, religious light on the fine roof, the heavy oak carving of the accessories, the gorgeous gilding, the emblazoned arms, which throw into still greater relief the row of red-covered benches assigned to the peers, the woolsack, and the two smaller seats of a like nature for the Lord Chancellor and the judges, near to which stand those magnificent candelabra, which add so much to the imposing effect; while the tapestries—most of them Dutch gifts to old Queen Bess—and the frescoes, which are both in the gallery, and below the gallery, and the statues of the barons between each window, must excite our admiration.

For the time being, however, my attention was concentrated on

the raised dais on which is the throne, an elaborate, gothic-looking chair, resplendant in crimson velvet and gilding, with the royal monogram conspicuous on the back of it, the legs resting on four lions couchant a very imposing affair altogether; uncovered for the House as it never is, except when the Majesty of the sovereign is supposed to be asserted, viz., when the royal assent is given to the passing of a bill, and occasions of the kind.

In the front of this throne stood the Lord Chancellor; and the red-robed peers, who, in the case of a duke, wear scarlet cloth lined with white silk, tied upon the left shoulder with a bow of white ribbon; while on both shoulders are four guards of ermine at equal distances. The robes of a marquis are exactly similar, except that there are four guards of ermine on one shoulder, and three on the other, while an earl has three on each; a viscount two on each shoulder of plain white fur, not ermine. When I had noticed all this, and heard the speech which is generally delivered in a very clear, audible voice, I had seen all there was to be seen.

But this meagre ceremonial has not always sufficed to dismiss the Representatives of the People and the members of the Upper House to their homes. Time was, when the Queen with all the outward semblance of regal authority, and all the state observed at the opening of parliament, accompanied by the late lamented Prince Consort, the Prince of Wales, and such other of her children as were old enough, left Buckingham Palace in the ponderous gilt carriage, and escorted by a detachment of horseguards, trumpeters, outriders in scarlet and the like, alighted at the Victoria-Tower entrance, and repaired at once to the robing-room, whence followed by a long line of ministers, officers of the household, &c., she passed in regal procession through the royal gallery to the House of Lords, full then to suffocation of peers and peeresses, the former in their robes, the latter in all the splendour of the family diamonds, and the most brilliant attire they could appear in. Methinks I can see the House now, the first row of seats only occupied by the lords, while the rest, tier upon tier, as well as every nook and corner of the gallery, was crammed with the fairer sex. How well I remember it! the hour of anxious waiting; then the sound of the royal salute, which announced that Her Majesty had left Buckingham Palace; then the band playing outside, and the trumpets sounding as she passed through the robing-room; and then the sight which burst upon us as she appeared in the long, sweeping, crimson-velvet robe trimmed with ermine and gold lace, worn over a white silk dress with stripes of gold woven in it, all of which was so exceedingly becoming to the pretty bust and shoulders for which she was celebrated. Her hair was plaited in front, and on her head was the crown, made expressly for her, lighter than those of

any of her predecessors, weighing only three pounds ; while that of George IV. weighed five-and-a-half. It was composed of a hoop of silver covered with precious stones, enclosing a cap of velvet, and on the top was a Maltese cross and brilliants, while the rim was ornamented with Maltese crosses and *fleurs-de-lis* alternately. The Queen, of course, was the principal figure in the group, the cynosure of all eyes ; while the bright robes and uniforms that surrounded her, made a very brilliant spectacle, indeed. Peers and peeresses, and the vast mass of spectators, stood in breathless silence while she took her seat on the throne, the Lord Chancellor in his wig and gown on the right, the Prince Consort on her left ; then we were informed it was Her Majesty's pleasure we should be seated, and the speech was read, after that long and telling pause during which the speaker and the commons are summoned to the bar, when they announce their advent in most cases, by a very unseemly noise, totally forgetting the dignity of their body in their over-anxiety for a good place, for not more than twenty out of the six hundred odd, have a chance of either seeing or hearing. After the reading of the speech, the procession left in much the same order as it had come, and the state pageant was over. Now we look back regretfully to those old happy days when Victoria the Good was more with us, and look forward to the time when she may again think fit to be so among us once again.

Our English parliament has grown with the country's growth, and dates its origin so far back, that its actual commencement is wrapped in mystery. The Anglo-Saxon witenagemots were a kind of dim foreshadowing of what followed, but it was not until Henry III.'s time, that anything like an assembly of king, lords, and commons was thought of. He took council of his barons and his tenants concerning affairs of state, and subsequent monarchs bound themselves by an article of Magna Charta, to summon such advisers whenever advice was required. Then it came about that the barons objected to the other tenants mixing with them, and so constituted themselves into a separate assembly. Then it was found that what with the lesser tenants, their body became too numerous, and it was agreed, that they should among themselves, select certain of them, who should appear at these assemblies of the king's advisers, and represent the rest of them ; and so slowly, very slowly, the great power of parliament grew. The American Indians were not so very wrong when they called a similar assembly, " A Great Talk." We, of course, derive our word from the same root as the French verb, *parler*, to speak. At first parliament was a mere vassal of the throne, though always a formidable and dreaded rival, but it was many a year before it became a distinct power as now.

At first it assembled where and when the sovereign pleased ; the earlier parliaments met at Wallingford, York, Lincoln, Northampton, Winchester, Marlborough—anywhere, in fact, where the king happened to be ; but as time went on, it most usually met at Westminster, and after Charles I.'s time, nearly always there. None of us, however, are likely to forget the memorable one in his reign held at Oxford, while the plague raged in London.

But through all the various changes which time brought, the monarch retained in his hands the power of calling parliaments together, and proroguing and dissolving them, and whenever the faithful Commons failed to please their royal masters by their measures, parliament was dissolved, and very probably not called together again for several years. The Commons, nevertheless, had always a very powerful weapon at their disposal, for on them devolved all questions of public expenditure, and sooner or later the sovereign would be sure to have to apply to them for a vote of money, either for his personal use or for the nation. Things are so ordered now that it would be impossible for a length of time to elapse without a sitting of Parliament ; for all supplies are voted yearly, and many necessary Acts, too, have to be renewed every year ; in fact, Parliament, in the present century, is never prorogued for more than eighty days, because, at the end of that time, all privileges of Parliament enjoyed by members cease, and these privileges are great ; for the persons of the people's representatives are sacred, and are free from arrest, and the like, with many other advantages too numerous to mention. This is the reason why the Lord Chancellor declared the present Parliament to be prorogued to a certain day in October, not to February, when the Houses will virtually reopen, and the work of the Session commences. When this said day in October arrives, the form of an extended prorogation will be gone through by the Chief Clerk of the House, but there will be scarcely any one present, and the building, which for the past month has been given up to an almost unbroken stillness, will return to its quiet rest again for some months longer. Unless the notice of the reassembling of Parliament is followed by the words "for the despatch of business," there is always certain to be a further prorogation.

A dissolution is the close of a Parliament, and is followed by a general election ; a prorogation is merely the last of a session, and foretels the birth of another. Each House can adjourn itself, independently of the other, as at the Easter recess, and other occasions. When Parliament is prorogued, all matters then in progress are quashed, and have to be recommenced at the next session. No Bill can go on from one session to another ; it must be read a first, second, and third time, and receive the royal assent, during

the session, or all the preliminaries through which it has passed are rendered null and void, and have to be done all over again; this is why, towards the end of July and beginning of August, so many Bills are withdrawn; and if there is any truth in what gossips say, goodnatured M.P.s—over-persuaded by zealous constituents—oft-times bring in measures which they have never the slightest wish or intention of carrying out, and quietly let the time go by, so that at last they are compelled to withdraw them, for want of time for the necessary stages. Two Bills of the same nature cannot be introduced the same session. William III. took advantage of this during the progress of the Bill of Rights, and prorogued Parliament for a few days, in order that it might be recommenced under more favourable auspices. Parliamentary Committees, however, are not affected by these rules, and they are simply adjourned from the last of one session until twelve o'clock of the day of the re-assembling of Parliament, sometimes even going on long after the session is over. All these are somewhat dry details, but they ought to be interesting to us as a nation, for they tend materially towards the maintaining of our rights and liberties, and a great deal of patriotic blood has been shed to assert and maintain them.

THE HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

PART II.

THE LAST PARLIAMENT—ATTAINDER OF STAFFORD—THE ARREST OF THE FIVE MEMBERS—THE RAISING OF THE STANDARD— MILITARY OPERATIONS—FIRST BATTLE OF NEWBURY.

THE last parliament of King Charles's reign met on the 3rd Nov., 1640, this time in a mood very dangerous for such as put their trust in princes. It was necessary, it would seem, to strike a blow, and the blow fell like a thunderbolt in the attainder of Strafford, who had provoked a degree of hatred almost without parallel in the history of our country. Probably no state trial ever raised more delicate points of constitutional law, or had in it more of melodramatic interest than that of this ill-fated statesman. Fifty-six members only voted against the Bill of attainder, and they were held up to execration as traitors. The question of Strafford's guilt or innocence is one which seems to have taxed to the uttermost the acute discriminating powers of Hallam. The trumpet gives a very uncertain sound in such utterances as these—"The attainder of Strafford" could not be justifiable unless it was necessary, nor necessary if a lighter penalty would have been sufficient for the "public security;" and again, "if, then, we blame, in some measure, the sentence against Strafford, it is not for his sake, but for that of the laws upon which he trampled, and of the liberty which he betrayed."

There is something prophetic in Strafford's last words wherein he prayed "that every man would lay his hand on his heart, and consider seriously whether the beginning of the people's happiness should be written in letters of blood. I fear they are in a wrong way."

Enactments restricting the prerogative were now debated, and passed with alarming rapidity. In May, 1641, appeared the protestation of both Houses—a kind of feeble reproduction of the solemn league and covenant, which bears upon it the appearance of no little jesuitry. After making a forcible protest against popery, the protestors go on to pledge themselves that "to the duty of their allegiance, they would defend and maintain His Majesty's person, power, and estate; also the power and privilege of Parliament, and the lawful rights and liberties of subjects." To this protestation are appended the names of seventeen bishops. These

unhappy men might have spared themselves the trouble of protesting, for of the seventeen no less than nine were included in the list of thirteen subsequently impeached by Parliament. The Commons were marvellously in earnest. Down went the courts of High Commission and Star Chamber, not without regret on the part of some moderate constitutionalists, foremost amongst whom was Mr. Hyde, subsequently Lord Clarendon. Forest laws and obligations to knighthood followed, and the king soon beheld the downfall of the bulwarks of the prerogatives on which he put his trust.

It cannot be denied that, in assenting to these restrictive measures, the king forewent many of his undoubted rights ; and I think it may be fairly pleaded for him that he was prepared to descend from his exalted position of a king by divine right, and assume the *rôle* of a constitutional sovereign. Concession, however, came too late, and was misunderstood by men who had lost all confidence in their ruler. There were two points demanded by the Commons which exceeded the bounds of reform, and trenched on revolution. These concern the government of the militia, and the right of the bishops to sit in the House of Lords. To us it would seem a trivial matter whether the command of the local forces were vested in the Government for the time being, or directly in the king ; but it must be borne in mind that in 1641, in the absence of a standing army, the militia represented the military force of the realm, and that, mistrusting the king, the Commons feared that every concession prompted by fear, might be revoked by force. A more flagrant violation of the constitution was the attempt to exclude the bishops from their seats in the Upper House, and the exercise of rights enjoyed by their predecessors prior to the Norman Conquest.

However desirous the ill-fated king might have been of preserving at once his throne and the peace of the realm, it is, I think, very doubtful whether he could have succeeded in so doing. But, with worse than his usual judgment, he selected the most unsuitable time, and a most unfavourable issue, for one more stroke on behalf of the prerogative. On the 3rd of January, 1642, of our chronology, happened the famous attempt at the arrest of the five members—Sir Arthur Hazelrigg, Denzel Holles, Pim, Hampden, and Strode—and that in full session of Parliament, on the scene of their labours. In the king's language, "the birds had flown." The House of Commons adjourned for seven days ; the committee of members, many of whom afterwards espoused the royal cause, continued to sit in the City.

In the estimation of writers adhering to the cause of the Parliament, the Civil War began at the time that the king, at the

head of an armed force, entered the Commons House; but the Royalists, with a greater show of reason, fix the date on the refusal of the Governor of Hull to open the gates to the king. It would appear that the rupture was far more on political than religious grounds, and it should be borne in mind by those who would enrol the king among the noble army of martyrs, that he did not hesitate to give, on the 14th of February, his consent, by commission, to the Bill depriving bishops of their votes, while the command of the militia was treated like the manors of Prior's Dying Miser—"My manor?—no, I can't give that—and died."

In anticipation of the resumption of their seats by the five members, who were well assured of popular sympathy, the king withdrew successively to Hampton Court and Windsor, whence he made a vain but, I think, sincere attempt at reconciliation with the aggrieved Parliament. However willing each party, Royal and Popular, might be to wound, both seemed equally afraid to strike; while negotiations respecting the old militia controversy went on languidly, the possession of the magazines and fortified towns was an object of much greater interest. As far as I can judge from the opinions expressed by the representatives of the people in Parliament, the opponents of the king's designs mustered strongly all over the kingdom; but in the north and extreme west, loyalty was in the ascendant, while the eastern counties, and those more immediately adjoining the metropolis, were the strongholds of the disaffected party, London being almost entirely under the dominion of the Presbyterians. To the north the king immediately betook himself, fixing his head-quarters at York, where he rallied his adherents in numbers which have been variously estimated. On the 23rd of April, 1642, attended by some 300 horse, he presented himself before Hull, and required the governor, Sir John Hotham, to open the gates. Sir John's answer well indicated the unprecedented position assumed by the Parliament. "I am entrusted by the Parliament," said he, "to secure the town for His Majesty's honour, and the kingdom's use, which I intend, by God's help, to do."

Hereupon the king fulminated a proclamation against the governor, and the Commons retaliated in due course by a resolution against the king. The first collision seems to have taken place at Leicester, where the king, with about 3000 horse, overpowered some officers nominated by the Parliament to protect the magazines, of which the king possessed himself. At this time Charles was by no means wanting in vigour, for we find him, on the 6th of July, setting out from Beverley, with 3000 foot and 1000 horse, to besiege the refractory town of Hull. But the courage of Sir John Meldrum, lieutenant-governor, caused the failure of the enterprise,

with some loss of life and great loss of discipline. A brief review of the resources of the opposing powers will show how vastly superior the cause of the Parliament was to that of the monarch. The universities, the aristocracy, and a great part of the clergy were devotedly attached to the king; but the Parliament were in possession of the bulk of the warlike stores of the nation, of its capital, and of the sympathies of the middle class. A very eloquent summing-up of the merits and defects of Puritans and Cavaliers will be found in Lord Macaulay's essay on Milton, an essay which, from many points of view, may be studied with advantage.

It is not in the nature of Englishmen to enter on a war without a previous show of negotiations. Nineteen propositions were submitted by the Parliament to the king, with the intention, says Hume, of reducing him to despair. They certainly contained such restrictions on the prerogative as would, while leaving majesty its externals, reduce it to a jest.

There is both spirit and truth in the king's reply, published on the 13th August—"That he might have his hand kissed, the title of majesty continued, but as to true and real power he would remain but the outside, but the picture—but the sign of a king." General Ludlow is, perhaps, not far wrong in attributing the rejection of the propositions to his conviction that he might obtain as good terms when reduced to the last extremity.

On the 22nd August, the royal standard was raised at Nottingham, as an overt declaration of war. How different the feeling of the country now from that prevalent at the time of the menace by the Spanish Armada, when, with all the pomp, panoply, and circumstances of war, the lion of the sea lifted up his ancient crown—a rallying-point to an enthusiastically loyal and united people?

" No freshening breeze of Eve unfurled that banner's fold,
No parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty scroll of gold!"

Echard speaks of strange manipulations of aerial phantoms, musqueteers, harnessed men and horsemen, moving in the clouds in battle array, and attacking each other in several furious postures. Down fell the standard, clumsily fixed in a hole hewn out of hard rock with knives and daggers, and Charles lacked the ready wit of William the Norman to convert an ill omen into a good one; the attendance was thin, and the enthusiasm by no means at fever heat. Meanwhile, the Parliament slowly prepared themselves for war; the Earl of Essex being general of the west, and Lord Kimbolton, and others of a like station, commissioned officers of Parliament.

An attack by the king on Coventry failed, and his forces met with a galling repulse in that neighbourhood at the hands of Lord Brook, and his raw parliamentary levies. A movement in favour of the prerogative was made in Somersetshire by the Marquis of

Hartford, Sir Ralph Hopton and others, and that county was the scene of many passages of arms during the continuance of the struggle.

The first action of importance, however, was fought in the midland counties. The Earl of Essex rendezvoused his army at St. Albans to the number of about sixteen thousand, his instructions being, amongst other things, "to fight the army with the king, and rescue his person and that of the prince and the Duke of York from those about him." Prince Rupert meantime seized Worcester for the king, and defeated, in a spirited action, a detachment sent by the Earl of Essex to get possession of the place. On the approach of the earl, however, he withdrew his troops to reinforce the king at Shrewsbury. The numbers of the Royal army at this time are variously estimated, and here I may remark that the returns of combatants, and of killed, wounded, and prisoners, in every operation of the war, show signs of strange exaggeration. Hume gives it at ten thousand, Echard at six thousand foot, two thousand horse, and one thousand dragoons; *i.e.* heavy cavalry; while Rushworth increases the number to twenty-five thousand. Probably no combat so well deserves the name of an indecisive action as that fought at Keinton, or, as it is more generally called Edgehill, on Sunday, 23rd October, 1642. The Royal army was under the command of Lord Lindsey, an English nobleman, so called from Lindsey in Lincolnshire, and not to be confounded with "Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, Lord Lyon, King-at-Arms," or any of his descendants.

On the 12th of October it set out from Shrewsbury, and marched, *viâ* Bridgenorth and *Bromicham*—since sufficiently known to fame as Birmingham—prepared to advance on London. It is noticeable, through all the battles of the period, how badly the Royal army was supplied with intelligence—a proof of the indifference with which the cause was regarded by the peasant class, and of the inefficiency of its light cavalry. It was only at twelve o'clock on Saturday night that the king learned that the Earl of Essex, with the army, had left Worcester to intercept him, and was within seven or eight miles of his position. The surprise seems to have been common to both armies, and considerable time was lost in concentration of forces, so much so that it was nearly three in the afternoon when the action began. Clarendon attaches much importance to an omission on the part of the king to call on the troops under the command of Essex to lay down their arms. Anxiety on this point was more consistent with the character of a lawyer than with that of a soldier. Rupert, on the right wing, aided by the timely defection from the Parliament of Sir Faithful Fortescue, charged the enemy with great impetuosity, and utterly routed the battalions opposed to him. So

signal was his success, that, to quote the admission of General Ludlow, "Had the time he spent in plundering the waggons been employed in taking the advantages which offered themselves in the place of battle, it might have proved more serviceable to the carrying on the enemy's designs." The king's left, under the command of Wilmot, also gained ground, using their pikes well, their muskets but indifferently. A little generalship would have enabled the king to have completed the discomfiture of the foe; but the maxim, "Let no man stop to plunder, but slay, and slay, and slay," was but indifferently understood by this undisciplined horde which followed the royal standard. While the king's cavalry was scattered in pursuit of booty, a vigorous attack on the part of Balfour, in the rear, aided by a movement of Ludlow on the flank, broke the centre of the Royalists, and went near to effect the capture of the king. Sir Edward Verney, the standard-bearer, was killed, and the standard itself taken, but afterwards recaptured by one Captain Smith, by treachery, exclaims indignantly Captain Ludlow. Clarendon estimates the loss of life at 5,000, whereof two-thirds, he says, were of the side of the Parliament. Our confidence in the accuracy of the noble historian is, however, sadly marred by the fact, that a few pages farther on he avers "that it was really believed that there was not in the battle lost [to the king] more than 300 men." The loss on the king's side, nevertheless, included that of many a man of mark, while Clarendon assures us that "besides the Lord St. John and Colonel Essex (Prince Rupert's opponent at Worcester), the names of the rest of that party were so obscure that neither the one side seemed to be gainer by having taken or killed them, or the other side by being without them." A remarkable feature in the military history of the period is the generally fatal termination of surgical operations, a state of things which speaks but ill for the skill of the operator.

The material results of the action seem, in the main, however, to have been with the king, since it led to the storming of Lord Saye's House at Broughton, and the surrender of the Castle of Banbury, and the occupation by the royal army of Oxford, which acquired the distinction of being the only city in England which was entirely at the king's devotion. A success somewhat notable in its way, was the capture of Wilmot by Marlborough, a place of some importance to the king, not only as we read that it was in the heart of a rich country, but as it cut his communication with the West.

The proximity of the royal army to Reading, a town nearly equidistant from London and Oxford, induced Henry Martin, the governor, to withdraw its garrison, and the town was taken possession of by the king. From Reading, Charles determined to con-

tinue his march to London, much encouraged by the indecision of the Parliamentary leaders, and by overtures of a reconciliation which were made to him. Such an anticipation of peace prevailed that a deputation from the Parliament waited on the king at Colnbrook, to submit a proposition of terms. Prince Rupert, however, heedless of the ill-policy of aggression advanced to Hounslow, and prevailing on Charles to support him, made a dashing attack on Brentford—spelt “Brainford” by Rushworth—where lay two of the best regiments of the Parliament—Hampden’s and Lord Brook’s. Ludlow maintains that Rupert’s object was to seize Hammersmith, in which was Lord Essex’s artillery. The town of Brentford was taken, and several officers of the Parliament, among whom was one Major Quarles—probably a relative of the author of “The Emblems”—lost their lives. The Royalists claim to have taken five hundred prisoners, fifteen guns, eleven colours, and a large store of ammunition. The advantage, however, gained, in a military view, was utterly disproportionate to the loss sustained in the diplomatic point of view. The Parliament asserted that its proffer of negotiations bound the king to suspend hostilities, but there does not seem to have been any engagement on the point. The citizens of London, ever somewhat of fighters, despatched their train-bands, in support of Essex, to Turnham Green, and the king, halting between two opinions, retired to Reading.

The siege of Litchfield by the Parliament in 1643 has acquired from the pen of an eloquent divine more distinction perhaps than its military importance warrants. The episode of the death of Lord Brook, by the hands of “Dumb Dyott,” dwindles down in the pages of Clarendon to the bare mention of the fact that “sitting in his chamber, and the window open, he (Lord Brook) was from the wall of the close, by a common soldier, shot with a musket in the eye, of which he instantly died.”

It would be unjust to pass without notice the attempts at reconciliation which from time to time emanated from the Parliament. The following are the principal conditions submitted to the king at Oxford in the spring of the year 1643, at a time when the fortunes of the Parliament were not markedly in the ascendant.

That the king should disband his army and return to the Parliament; that he should leave delinquents to trial, and papists to be disarmed; that he should pass a bill for abolishing bishops and such other bills as should be presented for reformation; recusants to adjure papacy, to remove malignant counsellors, to settle the militia as the Parliament desired; to prefer to offices such as the Parliament should name; to take in all that were put out of commissions of peace; a bill to vindicate Lord Kimbolton and the five

members, and to enter into an alliance for the recovery of the palatinate,—these conditions, however moderate in the estimation of a Parliament, were such as no king could accept, and retain aught of royalty worth having. Commissioners from the Scots attended at Oxford at this time to treat for peace, and, probably, there was some sincerity and much hope of accommodation attending these efforts; but, to borrow a phrase from the Americans, “The common platform was wanting,” and the quarrel was fought out to the bitter end.

In dealing with the military operations distinguishing the Civil Wars, we find a parallel between the minor passages of arms in internal strife and those which marked the progress of the campaign in the Peninsula. Some half-dozen battles are known to the non-military reader, while the attentive student finds large drafts made on his attention by apparently unimportant skirmishes. For brevity's sake I purpose appending a chronological list of the principal events with as little comment as may be.

On the 2nd February, 1643, Prince Rupert got possession of Cirencester, after a smart assault. April 11th, he recaptured Litchfield. April 27th, Reading surrendered to Lord Essex. June 18th—the anniversary of Waterloo—fell John Hampden, in a skirmish near Henley with Prince Rupert's dragoons. It seems that his death resulted from the accidental discharge of his own pistol. On June 30th, Fairfax, who had met with considerable successes in the north, was routed on Atherton Moor by the Earl, better known by his subsequent title, the Marquis of Newcastle.

In the West of England the king's forces, under Hopton, fought an undecided action at Lansdowne, near Bath, with Sir William Waller. In this engagement fell Sir Bevil Grenville, of Cornwall, one of the king's most devoted adherents. After the action, the cavalry made for Oxford, and Hopton, with the infantry, retired to Devizes, the surrender of which he was meditating when the advance of Lords Wilmot and Carnarvon induced Waller to draw off from his position to give the relieving army battle on Rounderay Down. Hazelrigg, with the Parliament's cavalry, charged up-hill, and was severely handled by Wilmot. Waller's foot similarly fell into disorder before the charge of the royalist's horse, and the attack of Hopton's infantry, lately beleagured in the town, completed his discomfiture. In this action Wilmot took four guns and many prisoners. The wreck of the beaten army fled to Bristol, which soon after yielded to Rupert. On the 10th of August the prince commenced the siege of Gloucester, one of the most memorable of the war. “Women and maids,” we read, “wrought all one afternoon in the little mead fetching in turf in the face of the

king's horse." Dr. Chillingworth, a doughty controversialist, proved himself a good member of the church militant by his device of military engines borrowed from the Romans. One grenade, or, as we should say, shell, weighing sixty pounds, fell into an open street, but the fuse was extinguished by a pail of water thrown by a woman. It was indeed a brilliant contest, the description of which, even in the prim pages of Rushworth, reminds one of a chapter from Froissart. Now did the ancient spirit of London speak, and to some purpose. Essex got together an army, to which the city contributed five regiments and eleven guns, and with these he raised the siege, which had lasted twenty-six days, and had reduced their garrison to the last barrel of powder. This success wonderfully elevated the courage of the Parliamentary party, whose forces had been much weakened by sickness and desertion. Snapping up Cirencester by a *coup de main*, the victorious leader pursued his homeward way through the northern part of Wiltshire. As soon as the king ascertained the route taken, he made all speed to intercept him. Prince Rupert succeeded in bringing the rear-guard to action with some advantage to himself at Aldbourne Chase, losing in the engagement a French diplomatist, the Marquis de Vieuville, who, with more zeal than discretion, had taken service with the king. On the 20th of September—anniversary of the Alma—both armies met at Newbury, the king's forces having the advantage of position. The fighting lasted with greater or less vigour from six in the morning till far into night; the cavalry of the one side, and the infantry of the other, proved the better troops of the several armies. It seemed that if not on all points victorious, Essex extricated himself with great dexterity from a dangerous position, the king drawing off his forces under cover of the night.

Clarendon is quite enthusiastic in his praise of the conduct of the London regiments under Essex, who, he says, "behaved themselves to wonder, and were, in truth, the preservation of that (the Parliament) army that day." Somewhat harrassed by attacks upon his rear, the Lord-General made good his retreat to London, abandoning Reading to the king. In this action fell Lucius, Lord Falkland, than whom no more magnanimous soldier or patriot donned armour on either side. His character seems a reproduction of that of Sydney, the *beau ideal* of scholarly chivalry. Even his care that "if he should be killed in the fight his body should not be found in foul linen" bespeaks the sensitive fastidiousness of the high-bred gentleman. From an old book (title-page wanting) in my possession, I cull the following anecdote, *apropos* of the substantial failure of the campaign:—"Some time before the battle, the king and court, being at Oxford, drew the *sortes virgillianæ*—a kind of dipping for luck into the pages of Virgil. The king's passage was from the

fourth book of "The Æneid," which passage, Mr. Cowley, at his request, though ignorant of his motives, thus translated :—

"By a bold people's stubborn arms opprest,
Forced to forsake the land which he possest,
Torn from his dearest son; let him in vain
Beg help, and see his friends unjustly slain;
Let him to bold, unequal terms submit,
In hopes to save his Crown, and lose both it
And life at once. Untimely let him die,
And on an open stage unburied lie."

WAITING FOR MY HUSBAND

It is not my purpose to relate at any length the circumstances which made it necessary for me, a short time ago, to spend the best part of a whole day in the waiting-room of one of the large railway stations of the metropolis. Enough to say that having driven there in the morning from a friend's house in the neighbourhood of London, I found awaiting me at the station, *not* my husband, whom I had expected to meet, but a message from him to the effect that he could not join me so soon as he had anticipated. "Business of importance would detain him for some hours, perhaps until the evening." I was to amuse myself as best I could in the meanwhile.

This news was disappointing, to say the least of it. We were to have gone together by an early train to the Sussex coast, there to spend what is technically termed a "clergyman's week," and now, by this untoward event, we might lose one whole day of our short holiday. But there was no help for it. I must wait for my husband—the only question for me to settle was, how was I to amuse myself in the meanwhile? Two courses were open to me: to stay where I was, or to hire a cab, and drive about the town in search of entertainment. For several reasons I decided against the latter proceeding. I was alone, and a stranger in London; it was "out of season;" moreover it was a dull, chill day in autumn, and the rain was pouring down in a steady, uncompromising fashion. The fire in the waiting-room was burning brightly, and an arm-chair, which had been drawn near it, looked very inviting. The worst that could happen to me here would be to be a little bored with waiting, and against such a possibility I had happily some resources. In my travelling-bag was the last number of *St. James's Magazine*, with some of its pages still uncut. Other food, too, I had there of a less intellectual description, for my late host had been quite "royal" in his injunctions to his wife "not to let poor Nelly starve;" and for my fingers I had the feminine luxury of work. It was hard, if thus provided, I could not manage to amuse myself till such a time as my husband should arrive; and so I took possession of the arm-chair, which would probably be my head-quarters for some hours to come, in a philosophical, if not a very cheerful frame of mind.

After a short interval of perfect idleness, I took out my magazine, and began to read; but very soon I found that even under the most favourable circumstances, the waiting-room of a large London terminus is not a good place for enjoying literature, even of a light description. There is too much of confusion and excitement to allow of any concentration of thought. The ever-

moving stream of living creatures has a stronger attraction for the eye than even "the stately march" of Kinglake's or Macaulay's sentences; and the study of the written pages gives place for a time to the more fascinating study of the "human face divine,"—at least I found it to be so. By degrees I began to turn over the pages of my book very listlessly; more than once, indeed, I found it lying neglected on my lap, whilst my eyes were straining to catch the last glimpse of some fair young girl, or poor crippled child, who had passed on to the platform. Reading had, in fact, for the time, become a task, and much sooner than I could have believed it possible, my still uncut magazine was returned to my travelling-bag, and the mystery of "tattooing" reigned in its stead.

Now I could watch the passengers as much as I pleased. I do not know whether I should have found the occupation at all times equally fascinating. Perhaps I was more than usually fortunate in the glimpses I obtained of what might be called life at a railway station—for certain it is that many of the travellers who passed through the L—Terminus that day were persons who, either by accident of appearance or circumstance, were peculiarly calculated to inspire interest, particularly in the mind of an imaginative dreamer like myself. The faces of men and women whom I saw then are fresh in my memory now, as if I had only seen them yesterday; their words and gestures as distinctly remembered as if they had been familiar to me from childhood—so true it is that impressions may be made sometimes in a few moments which last through a whole lifetime.

I will try to describe to my readers a few of the most striking characters who crossed my path that day, trusting to be able to inspire in their minds something, if only a small portion, of the interest with which they inspired me.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when I reached the station, and most of the early morning trains had already started, so that for some little time after my arrival there seemed to be a sensible lull in the noise and confusion which usually reigned around. But about an hour later the bustle began again in good earnest. The tidal train for F— was about to start, and the passengers began to arrive in many different kinds of vehicles, and in every possible variety of travelling costume. Among the first came the London "swell," who drove up in his Stanhope, and flung the reins to his groom as he sprang lightly to the ground, just stopping for a moment to bestow a parting caress on his beautiful bay horses. I could see this part of the proceeding from one window of the waiting-room, whilst from the other I could look out upon the platform. He was dressed to perfection in point of ease and style, and his clothes had the additional advantage of not looking as if

they were new on. In fact, there was a certain look about his dark grey travelling suit which made me think it had seen service on Scottish hillsides, and, as it was now long past the 12th of August, very likely the grouse might have had something to do with it. He arrived, strange to say, some twenty or thirty minutes before the train was appointed to start; too soon to obtain a ticket, and, as he was lounging leisurely at the open door of the waiting-room, I saw that another groom in livery came up to him and touched his hat respectfully.

“The luggage is all right, sir; I’ve seen it booked myself for Boolong, as you said; and your plaids and things is in a carriage about the middle of the train, which the guard have turned the key of.”

A very slight inclination of the head was all the notice the master vouchsafed to his servant’s communication, but he turned to him a minute afterwards and said, “Be sure Captain Hervey has the Stanhope as usual, whenever he wishes it, and tell Gibbs not to forget about taking Brown Bess to Tattersall’s before the 30th.”

The man touched his hat, but made no other answer. Still he lingered near, as though he had something he wished, yet feared to say. Presently he summoned the needful courage. “I was thinking, colonel, if I might make so bold, and it wasn’t inconvenient, maybe you’d give me leave to take a week’s run into Warwickshire while you’re away, and when the young ’osses is out at grass. My father’s getting an old man, and he’s been bad with the rheumatics this three months past, and I haven’t seen him now for better than six year.”

The colonel looked with superb astonishment at the man, whose audacity had led him to prefer such a request to *him*.

“Don’t let me be bothered about such things!” he answered, haughtily; “find out from Gibbs if you can be spared.”

The words were not unkindly meant, perhaps, still I thought he might have spoken more as if the man beside him had been a fellow creature, and not only a machine—a mere hireling who minded his horses, and took his money in return, but between whom and himself there could, of course, be nothing else in common.

Once more the young groom touched his hat, and still respectfully, but I could see that the man’s face turned a shade or two paler, and I could almost hear his quiet sigh. I daresay he was thinking that the autocrat Gibbs might, perhaps, prove unpracticable, and, if so, that he might never see the poor old man of whom he had spoken alive again. And after all it *was* his father, and perhaps his feelings were as strong and tender as those of his

master, although he had called it Boolong, and talked about six year instead of years.

I watched the tall figure of the officer as he stood with his side-face turned towards me, and wondered a little sadly whether his was one of those wasted lives of which, alas! we see so many around us; for I call every man's life wasted, however busily it may be spent, whose ambition never rises beyond the gratification of his own selfish desires; whose spirit and energies are *never* kindled by the noble longing to do some good for his fellow men. I easily pictured to myself this man, with his delicate Norman features and heavy cavalry moustache, as making one amongst the aristocratic crowd of idlers who are to be seen by scores and hundreds in the season, leaning over the railings of the Serpentine drive in Hyde Park, and this not once in a way for an occasional hour of relaxation, but day after day and week after week throughout the balmy months of May and June. And I cannot help asking here, *par parenthese*, "Is this a life for a *man*, a *true man*? I am told that such men would be the first to lead a forlorn hope up the deadly breach, or to carry a wounded comrade out of the fire of the enemy, and I am ready enough to believe it; but I much doubt if their "season's" training fits them well for the trials and difficulties of everyday life, or would ever nerve them for the more silent but not less noble deeds of Christian heroism. Men such as these would go through fire and water to win the Victoria Cross, but I doubt if they would so much as stretch forth a hand to grasp a martyr's crown.

But I have grown too serious, and wandered from my subject, as I so often do, my subject for the moment being the handsome colonel who stood there so composedly, little dreaming of the interest he was exciting in a foolish old woman's mind. One source of excitement I could see *he* had more than some others. He was evidently a mountaineer—the well-worn, deeply-notched Alpenstock his servant was carrying with his guns, said as much, while his own easy and graceful carriage confirmed it. I should like to have seen him among the mountains, preparing to encamp for the night at the rocks of the Grands Mulets, or tramping steadily onwards over the ice-fields of Monte Rosa. I should like to have seen the healthy glow of exercise and animation flushing over his pale cheeks at such a time. Not that I would be thought to advocate, in general, the spirit of reckless presumptuous daring which tempts men to court danger—to gamble, as it were, with their own lives for a stake, not for the sake of any good that may accrue to their fellow-creatures, but merely to accomplish that which others have failed to do; it is an evil spirit which has numbered too many noble names amongst its victims within the last few years.

But still I could not help thinking that in the case of this man the very consciousness of "something attempted, something done," would light up those haughty features with altogether a pleasanter and a better expression than they were wearing then.

Very soon I found that I was not the only person in whom the guardsman (for guardsman I was sure he was or had been) had awakened feelings of interest. Standing near to me, in the waiting-room, and watching him with envious and admiring eyes, were two of the brightest and dearest of English boys. They would never have forgiven me for calling them so, for they did their best to look like full-grown men; but boys they were to all intents and purposes—happy, handsome, honest boys, such as England has a right to be proud of. Of course they had come in a hansom, and were decked out in all the resplendency of perfectly new travelling costumes and surmounted, or finished off, by two very fresh-coloured Russian leather belts and pouches. There was a strong smell of Russian leather in the waiting-room for some time after, I remember. Probably they were going abroad for the first time; indeed, I heard them say as much, for I could hear a good deal of their easy, school-boy talk; but all the time, though they never spoke of him, I could see that their eyes scarcely moved from the tall figure of my colonel, who still stood in his lounging, listless attitude, almost blocking up the doorway of the room. I could see how they longed to imitate the easy grace of that aristocratic "pose." I fancied they envied the cut of his garments, from the crown of his wide-awake hat to the very sole of his shooting boots, and would have given a good deal now to get rid of that indescribable air of newness which pervaded everything they had on. The height of their ambition, at that moment, would, I believe, have been realised if they could have copied the half drawling, half imperious tone in which he presently demanded from the officiating clerk a "through ticket" for Geneva. But I could not wish them to succeed. Boys they were—brave, honest boys—and such might they long remain—long might those bright faces be saved from wearing the weary, dissatisfied look of the man of the world!

I thought of a boy, just such a lad as one of these, who had gone away to sea, one April morning, years and years before. I remembered how his arms had clung round my neck, at that his first parting. I thought of his hot tears upon my cheek, and for the sake of my sailor laddie, I prayed God to bless these two dear boys.

All of a sudden there was an exclamation from one of them, almost a shout.

"By George, Tom, if there isn't the governor!"

“Nonsense! Where? I declare, so it is! He’s cut shop for an hour just to come and see us off. What an old brick it is!”

And then there was a wild rush (it was perhaps as well for the stately colonel that he had moved away from the doorway in time), and my eyes, following in the direction of the rush, saw in the distance a stout, cheery-looking gentleman, holding out a hand to each of the boys, who looked as if they would like to have hugged him then and there. I did not see much of them, but I can vouch for one thing—that the crisp bank-note which was paid for the first day’s travelling expenses did not come out of either of the Russian leather bags.

The confusion was at its height now. The time at which the tidal train was announced to start was fast approaching, and the passengers began to arrive in greater numbers. There were many specimens of the genius “snob,” such snobs as John Leech loved to draw for us—vulgar, yet good-tempered, and arrayed in all the glorious varieties of checks and stripes. There was the British paterfamilias “ordinary,” very red and very hot, struggling vainly to collect the scattered members of his family, who would wander about to look at book-stalls and time-tables. There was the inevitable old maid, with her poodle dog and parrot. There was the West-end milliner, proceeding to Paris in search of the newest fashions; well-dressed and lady-like, perfectly at her ease, and self-possessed, in the midst of all the noise and bustle that reigned around. There were several “Mossoos,” talking loudly and energetically, as is the custom of their nation; and more than one German, unwashed and unkempt, sallow of complexion, and dirty of linen, looking meditative and melancholy, as though the horrors of sea-sickness were already in anticipation. Altogether it was a strange picture of men and manners, a curious *melange* of faces and voices; and to think that this same scene goes on day after day, and year after year; that every day at the appointed hour just such a crowd of human beings is to be seen streaming through the station—that every day that tidal train carries its living freight of men and women to the coast of our little island, from thence to be transported to almost every part of the known world. To think, too, what a world within itself is the heart of every one of those men and women as they travel on—what a wealth of happiness, or crushing weight of misery, what delirious dreams of ambition, or what agonies of remorse may be shut up in each of those human beings’ hearts, and carried with them where they go. The readers of Carlyle will remember Teufelsdröck’s quaint wish to lift the roofs of the Cologne houses, and see what was passing at the same time under each. If such a fanciful idea could be carried out with regard to the tidal train and its passengers—if by some witchery the

veil which here separates the unseen from the seen could be lifted—I fancy we should sometimes see startling things enough.

Moralising again, as usual. I was standing at the window which looked on to the platform whilst thinking out these thoughts, and so did not notice that a large party of ladies and gentlemen had come into the waiting-room, till I heard them talking in low, earnest tones. I glanced round for an instant, but soon resumed my old posture, for there was a look of subdued sadness in the faces of all there assembled, which instinctively repelled all idle or impertinent curiosity. I was the only other occupant of the room, and either they did not observe me, or else they were too much engrossed with the painful interest of the moment to heed that a stranger was within hearing, and so I soon learnt from their own lips the errand on which they had come.

One of the party was Eastward bound, I had guessed it before, when I saw one of the young men leave the waiting-room, and take his stand beside a trunk, piled up with unmistakeable officer's luggage. The name was on the boxes in large white letters—Lieutenant Arthur —— (I could not see the surname), ——th Regiment, passenger to Calcutta, *viâ* Marseilles.

This was the secret, then, of these sad faces, and of that subdued weeping—this was the spell which had summoned together that little band of loving relatives and friends to see the last of the dear son and brother before he sailed for India. It was strange that I should have been thinking of my sailor laddie just a little while before, only to be reminded of him again so soon; for another “mother took leave of her son that day.” I had seen her in that one short glance, standing in the midst of the little sorrowing circle—the calmest, the bravest of them all—a tall, handsome old lady, dressed in widow's weeds, though her widowhood was evidently not of recent date. She was very pale, and her tell-tale eyelids looked heavy and swollen; but still she was quite calm, and was even talking cheerfully. The others were weeping, but in her eyes there were no tears. She was brave for her boy's sake, and, God helping her, she would bear up bravely to the last.

“Be a good man, Artie, my dear,” she said, looking tenderly into his face.

“Mother, I'll try,” was his answer.

“How could you let my mother come here to-day?” I heard one of the gentlemen ask of his sister. “It is enough to kill her.”

“She would come,” was the reply. “She said it would be better for her afterwards, and so I believe it will.”

I could not resist glancing round once more. They were not thinking of me, and so I hope it was not seen. The tall soldier was bending over his old mother, caressing tenderly the hand she had

laid upon his arm. "Only four years, mother," I heard him say, "I shall only be away four years. It seems a long time to look forward to, but it will soon be over, and then you will have me home again, strong and true as ever, and loving you all as dearly as now."

Those last words were meant I believe for other ears than his mother's, for he was not looking at her when he spoke them. There was a young girl standing near, who was no sister of Arthur's, though she must have been a relative or some dear friend, or she would scarcely have been there that day. He called her by her Christian name, but when the time came for the parting caresses, he asked for no kiss from her, only he held her hand in a clasp which seemed as though it never would end, and his eyes were all the while looking down upon her with that old, old look, which a man has but for one woman in the world.

"Good-bye, Margaret," he said; "you will not forget me in four years?"

"No, Arthur, I shall not forget you in four years," she answered, in a low voice, and then, for one moment, her eyes were raised to his.

It was the only word of love that passed between them, if word of love it could be called; if he could not read the truth aright in the shy, tender look of those beautiful eyes, all I can say is that he was not worthy of the treasure he had won. I could read it plainly enough; not in four years, no, nor in forty times four years, would she forget—through life unto death she would be true to him, though all the world else were false. He might forget, amidst the attractions of Calcutta, or the blandishments of Cashmere, but she would remember still. From that day forth she would sing the song of "Maggie's Secret" with a new and conscious meaning, and linger with a deeper pathos on the closing words:—

"I tell them they need not come wooing to me,
For my heart, my heart is over the sea."

The starting time came, and the warning bell rang out its summons to all tardy travellers.

I slipped quietly from the room, unwilling to intrude upon the last sacred moments of parting, and anxious if the truth must be told, to see the last of the little group in which I had been so deeply interested. They had lingered till nearly the last moment, and now followed me quickly on to the platform. I watched them from a safe distance, and saw the poor mother still clinging with trembling hands to the boy she was about to lose. I saw the young man who had been watching by the luggage come forward and grasp his brother's hand, and then point to the carriage in which he had secured a seat. Another moment or two, and those frail hands were fain to loose their clinging hold; the shrill whistle sounded,

and the tidal train started on its way to F——, carrying with it one heavy heart at least, that day.

The excitement and confusion were over for the time, and the officials and friends of the passengers began to move away. I saw the tall colonel's groom touch his hat mechanically to the departing train, and with a thoughtful face, and a mind bent on things far away, perhaps, take his place silently in the Stanhope beside his fellow-servant, and drive away. Then I saw the old widow lady coming slowly back, leaning heavily on her eldest son's arm; her lips and cheeks were pale as those of the dead, and there was a look of speechless sorrow in her face, which I shall never forget to my dying day. Instinctively I turned away, not caring to be seen watching, and as I did so the worthy merchant, the father of my two merry boys, came bustling past, and sprang into the first Hansom cab, looking now as if he had forgotten there were such things as boys in the world, and the whole object of his life was to get back to that money-making hive 'ylept the City as fast as possible.

And now that the tidal train was fairly gone, there came another interval of peace and quietness, which lasted for a considerable time. It was strange the contrast which only a few moments of time made in the aspect of life as seen at a railway-station. For one half-hour the porters, guards, passengers, and cabmen were to be seen running hither and thither, hot and breathless, as though life itself were not long enough for the fulfilment of their appointed tasks. In the next the very same men would congregate in languid groups, leaning against the pillars, and looking as if the smallest excitement would be welcome to enliven the dreary monotony of their existence, and then some distant shriek of an engine would be heard, and all would suddenly wake up into activity again. "Now then, noisy!" I heard a man call out once to a stray engine which was puffing and running about on the rails like a mad thing, but with something of method in its madness, I suppose. As for myself, I was not altogether proof against the prevailing feeling of reaction; the waiting-room felt quite lonely for a little while, after those in whom I had been so much interested had disappeared. I took up my discarded work, and began tating vigorously, at the same time giving the reins to my thoughts, and letting them wander where they would.

About one o'clock the passengers for the mid-day trains made their appearance, and again the platform was crowded with busy, restless beings—again following each other in quick succession, like the painted figures of a phantasmagoria. Many different families of men and women came in and out of the room where I kept my solitary watch. This might have been called "the children's hour,"

and now was to be seen also the greatest number of the paterfamilias tribe. There was the paterfamilias aristocratic, from the regions of Belgravia, or Tyburnia, with his haughty-looking wife, and well-behaved children, who looked as if they had never known what it was to have a good game of romps in their lives. There, by way of contrast, was the paterfamilias commercial, fat and goodnatured, "raised" probably somewhere between the Poultry, or Cheapside, who had torn himself from the charms of his ledger to enjoy a month's holiday with his numerous progeny at the seaside. What with nurses and babies, and spades and hoops, and perambulators, there did not seem an inch of room to spare, so long as this party were in the neighbourhood. There came the papa, bumptious and blustering, short of stature, and short of h's, and not too long-suffering in point of temper. I was much rejoiced when, after much bustling in and out, he fetched away his wife and daughters, at last, with the words. "Now Mrs. Hutchinson, if you please." Of course there was the papa primus, which, being interpreted, means the papa with his first baby—a little, soft, pink mortal, say unknown, lying fast asleep in the nurse's arms, and nearly smothered in lace and embroidery, and in the pearl-grey merino hood, which no doubt had been the christening gift of grandmamma. It was a pretty sight to see the young father and mother watching with tender glances their little sleeping baby, as though underneath that grey hood was the most precious thing the world contained, as, of course, it was to them. Besides these there was the paterfamilias parsonic, in the stiffest of white ties and straightest of black garments. He and his faded-looking wife kept strict watch and ward over their children, I suppose lest they should be contaminated by the society of other children "of the world," who were running about at greater liberty. But *halte là!* my pen runs on too fast. *My* husband is a clergyman of the Church of England, and I see his kind eyes fixed on me with a look of mild reproach, as I write that last sentence.

About half-an-hour before the afternoon train for H—— was to start, a party entered the waiting-room consisting of a lady and her daughter and one female servant. They were all dressed in deep mourning, the lady in fresh widow's weeds. She was still young in years, but her face was wan and careworn, as though she had grown old before her time with sorrow and anxiety. You had not to look far to find the cause of her present trouble—her daughter was evidently a confirmed invalid. The mother and the servant, a true "Pegotty" both in appearance and devotion, had supported her carefully into the room, and laid her on one of the sofas to rest; and then Pegotty went away to transact all the needful business connected with tickets and luggage; and the lady

sat watching her sick child, but furtively, as though she feared to give her pain. She was a girl of about fifteen years of age, and would have been very lovely but for the too perceptible evidences of weakness and disease. She was painfully thin; her hands were almost transparent, and her cheeks colourless except for the flushed hectic spots, where, to use the language of a modern writer, "Consumption had hung out her red flag of no surrender." She seemed restless and impatient even of the short delay, and yet her temper must have been by nature gentle, for her eyes filled with tears once when she saw her mother's look of pitiful rebuke.

"I did not mean to be impatient, mamma," I heard her say, "but it is so hard to help it sometimes."

I could not hear the mother's answer, perhaps there was none to *hear*; but I saw that she laid her hand caressingly on the young girl's head, and looked at her with eyes full of a patient tenderness which no fretfulness or selfishness would ever weary out. "The only child of her mother, and she was a widow." It was not difficult to guess their destination. They were going to the south-coast to try and "cheat the cold English winter" as the saying is, and to see whether the milder climate of H—— would win for the poor doomed girl a few more weeks and months of weary life.

"We shall have you quite strong there soon, I hope, my darling," the lady said.

God help her poor mother if she were no hypocrite—if she were really trusting in the hope of which she spoke! I could see the sentence of death written plainly enough in those wasted features and hectic cheeks, and could she be so wilfully blind? It could but be a question of time; not H——, not Madeira even, could save her now, or arrest for more than a few weeks, perhaps, the progress of the fell disease. Again I say, God help her if she were trusting to such a broken reed as the hope of her child's recovery! Ay! and He would help her, too, when the parting time came, as He has helped and comforted many a broken-hearted mourner before. We have all heard of One who wept beside the grave of Lazarus, and had compassion on the childless widow of Nain.

But I must not linger longer over these mournful details, or I shall make the reader's heart as sad as my own was while I was watching this little scene. Many bright faces, many gay, laughing groups of passengers passed before me that day, but the sad ones made the deepest impression, as they always do. Why is it, I wonder? I do not know if others feel as I do, but to my wayward heart it has always seemed far easier to weep with those that weep than "to rejoice with those that rejoice." We read much of the joy of the angels in Heaven; is it because of our fallen nature that we have so little sympathy with the joys of our fellow men on earth?

For the half-past four o'clock train for D—— came the bride and bridegroom.

I suppose that on an average one newly-married couple per diem at the very least start from the L—— station, and so I call them the bride and bridegroom for the day. She was a pretty, shy young creature, scarcely twenty, I should say, very ladylike in appearance, and dressed as quietly as was compatible with the fact of her wearing perfectly new garments from head to foot. He was tall and manly-looking, some ten years older than his new wife. They had driven to the station in a private Brougham, and evidently did all they could to impose themselves upon the public as an old steady-going married couple; but it was of no use. As if any one could have mistaken, for an instant, the bright light of happiness in the bride's eyes, or the magnificent pride of the bridegroom's manner, even if the tell-tale favour which fell out of the man-servant's hat by accident when he took leave of his masrer had not betrayed the fact. When her husband left her for a few minutes and went out on to the platform, the lady walked to the window and watched his every movement. As she stood there I could see how much of inward excitement she was feeling, in spite of her quiet, self-controlled manner. Her colour came and went, and more than once the pretty grey eyes filled with tears. Perhaps, then, she was thinking of her mother's last kiss, or of her father's white face as he put her in the carriage, or of the little brothers and sisters who had cried as if their hearts would break when they had wished her good-bye. But the tears were all gone when she sprang forward to meet her husband at the door, even before she heard his voice calling her.

“Now, Alice, come, my darling!”

He did not seem to care in the least whether the old lady who sat quietly tatting by the fire noticed how tenderly that last word was spoken.

There was a party of young officers, belonging no doubt to the D—— Castle garrison, standing together on the platform and waiting for the train to start. They made room for the lady and gentleman to pass, eyeing them in the meantime with significant glances. The truth was as plain to them as it was to me. Indeed everybody about the station seemed to know by intuition that there had been a wedding somewhere that morning, and that these two were the culprits. And the guard, who touched his hat to them at the carriage-door, would no more have dreamt of filling up the vacant seat in their *coupé*, than of doing—what shall I say?—well, of mistaking my old leather trunk (done up in canvass, after the manner of females), to be part of the officers' luggage.

And now once more there was a long interval of quietness—at least

of quietness for me, for I began to feel a little weary, and crept closer to the cheerful fire. The day, as I have said before, was wet and gloomy, the twilight deepened quickly, and while it was still quite early, the waiting-room became almost dark. But though dark, it was very comfortable—the room itself was comfortable, the fire and my arm-chair were comfortable, and I was very sleepy. I put down my work, and began to look into the fire and meditate, and then—well, I suppose I must have fallen asleep, for during about the space of an hour I had no further recollection of anything, except a kind of confused vision, in which the faces of persons I had seen during the day were reproduced under quite new and original circumstances. I fancied I saw the handsome colonel of the morning amidst the eternal snows of some mountain pass in Switzerland; above him frowned a gigantic wall of ice, steep and straight as the *Mur de la Côte*; below was a precipitous ravine. He was kneeling at the edge of the narrow path, leaning over, at the risk of life and limb, to catch sight of *something* which had fallen into the crevass beneath. His teeth were set fast, his eyes flashing, and his whole face glowing with an expression of eagerness and desperate resolution. By his side, pale and shivering with fear, stood *one* of the young boys whom I had seen watching him in the morning with such admiring eyes. He had better cause for the admiration now.

“There he is!” the colonel exclaimed, “I see him now! Thank God! he is not dead, for he sees us, and lifts his arm in answer to my signal. Lean further over, my boy, there—I’ll hold you, and you’ll see him too. Now for the ropes and guides, and in an hour’s time we will have him up here safe and sound, I hope.”

Next I saw the young Indian officer lying in the moonlight, on the deck of a large vessel which was just about to enter the harbour of Gibraltar, on her homeward voyage. He held a picture in his right hand, a portrait, not of either of his sisters, but of the girl whom he had called Margaret, and whose hand he had held so tenderly before he parted from her that day. The face was unchanged, except that in four years the girl he left behind him had become a noble and beautiful woman. And then the picture became the reality, and I saw the two, Margaret and Arthur, kneeling side by side in the chancel of a little Gothic church; a clergyman in his white surplice stood before them, and I heard a voice, as of some one at a great distance, speaking these words, “Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder.”

After that I saw in my dream a lady and gentleman walking arm-in-arm, by the sea-shore, one bright summer’s morning. Their faces were turned away from me, so that I could not tell whether it was the bride and bridegroom of the afternoon, or the widowed

mother of the invalid girl and some one else ; and just as they were about to turn, and I should have seen them closer, my own head fell forward with a great jerk, and I awoke with a sudden start, feeling vastly ashamed of myself when I found that I was no longer the only occupant of the waiting-room. Not that the lady who was sitting on the other side of the fire had noticed *me*, I daresay, for she seemed far too much absorbed in her own reflections.

She was a motherly-looking woman of about forty years of age, and would have been very handsome but that her face was pale and sorrowful, and her eyes bore the traces of recent tears. It was a kind of face that children would have loved instinctively, and I felt sure that many a little one had clung with caressing arms round her neck, or, wearied out with childish griefs, had sobbed itself to sleep in her loving embrace. She was very quiet, and her grief or anxiety, whatever it might be, had not robbed her in the slightest degree of her self-possession. She sat sometimes looking thoughtfully into the fire, and then would get up, and walk quickly to the door or window, as if to meet some one whom she was expecting. But as the 6 o'clock express for B—— was to start in a little while, and there was a good deal of confusion on the platform, she did not leave the safe shelter of the waiting-room.

Her husband joined her at last—a stout, middle-aged man, with an honest-looking English face; but he, too, seemed nervous and anxious-looking. There was but a short greeting between them, but in that moment he gave her a quiet, searching glance.

“ Ah ! Mary, my dear, I thought I should find you here. Well ? ”

The last word was a question, as she well knew ; but she only shook her head.

“ Any more news ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, I have heard again.”

“ Why didn't you let me know ? ”

“ It would have been too late. It only reached me just before I started, and I knew you would have left the office to come here. There had been some delay.”

“ Well, what news ? How was he then ? ” he asked, impatiently : but he knew without the asking, or he would scarcely have learnt it from her answer. She tried to say the one word, “ Worse,” but I do not think her lips uttered a sound.

“ Was it a telegram ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Let me see it.”

She opened her travelling-bag with trembling fingers, found the paper, and gave it to him. He put up his double eyeglass, read it through carefully, word by word, then shook his head very sadly, and gave it back to her.

“Poor little fellow! He is very bad from that, I am afraid—as bad as he can be. However, we go by the 6 o'clock train, and shall get down, and be at the school before half-past eight—that is all we can do.”

No, not quite all. They could lift their hearts in swift and secret prayer to the God of heaven, and ask Him to spare to them the little child whose life was even then hanging in the balance. And in the moment of solemn silence which followed I believe it was this they did. She walked towards the door, but he stopped her. “The train will not go yet for twenty minutes; better stay here, Mary, it is quieter.” And after that they did not say another word. I think he was afraid to speak to her for fear of shaking her self-control, but he watched her tenderly all the same. The time seemed to pass very slowly, but at last he looked at his watch and then laid his hand on her arm to lead her away. He was more impatient himself than he cared to acknowledge.

Just at that moment a man in a rough travelling coat came running in and looked quickly round the room.

“Is there any one of the name of Grant here?” he asked, “Mr. or Mrs. Grant?”

“Yes!” exclaimed the gentleman, eagerly; “my name is Grant. Have you any message for me? Do you come from——?”

“Yes! I've just arrived by the up train, and have run round here to see if I could catch you.” The poor man was so out of breath he could only speak in gasps. “I've come from Dr. Scott's, and he asked me to try if I could find you before you started, as he had a message to send; he thought you would come.” And here he stopped fairly for want of breath.

“Well! well!” exclaimed Mr. Grant, impatiently, and he took hold of his wife's hand. Good heavens! how the poor mother was trembling now?

“I was to tell you, your little boy was better—much better since the last telegram was sent. The fever had lessened, and he had been sleeping for more than an hour when I left. I know what you must feel, for I had my own boy like this last year; but they think the worst is over now.”

“Thank God!” I heard the father say. The unspoken prayer was answered even so soon.

“That was all, I think,” the other gentleman continued. “You'll excuse me now—I must be off, for I am in a desperate hurry to catch another train. No thanks, pray!”

Mr. Grant held out his hand and clasped the other's in a grasp of iron. “I wish I could do as much for you some day, that's all,” he said, and the next instant the good Samaritan, who had brought the message, was gone.

Then Mr. Grant turned to his wife and put his arm round her waist. She laid her head on his shoulder and burst into tears. "There, Mary, don't cry so, my dear," her husband said, but his own voice trembled not a little; "you heard what he said. Thank God our little Charlie is better!"

"Thank God indeed, but we must go all the same, John—we must go all the same!"

"Of course, my love, we will."

I believe in another moment I should have cried too, out of sheer sympathy with that poor lady's happiness. I was pretending to look very intently into the fire, so that they might not think about me; and thus standing, with my back to the door, I never knew another person had entered the room till I felt somebody's two hands on my shoulders, and heard a well-known voice say, "Well, Nelly, old woman, here I am at last; are you glad to see me? You must be tired out of waiting."

I turned round, and there was my dear, kind husband, looking very fagged and dusty, but so smiling and cheerful that I could not help saying to him—

"Yes, I am glad to see you, you dear old Frank; but I'm not the least bit tired of waiting, and the time has not seemed at all long, for it has been one of the most interesting days I ever spent in my life."

And what I told him was the truth. What I said then I say again now—one of the most interesting days of my whole life was the day I spent at the L—— Station "Waiting for my Husband."

H. S. EENGSTRÖM.

FACTS AND FABLES

MODERN criticism has disposed of a number of so-called historical facts. By a comparison of other documents with those previously relied upon, by a very careful examination into the authenticity of all, as well as into the general spirit, whether fair or otherwise, of the writers, and into the opportunities possessed by these of obtaining correct information, much reliable knowledge has been gained, and much that has hitherto passed for truth been blotted as false from the pages of our histories. Amongst a mass of varying statements and conflicting evidence, it is, however, often anything but easy to discover what is true, and what is not. Indeed, when we have established the fact that a certain act was done, or a certain speech made, we are frequently quite unable to attribute these positively to any one person, for the very same account is over and over again given of different men in distant countries and ages.

De Quincey, in his "Essay on War," asserts broadly that all anecdotes are false, and he goes on to illustrate this by saying that nearly all the pointed repartees or striking *mots*, circulating at the time he wrote as the property of Talleyrand, were ascribed to the Prince de Ligne in 1814-15, fifty years before to the same Prince de Ligne as a young man; again, twenty or thirty years earlier, to Voltaire, and so on retrogressively till, if we go far enough back, we find them told many centuries ago among the Greeks. He further instances one special *mot* which is ascribed erroneously to Talleyrand, viz., that language was given us to conceal our thoughts, and adds that this is to be found in the essays of Goldsmith, who died at about the time that Talleyrand was born. It is also true that many pointless sayings and bad jokes are constantly attributed, with the intention of giving them a currency they do not deserve, to men of note. The late Archbishop Whately and President Lincoln were especially sufferers in this way.

I will give some instances, from written history and tradition, of the difficulty there is in fixing upon the person who was the real hero in certain adventures or actions. He continually eludes our grasp, assuming the features, first of one great man, then of another, at distant intervals of time and place, till we lose him altogether in the darkness of primæval antiquity. All who have read the history of Rome are acquainted with the treachery of Sextus Tarquinius to the people of Gabii. Whilst this town was besieged by his father, Sextus, having wounded himself in several places, fled thither, and requested refuge, stating that his father treated him with great barbarity, and had inflicted the injuries he bore upon

his person. The people of Gabii received him hospitably, and placed the traitor in command of their troops. He then won, as had previously been arranged between himself and Tarquin, some victories over the Romans; and, having thus gained the confidence of his hosts, he caused the death or exile, by means of false accusations, of the principal inhabitants, and then treacherously handed the city over to the enemy. Now, we read that a very similar line of conduct was pursued by at least two others. Sinon, a friend of Ulysses, having first bound his hands behind his back, fled to Troy, and requested admittance, as he said that the Greeks had raised the siege, and had intended to sacrifice him in order to ensure them a favourable passage home, but that he had managed to escape. The Trojans believed him, and, at his suggestion, brought into Troy a large wooden horse, which he said the Greeks had left behind. This, as is well-known, contained armed Greeks, who, released in the night by Sinon, first having admitted their companions, surprised the Trojans, and pillaged the city. Then, Herodotus tells us that Zopyrus, when Darius was besieging Babylon, cut off his own ears and nose, and fled to the city, saying that he had been thus mutilated by the king because he had advised the abandonment of the siege. His assertions were credited, and he was entrusted with the command of troops. When, however, he had induced the Babylonians to consider him entirely their friend, and to rely upon him as their protector, he delivered the city into the hands of Darius. Here, then, are three tales, of which the fundamental idea is the same, the accessory circumstances only being different. A man in each gains the confidence of those previously hostile to him, and is treated by them with kindness and hospitality. In return, he betrays them. In chronological order, the supposed treachery of Zopyrus is the most recent; before this, occurred, or rather, is supposed to have occurred, that of Sextus; and far away in remote times, more than a thousand years before the Christian era, that of Sinon. Who was guilty of such a piece of bad faith and ingratitude—whether it was either of those whom I have named, or neither—there is absolutely no evidence to show. Perhaps the original perpetrator was some noted chieftain long before historic times, whose deeds are attributed to others, and are only dimly seen through a long vista of obscure tradition.

Most of us have admired the presence of mind of William of Normandy, who, falling down on first landing in England, turned in the opinion of those present, what seemed a bad into an auspicious omen, by kissing the earth, and saying that so he claimed and took possession of his own. A very similar circumstance, however, is narrated of King Olaf, Harold's son in Norway; and of Junius Brutus on his return from the oracle at Delphi,

about B.C. 500. The tale is revived, too, in modern times. An accident similar to that which befel William the Conqueror is said to have happened to Napoleon upon landing in Egypt; and he also is said to have done away with the evil impression it seemed to have momentarily created among his followers, in a way similar to that adopted by the earlier invader. Now, it is most improbable that this anecdote should be true of all these men. Of which of them, then, may it be told correctly? Or is it merely stolen from some far more ancient hero, and applied to other prominent, ambitious, aggressive warriors who were placed in circumstances that would render the occurrence of the event described possible and appropriate?

The tale told of the skill and heroism of William Tell is one that appeals strongly to the admiration and sympathy of all lovers of freedom, more especially amongst his own countrymen. It is, shortly, as follows:—Gessler, the Austrian governor of Switzerland, in 1307, set up a hat on a pole as an emblem of the imperial sovereignty, and ordered all who passed to bow to it. This Tell refused to do; and he, being an expert archer, was ordered by way of punishment to shoot at an apple placed on his son's head. Tell, fearful for his son's safety, remonstrated strongly, but in vain; and was obliged, eventually, to obey the tyrant's command, and shoot at the apple placed as directed. The arrow, however, carried it off, and left the child uninjured. Gessler, afterwards, seeing that Tell had a second arrow in his belt, asked why he had placed it there, and received the reply that the second bolt was to send to the heart of the man who had compelled him to the dreadful trial, if his son was hurt by the first.

Now, it is impossible, painful as it is to lose a hero whom we have loved from childhood, to believe that this account of the Swiss patriot is really historical. As we found to be the case in the two instances that I have already quoted, so is it here. The circumstances related of Tell are told again and again of men who lived long before he was born, and in far-distant countries. Saxo-Grammaticus, a Danish writer, tells the story of a certain hero of Denmark, who lived in the tenth century.

Toki, it appears, was a very accomplished archer, but at the same time, unfortunately, he was somewhat of a braggart. This man, vaunting his skill in archery, had declared that he could hit the smallest apple on the top of a stick placed at a considerable distance. Some who were envious of his skill told this boast to the king, who at once declared that Toki should show that he had not spoken falsely, by shooting at an apple placed on his son's head; and, further, that if at the first shot he did not strike the apple, he should be put to death. Toki, having placed his son with his back

towards the direction whence the arrow would come, so that he might not shrink from it, and having admonished him to stand steadily, shot and struck the apple through the centre. The king then seeing two more arrows in the man's belt, asked why he had placed them there. "That I might avenge on thee," he replied, "the error of the first, by the points of the others, lest my innocence might happen to be afflicted, and thy injustice go unpunished." A very similar anecdote is told of King Olaf of Norway, who lived in 1030, and a brave heathen called Eindredi; and also of King Harald, Sigurd's son, and Hemingr, a Norse archer. Hemingr, in some contests of skill with the king, had at least equalled him in every trial. This enraged Harald so much that he commanded that Hemingr should shoot at a hazel-nut placed on his brother Bjorn's head, and that if he missed it he should forfeit his life. After much hesitation, Hemingr, at his brother's request, consented, and, shooting, struck the nut safely from Bjorn's head. The same is related in the Faroe Islands of Harald, and Geyti, the son of Aslak; also, in *Malleus Maleficarum*, of a man named Puncher. It is given in English dress, in the ballad of William of Cloudesley, and according to Mr. Baring-Gould (to whose "*Mediaeval Myths*" I am indebted for much of the information in this article), there is a version, written long before Tell's birth, in Persian.

The majority of Englishmen, and all Welshmen, have heard, and probably given credence to, the story told of Prince Llewellyn and his dog Gellert—the supposed locality of the grave of the latter, called Beth-Gellert, being still shown to tourists. The tale runs thus. Llewellyn, in his absence, had left his infant in a cradle, under the guardianship of his favourite hound, Gellert. On returning home, on one occasion, the prince found the cradle empty and overturned, whilst the clothes, as also the dog's mouth, were dyed with blood. Hastily concluding that Gellert had slain the little one, he drew his sword, and put the faithful dog to death. No sooner had he done this than he heard the babe's cry, and looking behind the cradle, found his child quite safe, whilst a little further off lay the body of a huge wolf, which had been killed, in its endeavour to carry off and destroy his little one, by the noble dog.

The prince, deeply grieved at his own hasty act, and deeply grateful to Gellert, after burying him, erected a monument to commemorate his fidelity, and called the place where the grave was made after the poor dog's name. It seems a pity to demolish so pretty a story; but the truth is, that the whole is an allegory or fable, appearing in several forms, and of which the following is the root or essential part. An animal forms an alliance with a man, whom he serves in some signal way. The man, misunderstanding the nature of the poor creature's act, kills him.

Tales founded upon this fundamental idea are related, as is also the case with the Tell myth, throughout all the Indo-European stock of nations, and, indeed, from them have spread to many others. Both of these myths, indeed, though now variously appropriated and localised, originated far away from where we now find them apparently indigenuous—in Wales and Switzerland respectively, among the great Aryan race, before its disruption, and so have come down to us through the different tribes into which this great family broke up, with slight variations according to circumstances.

In Russian the anecdote is told of one of the Czars, exactly as it is told of Llewellyn. In German we have the same, with slight alteration. In Sanskrit occurs the following version. A Brahmin's wife gave birth to two children, one of which was a son, the other an ichneumon. One day, being obliged to leave the house to bring some water, she asked her husband to see that, in her absence, the child was not injured by the ichneumon, whom she unjustly suspected of evil intentions. Soon after the woman had left, the man also went out to beg, when a black snake crept in, and endeavoured to bite the child. This, however, was prevented by the ichneumon, who killed the snake, and then went out, all covered with blood, to meet the mother. She, imagining that the poor creature had destroyed her son, flung her water-jar at it and killed it. In another story the animal is an otter, in the Arabic version a weasel, in the Mongolian a pole-cat, in the Chinese an ichneumon, and in the Persian a cat.

Another tale, quite of a different kind, which, in the middle ages was generally considered historical, is equally a fable. It is to the effect that Leo IV. was succeeded by a woman, called Joan, as pope. A female from Metz, it is said, resided in Rome under the name of John Anglus, in the disguise of a male, who, obtaining a great reputation for learning and ability, was, at the death of Leo, chosen as his successor. Various scandalous particulars are added by later historians, especially by those opposed to the Papacy, at the time of the Reformation. The first writer to mention the circumstance lived in the eleventh century, about two hundred years after the supposed consecration of Pope Joan. This was Marianus Scotus, a simple monk, who resided at Cologne, Fulda, and Metz, and who had no special means of acquiring information on the subject, even supposing the passage in his works about the female pope to be authentic, which is doubted. Sigibert de Gemblerus, living in the same century as Scotus, also mentions it, but the account is probably an interpolation. From these two authors the scandal spread throughout Christendom, being copied from writer to writer, till it became at last the almost

universal belief. Platina, indeed, writing before the birth of Luther, relates the story in his book on the lives of the popes, but he adds that his authorities for it are uncertain and obscure authors, and that he only inserts it because it is a matter of common report. Indeed, Benedict III. was consecrated in the same year in which Leo died, so that Joan could not have been pope, as was asserted, for two years and a half, between the death of Leo and the elevation of Benedict. It is true that when Leo died, Anastasius was made anti-pope, but this was only for a very short time, and he was never supposed to be a woman. The story was very convenient, as a weapon to be used against the papacy by the early Reformers, but it rests on no historical foundation, and is probably a fable of Greek invention to throw discredit on the Roman hierarchy—or, the belief in the advent to reign in Rome of the “scarlet woman,” mentioned in the Book of Revelation, may have given rise to the myth. To show how difficult it is to be certain as to the exact occurrence of events passing before one’s eyes, I will give an anecdote, taken from a French paper, which, however, may or may not be true, of the person of whom it is related, or of some other man.

Sir Walter Raleigh, whilst in prison, was writing the second volume of a history of the world, when looking out of window he saw the progress and termination of a quarrel in the court-yard. An officer, as he appeared by his dress, being struck by a man, drew his sword, and ran the latter through the body. The man however, in falling, managed to strike down the officer with his stick. Then the guard came and took off the officer, then the corpse of the assailant. The next day a friend called upon the illustrious prisoner, and Raleigh related to him the circumstances. The friend then declared, to Raleigh’s great surprise, that he had mistaken the whole series of events; there was no officer engaged in the quarrel at all, the person supposed to have been one was an ambassador’s servant, from whose side the other man, having first been assaulted, snatched the sword, and ran the servant through the body. Then some stranger knocked the murderer down, and some of the suite of the ambassador carried off their dead comrade’s body. It was with great difficulty that Raleigh could be persuaded that his eyesight had so entirely deceived him. The friend, however, assured him on his honour that his account was correct, and said that he himself, being present at the time, had assisted to disarm the murderer. Raleigh then threw his MS. into the fire, saying, “If I cannot believe my own eyes, how can I be sure of a tithe of the events which happened ages before I was born?”

Modern criticism, in its eager search after truth, robs us of many of our pet beliefs, and places individuals in continually altering lights, as we learn more and more about them. Many of our

pretty stories melt away into untangible myths, and many of those whom we have esteemed as heroes, are shown to have hardly merited that appellation; whilst, on the other hand, some whom we have been taught to regard with execration, are found to have been undeserving of all the obloquy that has been poured upon them.

Criticism, however destructive it is to falsehood, is strongly conservative of truth, which, in consequence of the scrutiny it undergoes, is established more firmly than ever. It has thrown a flood of light upon the past, dissipating a thick cloud of error, and eliciting much valuable information, and thus has laid a correct foundation of a more correct knowledge of times gone by than was ever possessed by our ancestors, or than could have been possessed by us without its aid. The question it seeks earnestly to solve, is that of Pilate, "What is truth?" If amongst much that is false we can discover this, we can afford to put up with a few shocks to the easy credulity of our youth.

H. B. SPENCER, M.D.

COUSIN AMY

Who sees and loves not Amy Grey?
 The fairest little blossom, she
 That ever bloomed on the great tree
 Of Life, since first it knew a May.

Sweet eyes, with length of lustrous fringe,
 Look softly out from her rare face,
 So finely chiselled, full of grace,
 And glowing with a rosy tinge.

Not one of all the beauteous three
 Who for the golden apple strove,
 More gifted to awaken love ;
 Nor her who, watching by the sea,
 Saw the blue Hellespont astir,
 Where, 'mid the moonlight waters bright,
 Leander, swimming through the night,
 Came with swift strokes white-armed to her.

Few are as fair as Amy Grey,
 And none, I almost think, as good ;
 She cannot be in solitude,
 For angels watch her, night and day.

They float in sunbeams by her side,
 When summer brings the lily and rose ;
 And when the ground is white with snows,
 Upon the frosty winds they glide.

She has a smile for every child,
 The rosy cottage-darlings, who
 Gaze up into her eyes of blue,
 Spring-born when all the heaven smiled.

When will you marry, Amy Grey ?
 What happy man shall hold your hand
 Before the altar, where you stand
 To give the virgin heart away ?

ROBERT HANNAY.



WAVERNEY COURT

CHAPTER VI.

THE RECTOR AT "THE LITTLE TEA CHEST."

I SHOULD suppose it quite possible that the aristocratic reader, who, of course, lives in Belgravia, or some other fashionable part of the town, and who only knows Mile End from there being a station at that place, which he may have seen *en route* for the Continent—*viâ* Harwich, you know,—I should suppose it quite possible, I say, that such an one should look upon Mile End as an out-of-the-way little village on the Great Eastern line. Perchance he has been reposing in the cushioned carriage, lazily viewing the scenery through which he has passed. In this case, doubtless, he has beheld with rapture an expanse of pleasure grounds, stretching away as far as the eye could reach; a secluded mansion enveloped in a maze of trees, above the heads of which a modest church reared its tapering vane; and from this he has thought, and with reason, that Shoreditch and smoky London had been already left far, far away.

Oh! thou most innocent of readers! The mansion thou wert entranced with is a madhouse—Warburton's by name; the park-like lands, the thickly-growing timber, pertaining to the same. The rustic church belongs to Bethnal Green, once famous for its Beggar, who was blind. Alas! blind beggars are too numerous in that locality for any individual of the fraternity to be famous now. The only Blind Beggar now of note is a public-house, and in speaking even of this, the common and contemptuous usage is to drop the "Blind." Whatever the faults of this locality, extreme rurality is most assuredly not one.

It was to this quarter of the metropolis that Mr. Evelyn, ensconced in his cab, was borne. The street at which the cabman

pulled up had no thoroughfare, being a little narrow passage rather than a street, across the road of which posts and a bar were placed to prevent all traffic. The cabman informed him that Paradise-row was "further down." Paying, therefore, the man his fare, Mr. Evelyn proceeded to seek his destination on foot.

It is certainly not the most charming spot in the world, just there. The smell of fried fish is strong. The houses are small and old, unequal in size, and dirty in appearance. In wet weather the passenger is nearly drowned in the slush which pours down from the roofs of the houses, and stagnates in the pathway; in dry weather he is nearly suffocated with the dust, which blows about in whirlwinds. It is so ill-paved that, if he walks in the road, he will be sorry he did not try the pavement; and if he walks on the pavement, the stones are so broken about, that he will be sadly impressed with the conviction that he has chosen the worst side of the street.

Groping his way amidst swearing costermongers, dirty children, and their dirtier mothers, through the clang of hammers at a blacksmith's, and the roaring of a forge—through the monotonous seesawing of a stonemason's, in which were numberless gravestones in various stages of manufacture; past yards, in which old wheels and casks were exposed for sale; and others in which tall deals were piled and mighty ladders standing like masts of ships, touching the sky. Presently the street grew wider, and the shops ceased. The houses, though old and dirty, were larger, and with shaggy gardens in front, with wooden palings and oyster-shells instead of flowers.

At the corner of a narrow passage, in which children were playing and shouting, while various articles of under-clothing, fresh from the wash, were drying overhead, Mr. Evelyn espied a little grocer's shop, and above the name of the proprietor, which was Obadiah Jones, he read the letters, "Paradise-row," the "P" having rotted, and fallen away. Looking higher up, he perceived a square, red box, suspended as a sign, and upon which were written in gold, the words, "The Little T Chest." In the window, which contained two brown basins of tea, some sugar, and a pyramid of red packets of cocoa, in addition to a well-used fly-catcher, from which a few bluebottles were struggling to escape, appeared a bill, announcing that "lodgings" were to let for a "single man;" and also a written paper, stuck by a wafer to the glass, on which was written, "Shirt hands wanted; apply within."

"What a place!" the Rector groaned—"what a place for my poor child!"

Entering the shop, which was up two old and broken steps, the first thing that encountered his gaze was a large bill in the door-

way, announcing that a grand temperance demonstration was shortly to be made by the juvenile teetotalers connected with the Band of Hope; and above was depicted (probably as a further temptation to induce youthful converts) a van-load of rejoicing proselytes, proceeding, by means of four speeding horses, to that suburban paradise known as the Rye House.

Behind the counter, and serving a small child, whose dirty straw bonnet hung like a hood upon her back, was a fat, greasy-looking gentleman, in an apron that had once been white, and with a pair of well-oiled curls plastered upon his temples.

“A penn’orth of treacle; and, please, mother says you’re to give good weight,” said the child, in a shrill key.

“And mother says, please, you’re to give good weight,” she repeated, in the same tone, as the greasy gentleman, not deigning to reply, proceeded to weigh the sticky compound, which he poured out of a green can.

Whether the greasy proprietor of “The Little T Chest” would still have treated his customer with contemptuous silence under this second indignity cast upon his virtue, it is impossible to say; but at this instant happening to lift his fishy eyes, and beholding Mr. Evelyn, he, no doubt, felt his character was at stake.

“Good weight, my dear!” said he, with an angelic smile, and yet with an aspect of stern reproof; “tell your mother we *always* give good weight *here*.”

Nevertheless, as he spoke, he contrived, with his little finger, to give the scale a gentle touch, which sent the treacle down immediately.

“There,” said he, sweetly, taking the cup from the scale before it had time to regain its just equilibrium—“There, my dear, tell your mother there’s good weight *there*.”

The child doubtfully departed, loitering on the step, however, first to insert her finger in the cup, and afterwards into her mouth.

“Oh! the depravity—the depravity of human nature!” ejaculated the grocer, turning up one eye to the ceiling, and the other towards our clerical friend; “and that child only took the pledge last week, and became a Tinglebottomian New Light.”

“A *what*?” demanded Mr. Evelyn, in some surprise.

“A Tinglebottomian New Light, sir.”

“Indeed!” replied the Rector, rubbing his chin. “Pray what may that be?”

With something akin to stern contempt at the Rector’s ignorance, the sleek-faced grocer proceeded to explain that the Tinglebottomian New Light was a religious sect or congregation, holding opinions essentially different from, and essentially more in conformity with truth and pure religion, than all other sects and congregations

into which the Church of Christendom was divided; and, furthermore, that it was so-named from its eloquent and godly expounder, the Reverend Zachariah Tinglebottom, who was also the speaker's spiritual pastor and intimate friend.

Mr. Evelyn had never before heard of this new Dissenting schism; and, being a staunch upholder of his cloth, the information gave him no satisfaction. Drawing himself somewhat stiffly up, he expressed his wish to speak to Mr. Obadiah Jones.

The fat grocer, hereupon regarding the speaker with his fishy eyes wonderingly and hesitatingly, and wiping his pudgy hands upon his apron, at length leant forward upon the counter, and insinuatingly replied—

“*My* name, sir, is Obadiah Jones. What can I do for you, if you please?”

“Then you are the writer, I presume, of this?” said the Rector, producing the curious epistle he had received.

Obadiah's eyes grew more staring and expressionless than ever, and he wiped his hands again before venturing to touch the delicate document. When he perceived what it was, his manner became doubly deferential.

“Are you the Reverend Andrew Heavelyn, sir?” he demanded, with extreme respect.

“I am,” the Rector returned, quietly. “And, in regard to the contents of this letter, you may believe, my friend, how anxious I am to see my poor, unhappy child. Where is she? How is she? Lead me to her, I entreat you, without delay.”

The grocer drew himself up to his full height—that is to say, he became nearly round, his breadth and altitude being pretty equal—and, puffing his cheek, he spoke in a hollow and ominous whisper—

“She—she is *gone*.”

“Gone!” ejaculated the anxious father, starting back.

“The lamb is gathered to the fold—she is *dead*,” was the reply, delivered in the same wheezy and solemn whisper.

The poor Rector stood silent and still for a few moments, and his lips quivered. Then he said, in a low voice, “God's will be done!”

“Her last moments, sir, you will rejoice to know, were comforted by the presence of our pastor, of whom I was speaking, and by Mrs. Jones; and—and though she was, as Mrs. Jones, my wife, says, a little dark, we may, at least, hope, sir, that her benighted spirit is in *Je-rusalem*.”

Whether it was a kindly spirit of hospitality, or whether Mr. Jones thought he could talk more at ease, and make himself appear

in a more advantageous light, with a view to receiving his reward from the Rector's generosity and gratitude; or whether, having the latter object in his view, he conceived the desirability of receiving his wife's all-powerful support—who shall say? However this may have been, he invited his guest to walk into the little parlour behind the counter, which was approached through a glass-door, with a yellow gauze blind. Here a rather sour-looking lady of fifty, thin and gawky in aspect, and rigidly upright in carriage, was sitting, and perusing a small tract, which the Rector afterwards found out was entitled, "The Final Extinguisher to Anti-Tickle-bottomianism." She arose on the entrance of the gentleman, and let fall a curtsey of the primmest kind. The stout Obadiah, who seemed to stand in great awe of this lady, introduced the Rector to her in due form, and her to him, as "Mrs. Jones, sir—my wife," whereupon the lady, in a rather sepulchral tone, pointing to a chair, invited her guest to take a seat.

"Ah, sir, my husband has told you all," said Mrs. Jones, in a mournful but rather shrill key. "It is a sad and yet a blessed thing to die when we are young; we leave a wicked, sinful world.—Obadiah, there is some one in the shop."

The sorrowing father gave little heed to all her platitudes; he asked her presently when it was the poor girl died?

Mrs. Jones replied with great volubility that the poor young lady departed on the previous evening, just after Mr. Jones had written the letter to him; that it was a pleasure to see her die, and so forth; that the pastor took a great interest in her, and tried to convert her to a Tinglebottomian New Light, and almost succeeded, she thought, if not quite; and that though she was "dark" upon some points, it was very gratifying to know they were not "essentials," and so on at considerable length. Mr. Jones having by this time returned from serving, and, possibly, cheating his customer, and having seated himself before a looking-glass, so that he could occasionally caress and re-arrange the curling locks upon his temples, Mr. Evelyn, by dint of many questions, elicited the following facts, or rather, statements, which, being garnished and highly coloured by Mr. and Mrs. Jones with flattering encomiums upon their own charity and Christian love, purported to be such.

It appeared that about six months previously, on one cold and snowy night, about December, Mr. Jones thought, or November, as Mrs. Jones as stedfastly believed—the former citing as a proof that he went that night to the "Watch," which, as everybody knows, comes only on the final evening of the year; but Mrs. Jones, maintaining her point, proof or not, it mattered nought to her; but certainly on one cold and wintry night, about six months

before, a young woman, who seemed in great distress of mind, though not in poverty, came into the shop and took the furnished room, which then they had to let.

At which point of the narrative Mrs. Jones broke off to give her listener some theological and ethical observations upon the letting of apartments in general.

“Exactly so, ma’am,” the Rector interrupted hastily, and striving in vain to subdue the impatience which vanquished him. “But pray go on, ma’am. And so the poor young woman, who, I presume, was my unhappy daughter, entered the shop and took the furnished room. What next occurred?”

Being thus recalled to the progress of her tale, Mrs. Jones went on to say that this young woman, who was, indeed, a mere girl, and who, she at once perceived by her manners, was a lady, had taken the “apartment” then and there. Upon requesting a reference, “which you know, sir,” said Mrs. Jones, “as it were a furnished apartment, were necessary, independent of her religious views,” the young lady had burst into a torrent of tears, stating that she had no friends in London to whom she could refer; but, inasmuch as she volunteered to pay a month’s rent in advance, Mrs. Jones waived her scruples in regard to the doubtfulness of her new lodger’s religious views, thinking, and very truly, that so long as a person had money to meet the ordinary requirements of moral obligations on the head of rent, and as long as one’s own self was a respectable Tinglebottomian New Light, and an offshoot of the Band of Hope, one had no call to stand in one’s own light. In short, this young person, who stated her name was Smith, but who was extremely taciturn about her affairs, though, as Mrs. Jones assured her auditor—and with perfect truth—she had endeavoured by every means, direct and indirect, to ferret out the secrets of her life, the young lady stated that she had seen better times, and added, with a sigh, “better than she ever deserved to see again.”

Mrs. Jones was fully persuaded that this mysterious young person had at first paid her rent, and supported herself, by the proceeds of the sale of her trinkets and jewellery, of which the deponent declared, from her own knowledge, the young lady possessed a considerable amount. She had, however, soon after she had taken up her residence with them, come downstairs one morning, and had, with some hesitation, inquired of the speaker as to the possibility of her obtaining any needlework, and had alluded to the notice, then also in the window, which intimated that shirt hands were required. The result of which was, that Mrs. Jones procured for the young lady—“as, indeed, sir, she would have done anything in the world for the poor dear”—a supply of the said shirts from a certain “friend and widow lady, sir, which took in slop-work from a

city-house," to whom the said notice pertained. Farther, that by means of these shirts, the young girl had been able to earn, "one week with another, as much as two-and-six; which, sir, is little enough, as goodness knows, but which were better than none at all, and certainly helped to pay the rent."

The landlady went on further to say, that "Miss Smith, that is Miss Hevlyn, sir," was always very gentle and kind, though very silent about her own "affairs, which were certainly her business, sir, and not mine;" and that during the last illness of a certain Mrs. Sparks—"the wife, sir, of a person as lodges upstairs"—which had occurred a month or two before, through poverty and lingering disease, the girl had waited like a sister upon her, tending the dying creature night and day, and seeming never to weary. And, furthermore—here Mrs. Jones spoke with some asperity—this Mrs. Sparks seemed to have learned more from the girl of her own life than anybody; and that Mr. Sparks, a drunkard though he were, held her in the greatest reverence.

"My poor girl—my unhappy, my erring child!" the Rector cried. "But could you never learn anything of—of the life she had been leading before she came to you?"

Mrs. Jones shook her head impressively. That she had *ot* appeared to distress her more than anything. Mr. Evelyn arose from his seat, and said something in a low tone; then Mrs. Jones rose also, and led the way, he following, from the room. With tears—with tears that blinded—the broken-hearted father went up those dark and creaking stairs; and in that little room, alone with none but death and God—beside that lowly, humble bed—he knelt. Reader, over that solemn scene were it not well to draw a veil?

* * * * *

When Mr. Evelyn came down it was evening. He looked at his watch, and it was nearly nine o'clock. The last train left for Waverney at nine; he would not, therefore, be able to reach the station in time. He would, consequently, have to remain in town that night. He scarcely minded this, since he hardly felt the courage to break the sad news to those who waited in anxious expectation. While he was thus thinking, the bill in the window, "Lodgings for a single man," flashed across his mind. In short, it was quickly arranged he should pass the night in Paradise-row. To live one night in the miserable house where his child had died, the Rector felt a sort of penance; besides, there, in the solitude of the night, he could commune with her in spirit.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RECTOR'S NEW ACQUAINTANCE

THE room in which the Reverend Andrew Evelyn slept, or, rather, was supposed to sleep, was a very small one; and perhaps that gentleman, being used to the scrupulousness of his excellent wife's arrangements, did not find it a particularly cleanly one. Certainly the air of Paradise-row was not as fresh and salubrious as that of Waverney; and, on the whole, the bed upon which he reposed was not so soft and comfortable as that to which he was accustomed at the Rectory.

The Rector turned restlessly from one side to the other in hopes of driving away his thoughts from the various scenes and incidents of the day. But all his efforts were in vain. He could not forget for one moment that she whom he had deemed in the morning as at least physically alive, if morally dead, was now dead indeed. That his daughter, the unfortunate being for whom his heart swelled with a father's love,—not the less sacred because tinged with sorrow,—had quitted this world in which, perhaps—nay, most likely, indeed—she had experienced but too much misery—with that misery still deepened by the belief that she quitted it unforgiven, unwept for and unregretted. Nor could he forget that he was that moment beneath the same roof as that daughter's lifeless body. Was not this enough to banish sleep from the Rector's eyes?

It was ever the custom of Mr. Evelyn to retire to rest early. This evening—the same be it remembered upon which Grace had been terrified by her mysterious dream—he had gone to bed so early as ten o'clock. Feeling so nervously excited and anxious, he had requested that a lighted candle might burn by his bedside. After striving for about two hours to obtain sleep, but in vain, he gave it up as a bad job, and quietly got up again and redressed himself.

“I am as well up as restlessly tossing about in this fashion,” he said, as he pulled on his boots. “Perhaps a little reading may distract my thoughts.”

Saying which, he felt in his coat pocket for a book; for Mr. Evelyn made a point of never leaving home without some literary treasure with which to beguile his leisure moments with profit and amusement. Accordingly he snuffed and trimmed the remnant of his candle, cleaned his spectacles, and set himself upon a broken chair—the only one the room contained—to read the “Night Thoughts” of Dr. Young.

Now Dr. Young's “Night Thoughts” is no doubt a very moral

book, and one in which there is much excellent writing. It is one, moreover, eminently calculated to produce the end for which the Rector read it, viz., to send him off to sleep. He, however, might as well not have made the attempt. The soporific powers of a narcotic may be very great; but what signify those powers to a man who cannot imbibe the narcotic? Mr. Evelyn, in fact, found it utterly impossible to read; consequently the "Night Thoughts," not having a fair chance, he did not drop off asleep. His thoughts wandered from the pages; and the harmonious lines of the poet, which, by the bye, *do* require a certain amount of undivided attention in order to apprehend the meaning, not to say to become interesting, were to him, in his present uneasy state of mind, perfectly unintelligible.

"It is no use," he said at last, closing the book. "Let me see; I will write a letter to my nephew, George Wetherby, and let him know of the death of his poor cousin. Ah me! I think George Wetherby used to be fond of her once, poor girl. I would that—well, well, Andrew Evelyn, my friend, these dreams of what *might* have been are bootless things. Avaunt thee, visions!"

The attempt to write the letter was, however, nearly frustrated, as the other effort had been, since, as soon as the idea was formed, the difficulty of writing without pen, ink, or paper, occurred to the Rector with forcible significance. This difficulty, however, Mr. Evelyn had not to surmount, as, after a brief search about the room, he found the remains of a bottle of ink and a rusty pen; and having also discovered a sheet of note-paper in his pocket-book, with these before him he prepared to set about the composition.

"Rather adverse circumstances under which to indite a letter," our Rector said with a sad smile, as he fished with his pen out of the ink-bottle a black-looking substance, like a drowned black-beetle.

But whatever the difficulties he had not yet experienced, they were speedily doomed to be eclipsed by one, the insurmountability of which rendered the others insignificant; for scarcely had he headed the letter, and begun "My dear George," when the candle, which had burned to the socket, gave a malignant "phizz," and went out, leaving the room in utter darkness.

"Pleasant, at all events!" muttered our poor parson, peevishly, as he groped his way from the table. "The best thing—indeed, the only thing I can do now, I suppose, is to go to bed again with my clothes on. Ah! here is the window! and there is some one with a light."

In fact, it was as he said; for on looking out of the window he perceived that another, facing his own, but at right angles to it, and in a room apparently on the same floor as his, and jutting out

from the house, had a faint light glimmering from it. As he looked, the magnified shadow of a man's head flitted across the window and the room. It thus occurred to Mr. Evelyn, that as some one in the house was still up at that late hour, that some one might possibly be able to accommodate him with a light. No sooner did he conceive the suggestion than he proceeded to act upon it; and groping his way back to the door, he opened it softly, and peeped out. Peering over the top of the bannisters in the direction in which he supposed the room to be, he perceived a door through which a faint light was gleaming, about half-a-dozen stairs lower down. Listening for any sound, he presently heard a light cough from some inmate of the room, and which was almost immediately followed by apparently the same person speaking in a low, husky voice.

Treading softly upon the stairs, the Rector descended, and having reached the door, which he found ajar, tapped gently. His first summons produced no effect whatever, the person within continuing to hum some ditty, which he had taken up, in his husky voice.

"Rather a late hour for singing, and rather a craky voice," the Rector thought, tapping again at the door, this time more loudly. "Upon my word, his singing reminds me forcibly of the chorus of frogs in Aristophanes."

The second summons proved more effectual.

"Hulloa!" cried the voice within, ceasing its song. "Who's there?"

Mr. Evelyn pushed open the door. The occupants of the room, which was rather small, and extremely dirty and poverty-stricken in its appearance, were three; viz., a man, a boy, and a dog. The man was a little weazened-faced, sharp-featured fellow, with light shaggy whiskers, and small, sparkling grey eyes, of perhaps forty years of age. His personal appearance, in accordance with that of the room and its contents, betokened neglect and destitution. He was busily occupied in plating a clothes-line, from a coil of yarn which was at his feet; and in one end of the room two or three clothes-props were lying across the floor, and a bag of clothes-pegs was hanging up overhead. And as he worked in his shirt-sleeves, smoking a short pipe, with a pewter pot of beer by his side, the boy was sitting cross-legged upon the floor, with a needle-and-thread in his hand, mending, by means of a huge patch, a coat which seemingly belonged to the elder.

This boy, who was not over-cleanly about the face, bore a striking facial resemblance to his companion, which resemblance was considerably heightened by the fact that both wore large fur caps, each being the fac-simile in form of the other. He appeared,

however, to be rather better off in regard to his vestments than his senior was, being blessed with a tolerably sound pair of corderoys, while those of his companion were one mass of patches; and wearing also a bright blue jacket, with a row of shining brass buttons, the remaining indications that the wearer thereof had received, or was receiving, his elementary education at a charity-school.

The third individual in the room, who was a large and vicious-looking creature of the bull-dog breed, aroused himself upon the entrance of the intruder, and, advancing two steps, greeted the new comer with a surly bark, which subsided into an angry growl.

“Lay down, Charley! lay down!” exclaimed the boy.

“Keep quiet, you warmint, can’t you?” added the other, making believe to throw his fur cap at the dog’s head, which caused that amiable animal to slink away into the further extremity of the room, not, however, without evincing his disgust by another growl.

“Hem!” said the Rector, feeling relieved at the retirement of his canine adversary. “I ventured to disturb you, my friend, to ask you if you could oblige me with a light. My candle has gone out, and left me in utter darkness. Really, I am sorry to trouble you, but being unable to get to sleep, and wanting to write a letter——”

“No trouble, sir, walk in,” said the man, after surveying the new-comer for half a minute, and then very coolly going on with his work. “Bob,” he added, turning half round to the boy, who was staring with wonder at the Rector, with all his eyes—as the phrase is.

“Yes, dad,” returned this youth, “what do you want?”

“Get the gent a candle, can’t you—if we’ve got one?” added the elder, as a saving clause.

“But we haven’t, dad,” returned Bob, looking at a cupboard significantly.

“Oh, haven’t we?” answered the elder, very composedly taking his own candle out of the bottle in which it was burning, and cutting it with his pocket-knife into two pieces, and then replacing the lighted end: “Then I tell you what, sir; we’ll share and share alike—shall we?—and welcome!”

Mr. Evelyn could not refrain from a smile at this grotesque proceeding; but as he arose to receive the moiety of tallow which his quaint host held out in his hand towards him, Charley, the dog—probably disturbed by the suddenness of the motion—started forward again, and set up such a ferocious snarling as caused the Rector to feel extremely uncomfortable about the calves of his legs.

“Oh, that’s it, is it? You come here!” interposed the maker of the clothes-lines, throwing down his work, and addressing the

noisy quadruped, who thereupon came slowly out of the corner, his tail hanging down, and his eyes fixed deprecatingly upon his master's face.

"That's a good dawg, he is, and no mistake," said the other, with a look of admiration at the animal in question, whose jaws he proceeded to open to the Rector's view. "A fine dawg, sir; look at his teeth!"

Mr. Evelyn hastily expressed his entire approval of the teeth, but did not appear desirous of approaching too near them. Whereupon, the other, changing his look of admiration to one of severe reproof, turned to the dog: "Now you look here," said he, warningly; "if you get making that row any more, I'll just twist your tail into a clothes-line. Do you understand that, now? You do? Well, then, you'd better go into your corner again, and keep yourself quiet!"

Charley shook the appendage in a manner which implied that he did understand, and preferring, seemingly, to preserve it in its normal condition, to subjecting it to that with which it was threatened, into his corner he went; and though he was as silent as a lamb, the glance he cast upon the Rector seemed very plainly to say, "You see, my friend, what superior protection you enjoy; or wouldn't I let you know, that's all!"

Mr. Evelyn expressed his thanks for the candle, which he offered to pay for, but which offer the other would not hear of. He was then about to return to his own room, not, however, without a lingering hesitation as he turned away—for, he thought, perhaps this man might be the one the landlady had spoken of—when another remark from the clothes-line maker, actually leading to the subject he had in his mind, detained him.

"Ah, sir!" said he, "the sagacity of that dawg is wonderful. Now that animal would make no more of laying hold of a fellow, if he thought he didn't mean any good, than he would of eating his grub. See how he looks at *you*, sir! and, dash my buttons, you should see how he looks at the pastor, when *he* comes! He's a knowing beggar, is old Charley, sir, I can promise you. And yet, sir, if you were to see how he took to the poor young lady who is now dead upstairs, sir—really it was wonderful! Why, sir—you wouldn't believe it now, I dare say—but that dawg used to sniff at her and lick her hands like a—like a lamb!" said the speaker, hesitating, at a loss for a simile; and even as he discovered the not very appropriate one, Charley uttered a low and ferocious growl, which was certainly not very lamb-like. "There, sir," the speaker continued, pointing to the animal with marked admiration—"there he is now, a whining after her as he has been all the blessed day! Lord bless you, sir, all the while the poor thing was ill, there was

no keeping him from along of her bedside ; and he used to like his vittals better from her hand than he did from anybody else's. When she went out, he used to sit at the door-step, sir, as patient as an angel blowing a trumpet on a tombstone ; and there he'd stick fast until she came home again. Ah, sir,"—and here the man took off his fur-cap, and wiped his eyes with it,—“and well he might take to her ! everybody else did, sir, as had a heart of gratitude in 'em ; for she was a dear, blessed soul, whatever she may have been, and whatever people may have said about her, and that I will say. *I* shall never forget how she waited upon my poor old woman in her last illness, that I'm dashed if I shall, as long as ever *I* live, and that's a fact !”

The first part of these remarks, which had reference to the dog, Mr. Evelyn, halting on the threshold of the door, listened to out of courtesy to the obliging clothes-line maker. As the latter proceeded, however, the smile on the Rector's lips faded from them, and he turned back into the room.

“Is your name Sparks, then, my friend ?” he demanded, quickly.

“Will Sparks—yes, it is, sir—at your service,” replied the man.

“Mine is Evelyn. I am the father of the young lady of whom you were just now speaking, and for whom you seem to have some kindly feeling.”

If the speaker had fired a pistol at Mr. Sparks, the effect would not have been more startling. The latter started up from his stool, threw his work down, and seemed half inclined to spring at the Rector's throat ; but he stopped himself, and looked very hard into the Rector's face.

“God bless me ! and you're really her father, are you sir ?” said he.

“I am ; at least, I was,” replied the Rector, sadly.

Will Sparks sat himself on his seat again, and taking up his yarn, went on twisting it with remarkable industry and vigour.

“They told me, downstairs, that during your wife's illness my poor girl was much with her.”

“So she was ; God bless her for it !” interrupted Sparks, with fervour, and again making use of his fur-cap to wipe the moisture from his eyes.

“Perhaps I should inform you,” continued the Rector, with some hesitation, “that after my daughter left her home, until I received the letter from Mr. Jones, announcing her dangerous condition, I neither heard nor knew anything of her life. Can you tell me anything of it ? I thought, perhaps, she might tell more of her unhappy life to one she took an interest in than to the ungenial people I saw downstairs.”

"I can't tell you much," replied Will, slowly, and after a pause, "because she didn't tell much herself to nobody."

"Still, my friend, a father's anxious mind would be relieved to know even a little. Perhaps she made some revelation to the minister who came to her, and attended to her spiritual wants—do you think so?"

"Do you mean the *Pastor*? No, dash my buttons, that I *don't!*" returned Sparks, emphatically. "I don't think she took to the Pastor at all."

The emphasis of the man, and the grim and half-derisive smile with which he spoke, somewhat surprised our simple Rector. He said nothing, however, upon the subject, but presently besought the other to relate to him all that he knew in regard to the fate of his "poor child." Without immediately complying, Mr. Will Sparks went on working at his business for about half-a-minute, and then turned sharply upon the boy.

"Here, Bob!" said he.

"Yes, dad!" returned Bob, in precisely the same tone in which he had replied before.

"Look here! you go downstairs a little while—and—and—" Mr. Sparks looked at the ceiling, as though he were seeking some word with which to fill up the sentence, and then added, briskly, "and play!"

Meekly and silently Bob went downstairs, but whether to fulfil the latter injunction it is not easy to say, inasmuch as playing by one's-self in the dark, and at nearly one o'clock in the morning, can be no very agreeable occupation for anybody. When Bob had left the room, Will turned upon the Rector, saying—

"Little pitchers have great ears, sir, as you know; and so I thought, before we began to talk of these matters, I'd just get rid of the youngster, who's a good lad enough, I must say, but who doesn't, of course, understand these things."

Mr. Evelyn commended his prudence, and sitting down upon a rather shaky chair, prepared to listen to what the other had to say. Seemingly Mr. Sparks had little to acquaint him with. He was aware that Smith was not the unhappy girl's real name, but that her name was Evelyn; that her father was a clergyman, who lived in the country; he had forgotten the name of the place, but when it was mentioned, recollected that it was Waverney. Miss Evelyn had so far taken the late Mrs. Sparks into her confidence as to admit to her that she had been, about two years previously, seduced by "a gentleman" under a promise of marriage; that she had had a child, who had died; and that, as her paramour had refused to fulfil his promise to her by marrying her, she had left him. And this was substantially all that Will Sparks knew of the matter. If his wife had ever known more, she had never revealed it to him."

“You do not then know who—who her seducer was?” demand Mr. Evelyn, eagerly.

“No, sir; I wish I did.”

“You wish so? Why?”

“Because, sir, if I did, I’d sooner have the pleasure of pitching into him than I’d receive a thousand pounds, dash my whiskers if I wouldn’t!” replied Will, warmly. Perceiving the clergyman to regard him with some surprise, he went on. “Maybe, sir, you don’t understand what business it is of mine. But, look you, though I know very well Miss Evelyn was in a different position in life to what I am, I look upon her as my sister, I do, poor thing! She behaved like a sister to my poor old woman, and I should be worse than a brute if I didn’t feel grateful for it; and by the Lord, sir, if I ever come across the villain who has done her any harm, I’ll pay him off something of her account, one way or another, or my name isn’t Will Sparks, that’s all!”

The Rector smiled at the man’s vehemence.

“You forget one thing, my good friend,” said he; “if you do not know who the man is, how are you to ascertain his identity if you ever should come across him?”

Sparks shook his head and answered quickly—

“One thing I forgot, sir, truly, but it is not that. I forgot to mention that Miss Smith—I beg your pardon, sir, I mean Miss Evelyn, only I’m used to the other name—Miss Evelyn used to wear something—a brooch—which held the likeness of a man; and that man, sir, was—was him! so if I don’t know his name I know his face, and that, at least, is something.”

It was with the most intense interest that Mr. Evelyn heard this statement. He eagerly demanded what the brooch was like, and where it was, as well as a hundred other questions of a similar kind. In regard to the first, Mr. Sparks stated that it was like an ordinary brooch set in gold, and that it contained a painted miniature. In regard to the second he was quite at a loss. He supposed it was amongst the other things that belonged to the young lady, and somewhere in her room. Replying to the Rector’s query as to the description of the portrait, he said that he did not think he could give much description of it, but that he himself had a very vivid recollection of the peculiar cast of face, and could see it then, in his mental vision, as plainly as though it were before his eyes. He could not positively state any age for the person; he might be thirty, he might be forty, or more, or less—small portraits of that kind were very deceiving; but certainly he was very handsome. And he then repeated that if he ever saw it again, he should know the face.

“I must see into this,” said Mr. Evelyn, excitedly. “It is

strange! I should suppose the person downstairs knows all about the poor girl's trinkets, and so forth. I will not detain you any longer, my friend. I thank you very sincerely, both for your information and sympathy, and you may rest assured I shall not forget it. To-morrow morning I will endeavour to ascertain something about this brooch."

Wishing the clothes-line maker a good-night, the Rector retired, with the moiety of candle he had procured, to his own room.

"It is a sheer impossibility for me to write a letter now," said he, throwing himself, dressed as he was, upon the bed. "Heavens! where—where is all this to lead to? How wonderfully strange it is, that a man, of whose existence even, I was ignorant, should prove the probable means by which I may discover the secret which I long, yet dread, to penetrate!"

Just then a clock downstairs struck two, and Mr. Evelyn, feeling the necessity of a little tranquil sleep to refresh him after his anxiety of the day, turned on his side and awaited that repose that did not readily visit him. And when, indeed, he at length slept, it was not to enjoy those pleasing slumbers, which, in the words of Fielding, "A heart that hungers after goodness is apt to enjoy." Yet the heart of Mr. Evelyn was such an one.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INQUEST AT WAVERNEY.

THE first thing Mr. Evelyn did in the morning was to seek out Mrs. Obadiah Jones, and to institute inquiries of her as to the various articles of dress and so forth his deceased daughter had possessed.

Mrs. Jones, with many voluble assurances that he would "find everything there, just as the poor dear had left them," produced a small wooden box, which, upon being opened, was found to contain a shawl, a dress or two, &c., all of which had evidently been once of the best quality. In the same box, along with a bundle of tracts and so forth, which Mrs. Jones informed the father she had supplied, was the copy of an old *Times* newspaper. To this latter, however, Mr. Evelyn at the time gave no attention.

"Had his daughter no jewellery of any kind?" he inquired.

"Oh! dear no—not that Mrs. Jones knew of, unless it was in that box."

"Had Mrs. Jones ever seen a brooch containing the portrait of a gentleman?"

Mrs. Jones declared at first that she never had seen such an article. Upon reconsideration, however, and upon being pressed, she thought she had seen something of the kind. She had not, however, beheld it lately, of that she was certain sure, nor had she the

the remotest idea what had become of it; "that is, of course, if it wasn't, sir, in that box." She supposed the young lady must have sold it, or disposed of it in some way. She knew she did such things sometimes, when money was getting scarce."

All Mr. Evelyn's inquiries for the missing treasure proving thus in vain, and a minute search in the room which the deceased had occupied proving equally so, the anxious parent was compelled to relinquish all hopes of regaining it, and consequently the solution of the mystery thereto attached. He, however, caused the box, with its contents, and everything else his daughter had died possessed of, to be securely fastened up, saying he would take it away with him; which resolution on his part met with the evident disgust and disappointment of Mrs. Jones, who had prematurely indulged in the expectation that the sundry gowns, &c., might become her own.

"I will take care of these things," the Rector thought. "Would it not seem a sacrilege to the memory of my poor child to abandon everything she possessed in her misery, and not to preserve anything?"

He then proceeded to finish the letter which he had begun on the previous night in his bed-room, and having briefly but touchingly related the circumstances of Emma's death, he sealed it, addressed it to "George Wetherby, Esq., Fig Tree-court, Temple," and subsequently posted it. Before leaving he gave the necessary instructions to Mrs. Jones as to the preparations for the funeral. He would have liked that the poor girl's remains should have rested in the peaceful tranquillity of Waverney Churchyard; but he considered, and justly so, that it would be better, for the sake of the erring one's memory, that as she had died amongst strangers, so should she be buried also. Then, stating that Mrs. Jones should have further instruction from him the next day, he gave that lady a valuable consideration, which ought at least to have consoled her for the old gowns, etcetera, which she had lost.

The Reverend Andrew Evelyn soon after entered a cab, which speedily carried him to the terminus of the North Kent Railway, where he procured a ticket for Waverney, and sped thither as quickly as the train could convey him. The only circumstance worthy of remark upon that journey was, that sitting in the same carriage as himself was the same wiry gentleman who had been his fellow traveller to town on the previous day, and who had by his side on this occasion the same identical blue-bag which had then accompanied him—no other, in fact, than Mr. Squelch, of the firm of Gunter and Squelch, of Austin Friars. It must be confessed that Mr. Evelyn was somewhat surprised at seeing the gentleman again his fellow passenger. But he was not a man of much curiosity, and feeling rather fatigued on account of the dis-

turbed night he had spent, the motion of the carriage lulled him off to sleep, nor did he awake until the train stopped at Waverney Junction. Here the two gentlemen alighted. Mr. Evelyn hastened towards the Rectory, and remarked that the other, who grasped his bag (out of which peeped sundry deeds and legal documents), as though he were an animated Court of Chancery, sped, with shuffling steps, in the direction of Waverney Court.

Mr. Evelyn reached his home soon after Sir Walter Lee had quitted it. He was, of course, greatly shocked to hear of the untimely death of his friend, the late baronet, as was Mrs. Evelyn also to hear the sad news of which her husband was the bearer. The Rector being apprised of the visit which the new proprietor of Waverney Court had paid him, and learning that his object in doing so was to obtain advice and assistance, he did not wait for the young man to come for him again, but shaking off for the time all his own private sorrows, he hastened over to Waverney Court.

The whole of the following week was a scene of continued bustle, anxiety, and sorrow to the Rector. All Waverney was in a state of commotion, such as that little village was rarely wont to be in. First of all, there was the inquest upon the body of the deceased baronet. The result of this was looked forward to with the greatest excitement. For popular opinion was divided, and daily discussions all over the village, and nightly ones in the parlour and tap-room of the village inn, had ensued, as to the manner in which Sir William had met his death. The vague and contradictory rumours which were current, served only to perplex and confuse the judgment; and even the more enlightened of the inhabitants could come to no satisfactory conclusion upon the subject at all, except that it was a very mysterious affair. The circumstances of the case, as they were gathered from the report of the inquest which appeared in the local paper, were as follows:—

On the night of the 8th of July, upon which the melancholy event took place, Sir William passed some hours in his library. He had subsequently gone out into the grounds, it was presumed for the purpose of taking a little fresh air. About five minutes afterwards the report of firearms was heard. Such was the evidence of Mr. John Miles, the butler at Waverney Court, which was substantiated by several of the other domestics. In reply to a question from the coroner, the same witness stated that the deceased appeared to manifest no particular difference in his conduct from his ordinary behaviour.

The statement of the next witness was of considerably more importance. This witness was no other than the nephew of the deceased, viz., Sir Walter Lee. The young man, who, as he made his deposition, was observed to be very pale (which was, indeed, per-

fectly natural, considering the distressing circumstances of the case), stated that he was about to pay his uncle a visit, intending to remain with him some time. He had not been to Waverney for about two years, as he had been travelling on the Continent, and had only returned recently to England. He further stated, that as he was approaching the avenue which led up to the chief entrance of Waverney Court, he was startled by the report of a gun or pistol, apparently a couple of hundred yards ahead. He had thereupon shouted out several times at the top of his voice, had hastened in the direction from which the sound appeared to have come, but that, being rather uncertain as to that direction, some delay, of, he should think, at least two or three minutes, had intervened before he had reached the spot. There he had found the body of a man lying dead upon the sward, and upon hastily stooping down to examine it, he perceived, to his inexpressible horror, that it was his uncle, who lay there, with pistols by his side, and a pistol wound in his breast.

Another witness, Thomas Shaw—Tom Shaw, as he was generally called—a gamekeeper upon the estate, deposed that hearing the shouting of the last witness, he hastened with all speed to the place, and then confirmed the rest of the evidence the new baronet had already given.

The remainder of the evidence went to show that almost immediately after the last witness had arrived at the spot, several others, attracted by the unusual sounds, had also come up to the scene of the catastrophe. Upon examination, it was ascertained that the unfortunate gentleman was perfectly dead. As the witness—*young Lee*—had stated, a pair of small and handsome pistols were lying by his side; one of them had manifestly been discharged lately, and the other was still loaded. To whom those pistols belonged, no one could say; *but young Lee intimated his belief that he had seen a pair, at least very similar to them, if they were not the same, in the possession of his uncle some years before.*

Now, all this, so far, had a tendency to show that the unhappy gentleman had himself been the author of his own death. Indeed, so much was this the general impression at one time, that Mr. Squelch, the indefatigable solicitor of the late baronet, who was present, and had procured himself to be a witness, gave such evidence as he hoped would make it clearly appear that his late client had been of unsound mind. This was, of course, to endeavour to avoid the disagreeable verdict of *felo de se*. He stated that he had been down to Waverney Court the very day of the occurrence, being called thither by some legal business on behalf of his client. He protested eloquently and energetically that the extraordinary behaviour of Sir William had, upon that occasion, greatly alarmed

him. He called witnesses to prove that Sir William had, some half-a-score or so years ago, suffered from a brain fever—from which, of course, the cunning lawyer desired it to be inferred, that that gentleman had never been thoroughly *in compos mentis* since.

True it is that the "extraordinary behaviour" the astute solicitor spoke of, proved, upon searching inquiry, to have been merely that the baronet had been somewhat absent-minded when spoken to, and that he had casually referred in a rather melancholy way to the common affairs and pursuits of life. That Sir William had certainly been rather melancholy, there were plenty of witnesses to attest; but having proved so much, they certainly proved but very little indeed. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Mr. Squelch had manœuvred so cleverly to support his case, that the jury would have returned a verdict of "suicide while suffering from temporary insanity," had not an unlucky witness—a detective, in fact, from Scotland-yard, who had been examining into the affair, given some further evidence, which greatly shook the faith of even those who were the most ardent patrons of the suicide theory; and they began speedily to doubt whether the deceased had really committed suicide at all.

This was the startling fact, *that the pockets of the deceased man had undoubtedly been rifled, and that the gold watch which he was well known to have worn, had been violently wrested from the chain.*

This startling statement was immediately confirmed by several witnesses, who, one and all, seemed astonished they had not thought of that fact before. A murmur of doubt and apprehension was unmistakably expressed by every person in the room. The coroner himself appeared greatly perplexed, and the indefatigable Mr. Squelch, to whom, in common with the rest, this information was most unexpected, was not less perplexed than the others. But as it did not much matter to him what the verdict might happen to be, so long as it was not one of *felo de se*, he hailed the new turn affairs had taken, chiefly, with curiosity.

This entirely changed the aspect of the case; and, indeed, the point for the jury to settle was not an easy one. And so, having to solve a problem as difficult as that of the hostler who had to put three horses into a stable, which, by any possible means, could only contain two, they very wisely acted as he did—viz., gave it up in despair.

The verdict was an open one. They declared the deceased was "found dead,"—of which there could be no dispute;—but that "of the means by which he received his death, there was not sufficient evidence to show." Now, this, though it was perhaps the only conclusion to which, under the circumstances, it was possible to come, served only to increase the anxiety and uncertainty of the

people of Waverney, who, for the space of the next nine days, and occasionally even after that, went into the details of the case over and over again, in the futile endeavour to see what *they* could make out of it. But, alas! they could no more solve the unsolvable mystery than the jury could.

The first question was, Did the baronet commit suicide, or was he murdered? The second was, If he committed suicide, what could possibly have been his motive? or if he were murdered, *who could have been the murderer?* Of course, as all attempts to answer the first question were mere wild theory, all attempts to answer the second were equally so. For if the unfortunate gentleman had himself put an end to his life—as the pistols by his side would seem to indicate—how could his pockets have been rifled, and his watch stolen, as appeared so clearly to have been the case? If, on the other hand, he had been murdered, as the latter facts strongly tended to show, how came the pistols by his side, so arranged as to have the semblance of one of them having been discharged by himself, and the other loaded, as though to complete the work of self-immolation, should the first shot fail? Another remarkable thing was, that had Sir William contemplated self-destruction, it might reasonably be inferred he would have left some written communication behind him, indicative of his resolution; whereas, no such document could anywhere be found.

The only theory which the curious circumstances seemed to warrant, or which, at least, by any possible means, could be deemed consistent with the facts, was one which the legal adviser of the deceased, Mr. Squelch, took occasion to expound on the evening after the coroner's inquest had been held. It was simply this, That Sir William, wearied probably by the application with which he had been studying in his library for several hours, had temporarily quitted his books for a brief stroll in his park, hoping, perhaps, that the fresh air might better compose him for his night's sleep; that while he was rambling in the grounds, some rogue, who might probably have been attracted to the part by the hope of an opportunity to plunder, and seeing Sir William alone, had unexpectedly confronted the unsuspecting gentleman, and the baronet being a strong and courageous man, a struggle had very likely ensued. The villain, probably finding himself otherwise unable to effect his escape from the grasp of his antagonist, had resorted to the terrible expedient of murdering him; had fired one shot, which had proved effectual in its deadly mission, and had then, after plundering the body of everything valuable, and in order to avert suspicion of foul play, had cunningly placed the two pistols beside the corpse in such a manner as might lead to the belief that his victim had perished by his own hand.

The young nephew of the deceased, who was the shrewd lawyer's auditor on the occasion, listened to the exposition of this hypothesis with profound attention, and at its termination, expressed his assent to its probability. And composedly lighting a cigar, observed, that "he was very sorry for his poor uncle, but that he supposed everybody must die some day, and that for his part, he didn't know whether a sudden death, albeit, more harrowing to the survivors, was deprived of the bitterness to the man himself—which ever attended a gradual but certain decline of life, as in a lingering disease, was not, on the whole, the preferable of the two."

But however satisfactory to Sir Walter Lee and his legal friend this solution of the mystery might have been, and however many of the worthy Waverneyites might have adopted the same views of the affair, it cannot be denied that even this ingenious theory was assailable in certain points.

This, however, is the *second* mystery which it is the province of this story to elucidate ; and, as I am well assured that you, my dear reader, are sufficiently versed in the ways of the world, and of them who live therein, to know that when several hypotheses to account for a difficulty have been started, it is ever a good thing to take up with the best ; and as no perfectly conclusive explanation of the tragedy was at present forthcoming, you are at liberty to adopt the theory last given, or any other which you may deem the most satisfactory to yourself, until Time—that arch-revealer of all mysteries, shall think proper, as I draw near to the end of my history, to throw his all-searching light upon this.

Readily will it be surmised, that all these stirring events caused our Rector plenty of occupation and anxiety. Yet it must not be forgotten that he had matters to attend to independently of these, which might of themselves have taken up the whole of his attention—I allude to the burial of his daughter, which took place on the Sunday following her death.

In a quiet spot of ground—'twas a cemetery hard by, where the wild flowers watch tenderly the graves—all that remained of Emma Evelyn was placed. Beneath a modest tomb she slept. Often the thoughtless idler, passing by, would stop, and, reading the recorded number of her early years, would sigh a word of pity and regret. Few thought that she, so young in years, was still so old—so very old in sorrow ! Let us trust that her sins were atoned for and forgiven.

CHAPTER IX.

FIG-TREE COURT.

It had greatly surprised Mr. Evelyn that the letter which he had addressed to his nephew, Mr. George Wetherby, announcing to him

the death of his cousin, had not been in any way attended to by that gentleman. And although the Rector and his wife, in discussing the matter over, were ready to make every allowance, and even to invent excuses for him (as that he was overburdened with work and study—that he was ill, and so forth), yet they could not but feel that such neglect was scarcely to be excused on any account; nor did the lady attempt to disguise that she was irritated.

“I must say, I did not think George Wetherby would have behaved like this,” she said, tapping her foot—which had once been *petite*, and, in her younger days, admired, but which was now rather un-Cinderella-ish—upon the ottoman. “Really, my dear, it seems as though we might all of us die, and he wouldn’t take even the trouble to care where we had gone to. Dear, dear! to think what a fine baby he was, with pink cheeks, and little blue eyes, just like a China doll! To think he should ever have turned round on us like this!”

“I can’t see, mamma, how he’s turned round upon us, whatever he may have done,” interposed Grace, who was always ready to stick up for the absent in general. “Besides, he may not even have had the letter. If he had, I feel sure he would have been here long ago, or would have written, at least.”

“Hoity-toity! what is all this about Master George? Upon my word, I shall have to keep a sharp eye on my little Gracie, if this young man ever does come to see his old uncle again. Eh, miss—eh?” And the good Rector, who was never angry even with his enemies for two minutes at a time, playfully patted his daughter’s cheek, until it glowed again with the most charming blush that ever modest maiden stole from blooming rose.

Though, however, Miss Grace blushed, it must not be supposed that there was any other than the most cousinly sentiment which throbbed beneath her bosom for the gentleman in question. Indeed, she was rather angry at the mere thought of such a thing; and, to speak the truth, was very thankful in her heart, that a certain young baronet, with fascinating blue eyes of mysterious depth and beauty, was not present just then, to hear her father talk such nonsense, for fear he should think there was some truth in it.

As the event proved, Mr. George Wetherby was not to blame after all—at least, for neglecting his relatives; for it came to pass that, about a week after he had written the letter, Mr. Evelyn, being in town (it was two days after the funeral, and he had come up to settle the expenses thereof), called upon that young barrister at his chambers in Fig-tree-court.

The Temple has been so often described—its tall, dingy-looking houses; the solemn sound of footsteps, on the flags; the old hall; the ancient church; the quaint sun-dials; the pleasant gardens,

famous for chrysanthemums, and as fresh and genial in that otherwise withered spot as an old man's recollection of his boyish days,—all these have been so often described that they must be perfectly familiar to the ordinary novel reader.

Mr. Wetherby's chambers were at present upon the "third flight," which of itself was sufficiently suggestive that his practice was not a very extensive one, since barristers are subject to the usual laws of matter, and have a tendency to gravitate downwards (*i.e.* in regard to the altitude of their chambers) in the same ratio as their (professional) weight.

Mr. Evelyn toiled up the dark and creaky stairs, flight after flight, wondering whether he would ever reach his destination. Arriving at last upon the third floor, and before the door upon which was painted, in black letters, Mr. Wetherby's name, he perceived, somewhat to his surprise, that the door was locked, and a written paper, bearing the vague sentence, "Return in an hour" adhering thereon by means of an old rusty steel pen stuck through.

"'Return in an hour,'" Mr. Evelyn repeated, looking at his watch. "It is now one o'clock. I suppose he has gone to dine. If I come round again about two, I shall catch him."

About half-past two he again repaired to his nephew's chambers in the Temple, but the inevitable "Return in an hour" was still staring him in the face, and the door as strongly secured as ever. Mr. Evelyn thought this very strange, and could only account for it by the supposition that his nephew was perhaps called away by some professional matter which had prevented his return to the office at the stated time. Even then, it was certainly very strange. As he was sauntering out again, lost in perplexity, his eye alighted on the housekeeper's bell; and, inspired with the idea that she might be able to give him some information, he rang the bell. Some delay ensued, and then an old woman came stumping down the stairs in response to the summons. This old lady, who was so deaf that the visitor had to bawl his inquiries into her ear at least three times before she could comprehend them, informed him that Mr. Wetherby had not been to chambers for the last week past; that he had gone away one afternoon, and instructed her to receive all messages, and take care of his letters until he returned; and that, so far as she was concerned, she had not the remotest notion when that event would come about.

The surprised parson thought this was the strangest thing of all, but as there was no help for it, he gave the housekeeper his name, and desired that deaf individual would inform Mr. Wetherby that he had called as soon as ever that gentleman returned to town. He was once more retracing his steps when, in turning the corner which leads into the Strand, a gentleman, who was also turning the

corner, but in the opposite direction, ran plump into his arms, causing Mr. Evelyn to pant considerably, on account of the violence with which his somewhat prominent corporation came into collision with a fishing-rod which the other carried in his hand.

"Beg your pardon, really," cried the other, lifting his hat apologetically.

Mr. Evelyn faintly smiled, as though he rather enjoyed it than not, and touched his own. He was then hastening on, when an ejaculation from the other stopped him.

"Holloa!" cried the stranger. And before the Rector knew where he was, he felt his hand caught in a vice-like grasp, and himself turned completely round, with his face once more towards the Temple.

"Good gracious, George! is that you? Really, I—I didn't see you," rejoined the half-scared clergyman, still rubbing his injured corporation with the hand that was disengaged.

"See me? Of course you didn't! You were thinking too much about your stomach, my dear sir, to see any one. It is a weakness common to all you gentlemen of the cloth, from Friar Tuck's time downward," rejoined George Wetherby—for it was he, smiling. "But what on earth brings you from Waverney, to such a horribly dreary place as the Temple? All well, I hope?"

"What on earth keeps you *away* from the Temple, however dreary, you sad dog?" rejoined Mr. Evelyn, good-humouredly. Here has your old uncle been poking about your chambers goodness knows how many times this day, and all through that lying notice on the door, that you would return in an hour."

"My dear sir," returned the young barrister, coolly puffing his cigar, and lazily staring at the smoke, "allow me to remark that the extremely innocent notice alluded to does not at all deserve the opprobrious epithet you bestow upon it; and also, that when you conclude it to announce the happy occupant's return in the time specified, you draw a conclusion which the premises do not warrant."

"It says very plainly that you *will* return, does it not, my dear boy?" interposed the worthy clergyman, staring at his nephew blankly.

"Nothing of the sort, my dear sir, I assure you. On the contrary, instead of being the indicative mood, future tense, first person singular, '*I will return in an hour,*' you should parse it as imperative mood, future tense, second person singular, '*Return thou in an hour;*' meaning, of course, that the entranced beholder can return in an hour if he pleases; and if he doesn't, I see no reason why he shouldn't please himself, and keep away. For my part, I should strongly recommend him *not* to 'return in an hour,' as it is extremely probable that if he does he will see the same

imperative admonition staring at him as before. But it's all the same to me. They are welcome to the use of the landing for standing-room."

The elder gentleman scratched his nose dubiously, and shook his head.

"But I say, George—ahem! I'm afraid this doesn't look as if—as if you were very busy; does it?" he said, presently.

A queer expression came over the other's face, as he turned up his eyes to the sky, and then, bringing them down again, looked steadily into his venerable uncle's face. "Not busy?" he repeated very slowly. "Then I can just tell you, my dear sir, that I *am* busy, and no mistake about it. Why, for the last week, I have been in Scotland—yes, sir, actually to Scotland, and all that time I'm sure no man could have been harder at work than I have."

"At Scotland? What have you been busy about there, George?"

"Fishing, sir—fishing; hard at it all day long."

"Hem! Yes, my dear boy; but I mean at your *profession*."

"Of course; that's just what *I* mean, too," rejoined the other, as cool as a cucumber. "My profession, just now, sir, is to enjoy myself to the very uttermost limit possible——"

"Consistently with innocence and propriety, I hope, my dear George?" interposed the Rector, hastily.

"Consistently with innocence and propriety, of course, by all means," assented Mr. Wetherby, with great readiness and assurance; "but as I was about to inform you, sir, pleasure—that is, as you observe, innocent pleasure—is at present my profession; and I can tell you, my dear uncle, that a very good profession it is when you stick to it; and that for my part, I'm a very fair sort of a client to myself that way, which, allow me to observe, is very satisfactory to contemplate, inasmuch as no one is particularly anxious to patronise me in my other putative profession of the law."

By this time they had reached the young man's chambers, and he, having rung the housekeeper's bell, and pulled down the notice to which allusion has been made—throwing the rusty steel pen which fastened it at the housekeeper's tabby cat, who happened to be warming himself upon the stairs—then waited patiently for the deaf lady to bring him his letters and the key. He then unlocked the door, and led the way into the room, which was as snug and comfortably furnished a place as any single gentleman need wish to have; a square library-table being in the middle, a half-dozen horse-hair chairs, with an easy one to boot, and the softest couch that ever lazy Templar reposed upon to study Blackstone, or to——what you please. Scattered about the room were sundry articles, such as fencing-foils, fowling-pieces, boxing-gloves; while

between the window and a book-case, adequately stocked, appeared a framed engraving of "Kettledrum."

The Rector sank with a sigh of ease into the profundities of that glorious couch, whilst George Wetherby was briskly unlocking cupboards, producing bottles, glasses, and drawing corks with an alacrity that perhaps spoke more for his hospitality than his prudence.

I have said the Rector sighed. He sighed partly because he, worthy man, was tired, and that couch was *so* comfortable; partly because of the sad news he had to tell; and partly because of the sad things he saw, and the sadder things he feared, of that mad-cap nephew of his. You see he was a clergyman; and clergymen being in the habit of preaching, are wont to preach sometimes, to the annoyance of their neighbours, when they are out of the pulpit. The kind-hearted old fellow having now a good opportunity for a small extemporaneous sermon, was well disposed to improve the occasion for his companion's benefit.

"You know, my dear George, that I have your good at heart, and that it is only to promote that good that I am going to offer you a few words of advice."

George bowed, lit a cigar, seated himself, and quietly puffed at the ceiling.

"Pleasure, my dear boy, indulged in moderation, as a relief to the labours of life, and provided it is innocent, is a very good thing; and—and upon my word, George, this is capital port!—but when pleasure causes you to neglect your profession——"

"No fear of that; it is my profession neglects me."

"Perhaps; but now listen to me, George. Supposing while you are away in Scotland, *fishing*—I used to fish when I was a young man—supposing, I say, that any of your clients—or, as you are a barrister, I should say your solicitor friends—were to come here about any case you may be engaged in——"

"But I haven't got any case, so they *can't*," interposed George.

"Well, but if they were to come to *give* you one——"

"They're not such fools as to come to *me*. They know very well that I'm about as well acquainted with the law as that old tabby-cat is. Besides, my dear uncle, in such an unlikely emergency as the one you mention, if I'm in the way, so, so; and if I'm *not* in the way, they can easily return in an hour; and if I'm *not* in *then*—well, upon my word, so much the better for *them*."

"My dear George," began the Rector, remonstratingly.

"Yes, it is all very well, no doubt; but uncle mine, you must please to remember,—the decanter stands by you; help yourself, —you must please to remember that these chambers, though

delightfully situated, with a fine view of the Thames, and—and the chimneypots on the other side, and all that sort of thing, are liable to weary a man if he sits in them all day, foolishly waiting for people who are far too wise to come; more especially if that man happens to hate the legal profession with all his heart. Why, look you, reverend sir, how would you preach at that charming little church of yours at Waverney, with only your ancient sexton and parish-clerk for your congregation? I believe, sir, you are not bound by the law Ecclesiastical to expound your doctrines, except there be at least some one to hear them. Neither, opine I, am I bound by the law of common sense, to make myself uncomfortable in attending to my business, when, of a surety, I have no business whatever to attend to."

Mr. Evelyn smiled at his nephew's *sang froid*; yet feeling his position, both as a minister and the young man's relative, he thought he would make one further exhortation, in which, however, Mr. Wetherby very adroitly stopped him.

"Excuse me," he said, pulling his pile of letters before him; and as he opened one, he secretly swept two or three little scented epistles (written on tinted paper) into a drawer and out of his uncle's view. "With your leave I will just—halloa! what is this? a mourning letter! and—and—by Jove—yes; from you!"

Mr. Evelyn was recalled to himself. He drew a deep sigh.

"Yes, George, I ought to have told you before; but I have, like a coward, been driving off telling you the sad news. I wrote that letter, and not hearing from you in reply, I came to-day to ascertain the reason. You will be shocked when I tell you that poor Emma is *dead*."

George Wetherby started up; his face was very pale.

"Dead?" he repeated, his hand crumpling up the letter convulsively. "Dead?"

"It is too true, my dear boy. It is a sad blow to all of us."

"Good God! it is indeed!—it is indeed!"

The young man arose from his seat, into which he had sunk as he murmured the last words, and paced the room in agitation.

"Tell me about it! tell me all!" he said, turning suddenly upon the other, who had scarcely expected he would be so affected as he was.

Mr. Evelyn recapitulated in a few words those melancholy facts with which the reader has already been made acquainted.

Wetherby listened in profound silence. When the sad tale was ended he buried his face in his hands, and bowing his head upon the table, gave free vent to his emotion.

The Rector, who was himself deeply moved, heard him sob.

"George," he said, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder.

Wetherby looked up. Every particle of blood had left his face.

"What is it?" he demanded, in a low, cold tone.

"I have to beg your pardon."

"For what?" said George, almost sternly.

"We have done you an injustice, my dear boy. We thought you had neglected us in our trouble. We thought you did not care——"

"If you thought *that*, you have done me an injustice, indeed!" he exclaimed with vehemence.

"Do you know, uncle," he continued more calmly, and resuming his seat. "Do you know that she—that she, poor thing! was the only girl I ever truly loved?"

A groan was the only way the other could indicate his compassion.

"She was the only girl I ever truly loved," Wetherby continued. "There was a time when I thought she might have cared for me too. Ah, I can look back upon that time even now with joy—with unfeigned rapture. That was the only time I worked industriously and studied hard. Well, well, it is all over now. But there is one thing which is *not* over. By Heaven, it is not over yet!"

"And that is——"

"*Revenge!* vengeance upon her betrayer! the devil who has ruined her and destroyed her! who has wrecked my happiness for ever!"

As he spoke he started up, and his eyes gleamed fire.

Mr. Evelyn rose also, and strove to soothe the young man's passion. In truth, he was terrified by the vehemence which the other had displayed.

"Yes; it is vengeance!" George repeated, more calmly. "When I first heard of the poor girl's fall, I vowed I would have it; and I now, in the sight of Heaven, repeat that vow. I will ceaselessly and mercilessly track that villain through the world, and when I find out who he is, I will contrive the means which shall bring vengeance down upon his head!"

"Rash boy! vengeance belongs not to man. Let us leave it to Him to whom it does belong."

"Let us change the subject rather," said Wetherby, in an altered tone. "Take some more wine;—you will not? Well, by Jove, then, sir, I will."

Nothing more was said until they parted, when Wetherby observed that he would come down to Waverney soon; that he wanted to have a quiet talk; but that he was not able to talk quietly just then.

"Curious!" murmured the Rector as he went away. "Here

are *two* men who have sworn revenge on *him* who is yet unknown. Two men are eager to follow in his trail."

CHAPTER X.

CHIEFLY ON HEROES.

IT was once the fashion for novel writers to choose for their heroes dashing young scamps, who were remarkable for their generosity and immorality. Tom Jones, that bold and badly-moralled, but good-natured rogue, whom Colonel Newcome—who, by-the-bye, was a hero of a different stamp—scorned, was so incensed with, was the reigning monarch amongst heroes in those days, and Master Roderick Random was second to him—let us say, his grand vizier or minister of state; and it was usual for these worthies, after sowing their wild oats with tolerable profusion, to marry a charming and innocent young lady (who was much too good for them) towards the end of the book, and to live happy ever after.

When the Great Unknown was enchanting the world, heroes improved in their morality, and were distinguished by their military prowess. Nowadays, heroes are what you please. Sometimes they are fools, sometimes rogues, and the heroines as bad as they. Sometimes they are ugly, sometimes they are old men, whose wives, the heroines, treat them very scurvily—and serve them right, too, the old donkeys! Sometimes there are two or three heroes—for I conceive that he is entitled to be called the hero who marries the heroine, and that this is purely and simply what the title means; and sometimes, in this case, the heroine, having rather more husbands than she can manage, quietly drops one of them down a well, in order that she may get him out of the way.

My big and noble brother, indeed—whose name I reverence, and whose books I love—once did without any hero at all. I suppose *he* thought a hero ought to be something more than merely a husband of his heroine, or else he did not deem either Becky Sharp or Amelia Sedley such. But then you know that Thackeray could manage to interest without having to descend to the clap-trap of us, the lesser lights of fiction. Happy man! he had no such terrible mysteries to clear up, and intricate plots to elucidate, as *I* shall have to dispose of before I can write "finis" at the end of my book. In fact, it must be apparent to every one who has gone with me thus far that it is now high time I should express some clear views in regard to the heroship of this story.

From what I have hinted, in several of the preceding chapters, about the soft blue eyes, the handsome face, and the musical voice, and so forth, of Sir Walter Lee, the acute novel-reader has, no doubt, had an inkling that *he* is to be the man. On the other hand, there

are certain reasons which might scarcely warrant such a conclusion. In the first place, a hero should ever be brought forth prominently upon the canvas, and I must admit that, hitherto, even Mr. Evelyn has had more to do in these pages than Sir Walter Lee. But, then, surely no one would suspect that the *Rector* was to be the hero; such a thing would be absurd—unless, indeed, I was so vain as to fancy I could make that excellent gentleman rival a certain famous Vicar, who dwelt at Wakefield a century or so ago. As for George Wetherby, he *might* have done one very well, it is true, but then, you see, he has himself declared that the only woman he ever truly loved is dead. And what on earth should I do with a hero in such a hopeless state as that?

Gentle reader, the plain truth of the thing is this, that Sir Walter Lee, good or bad, is to be the only hero this tale will possess. And to let you into the secret of the cunning way in which I plan such matters, I have contrived that he should partake of certain characteristics common to all the various species of hero, and yet that he should nevertheless have something *sui generis*, and be in that something original and distinct from them all. Consider a moment, if you please. In the first place, I have more than admitted that Sir Walter had been something of a rake; and as for his lavish generosity, why there was not a private in his former regiment who would not bear testimony to that. So far, you perceive, I have managed to give him the flavour of a Tom Jones.

I have already affirmed that Sir Walter had proved his prowess as a gallant soldier in the Crimean war: so far he belonged to the heroes of the Scotch romantic school. In regard to the fairness of his complexion—and, perhaps, in some psychological characteristics also—he partakes of the Lady Audley and the modern sensational class. His age was about twenty-nine or thirty, as I have said. In this respect, you see, I have hit upon the happy medium when he is old enough to preserve any mysterious secrets (if he has any), and yet by no means too old to be interesting and romantic. His good looks he has in common with heroes of all grades and distinctions, a class too numerous to be recapitulated here.

I have never scrupled to assert that Grace Evelyn was my heroine. It will appear to the reader that Sir Walter was now rapidly about to submit to the destiny of all heroes, and fall in love—at least, there were plenty of gossips at Waverney who *thought* he had fallen in love.

Mrs. Barber, the wife of the London builder of that name (who had made a comfortable little fortune, and was still carrying on a snug business at Waverney), was the first to make the important discovery; and Mrs. Phillips, the architect's wife and Mrs. Barber's dear friend and bitter rival in all things, was the very first to whom she imparted the discovery she had made. And that the visits of Sir

Walter to the Rectory were frequent there could be no doubt. Scandal soon declared these visits were fraught with matrimonial interest. Whatever the motive, there could be no doubt of the fact. The handsome young owner of Waverney Court had taken up his abode at that charming residence. There were a good many little things to settle, consequent upon the sudden death of the late baronet; and it was, of course, well, if not necessary, that his successor should be at hand to look over his own affairs. And it appeared that Sir Walter found so much that required, not only his own looking after, but the advice also of his late uncle's trusty friend, Mr. Evelyn, that it was almost a natural consequence he should be called to the Rectory at least once a day. Though, however, it was doubtless business which called Sir Walter so often to the Rectory, it was scarcely business which detained him there, and rendered his visits sometimes so long that Mr. Evelyn often marvelled, and Mrs. Evelyn sometimes wished him at Hanover, on account of the interruption which so distinguished a guest necessarily occasioned in the domestic arrangements of her well-ordered household.

These lengthened visits of the young man, however they might have appeared to the girl's parents, served certainly to increase the familiarity of the acquaintance between Grace and himself, and perhaps, also, to make considerable inroads into the sympathies of the maiden's heart. Certainly, she came to look for these little meetings with expectation and pleasure, and not unfrequent was the matronly sermon upon the unseemliness of female vanity she received from her mamma, consequent upon the increased periods which the elder lady declared her daughter now took in her little personal decorations, and in wasting her time before the looking-glass.

Yes; there can be no question but that Grace found the young baronet an agreeable companion, nor that his soft musical voice, breathing the compliments his tongue could utter so well, sounded very pleasant to her ear. And yet the young man's conduct perplexed and sometimes alarmed her. In the midst of his little complimentary speeches, he would often break suddenly off, and turning hastily away, would seem, from the working of his countenance, as though tortured by some inward struggle in his mind. At such times he would generally, with a flurried apology, attributing his conduct to a sudden attack of headache, or some such excuse, quit the house hastily, nor would he return, perhaps for two or three days.

Yet in her moments of the greatest ecstasy, Grace felt an oppressive foreboding, seeming to her like the shadowy terrors which overhang the waking moments of the opium-eater.

Grace Evelyn could not banish from her memory the recollection of her mysterious dream!

BIRTHDAYS

WHAT has become of birthdays? Let us be understood: we do not say of births, of these we have enough and to spare; but of birthdays, the celebration of these births,—what has become of these once popular anniversaries? Time was when there were no such momentous epochs in our lives as were these; time was when all other festivals sank into comparative insignificance. Where are the festivities which were used formerly to greet the attainment of another year in all families, and amongst members of all ages within those families?

We are not ordinarily of those who lament the disuetude of old customs simply because they are old, because they were approved by ancestors whose civilisation was inferior to ours. We hold that something more must be proved of the “good old times” besides their age to induce the desire to return to them; that manners and customs are less likely to have been better in a rude age than in one more cultivated and refined. But we do confess to a lingering regard for this particular one. We have a lurking fondness for the memory of those anniversaries of our own, when the occasion was celebrated in its integrity; we have an affection for the custom *per se*. The author of “Elia” says, in one of those charming Essays with which his name is associated, that every man has, in effect, two birthdays—his own rightful one, and the first day of every year. He further assigns greater prominence to the latter, asserting that it is that occasion upon which we really feel that another year has passed over us, that another mile-stone has been reached upon the broad highway of life. From this view we wholly dissent. The first of January has never been to us a day of such significance as that day which exactly marked the number of years since we first saw light. We do not believe it is ordinarily so felt by mankind. The first of January is but the commencement of a year appreciable to all alike; but a birthday is the commencement of our own particular year, the date from which we are entitled to describe our past existence by a new name, a new number, a new term in the vocabulary of our lives. The interest attaching to the new year attaches to plants, to animals, to the events of history, to every animate and inanimate thing; but the birthday anniversary concerns us alone—from it we date ourselves, and by it will hereafter be dated the length of our pilgrimage in this world. But is this, then, a motive for celebrating it? or should it not rather be good cause for allowing it to slip by unrecognised? or even for devoting it to penance, mortification, and

self-abasement? Certain it is, that in looking back over the road we have travelled, over the steepes that have led us at length to the eminence now reached, certain it is we shall find many incidents in that journey to regret, much that will strike us as unsatisfactory and unsatisfying throughout. Why, then, it may be asked, rejoice to recall it? why return again in recollection to former gloom and sadness? We answer that it is precisely because such is the almost inevitable result of looking back, that we should strive to improve the present, that we should, in commencing the year's struggle afresh, leave one day at least of happy augury behind, to which, in imagination, to return with gratitude and pleasure. By what manner of reasoning do we persuade ourselves to heap sorrow upon sorrow for its own sake? or is it wise either in the full worldly sense to grieve for what cannot be undone? We look back upon the year that has gone, and we find it unsatisfying, full of pains and disappointments; surely, then, we are but reasonable in being glad that it is no more. Or is this a material and unwholesome way of viewing it, then we have higher motives to assign. If we look upon all life as but a preparation for futurity, have we not cause to rejoice that we have approached a stage nearer to it?

We do not think that it was such reflections as these that influenced people much in making the birthday a day of congratulation. We think, rather, that it was the instinct of sociability and simple kindness, which induced them to choose it from amongst all others as a convenient season for expressing their good wishes and hopes to their relatives and friends. The formula of the conventional greeting seems to imply this. "I wish you many happy returns of the day" has a homely, friendly ring about it, quite apart from any deeper or more far-reaching purpose. Similarly the expressions—"A merry Christmas," and "A happy new year," have the same savour of good-natured sincerity and simple-heartedness. How much more genial these than the hideous innovation lately introduced, and characteristic of these artificial, unearnest days—"I wish you all the compliments of the season!" The "compliments," as if you were anxious that it should not be supposed that there was anything real in your wish; and the "season," as if you were ashamed to pronounce the familiar words Christmas and New Year. What despicable snobbishness and affectation is here! Yet though there be nothing more fundamental in the theory of the birthday festival than these simple instincts, it is well to have it shown that graver reasons for its existence can be found. There is a puerile cynicism, affecting now the facetious, now the quasi-philosophical, which is very rampant at the present day. It is its mission to strip all that is simple and genuine of its inherent nobleness, and to exalt scepticism and sarcasm at their expense. This

tenor of popular thought, so painful for all good men to contemplate, has immense attractions for youth. In adopting it young people imagine that they place themselves upon an equality with their seniors, a fancy which is always very dear to them. Since to sneer at a subject it is not necessary to understand it, the elevation is easily reached, and as it requires no refinement or deepness of perception to think ignobly, so neither does it require much experience to enact the part of doing so. From acting it, a little practice leads them to expressing their approbation of it, and into antagonism to everything which is its natural superior. Hence arises that school of small reasoners and little jokers which infests modern society.

They are the disciples of this school chiefly, who look upon birthdays—the celebration of them—as childish follies and anacronisms. It is their lofty boast that they are much too worldly to see the good of such doings as giving small presents or tokens of affection, of offering congratulations and good wishes, over nothing more alluring than the simple advance of time. The theme is, indeed, in all respects a fit one for tiny sarcasms, and has all the elements of its own species of popularity about it. How easy and how exquisitely humorous in their eyes, for instance, to sneer at these small presents upon account of their value, to suggest the little utility which they proverbially possess! What a magnificent “hit” to aver that they are only given with a view to compensatory returns at a future time! And what a fine opportunity for expatiating upon the heavy experience of the advance of time, and of appearing charmingly worldly-minded and *blasé*! This is the easily learnt lesson which passes for cleverness with so many, and it is for the teaching of these many that we have adduced weighty reasons in favour of keeping the anniversary of birth a festival, as well as those other and more homely reasons which are more a matter of feeling than of proof. The fine old custom has been long dying out amongst us, and remains—wherever, indeed, it does at all remain—but a shadow of its former self.

Now, we cannot but look upon this decadence of birthdays with regret. We have enough of coal and iron, machinery and money-grubbing in the world to enable us to spare a day now and then to kindness and sociability without any very great loss—nay, without being other than absolute gainers when the ultimate aim of all this productive energy is considered. How is all our vast accumulation of wealth to be enjoyed, if, in the act of accumulating, we are, in effect, reducing ourselves to the condition of our own machines? Now, least of all, can we afford to forget what is in the better sense human in our nature, for now, least in all the ages which the world has ever known, do the sights which we see, and the sounds which

we hear, and the circumstances amongst which we live, recal it to us. And what is more humanising than these simple festivals? What was there that had more of simple-hearted kindness about it than the notion of the old birthday? We confess, for our own part, to something of a horror for Christmas Day—the only other anniversary with which these can be compared for importance. That day has an interest apart from all mere worldly considerations, and that interest is of a solemn and an awful kind. We have always considered it a mistake that it should be kept as a day of feasting rather than as a day of serious meditation and prayer, such as Good Friday and the other holidays of the Church. It seems an absurdity that it should open with more than the solemnity of a Sunday, and close with more than the boisterousness of a birthday party. We believe that most persons are, in a sort of dim manner, conscious of this, for we have observed that the efforts at preternatural joviality which it is common to make on that occasion generally result in failures of a very pitiable kind. There is nothing more depressing to the spirits than the notion that one is expected to appear abnormally happy without precisely seeing why, and than the effort to do so. The almost inevitable result is one deplorably humorous. But no such complications as these exist with regard to the birthday of the individual. There is no mixing up religion with feasting here; no going to church to hear mortification of the flesh preached, and coming back to gorge upon the heaviest of fare. All is consistent throughout; it is *your* day, your *fête*, and you are to be *fêted* and made happy from morn to night. Ah! well do we remember a few such anniversaries of ours, and graceless indeed should we be did we not pay to their remembrance this tribute of regret. It is not so *very* long ago either—though how long does it seem!—since we were in the midst of those days. True, years have rolled over our heads since then, and birthdays have come, and birthdays have gone, unnoticed. Alas! is it not ever so now? A line, it may be, from a friend who remembers the occasion, or a tardy congratulation, perhaps, from a relative whose memory has been jogged;—to this chill depth we have fallen. What is there of interest in the day of *our* birth, after all? What, indeed! But do we, then, forget this very last? and is what alone signalled that day so soon effaced from our recollection? No, indeed no, it is not; and should these words ever meet the eyes of two fair beings who did not forget it either, let it be a proof to them that their kindness was not wholly thrown away; let it assure them of a return—the only one we have it in our power to offer—the only one, we feel assured, that they would wish—in the form of a long-cherished remembrance of that deed of friendship, of a full-hearted appreciation of an act of sympathy as gentle as it was generous, as flattering as it was refined.

With what an interest used the little ones to look forward to a birthday in the times when it was an institution! Oh! the plottings and the consultations that used to take place upon the subject of presents—the royal commission sitting in the nursery, the conference assembled in the backyard. Was it not something to see them counting their pennies, which they had saved for this great event, and discussing the respective merits of the wondrous treasures which they were destined to secure? Ay, many a time, too, had they, with those very pennies in their hands, passed stalls of lollipops, untempted, and stores of hardbake, unseduced, proof alike against the attractions of marbles, tops, and dolls, nobly unconscious even of the very existence of Noah, and of all his interesting family circle. And when the presents were at last produced, what a motley collection was indeed there! Our friends, the cynics, would at all times have been pretty sure to have a fine time of it here—a fine opening for the practice of their admirable vocation. How perverse ingenuity could possibly devise so many articles so little useful—here was a problem heavy to solve. But what of that? In their eyes, they were everything that was charming; nor to us, indeed, do they seem much less. They represented an idea; they did more—they represented a fact. They represented the fact that those children were kindly-hearted, and thoughtful of others, and that they were early learning lessons of self-sacrifice and generosity—the noblest that man can learn. Then, if it were a birthday of one of themselves, how sublimely unconscious would the favoured one endeavour to appear amid all the preparations going on around him; and how very transparent, too, the effort would be! How he would try to pump out of each the secret of what the other had bought, and what a portentous mystery would it be in every case! Or if it was one of the older folks—a parent or a big brother or sister—upon what a scale of magnificence would not matters be conducted! A deputation would now wait upon the favoured ones to lay the offerings at their feet, or a time and place be selected beforehand—breakfast-time, in all probability—for the simultaneous disclosure of the gifts. Well, well; children grow up faster now-a-days, and put away childish things sooner than they seemed to do when we were young; and nevertheless it seems to us that it would not harm them much to hold a little faster to so simple and so homely a custom. The world, too, seems to care more for business, and less for its seasons of relaxation than heretofore, and yet we cannot think it would lose greatly, either in material wealth or dignity, were it to save from out the institutions of the past this one of birthdays, to keep sacred and apart.

R. W. C.-T.

ABYSSINIA : MYTHICAL AND HISTORICAL

PART I.

THE history of human error has yet to be written. As in Eden the evening and the morning were the first day, so in our progress to knowledge we observe that the shades of darkness have to be endured ere we attain the dawn. Ghosts and legends have long been the accompaniments of physical darkness, and moral darkness has its analogous myths and marvels. In imperial Rome a taste for the marvellous survived the sportive irony of Horace; in our Augustan age of literature, what were the sublime conceptions of Spencer and Shakespeare to folks whose ideas were of the earth, earthy? The Red-Cross Knight and the Enchanter Prospero were no strangers to the public to whom they were introduced; tales of the marvellous could only make their popularity in an age which yearned after the marvellous. Even Puritanism, the most practical form of English downrightness, could not afford to dispense with the allegorical; and, so long as our language lasts, Bacon's aphorism will hold good—"The mixture of a lie doth ever give pleasure." Shakespeare's maritime Kingdom of Bohemia is quite in keeping with the geographical knowledge current in the age of which we write, yet the land of the Czechs was far more open to investigation than the regions linked with the name of Prester John.

The origin of the myth is singularly obscure, yet it is not the less a fact that multitudes of people, not ill-informed in the knowledge of the time, believed in the existence, either in Asia or Africa, of a powerful monarch, combining in himself the functions of king and priest. "Our little systems have their day," and the systems of the fabulous had their day as well as better-established schemes. They owed their birth to the teeming brain of a solitary enthusiast, they became staple articles of faith, and they might attribute their downfall to investigations prompted by the fame they enjoyed.

Tracing our idea of ethnology from Holy Writ, we find that, of the sons of Noah, Ham became the father of Cush, who gave birth to Seba and Havilah, while another Havilah traced his descent from Shem. Cush has generally been considered the common ancestor of the African nations, while Havilah has been sought to be identified with Zuila or Zeila, on the border of Abyssinia. The authority for this identification is one Benjamin of Tudela, well versed in Jewish lore, of whose travels we shall have some-

thing to say hereafter. It may seem a profitless task to pursue the inquiry — which of the two Havilahs did the Jewish traveller mean? But the confusion between Hamitic and Semitic origin is typical of the obscurity which envelopes the origin of the Abyssinians. The similarity existing between the manners and customs of the Jews and Abyssinians is one of the principal reasons which induces Dr. Pritchard, in his "History of Man," to style the latter a Semitic nation, in contradistinction from the bordering negro tribes. The student of prophecy will not fail to mark how frequently Isaiah refers to Ethiopians and Cushites. In the 14th verse of the 45th chapter, the stature of the Ethiopians and the Sabeans is particularly mentioned, and the mention may have given rise to legends of the existence, in the land of Prester John, of most stupendous giants.

The Abyssinians have so overlaid with legends the Biblical account of the visit paid by the Queen of the South to Solomon, that we are compelled to give up in despair the attempt to distinguish the true from the fabulous. According to their traditions, the race which, prior to the usurpation of Theodore, ruled in Abyssinia, was descended from Solomon and this nameless queen. The son of Solomon was said to have been sent in early youth to Jerusalem for education, and to have returned with a body of Jewish colonists, with whom was Azariah, a son of Zadoc the priest, who deposited at Axum (the original capital of the empire) a copy of the Mosaic law. This copy, it is said, remained in existence till the destruction of that city by the Moors, in 1536. By their own showing, the Abyssinians were no less favoured under the new dispensation than under its predecessor. The Eunuch of Queen Candace (called by Lobo, Judith), baptised by St. Philip, is said to have borne the name of Indus, and to have been the founder of Christianity in the empire. Queen Candace and the Island of Meroe, with which she is traditionally associated, are even more difficult to identify than Saba and its monarch. With the love of boasting often allied with ignorance, the Abyssinian mind has evolved a whole series of myths respecting the Queen of the Ethiopians, whose exploits and ordinances are about as well attested as those of King Arthur. May not the office have been originally confounded with the name? and may not the sacred writer have referred to the khan or ruler of some swarthy oriental people?

St. Thomas, again, has been credited with the conversion of this singular people to Christianity in the course of his journey to India, where he is stated to have suffered martyrdom. Marco Polo gives the scene of his labours as Maabar, by which he appears to mean some region in the south of the Indian peninsula.

An almost insuperable difficulty in dealing with Abyssinia arises from the uncertainty of its boundaries, as well ancient as modern, and the vague nature of our acquaintance with its system of government. Homer did well in sending the gods to seek relief from toil amidst the "blameless Ethiopians;" neither Greek nor Trojan could disturb them there. The root of the word Abyssinia seems to be the Arabic term "*Habesh*," a confederacy, or rather confluence of people, such as occupied the Cave of Adullam, and founded Rome. Alike, the name and the idea are unpopular with the inhabitants, who style themselves Ethiopians. The formation of the Abyssinian power has been compared to that of the French, and there is much force in the comparison. The original language of the south, now only used by the learned, is known as "*Ghiz*," identified with "free," while the nature of the feudal tie, binding the governors of the provinces to the Negush, or Emperor, appears to have much in common with the allegiance due to the early French kings from their powerful vassals. As the dukes and counts sometimes paid willing suit and service to their territorial superiors, sometimes assumed independent sovereignty, we can only reconcile the attempt of various authors to define the component parts of the Abyssinian monarchy by supposing that the tendency now ran towards cohesion, now towards divergence, and that provinces were treated as tributary or independent, according as the ambition or caprice of their rulers directed their politics. The maps of early Abyssinia are models of inaccuracy, towns and rivers being inserted rather in accordance with the draftsman's ideas of the eternal fitness of things than with facts. A magnificently minute map of Upper Ethiopia, engraved in "*Dapper's Geography of Africa*" (Amsterdam, 1686), while it puts in an illustration of a weight for age race between two elephants as being the only relief to the monotony of central Abyssinia, has quite a running text in Latin on its surface, identifying scenes of great but purely mythical interest. According to this veracious guide, towns are as plentiful as blackberries, while the abundance of rivers precludes all fear of lack of water. It is somewhat disingenuous of the geographer to treat such a map as an explanation of his text, with which it has nothing whatever to do, being derived from Portuguese sources of knowledge, or the absence of knowledge! This is, doubtless, the map which Ludolf, in his "*History of Ethiopia*," treats contemptuously as "going begging about the world for an author," and provoking good Abbas Gregorius (of whom more hereafter) to "upbraid the folly and carelessness of our people." Ludolf calls attention to an error into which as well Dapper as his predecessor had fallen, the confusion of titles with geographical names; thus the Governor of the Sea, Bar-nagus, is made to do duty for the country

Barnegas, in the map, Barnagasso. Tegrémahon lends to its proper name, the title Governor, as Ambia Candiva does that of president. Alvarez, who wrote about a century before Ludolf, is more accurate in this respect, and a more minute acquaintance with his work would have spared Dapper the ignominy of being a blunderer. It should be observed that in the much maligned map, Amara figures as the name of a lake, between the 62nd and 63rd degrees of longitude, nearly bisected by the Equator, approximately indicating the Victoria Nyanza, the discovery of which gives such a lustre to the labours of Captain Speke. It is creditable to the candour of the English traveller that he alludes to the existence of the name and idea in the following terms:—"It is remarkable that the Hindoos have christened the source of the Nile, Amara, which is the name of a country at the north-east corner of the Victoria Nyanza. This, I think, clearly shows that the Hindoos must have had some kind of communication with both the northern and southern ends of the Victoria Nyanza." It is possible that the early Portuguese geographer fixed the locality of this lake Amhara from knowledge acquired in India.

Of such towns as have acquired historical distinction, ancient geographers have by no means very accurate ideas; and when vagueness of verbal description is attended by inaccuracy of indication, we study alike books and maps with diffidence. The city of Axum, the chief town of Ethiopia, was a place of much note in the sixth century. Procopius speaks of it as being the capital of a flourishing Jewish community, known as the Homerites, whose dominions extended along the coast, as well on the African as the Asian side of the Red Sea; a tribe of Arabs known as the Madenians being their tributaries on the Asian continent. Procopius gives Bullicas as the name of the principal Arabian port of the Homerites, whence, he says, the passage to the port of the Adulites occupies, with a fair wind, five days and as many nights. "The town of Adulis," he says, "is a little removed from the sea, and is distant from Axum about twelve days' journey by road." The town of Adul is usually identified with either Zeila, in Annesley Bay, or with Arkeeko, otherwise Ercocco, the distance from which latter town to Axum would appear to correspond with the description given of Adulis. Of the distinction between the port and the town of the Adulites, we can offer no explanation; although, as will be seen hereafter, contemporary history bears out Procopius' assertion that the town was not built directly on the coast. On the old maps Adel is given as denoting an existing state on the south, its capital being apparently identical with Zeila, the alleged Havilah of Genesis.. Some confusion is also created between Adel and Aden. In the time of

Justinian, 522 A.D., it would seem that one Hellesteus (also known as Kaled), a Christian king of Ethiopia, invaded the Asian dominions of the Homerites, slew their king, and made one of his creatures, Essemipheus, tributary ruler of the country. With this Hellesteus, and his vassal, Essemipheus, the Emperor Justinian entered into a league against the Persians, promising the Axumites considerable advantages in the trade with India. It does not appear that his new allies rendered the Byzantine emperor any great assistance, the danger attending an invasion of Persia being more appalling than Justinian's promises were attractive. Procopius notices the peculiar construction of the vessels navigating the Red Sea, and in particular the substitution of ropes for nails in fastening the planks. He suggests that the ignorant attributed the absence of metal to the existence on the coast of a magnetic mountain, which attracted the nails and destroyed the ships. He gives, as the real reason, the absence of iron in Ethiopia, and the fact that the Romans forbade the sale of it. As an instance of the baselessness of the tradition, he mentions that no accident befel Roman vessels laden with iron. Sir John Mandeville, to whose work we shall presently refer more particularly, seems to have been better acquainted with Sinbad the Sailor than with Procopius: he alleges that "merchants will not go into the land of Prester John, by reason of the length of the journey and the great perils on sea; there are many places in the sea where are many rocks of stone that is called adamant, the which of his own kind draweth to him all manner of iron, and therefore there be no ships." Father Lobo, a Jesuit missionary, who entered Abyssinia about the year 1624, mentions the use, in the Red Sea, of ships called "Gelves," constructed out of one tree, of which the trunks are cut into planks, which are sewn together with threads spun from the bark, which, twisted, make cables; leaves stitched together, make sails; while the fruit of the tree is shipped for stores.

Father Bermudez, in 1535, mentions the expedients to which the natives resorted to remedy the deficiency of their country in iron, "shoeing," as Purchas translates it, "their carriages with certain old calivers, which broke because they would serve for no other use."

Contemporary with Procopius was one, Cosmas, a merchant of Alexandria, surnamed Indicopleustes, from his Indian travels, who visited Axum. This bears out the account given by Procopius of the towns of Axum and Adul, "the latter of which is some short distance from the sea." At the time of the expedition undertaken by the King of Ethiopia against the Homerites he was summoned to assist in transcribing some inscriptions on a marble seat at the entrance of the town of Axum, said to have been placed by one of

the Ptolemies. The inscription is in Greek; it has been a sad source of trouble to the learned, inasmuch as it enumerates the conquests of Ptolemy in remote districts of Ethiopia, where no corroborative testimony supports the assertion that the Egyptian arms had ever been carried. It is generally believed that Cosmas is responsible for a confusion of the substance of the conquests of one Æxinas, a native king, with those of Ptolemy. We have spoken of the "Ghiz," the classical tongue of Ethiopia; and we are indebted to Cosmas for the information that a difference existed in his day between the polite and vernacular language of the country. He mentions having seen in Abyssinia, the hippopotamus, which, he says, was known in the vulgar dialect as Aru, but in the other vocabulary as Arweharisi. The Unicorn seems to have been a stock article of the fabulous kind in Ethiopia. Cosmas says that he never encountered a living specimen, but that he saw figures of iron, representing the animal, in the palace of a native king. He appends a drawing of the unicorn, giving it a goat-like appearance. He says that "it is impossible to take the beast; all his strength lies in his horn. When pursued, and on the point of being captured, it throws itself from precipices, and turns a summersault with such dexterity that it receives all the shock on the horn, and escapes safe and sound,"—clearly not a beast that would have much chance on the level. *Apropos* of unicorns, our friend, Dapper, quoting almost literally from Ludolf, says, "the most intelligent people have believed that the beast is but fabulous, because it has been the subject of so many ridiculous descriptions—it being alleged that it cannot be taken alive, and that it is composed of two different natures. These are fables, but we cannot, for all that, say there are no such things as unicorns. Jean Gabriel, a Portuguese, saw, in the kingdom of Damot, an animal which had a fine horn on its forehead, white, and about a foot and a half long. It was about the size and shape of a horse, bay in colour, and had the hair of the mane and tail black and short; the natives assured him that it lived in the most densely-wooded parts, and that it very rarely showed itself in cultivated places. A Jesuit father had seen a little one, which was brought to his dwelling. The Portuguese who were transfixed, by the Emperor Adamat Saged, to a rock in the territory of Nunin, which is in the kingdom of Gojam, all testified to the fact that they had seen several, which fed in the forests around the rock; Bermudez and Marmol state the same thing."

During the period commonly known as the dark ages, little was known to the western world of Abyssinia, or perhaps of much else. One, Benjamin, a Jewish Rabbi of Tudela, in Navarre, moved apparently by a spirit akin to that of Moses, to go out with his brethren, and look upon their burthens, in the year 1159 undertook

a long journey in the East, in the course of which he traversed Abyssinia, whereof he gives a very meagre description, which has by no means escaped criticism. He speaks of the country as the land of Cush, fixes the Eden—Thalassar, of the 19th chapter of the Second Book of Kings—within its limits, a supposition that seems to have given rise to the confusion of Adul and Aden in the topography of subsequent travellers. He attributed the rising of the Nile to the heavy rains which fell in the country of Abyssinia; and what appeared too severe a shock to human credulity, he spoke of several mountains, inhabited by Israelites who had not submitted to the yoke of the Gentiles—a state of things none the less existing.

Marco Polo, the celebrated Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century, whom we find occasionally described as Marcus Paulus and Marcus Venetius, adds but little to our knowledge of Abyssinia. Of the potentate to whom he gives the name of Prester John he speaks in very unambiguous terms. Un Khan, a Tartar leader, who is supposed to have been the original of Prester John, had the misfortune to give battle, about the year 1162, to Genghis Khan, who had offended him by demanding his daughter in marriage; and losing at once the battle and his life, he might have been decently buried and forgotten. He was not a Christian, and he had nothing to do with Abyssinia. According to Marco Polo's accounts, Abyssinia, which he terms "Abazia," a tolerably faithful rendering of the Arabic "Habesh," otherwise the middle or second India, was an extensive country, governed by a Christian monarch, having under him six tributary kings—three Christian and as many Saracen—the dominions of which latter lay towards Aden (Adel). He mentions, as a recent event, that the emperor of the country, having been deterred by the advice of his countrymen from proceeding on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, sent a bishop in his stead, who, on his return, being encountered and molested by the Saracen Soldan of Aden, appealed to the emperor for redress. Although the aggressor was abetted by two neighbouring Mahometan princes, he had to succumb to the arms of the Christian emperor, who took and pillaged his capital.

Marco Polo gives us as well-founded a minute series of distinctions by means of punctures or tattooings of the different classes of subjects of the Abyssinian empire, Christians, Mahomedan, and Jews, but the antecedent improbability of the circumstance is so strongly supported by what we knew of the religious rites of the people in question, that we can only think that the worthy traveller was hoaxed by some wag of the period. Alvarez (*circa* 1520) mentions having seen certain negroes elaborately tattooed, but apparently referring to the earlier traveller's observation, he takes care to inform the reader that the system of ornamentation pro-

ceeded from individual taste, and not from the requirements of religion. From Marco Polo to Sir John Mandeville is no great jump in point of time, but if the Venetian sometimes wandered from the *vrai semblable* the Englishman seemed to revel in the marvellous. He gives a most stupendous account of the conversion of the individual known as Prester John, whom he makes out to have been as great a traveller as his historian ; it is a comfort that he admits the superiority of the Great Khan over his *protegé*. Ludolf, the Ethiopian chronicler, waxes very indignant over Sir John's exaggerations, and accuses him of mistaking the "Great Khan" for the "Great Dog" (cane). By the way, our old friend appears under a singular designation in the pages of his critic—no less a one than that of Sir John Montevillâ, knight and doctor. "From the land of Bactria," quoth Sir John, "men go in many days' journey to the land of Prester John, that is a great emperor of Ind, and men called his land the Isle of Pantoze. This emperor holdeth a great land and many good cities and good towns. In this kingdom are many good isles, and large, for the land of Ind is parted into isles because of great rivers that come out of Paradise. Prester John hath under him many kings and divers lords, and his land is good and rich, but not so rich as the land of the great Khan." He goes on to say that "the land of Prester John is long, and merchants pass thither through the land of Persia, and come into a city that is called Hermes (Ormuz) for that a philosopher that is called Hermes founded it, and then pass an arm of the sea, and then come to another city that is called 'Sabaoth,' and there find they all merchandizes and popenjays (parrots) as plenty as larks in our country." In another part he asserts, and his statements, if substantiated, would quite bear out his assertion, that "the land is full of marvels, for that there is a goodly sea which is of sand and gravel and no drop of water, and it ebbeth and floweth with very great waves, as another sea doth, and it is never standing still, and never in rest, and no man can pass to the land beyond it."

This highly astonishing river is probably merely the Mareb of which Dapper writes in much taller style. "The Mareb," says he, "takes its source in a place near Fremona, in the kingdom of Tegré, of which it waters a great part. It goes then into the country of the Caffres, and, as if it disdained to yield to them its waters, it sinks below the ground, and flows on for a considerable long space ; but the strangest thing is, that one has only to dig four or five feet to get at its waters, and even to obtain fish. Then, as if to take leave of the place of its birth, it rises from the ground at a place not far from its source, and frequently loses itself in the burning sand of Dequin."

A charming piece of fiction is that connected with another river which Dapper stigmatises as fabulous. "The Jews assert that there is a river in Ethiopia, which they call 'Sambation,' that is to say 'Sabbatical,' because it rests on the Sabbath, whereas on other days of the week it carries down great quantities of sand and stone. Beyond that river they (the Jews) say that there are numerous families of Israelites, but that they dare not pass it to visit them, for fear of violating the Sabbath, during which day only it is capable of being forded. Pliny and Josephus have placed it in Judæa, where the latter asserts that Titus Vespasian saw it; but the Jews who have written of it since—more accomplished liars,—observing the raillery which this tale would provoke, as nothing of the kind is to be seen in Palestine,—have fixed the locality of the river in Ethiopia, where nobody is likely to go to look for it."

With another quotation from Sir John, we commend his book to the favourable attention of all such as have not yet read it *in extenso*. "There is a certain isle," he remarks, "where be people as great as giants, of eight feet long, and they gladlier eat men's flesh than other; and men tell us that beyond that isle is another, whereon are greater giants, of forty-five feet or fifty feet long, but I saw them not; and among these giants are great sheep—as it were, young oxen—and they have great wool. These *sheep* have I seen many times." These substantial sheep are probably the Lama; and assuming the fact to be so, we have quite an insight into the good knight's data. In a *pays de cocagne* wherein are sheep as big as oxen, by every rule of comparative anatomy, how big should men be? Assuming, on the other hand, that the sheep in question is the fat-tailed African animal which has the honour of being represented by Ludolf, how intensely can we sympathise with Little Bo-Peep, and share her joy on the return of the lost mutttons, each carrying his tail behind him!

As Prester John fades away in the light of modern history, till the name becomes, with Alvarez and his successors, a mere title of dignity of the reigning monarch, we purpose producing, for the benefit of our readers, a few of the guesses which have been made as to the origin of the phrase; the more obvious derivation being from the Greek, implying, as Sir John will have it, a converted heathen's assumption of the title of priest, rather than of king. Other early critics deduced the title from a Persian perversion of the Italian *pregiare*, applied to certain orthodox Christians of Cathay; while one Jacob Gobijs, quoted by Ludolf, without specifying the language of the original, gives as the signification of the words, "a king who has the best servants," in allusion to the excellent qualities of certain highly commendable Ethiopian slaves. Marco Polo is made to

stand sponsor for the name, but it is unjust to fix upon him the origin of a myth which he did his best to solve. It seems that, in one or other of the Crusades, the Western knights made the acquaintance of some Eastern pilgrims, who styled themselves subjects of a Christian prince; and it is not a very wild assumption that the monks who boasted of the aid rendered to the good cause by St. Denis, St. George, and St. James, improved the occasion by extolling the power of an earthly champion by whom assistance might possibly be rendered to the sorely over-taxed soldiers of the cross.

We cannot forbear calling attention to the word *Prester*, applied by the Ethiopians to a hurricane. It is *testibus* Ludolf and Dapper, the former of whom deduces it from a Greek source, *πρηστηρα*. The exact Ethiopian signification is stated to be "serpent," while the Greek word is made to stand alike for "reptile" and "tempest." May not the phrase refer to some individual monarch of Ethiopia, renowned either for his victory over a serpent or for the subtlety of his character?

There is one traveller, far more recent in date than any of those from whom we have hitherto quoted, whose acquirements as a fine natural liar filled our friend Ludolf with quite a sublime degree of respect. He makes the kindly excuse for the traveller that "he seems to be a soldier, and totally ignorant of all ingenious arts;" but hints, that writing, in point of date, after so painstaking an author as Tellez, he might have put a little more restraint on his imagination. The late travels of Giacomo Baretti, published in England in 1670, speak of an expedition undertaken in the year 1655; but so thoroughly are his observations in keeping with those of Sir John Mandeville, that we discard all pretensions to chronological regularity in recognition of the merits of the chronicler. We trust, by the way, that the Xenophons of the British force will not be deterred by the force of Ludolf's apology from making their observations public.

Baretti thus describes an interview which he and an Abuna (bishop) who bore him company had with Prester John. "The emperor was standing in a stately tent erected in the midst of the rest; about it was a large palace, much like a market, where the courtiers are accustomed to walk. On the right hand is another, very beautiful, where the emperor's wives and concubines dwell. At the top of the prince's tent is a golden cross, with an angel holding it in his left hand, with a drawn scimitar in the right. He (the king) was in the kingdom of Beliguaze, near a town very well peopled, and situate in a pleasant plain called Iknovah, about six leagues from the river Tagan. The emperor never stirs out of his tent but 600 men do follow him at his heels; they are his daily guard;

they wear a livery and habit distinct from all other people—on their head a scarlet bonnet with three white plumes, fastened behind with a blue cross ; on their shoulders they have a very convenient coat that comes down to their middle, with a girdle or sash ; over it a Roman mantle hangs, more proper for state than action ; the colour is green, it is not very long, nor troublesome when they are obliged to make use of their hands. Sometimes they ride, sometimes they go afoot, as the emperor's occasion requires ; for that purpose he hath always ready in his stables great numbers of horses. The emperor's person is whiter than any of his kingdom, for the Abyssinians are tawny, a colour drawing near to black. I never saw any others of his relations or kindred, but I hear that they are all of the same colour. The people interpret this to his advantage, that God, by this distinction, hath singled out that family that is to reign amongst them, out of which they always choose the emperor ; their custom is that he should never marry until he be crowned ; then, with the consent of his nobles, he chooseth two wives out of his kingdom ; he chooseth, besides, as many concubines as he pleaseth ; they are always with him in his tent, with their attendants. The first male child usually succeeds the father in his kingdom. As soon as the children are named, they are carried to a very distant place, in the middle of a* large mountain called Amarak, where a fair castle is built, encompassed with the River Baroher, and fortified with a strong wall. There they are kept, with other precious things belonging to the emperor ; they never go out unless it be in the gardens and place of recreation with which this territory is abundantly furnished. The emperor visits this place once a year with his wives. When he is chosen, then all his brethren accompany him to his coronation. The emperor is first crowned with thorns before he puts on the imperial diadem, in imitation of our Saviour. The present emperor's name is Abraham : he is a young man, about thirty years of age. The name of the emperor is Gian Belul, or *precious Gian*, or John. They (the Abyssinians) never used to send their thoughts one to another in writing, but by messengers, either out of ignorance or superstition ; for they fancy the use of writing so sacred, that they will not profane it in ordinary business. I never saw a walled city. Some castles have of late been built for pleasure, rather than for defence." Afterwards he proceedeth to relate some wonderments, which are, indeed, in their nature astonishing. "In Barnagasso there is one thing very remarkable in the mountains. Near a little town called Aburale, is a large fountain of such strange nature, that whatever is cast in it turns, within a day's time, into a hard stone, whether it be wood, flesh, earth, or any other substance ; and not far from it, at certain times, amongst the common people, it is reported that

there are appearances in the mountains very dreadful! When I passed by that place my curiosity carried me to it. I did really hear strange voices and noises in the air, but saw nothing; but I did attribute the cause to the wind and the disposition of the mountains, that are so placed that when a strong gale blows upon the rocks there are unusual noises heard; the wind also strikes through several caves, and at the entry many shrieks and cries are heard, so that the country people dare not venture in to know the cause of them. The vulgar opinion is that this place leads into hell, and that the souls of the damned tormented in these lower parts of the earth do send up their complaints." Alas! for the musical acquirements of the Abyssinian clergy, the producers of these unearthly noises turned out to be friars at their devotions! so says Baretta. To relieve the reader's mind after such highly-coloured scenes, he stoops to discourse of so prosaic a matter as the customary place of sojourn of the emperor, which he fixes in Tegremahon. "In this kingdom," he continues, "was a former city, called Caxumo; it was the metropolis of Ethiopia, but it hath been mightily ruined by the wars, so that at present it shows but a few houses. Near the city is a fountain that contains much water, but never yields any until the beasts do come to drink; and when they do approach, it flows over and gives a very plentiful stream of clear water, very grateful to the palate." Baretta pledges his faith for the fact that he had seen the castle of Amhara, and the king's children of the castle. He says: "It is as delicious a place as ever I have seen in Europe." So many travellers make mention of this castle, and a most marvellous system of seclusion to which the presumptive heirs of the throne were subjected, that we shall hereafter seek to collate the authorities bearing on the point. The aptitude of the Abyssinian mind for the reception and propagation of tales of the wonderful, is evidenced by an anecdote told by Mr. Salt (Travels of Lord Valentia, vol. iii., edition 1809), that on his visiting the coast of Calam Negus, near Axune (supposed to be so called from King Calam, Caled, or Ellistheus), the guide assured him that if any person should take in a candle at night, he would see distinctly the whole of the way to the city of Jerusalem, whither Calam, whoever he might have been, went on a pilgrimage.

THE PEARL OF DAMASCUS

RIGHTLY have the Arabian poets styled Damascus "a pearl set in emeralds," for is it not a city of white houses and green trees, surrounded on all sides by the fairest meadows, vineyards, and olive groves, that ever gladdened eye and heart of man? And who among the daughters of the pearl of cities could compare with Zinda, the daughter of Adad? She who is pearl of pearls must be the pearl of the world. Even the young maidens grudged her not this distinction, which is a thing most wonderful, and almost past belief. Her father was steward to a man who was so rich that the more money he spent, the more he seemed to have. His name was Hammun Happi, and he lived in a great house, surrounded by gardens, where the flower-beds vied in radiance with the plumage of the birds that hovered over them. He was very fanciful, too, and spared no expense to gratify his fancies, yet encompassed as he was by every delight of the senses, he was not contented, and often found it hard to pass away his time. He was tired of all his old pleasures, and every new one pleased but for a little while. His friends, of whom—strange to say for so rich a man—he had many, advised him to marry, and this wise counsel came more especially from those who had daughters of a suitable age. It was not for want of a choice of wives that he remained single, seeing that he was regarded with favourable eyes by all the maidens of his acquaintance, and also by several widows. Certain persons upon whom Allah had bestowed an inordinate length of tongue scrupled not to assert that his celibacy arose, not so much from disinclination to the married state, as from the fact that his wandering eyes had been caught by the Pearl of Damascus. And for once the decree of those who love to sit in judgment on the affairs of their neighbours was right. His conduct had long since revealed to Zinda that state of his feelings, for he sought to touch her heart by gifts and every attention, which the disparity of their stations permitted him to offer, but she avoided him and returned his gifts. And this obduracy was in a great measure due to a secret partiality which she entertained for Bizzibbi, a barber, who dwelt within sight of the gate of Hammun Happi. As for Adad, his eyes were two in number, but the jerking of the head is as the closing of the eye to the ass that hath not the priceless blessing of sight. So the rich man sighed, and was restless, left off eating and sleeping, took to solitary rambles, and tried very hard to make some poetry—in which he failed. Then, partly to wile away his time, and partly because he knew that women are apt to be taken with fine clothes—as children with the

glitter of fire flies—he sent for Meshur Ben Neethim, the principal tailor of Damascus. Ben Neethim was descended from the famous Sheikh Abraham, and his shop was over against the gate of the storytellers. The tailor made great haste to come, and when he presented himself, Hammun Happi commanded him to make some clothes of the finest texture, and most expensive description, to spare neither his silk nor his velvet, and to embroider them with fantastic devices, according to the latest fashion of the Syrian exquisites. Meshur Ben Neethim had brought the implements of his craft, and he measured his patron at once. When he had ended, he prostrated himself before the divan on which the great man had seated himself, and said, “Will my lord deign to accept this little book from the hands of his unworthy servant?” With these words, he placed in the hand Hammun Happi graciously extended for it a very small book, in a cover of white, embossed with gold. Hammun Happi opened it, and lo! it was full of pictures and verses of a very strange sort! On the first page were turbans, and captans, and cloaks, and divers sorts of breeches; in short, all the outer garments that a well-to-do Mussulman should wear; but the garments only, and no wearer or portion of a wearer to be seen in them. Farther on were figures of men, some completely dressed, others only partly so, and then came a row of boys of tender age, clad in various styles, and standing each in a different attitude. But each of them had the very same face as his companions, although he differed from them in dress and posture, and the same astounding peculiarity was observable amongst the men. Yet of all things in this surprising book, it was the verses that most particularly attracted the attention of Hammun Happi. They were written in every style of poetry. The epic or heroic, the tender love-ditty, the stinging epigram, the incomprehensible sonnet, the grave and critical essay in verse—each and every species had there its representative. In their outset, they severally treated of a great variety of subjects, but one and all were very whimsically and ingeniously brought to end upon the same topic—the manifold excellencies of the garments made by Meshur Ben Neethim, and the amazing lowness of their prices.

As Hammun Happi read them his heart warmed within him, for he thought, “It may be that this man will for money indite me some verses which will do me some grace in the eyes of Zinda; and he said, “I would give much, O tailor, if Allah had granted me that gift of making verses which he hath seen fit to bestow upon thee!”

“My lord,” said the tailor, “with shame do I confess that I can handle a needle better than a pen. Be it known to thee that thy slave keepeth a poet.”

“What!” said Hammun Happi, wonderingly, “can one keep a poet, even as he would a cook?”

“In truth, my lord, he can,” said the tailor. “Those verses were written by a young man who doubleth with his profession of poet the less congenial one of a trimmer of beards. His name is Bizzibbi, and his shop may be seen from yonder window.”

“What!” again exclaimed Hammun Happi, “that lean youth, of whom but yesterday I heard my groom say that he would never set foot in his accursed shop again, for the knave had cut his chin thrice in one week?”

“Even he,” said Meshur Ben Neethim, “and I would wager that when he drew thy servant’s blood, his head was running on his verses, as it generally is.”

So great was the astonishment of Hammun Happi, that he was well nigh starting up in most unseemly haste, and going straight in quest of Bizzibbi; but recollecting in good time his station, and the presence of an inferior, he said, “Get thee gone, tailor, and tell thy poet that I would speak with him in private this very night. I shall require him to write me some verses, for which I will liberally reward him. Bid him come to my gate an hour after sunset. I will give order that he be admitted without parley.”

So Meshur Ben Neethim departed and told Bizzibbi of the good fortune in store for him, and being one of those who love money for its own sake, he added, “Considering, O Bizzibbi, that it is through me this lucky chance hath fallen to thy lot, thou wilt not refuse to divide with me such profits as may arise to thee therefrom.”

“Nay,” said Bizzibbi, “who can foretel the future? If, indeed, I receive aught of this man’s money, I will accord thee a share of the same, which thou wilt not refuse——”

“That I surely will not,” said Meshur, the son of Neethim.

“To take out in poetry,” continued the barber.

The tailor made a wry face at this; but, having no choice in the matter, he agreed with what grace he might, and went his way. But the cunning Bizzibbi had refrained from telling him how, for some time past, he had been intending to seek the patronage of Hammun Happi. The barber was not only one of that strange and wonderful race called poets, but he was also a philosopher. His philosophy was of that lofty and rarely-appreciated kind which stoops not to concern itself with the everyday trifles of life. When his own corns were trodden on, he was full as angry as any grovelling fellow without a grain of philosophy in his composition might have been, for which phenomenon the irritability which all mankind acknowledge to be inseparable from the poetic temperament may have been accountable. But he bore the misfortunes of his neighbours with an equanimity worthy of Epictetus, and he hath been known to utter

such divine consolations to a man suffering from a raging fit of toothache as would have made any but a downright heathen forget the pain, though the fellow did but bid him go about his business, adding an expression with which may God and his holy prophet forbid that I should sully my page. But as poetry and philosophy make not a man a better barber, so it several times came to pass that, while following his business in a poetic reverie, he happened to cut the nose or chin of a customer. As a natural consequence of this absence of mind, his trade fell off, and he turned his attention to the discovery of some additional source of income, for Meshur Ben Neethim paid him at such a scurvy rate that poetry alone would by no means have sufficed for his wants. After much cogitation, he came to the conclusion that in the reformation of public abuses he might find a suitable field for the employment of his active mind, and also of his poetic talent. But here fresh difficulties began, for, spite of the vigilant administration of the good caliph, there were so many abuses then flourishing in Damascus (as is still the case in other cities I could name), that he was not a little embarrassed as to which of them he should first sweep from the face of the earth. Until he had decided this point, he wisely postponed all consideration of the means by which he was to effect his object. While he debated these things, he grew more and more abstracted, and his business fell off more and more. Fortunately, he was a single man, but even single men must eat, and therefore he said to himself—

“God is great. Before money and credit are utterly exhausted, I will go to the rich man over the way, and present to him a copy of my verses. Stricken with surprise and admiration, he will lend an attentive ear whilst I unfold the plans by which I will yet cover myself and him with glory. Surely genius and wealth united must carry all before them.”

Thus you may easily imagine his joy when he found that, without any trouble on his part, things were like to fall according to his wish; but he was careful not to let Ben Neethim get an inkling of this, or of his preconceived intention. At the appointed time, he went to the gate of Hammun Happi, and was instantly admitted. He had never been in such a mansion before, and the magnificence of the apartments through which the servant led him almost took his breath away. At last he was shown into a room much smaller than the rest; but it was very lofty, and the walls were draped from floor to ceiling with hangings of rose-coloured silk, fringed with gold. The ceiling was painted in compartments, each representing an incident in the life of Mahomet. Each of these divisions was very narrow at the end next the wall, but gradually widened as it approached a large circular space in the centre, containing a view

of the interior of the mosque at Mecca; so that the effect of the whole was that of a colossal star of bright and glowing colours. In the middle of the room was a basin of white marble, filled with water, and a number of water-lilies expanded their snow-white petals all over its surface. But they could scarcely have been real ones, for a tiny jet of water sparkled up through the cup of every one of them, with a little twittering ripple that would have lulled a spinning dervish. Round about the marble basin, orange and lemon trees, laden with fruit, were growing in vases of the variegated marble of Ispahan, and filling the atmosphere with their intoxicating perfume. A small three-piled carpet, of Persian manufacture, was spread upon the inlaid floor, close to these trees, and upon it, his elbow resting on a cushion, reclined the master of the house. A low stand by his side held his nargilly, a cup of Mocha coffee, and a small lamp of chased silver, from which a subdued glow of light was reflected into every corner. Yet the owner of all these fine things was yawning in very weariness of soul, and wishing that it were in his power to change places with the visitor, who was now ushered in by a negro page in a flaming scarlet tunic. His coffee was too strong, his pipe would not draw well, and his nose itched. You see that rich men have their troubles as well as poor ones.

When the Nubian page had retired, Bizzibbi made his salaam, and then stood with downcast eyes, waiting till Hammun Happi should please to break silence. But the rich man was the more embarrassed of the two. He felt the necessity of placing full confidence in his new ally, and knew not how to set about it. At last he said—

“Young man, I am told that thou art of those fortunate ones who possess the inestimable talent of making poetry. If gold could buy that gift, it should be mine; but as it can be neither bought nor sold, I will pay thee handsomely to exercise it in my behalf. Know, therefore, that the daughter of my steward hath made so deep an impression on me that life without her hath no longer any charms for me. And since it seemeth that ware so precious as the sweat of a man’s brain can be bought and paid for, I also will purchase the production of thine. Write me some verses such as may win the heart of a maiden. Thou wilt need to do thy best, for though, as I have told thee, I cannot write them, I am nevertheless a better judge of such things than most men. Now begone, and if I am satisfied with the fruit of thy labour, I will reward thee beyond thy expectation.”

So, with much chuckling of the spirit, Bizzibbi departed, and, going straight home, sat down to write (first getting out his dictionary, that he might not be hindered by lack of knowing what

letter should follow another); and whether the thought of the good pay he was to receive acted as a spur to the oft-times sorely jaded nag of his intellect, I know not, but certain it is that never before had ideas been so plentiful with him. Notwithstanding which, he took such pains, and belaboured his brain to such good purpose, that, by the time he had finished his task, the officers of the mosques were calling the faithful to prayers at break of day, while his face glowed, and his hair was as if the animal that is adored by the dwellers in Egypt had brought forth her young therein. He lay down, and fell asleep; and when he awoke, the midday sun was shining hotly on his face, and the street without resounded with the clattering of the hoofs of asses, camels, and oxen, and the cries of the sellers of dates and pomegranates; for his door was opposite to that of a large khan, or inn, and the way to the street of the dealers in cast-off clothes lay past it. He rose up with alacrity, and scarce had patience to wash himself, repeat a prayer, and swallow a cup of coffee, before he set out. Hammun Happi was anxiously awaiting him, and taking the manuscript from him, bade him be seated while he read it.

Having perused it some three or four times in silence, and with a critical frown, he said—

“Young man, I could point out some weak places in thy verses, but, on the whole, I am satisfied; and as a mark of the confidence which I intend to repose in thee, I will entrust thee with the delivery of that which thou hast written. Thou knowest the dwelling of my steward?”

“As I know the reflection of my face in a glass from that of another man’s!” said the barber.

“Good!” said his employer. “When evening prayer is over, go down the westward road, past the bazaar of the pipe-sellers and the mosque of El Dronor, till thou comest to an avenue of plane-trees on thy right hand. At the end of that avenue is a private entrance to the garden of Adad; the door is easily opened, and at that hour Zinda is usually alone in the garden, tending her flowers and enjoying the cool of the evening,—I speak with assurance in this matter, for I have long studied the movements of the adored of my heart;—then, seeing her, it will be for thee to present this paper, saying, ‘From him, O Zinda, who is thy father’s lord and thy slave!’ or any pretty poetical conceit that may occur to thee; but as thou valuest my favour, let her not think the verses the offspring of any brain but mine, or truly she will think of me as one who is only fit to be a driver of asses!”

“But,” said Bizzibbi, “if she should not be there? or, again, if her father should also be walking in his garden, or even looking from a window?”

“ ‘ If ’ is the son of a dog, and should be trodden under foot ! ” replied Hammun Happi. “ Fear not, O wielder of razors and pens, for I have even insured thee against that danger ! I will give thee an order for twenty pieces of gold ; and shouldst thou indeed encounter my steward, thou hast but to present it to him as the sole cause of thy coming thither. Again, should Zinda not be there, thou canst, by means of it, go boldly to the house, and ask for Adad ; fortune may then favour thee with a sight of his daughter. But, in any case, let not a fifth eye behold the giving of the verses ; and, above all, be not imprudent, for there are more days than one in a year, and opportunities are as the sands of the sea to those who know where to look for them. In so delicate an embassy, much must needs be left to the discretion of the ambassador. ” He told the barber, further, of the strange hard-heartedness of Zinda, which he now hoped to overcome by the aid of Bizzibbi’s genius. “ And, ” said he, in conclusion, “ seeing that suspense is a thing accursed, I shall this night go forth and divert myself ; but with the rise of to-morrow’s sun, let me know how thou hast sped. ”

As the barber-poet went along that evening, he felt his heart beating at a great rate, for he had never before exercised the peculiar and responsible functions of a go-between ; and though, as a philosopher, he, of course, despised beauty, yet, as a man and a poet, he was by no means insensible to its power. However, as he had seen Zinda but two or three times, and was wholly unaware of the impression he had made upon her, he amused himself as he went along by thinking of his verses, and by looking about him at the gay shops and the people. The streets were crowded with those who had come forth to enjoy themselves after the heat of the day. It was now deliciously cool, for the sun had set, and the awnings of thick matting, which are suspended above the principal thoroughfares to keep off the intense heat, had been removed. A gentle west wind came wandering into Damascus from the mountain ranges of the Lebanon, and, from time to time, a puff stronger than usual would blow a little cloud of spray from the fountains which play at every corner in the loveliest of cities, and would sprinkle with their waters the wearied beasts of burden drinking at them, and the women who were fetching water. As the barber passed down the westward road, the pipe-sellers were beginning to close their shops, and the last of the evening worshippers were emerging from the cypress-shaded grave-yard of the mosque of El Dronor. He soon came to the avenue of plane-trees, and presently found the door in the garden-wall. Stepping noiselessly in, he closed it after him, and at the same instant caught sight of one in comparison with whose beauty the rarest flowers were but as weeds.

Thus far, then, fortune *had* favoured him, for Zinda was alone, and apparently deep in reflection. All unaware of the interest with which he had inspired her, he could not help wishing, nevertheless, that he had been about to plead his own cause instead of another man's. She was sitting in a verandah thickly overhung with roses, which crowned a terrace curiously bordered with an arabesque of fruits and flowers in mosaic. Her eyes, black as an Arab's turban, and bright as the jet of Kurdistan, were musingly fixed upon the minarets of the great mosque. Still unseen and unheard, Bizzibbi ascended a flight of steps, and paused on the verge of the terrace, which commanded a fine view of the city, on which the rich glow of an Eastern sunset yet lingered. The waters of the Euphrates glittered in it, and farther off, in the plains on the other side of the river, the slowly undulating movement of a caravan could be discerned, while the tinkling of its bells came faintly and fitfully at intervals across the smooth bosom of the water.

But the barber had no time to go into raptures; besides, the prospect had been familiar to him from infancy upwards; so, with the discretion of one who was not born yesterday, he loudly cleared his throat. At sight of a man, the daughter of Adad started up; but when she saw what man it was, she sat down again, and repented in her heart that she had not arranged her hair according to a more becoming fashion. Very hot and nervous, the barber stepped forward.

"Adorable Zinda!" he exclaimed, "for such transcendent loveliness can belong to none but the Pearl of Damascus, I am charged by him who valueth not the countless sums thy father administereth for him as he would value one glance from thee, and whose riches are powerless to gratify his only wish;—I am charged by him who is the unhappiest of men to present this paper of verses to her whose beauty inspired him to write them."

This little speech he had been at some pains to concoct as he came along, and when he had spoken it, he sank gracefully on one knee, and offered the manuscript. But so dazzled was he by the blaze of her beauty, and withal so anxious lest any other eye should be upon him, that he was very near giving her the order for the twenty pieces of gold instead of the poetry, and the consciousness of having so nearly made a mistake caused him to colour very deeply. Zinda did the same, but her complexion was so dark that only the faintest trace of the process was visible.

"O Bizzibbi!" she said—and the barber marvelled, for he knew not that she was so familiar with his name,—“O Bizzibbi, knowest thou so little of our sex? What woman ever cared for gifts at second hand? Besides, I understand not why my lord should continue to importune me, seeing that I have taken every

means to let him know how distasteful to me is his pursuit." She said this somewhat tartly, for it sadly chafed and thwarted her to find that he had come on another man's errand.

"At least," said Bizzibbi, "deign to read the verses; for my lord, knowing my fitness to judge of such matter, hath graciously favoured me with a sight of them, and I can vouch that they are not unworthy of their destined honour."

"It's somewhat strange," said Zinda, "that Hammun Happi should trumpet forth the desires of his heart to those who carry his messages!"

However, she took the paper, and opened it, but scarce two lines of it had she read when her father stepped into the verandah.

Adad, the steward, was one who cared not to loosen the strings of his purse, save when he put something into it. And this feeling had, in course of time, extended itself to his master's money, so that the paying away of every one of the great sums continually required by the boundless expenditure of Hammun Happi was to him as the extraction of a tooth by an unskilful leech. To shake off that heaviness of the eyelids, induced by attendance at evening prayer, he had taken it into his head that he would look over his accounts. He kept his books in a little room opening into the verandah of his garden. But no sooner had he seated himself and opened them, than he heard the murmur of voices without.

"God of my fathers!" he ejaculated, "if that is the voice of my child, she hath a hoarseness on her which the breath of the evening star will but confirm." And being one of those careful fathers to whom a doctor's bill was as the fragrant oil that cunning men distil from the liver of the cod, he instantly entered the verandah, and surprised the barber before he had time to rise from his kneeling position. The paper fell from the hands of the startled Zinda, and her father picked it up. But she forebore from screaming or fainting till she saw what turn matters were like to take. Who among the children of men proceedeth to a conclusion by any method but a jump? Adad made one leap to the first that lay within his reach.

"Ha!" said he, "by the doves of Mahomet, what villainy is here?"

"No villainy at all," said the young man, boldly. "I come from thy master with an order for the payment of twenty piastres, and here it is. But before seeking payment, I ventured to exhibit these verses to the peerless eyes of the pride of our city."

"Verses!" repeated the now thoroughly exasperated father. "Ay, I have heard of thee as a maker of such trash. My master hath been guilty of many follies, but were gold pieces as plentiful as shells or slates, he would scarce pay twenty of them for the clip-

ping of his beard. Miserable shaver! thou hast forged my lord's signature to the order for the money, in order to gain access to my daughter. But the child of a rich man's steward may look higher than to a barber's pole."

"Father," interposed Zinda, "my lord will but be angered at the denial of his messenger, and the young man's words are doubtless the words of truth. Only in one thing hath he equivocated—the verses were not made by him, but by Hammun Happi himself."

"Let women and parrots be sparing of their speech," replied her father. "The wagging of the tongue is a snare to the feet, but silence is a tower of safety. Our good and virtuous master commit so base an action! 'Tis but another of this rascal's fabrications. One tale to thee, and half a one to me. Get thee within; and as for this twister of words, he shall at once with me to my master."

Now Bizzibbi felt rather in a quandary, but recalling the saying of the wise man, "that haste is the father and mother of error," he reflected. "If I betray the secret of him who sent me hither, my prospects will become as the dust under my feet. I will go quietly with this sweeper of the dwellings of hogs, and Hammun Happi will take care that I come to no harm."

So he held his peace, and broke not that of our lord, the Caliph, but went unresistingly between two stout fellows of the steward's household, Adad prudently following in the rear, out of reach of the barber's arm, which was long and far-reaching, like its owner, who, for his part, thought it no business of his to tell the unpoetical steward that he in quest of whom they were going would not be at home. The great man had indeed rambled forth without the walls of the town, to the famous rose gardens, where those whose hearts are lighter than gossamer dance on a platform of crystal, to the music of the tabor and the tom-tom. And it so happened that the servant who had been privy to the barber's secret visit to Hammun Happi was also from home. But Adad was not to be so easily balked.

"Our master may not return till late," said he. "We will have the fellow before the Cadi, and he shall give him a night's lodging."

And still Bizzibbi was silent, for he knew that even Cadis are but mortal, and a man may sometimes fly from captivity on the wings of a golden eagle. The sitting Cadi was just about to leave the hall of justice, for it was the time of the fast of Hairam, and being a strict Mussulman, he had eaten no flesh that day, but only a fowl or so, a plate of fish, and some trifles of pastry, besides his bread, rice, and coffee. Therefore his stomach was in no mood to be detained, but cried aloud for food, and would not be hushed, so that when Adad had stated what ground there was for the detention of

the barber, he said, "As, after all, 'tis but a mere suspicion, the young man may be at large until our morning sitting, if one can be found who will engage to forfeit his head, or a thousand piastres, should he not then be forthcoming."

"A thousand piastres!" exclaimed Bizzibbi. "Oh, most worshipful, hath any man beside the Caliph a head and so much money?"

El Beeki, the Cadi, was a man of rare forethought and sagacity. "I will show these people," thought he, "that Solomon the Wise hath yet a successor left." Then he asked for the verses, and, handing them to his clerk, desired him to read them aloud, which he did with the admirable emphasis and modulation that commonly distinguish the reading of such persons.

"Truly," said the Cadi, "I have, in virtue of my office, listened to much that was trying to the patience, but such tedious stuff as that which hath just been inflicted on our ears, did I never before hear." And this he said for the purpose, shrewdly judging that no man would hear the child of his understanding thus vilified without showing an emotion which would at once decide the question of paternity. Nor was his penetration at fault.

"Son of fifty fathers, thou liest!" vociferated the poet; "for I tell thee to thy teeth, if any yet remain in thy gums, that never, since the days of Sadi, the Persian, were better verses written, or any better fitted for their purpose!"

Said the Cadi, with a grave smile—"Let the court bear witness that this fellow's imputation on the virtue of my mother rouseth me not to the anger that he hath displayed upon hearing me censure the verses of another man." Then, turning to the barber—"Thou hast given thy testimony. 'Tis plain that thou thyself hast written the verses. And, since thou hast lied on that point, 'tis not unlikely that thou hast forged the order for the money." More he would have said, but that, bethinking himself of the kid, stuffed with pistachio nuts, which even then awaited him, he rose, and added—"The time for the rising of the court having long since elapsed, the barber must be detained till to-morrow; and let notice be given to Hammun Happi, that he may then attend, and either prove or disprove the validity of his signature. Peace be with you all!"

And then the barber was removed by two attendants, who were clad in blue, to indicate their office. He still trusted to the return of his employer to make all right, though he relished his position but little, and the less so that his interview with Zinda had given rise to certain inward prickings and yearnings, the like of which he had never felt before. He was shut up for the night in a room, the only furniture in which was a piece of carpet to kneel upon, that the floor might not be too speedily worn away by the ardent devo-

tion of the true believers. As for Adad, he did nothing but rub his hands, to think how cleverly he had outwitted his would-be son-in-law.

Hammun Happi, being summoned, had no resource but to attend. And, thinking that he would cut but a sorry figure in the affair, he resolved to smother a fancy that was like to prove so troublesome; so he had a little private speech first with his steward and then with the Cadi; after which he boldly declared that he had resolved to favour the attachment of so worthy and talented a young man, whom he loved as a brother, and that he had given the order for the money solely out of admiration for the poetical talents of Bizzibbi, who had long loved Zinda, and who had indeed written the verses, the fathering of which upon himself had been but a jest, agreed upon between them, to see how Zinda would take it. No one who heard this story believed it; but who was to contradict so great a man?

Zinda made no attempt to conceal her joy, and her father gave vent to his wisdom in these words—"See now how good cometh out of evil! The writing of poetry is an evil gift, for it leadeth a man to despise honest labour; yet, without that gift, this youth would never have attracted the regard of our noble master, and, without such regard, my daughter would never have been happy with him who is, as I find, the man of her choice."

So Bizzibbi and Zinda were united with great rejoicings; and Hammun Happi shortly after married a lady of his own rank; but he was careful to do all his love-making himself.

The story coming to the ears of the Caliph, who loved to surround himself with all manner of clever and diverting people, he sent for Bizzibbi, and would have made him chief of that honourable band whose duty and privilege it is by turns to die and trim the hair and beard of God's regent on earth. But the poet, frankly avowing his distaste for any sort of manual occupation, Haroun Alraschid settled a pension on him instead, which his descendants enjoy to this very day.

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

BY THE COUNTESS VON LAUENBRÜCK

CHAPTER XXV.

OUT in the darkness, in the cold, in the lonely winter's night. Alone, solitary, his heart full of bitterest curses, his head bared to the driving wind, his mantle bound firmly about him, the snow clinging to every fold of his garments, the poor emigrant came back once more to his native village, drawn thither by some irresistible attraction.

It was St. Silvester's-eve. In every house lights were burning, and the glass and the joke went round: there was diving for nuts in the water-tubs, and melting of lead in the crucible, whilst the young and light-hearted sought to read their fate, and the tale of the future, in a thousand quaint signs and fanciful omens. But he wandered homeless, alone, in the dark, weary, desolate night. The year that was fleeting away for him had been happy; the year that was coming so fast must be dreary, and hopeless, and sad. And dreary, and hopeless, and sad, the future lay outspread before him—a blank and monotonous mass; a waste and a desert of gloom. Already he heard the footsteps of the New Year coming swift o'er the hills; but no welcoming throbs of his heart rose up to meet the feet that were beautiful upon the mountains. The angel of the Old Year stood even now upon the threshold, counting each moment of time, ere he spread out his wings to take flight, burdened with joys and with sorrows, for the realms of eternity. But a week ago, and the angels had sung the song of glad tidings and rejoiced over peace and good-will that had come to reign amongst men. But to this poor, solitary, wild-hearted wanderer, the glad tidings of good things had sounded like cruellest mockery; and peace and good-will amongst men like beautiful, impossible fictions, good for the angels to sing, but maddening for sinners to hear. What drove him thus to the scene of his torments? Had he not promised the Pastor, and sworn to abide by his promise, that he would go forth from the village, and never return there again? Had he not given his word to abstain from the vengeance he longed for, knowing to Whom such belongeth, and Who will repay in good time? Had he not said to himself, that the sight of that pale, rigid face, like some monument hewn out of marble, would drive him to horrible madness by its own stony, expressionless calm? Did he not shiver and tremble as that shriek of unearthly laughter sounded again in his ears, shrill and re-echoing ever? And yet

“a spirit” in his feet led him over those hill-tops, past the great windmill, and down by the hedgerows, to where, in the midst of the village, the well, with its iron-bound bucket, brimful of bright, happy love-memories, and all running over with old associations, and thoughts of the magic-hued Past, arrested his purposeless footsteps.

* * * * *

We were very quiet up at the Schloss. The secretary and postmaster, convicted of tampering with the confidences reposed in them, had both been dismissed. Indeed, the latter had turned queen's evidence; and had confessed to being an accomplice, and that, in return for his treachery and dishonest dealings, he had received various benefits, exemptions, and emoluments at his principal's hands. There was no one to prosecute. Fritz was unwilling to do so; the poor wanderer had departed again on his travels, shaking the dust from off his feet as he went; and neither the injured young wife nor her mother could press the matter for punishment. Disgraced, and convicted of a long series of acts, which would alone have condemned him, without the more flagrant transgressions which had now come to light—disgraced, and for ever degraded, the misshapen scribe had heard in scowling silence the verdict, which was largely tempered with mercy. It was the lawyer who spoke it; and all the other defendants, who had been accustomed to tremble when he was displeased, and to fear his intemperate anger, and biting, vindictive malice, now heard, but with downcast eyes and faces of greatest embarrassment, the sentence—milder, indeed, than justice alone had awarded—pronounced upon Secretary Fuchs. He should lay down his seals, and resign his office, the lawyer had said, giving account of all money or monies that had passed through his hands, restoring where aught was deficient, and from his own private purse making good all peculations. It was then, with a face distorted with impotent fury, that the misshapen wretch had arisen, and hissed forth those venomous words concerning the young Countess Hilda. Then he had gone forth in his anger, casting malevolent threats on all who had seen his disgrace.

The snow had fallen lightly every day since Christmas, and the earth, on the eve of the New Year, was still wrapped in its mantle of white. The poor young wife and her mother sat silent and thoughtful, keeping the vigil of St. Sylvester, with hearts that were heavy indeed. Nightly a form might have been seen, a terrible gnome-like shape, issuing forth in the darkness, and wending its way to the chapel that stood in the garden. Was it for some holy purpose—for prayer, or for loving remembrance that the last nights of the year were devoted to labours unseen? There seemed

an unfitness, a grim profanation, an intruding of Sin, made more hideous by being incorporate, on this place of purest repose, of holiest rest, and of beauty. Was there no hand to arrest, no eye to detect the workings of wickedness? None.

Weary of his solitary watch by the well, the traveller rose again to his feet, and passing over the hill at the back of the chapel, paused for a moment, and reverently folded his hands. "There lies the Countess H el ene, her father's pride, and his darling; dare I, my heart full of hatred, cross that ground that her ashes make holy?" But suddenly something arrested the words ere they scarcely were uttered;—something,—a something as hideous as sin—as crooked, misshapen, ungainly; something so evil and weird in its strange and repulsive appearance, that a moment of fear and of superstitious awe arrested the feet of the wanderer, holding him fast, as though bound by a spell, to the spot where he stood in the shadow.

"Ah!" said the figure, and the hideous, malevolent features grinned with malicious delight in the rays of the moonlight. "People of your sort have hearts—are born with those sensitive organs—cherish and cocker their children, indulge and flatter them, encourage their haughty behaviour and selfish caprices; and when they are dead—for even people of your sort must die—then they cherish their memories, building them chapels, and laying fresh flowers on coffins that are full of the dust of their darlings, weeping sweet tears in a woe that is but fictitious; only a luxury more—a privilege made for the rich! We—we plebeian and clay-made—we outcasts and grovellers, having no hearts, and no time, and no money, are but the slaves of the rich; they use or misuse us at will; and when we are worn down to shadows, and have spent all our lives in their service, then they hunt us forth like dogs from their presence, and leave us to hunger or die. But there is a vengeance that is sweet, and that vengeance is mine to-night!" There was a moment's pause, followed by a harsh, grating sound, as though a saw were passing through green wood. The snow was lightly falling again, and all was very still. "My work is accomplished! The snow will cover my footsteps; all the fools are rejoicing and carousing—no one thinks of me. When the first rough wind blows from the Baltic, each snow-laden tree will break at its stem, and lie prostrate, sharply sawn through in each trunk, and the stillness but saves them from falling. Then, Herr Graf, you shall come to the place where you have laid your darling, and shall find it desecrated! Then, fair young Countess, your tender limbs shall be brought hither; but no shadow of linden or plane, no murmuring pines or beeches, shall grace your last resting-place! Bare and desolate, so you shall lie—my curses upon you! I leave

a legacy of hate in this my last service and work for the house of Lauenbrück!"

With the spring of a panther, the supple form had cleared the low paling, and uttering an inarticulate cry of wrath and rage, had sprung on the demon whose impious midnight work the man had witnessed. Firmly he grappled with his foe, the sharp teeth of the saw lacerating his hands, whilst the yet sharper teeth of the dwarf were fixed in his flesh. Though misshapen and hideously deformed, the secretary was strong in the arms, and was vicious and desperate.

"Cur! fiend! false-hearted! I will not kill you, for your impure blood shall not stain my hands or endanger my soul! I will not kill you, for your life shall be one of penance and torment! All good men will flee you—all good women snatch up their young ones as your crooked shadow passes by! I will not kill you; your blood shall not stain this spot that your feet have profaned. I will not kill you; 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,'—I will leave it to Him to repay; but I will set my mark on your face, and the children shall point at you—shall point at the mark on your face, and flee, as though from the evil one! False, lying, cruel, faithless to your master, good angels have brought me here this night, and good angels will help me to punish! Your fangs may poison my flesh, but I will not relax my hold of you—fiend, demon, and liar! the right shall give me the might."

Grappling together, they rolled on the new-fallen snow; grappling together, they rose and wrestled again; but by degrees the manly vigour of the younger man began to tell, and the long, sinewy arms of the dwarf seemed well-nigh exhausted.

"I will not kill you! false-hearted hound that you are. The sorrowful face of your wife, of your wife who detests you, shall haunt you through life, telling tales of cruelty, falseness, and lies; lies, cheating her out of her life, of her youth, of her hopes and her faith. I will not kill you—death in your case were but mercy—live on, accursed of all; live on, a branded liar and coward; lonely, unloved, and unregarded."

Dragging his victim into the road, Heinrich flung him on to a bank, and left him. He walked on, his head erect, his steps elate, still breathing loudly from the hardly-fought fight, but cautious, triumphant, and calm.

At the Schloss gates he met Fritz, who had gone down to speak to the Forester, and wish him a "Merry New Year." It had struck midnight as Heinrich left the chapel-ground. The New Year was dawning. Then the poor, broken-hearted fellow had told Fritz all his story. And Fritz had pressed his hand as they parted, and wished him "God speed."

“Where do you go, Heinrich? You will not desert us.”

“I shall go back to the country of my adoption, Herr Graf. Home has no ties for me now.” Then the two men had understood one another, and the young count, stretching forth his hand, had spoken that word of farewell, and had turned silently over the draw-bridge.

Unwilling messengers were sent to rescue the misshapen scribe from the scene of the late encounter: they looked on him, all, as something “uncanny,” and a superstition that had long been whispered about him now became loudly current. They found him bleeding and senseless; but yet not even an instinct of pity, overcoming their horror, could reconcile them to the first task which the new year had called on them to perform.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“You will not go to-day, Mabel?”

“I think we must.”

“Oh! there can be no *must* in the case; you have Cuthbert and baby with you.”

“What do you say, Cuthbert?”

“Whatever you do, my dear.”

“*Quel mari complaisant!*”

“Well, we will stay,—that is if you will keep us one day longer.”

“Do not talk of one day; I hate conditions.”

“Well, we will stay—(with certain mental reservations which I suppress because unpleasant to you)—unconditionally?”

“Victoria!”

Then Fritz had gone out of the room to seek his brothers, and we settled down to a pleasant chat.

“There was ample fund for conversation. Charming letters from the elder Lauenbrücks, a congratulatory epistle addressed to us all, from Graf Karl; a pretty, lady-like note from the lonely Helmine, the newspapers, the late local occurrences. And we were almost merry. Fritz had told us nothing of the desecration and desolation that had been committed the night before. He was now going down to the spot with Max and Hugo. Presently Cuthbert and I departed for a mid-day walk. We spoke of Hilda and Fritz, and agreed in hoping that this new year might be a happy one for them.

“Fritz is a capital fellow!” Cuthbert had said; “but he is *not* happy.”

“Has he told you so?”

“Oh, no! but I can hear it in the sound of his voice.” (Cuth-

bert's ears were of more use to him than many persons' eyes was to them). "Hilda is very much altered," he said, presently.

"I do not think so; she looks a little delicate certainly, but that is not surprising after her long confinement to the house. When spring comes and she can get out, all will be well again."

"I do not think so. I hear a great difference when she speaks."

In the afternoon, when a game of billiards was going on amongst the gentlemen, I sitting by Hilda's side, she suddenly asked me to read her something in German. I laughed at her whim, but complied with it at once.

"What shall I read you?" I asked.

"Here; here is a translation of Tennyson; read me this, 'Break, break, break,' the translation is finer than the original."

I read at her desire, and then there came a pause.

"Do you know Longfellow's 'Resignation' by heart, Mabel?"

"Yes."

"Then repeat it to me."

I did so.

"Now tell me the 'Old Clock on the Stairs.'"

I repeated that also.

"Do you know, Mabel, the last time I read these poems was in the library, the day I was taken ill. I had been very restless and unhappy all day, and I wandered into the room and sat down listlessly; everything seemed so dreary, and wretched, and lonely, and sad. I took up that book by chance, and after I had read a few lines I felt so calmed and soothed; so resigned, so raised above earthly pain, above earthly vanities and passions, that for the first time in my life, I felt what religion *might* be. My eyes seemed opened to visions of peace and purity, of strength and calm; I read 'The Psalm of Life;' I read a translation from the Spanish called 'To-morrow.' I read 'Resignation,' and then I heard Fraulein von Wolfram's voice, and some strange impulse led me to her; I wanted to save her; she seemed so young and beautiful; I thought that her life must be bright, and I knew the danger that was menacing it, and I was determined to trust to no future opportunity, but to 'act in the living present, heart within and God o'er head.' She did not believe me, Mabel! I saw it in her face; she was too polite to say so—too well-bred to show it, but I read it in her eyes."

"Hilda, Hilda, dearest! do not talk of that time; it is past and gone; 'let the dead past bury its dead.'"

"You are right. They say I am capricious; they said so once when my caprices were merely pretexts; but I will not speak of that. But now, dearest Mabel, I have a caprice, and it is this: If I have that book, and read again those inspired words, they will

bring me peace and calm, as they brought them to me even then. Will you fetch it for me, Mabel? it is in the library, I daresay, still; no one goes there when my father and mother-in-law are away; Fritz and the boys are not readers. Will you get it for me, Mabel? I can read those words when I cannot read the Bible; they do me good; they give me strength and faith."

I went and brought the book—a splendid American edition, with gorgeous binding and spirited woodcuts. She put her hand out with childish eagerness to seize it.

"Where did you find it?" she said.

"On the table, close to the window."

"Ah! I left it there; how quick you have been; thank you, dear; I think I shall find my happiness in this book, it is full of love, and faith, and religion; but now read to me."

"What shall I read?"

I opened the tale of "Evangeline," the patient, enduring, and faithful. Presently, as I turned the leaves, a white paper fell fluttering to the ground. I stooped to pick it up. "Why, Hilda, here is a letter of yours, you careless young damsel; do you treat your correspondents thus, and use their epistles as markers? Why, it has not even been opened! What news may be lying here musty!"

She turned on her couch. "That is strange!" she said, "I remember no letter, but give it to me, dear."

I gave it her. A sudden exclamation of wonder broke from her lips, then she quickly unsealed it with hands that were nervously trembling, and read it from beginning to end with eagerness, strange but intense.

When she came to the last word, her eyes were all brimming over with passionate diamond tears.

"Read it, Mabel, for *you* surely may read it. Oh! see what a noble heart he has! Read it, dear Mabel, and tell me what I shall say, or shall do. Oh! Mabel, how can I see him? How can I make an atonement for all that is past? How can I hope for forgiveness?"

Then I read poor Fritz's simple but generous letter, uncouth in its form and its diction, but noble, and tender, and true. The tears ran down *my* face also. But now, I felt, all would be well.

"Oh! Mabel, what can I do? Tell me, how can I repay him? Tell me, how can I face him—how atone for my folly—how show him my sorrow and truth?"

"Hilda, you must be calm. I will leave you alone now. Here is your letter. Lay all the kind words to heart, and be comforted, dearest. The book has brought blessings undreamt of. Lie still, and I soon will come back, dear." Then I kissed her, and went.

Poor fellow ! he had thrust the letter unwittingly into the leaves of the book that lay nearest, when summoned to Hilda, that night, by her terrified maid.

Across the Ahnensaal, where the glooms of an early winter's evening were falling through the tapestried chamber, to the room where I heard the balls rolling, I went as though in a dream, and yet with footsteps that were eager.

"Fritz, may I come in one moment?"

"Pray do"—and he came to the door.

"Dear Fritz, will you go to your wife?"

* * * * *

A new year had dawned upon them. Love, and devotion, and patience had conquered at last—and Hilda was happy.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE spring was coming to us; birds were singing; buds were bursting; the fresh green wanted but a day of genial sunshine, and all the glorious livery of tender green should clothe the world again with beauty. But a fair flower was drooping and dying; a young life was fading away; and the eyes that gazed out on the sunshine, telling of hope and of gladness, soon should be closed in death!

Fritz never left her. All the old gaiety vanished; all the old boyishness fled; all the quaint language forgotten. Fritz had grown into a man. He looked in his fair young wife's face, and knew she was dying; he smiled in her eyes, but his heart wept her already as dead.

Helmine von Wolfram, and Graf Karl were betrothed, and Hilda had pressed on their marriage with eager, affectionate haste. "It must not be put off," she said; "for in case of my dying beforehand they would have to delay it for months." Thus she talked, but not in her husband's hearing. He knew she was dying; she knew that he knew it; but no need to afflict him by words that were painful.

So Graf Karl and Helmine were married, and went on their wedding trip. A fortnight later, Fritz sat in his room all alone; his grief was silent and deep; he could bear no signs of condolence. But every relic of her whom he loved so entirely he gathered about him, looking in secret at treasures too sacred for other eyes. I cannot write of this. The blooming and beautiful Hilda lay now side by side in the chapel with little Hé!ène. She who had come out to meet and welcome me on my arrival, I now left lying lonely and cold in the treeless and desolate garden.

The Schloss was shut up. Fritz joined his father and mother. I never went there again. Two years later Count Stralenheim fell in a duel. Max and Hugo are still in the army, but Max gives his mother many a heartache.

Fritz has never married again. Sometimes, like an unquiet spirit, the mis-shapen dwarf will return for a day at a time, and haunt the cottage where his wife dwelt with her mother, a middle-aged, grief-stricken woman. The children stare at him with awe, horror, and wonder, and no man is found who will willingly speak to the dwarf. In the summer following Hilda's death we went to Colentz. Cuthbert took the advice of his German friends, and Von Groef was successful.

M. L.

THOMAS HOOD

THE works of an author are not always an exponent of his inner life and belief, any more than it is always the case that the child is father of the man. Many men, if judged by the writings, would be as different from what they really are, as the man of mature years is from the boy. The embryo does not always give us an idea of the full-grown animal, the bud does not always give us a fore-taste of the unclouded beauty of the rose. Nature often brings forth beauty from what, to our eyes, appears by no means instinct with it. The dark and unimpressive head of the tulip by nature's cunning artifice, becomes glorified and streaked with such colours as no painter's art could furnish; the dark green bud of the camillia slowly unfolds itself, and in its marvellous chasteness, colour, and symmetry, elicits our most intense admiration. Who could have dreamed that such transcendant beauty lay concealed beneath those lark-green coverings? who could have supposed that the radiant pearl was hid beneath the rough exterior of the oyster? The converse of this must also hold good—viz., that we cannot always judge of the shell from the pearl, the bud from the flower, the writer from his works. Some do deal so much in egotism, in delineations of self, that they appear in almost every sentence, and become positively nauseous. From others, you indirectly read their inner life in stray allusions, pathetic wailings over the lost and lovely, or longings after a new and higher state of existence. Some have the faculty of appearing in different dresses, so as hardly to be recognised. Who could at first believe that the author of "Salmagundi," was also that of the "Sketch Book," or recognise in Wilson, of the "Isle of Palms," and the "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life," the Christopher North of the "Recreations," and those "Doctes Ambrosianæ," so brimful of humour and rollicking fun? Or, to come closer to the point, who could trace in those shy, timid fawns, Curren, Ellis, and Acton Bell, the authoresses of those works which so took the world by surprise? Timidity seems to have been the first principle of their nature, and yet they have portrayed scenes the most extraordinary, in "Wuthering Heights" particularly, scenes of such harrowing interest, that it has often been a matter of surprise to us how they could have even conceived them.

The truth of the foregoing statement is particularly illustrated by the subject of our present sketch, Thomas Hood. No one could have supposed that the author of the *Comic Annual*, he who manufactured puns for the public, year by year, who seemed unable to speak but in a joke, and the lineaments of whose face almost provoked a smile—no

one could have supposed he was a poor invalid, often writing his puns when propped up by pillows, and tended by hands that loved him well. In addition to the ills to which his flesh was heir, his life was one continual scene of disaster, a weary struggle with the world, a fight, which, spite of *his* elastic spirits, wore him out at the early age of forty-six. Yet we never hear him complain, never hear a discontented murmur from his lips. Over the ills of his body he even jokes, and makes them a subject to excite his own and other people's risibility. Even when suffering the most excruciating torture, no hard words fell from his mouth, but, like the celebrated Robert Hall, he seems to have taken for his motto, his well-known remark—"I have not complained, have I? No! and I will not complain!" He had set himself an appointed task, and this he *would* do, nobly and well, spite of physical suffering, sorrow, or exile. In public, he had to bear the burden of a mind weighed down by that heaviest of all weights—debt—a debt not incurred by himself. But this was nothing compared to what he had to do when he entered the family circle. There he had to rouse the drooping spirits of those who were near and dear to him, who were feeling along with him the effects of the disasters that had fallen upon him. Is it to be wondered, then, that, amid the flashes of wit that came from him, and set the table in a roar, there should have been occasionally a tear in his eye, and a huskiness in his voice, as he thought of those dear ones whom God had given him.

It has been well said that "In mirth we are often expressing thoughts of the utmost seriousness, feelings of the greatest depth. Many men are too sensitive to give voice to their profound or enthusiastic emotions, except through the language of caricature, or the grotesque forms of drollery. We often meet men whose jests convey truths plucked from the bitterest personal experience, and whose very laughter tells of the 'secret wounds which bleed beneath their cloaks.'" How true is this of Hood! "He had," as he himself remarks, "to be a lively Hood to gain a livelihood." He lived under the stern taskmaster, Necessity, who made him laugh for his living, and only the ear of the thoughtful will understand that this laughter is often the humourist's way of crying. "Who," he asks, "would think of such a creaking, croaking, blood-spitting creature being the comic Hood?" Yet, with the blitheness of a grasshopper, he goes on trying to turn the creaking into what sounds to us like the cheeriest chirping.

It is a fact that Hood lived and laughed with death in sight for years. Hear what he says:—"The shades of the gloaming were stretching over my prospects; but I resolved that, like the sun, I would look on the bright side of everything. The raven croaked, but I persuaded myself it was the nightingale; there was the smell

of the mould, but I remembered that it nourished the violets. However my body may cry craven, my mind, luckily, had no mind to give in. The doctor declares that anatomically my heart is hung lower than usual; the more need to *keep it up*. Never meet trouble half-way, but let him have the whole walk for his pains. I have even known him to give up his visit in sight of the house. Besides, the best fence against care is a 'Ha! ha!'

Is there not manliness here, true nobleness of mind which *will* not be borne down by the earthly cares that press upon it, but, throwing all aside, *will* rise superior to them all? How infinitely preferable to that continual brooding over ills, real or imaginary, characteristic of the Byronic school! His was a heart that would not parade its sorrows before the public gaze, but bore them in silence, and made that public believe that all was well. His was a heart prepared for any fate, one that was determined to do its duty, and look on the bright side of everything.

"Night brings out stars, as sorrows show us truths." The green fields at no time seem so beautiful as when we gaze upon them after a long illness; the sorrows and troubles of others are never felt by us in their full intensity until we ourselves have gone through the same ordeal. The pangs that have rent our hearts, the woes that have weighed down our souls with a leaden weight, make our sympathies well out more tenderly towards those in distress. No doubt it was on this account that Hood so keenly felt for the sorrows of others, and so perseveringly wrote in their behalf. This feeling underlies far more of his poems than one is at first aware of, and even in his humorous pieces it occasionally creeps out. He seems to sit by the side of the poor and oppressed, and listening to their sighs, and drawing from them their inmost thoughts, places before us the bare truths in all their hideous deformity, and calls upon us to say—Shall these things be so? Occasionally he throws in some satirical or sarcastic remark which, by the contrast, helps to heighten the vividness of the picture, and increase our horror. In this way he has done more for this class than a host of others; for, by one stroke—"The Song of the Shirt"—he roused the indignation of a whole country, and compelled an investigation into a system the most iniquitous that ever disgraced a civilised country.

Hood, as we have said, was by no means a man upon whom fortune smiled, either at his birth, or during the whole course of his life. His constitution was consumptive, and during the greater part of his career he was subject to expectoration of blood. While quite young he threatened decline, and was sent for change of air, by some well-meaning but ignorant friends, to Dundee, which he was soon compelled to leave for London. Here he was engaged to assist the editor of the "London Magazine," where his

punning propensity broke out in humorous answers to correspondents, interspersed with more serious pieces, such as the ballad of "Fair Inez" and the poem of "Lycus, the Centaur." His "Odes and Addresses to Great People" were also published about this time, and had a great sale. In 1824 he married, and the early years of his married life were undoubtedly the happiest that Hood spent in this world. But he had need of all the sunshine and sweetness that could be gathered from them, for he was about to pass through fires of affliction and waters of tribulation. The organic disease of his heart—enlargement and thickening—gradually developed itself; hæmorrhage of the lungs followed; these were aggravated and increased by compulsory work, ever-recurring anxieties, and the ignorance of foreign doctors, until even his elastic spirits could bear up no longer, and he passed away into that land into which pain and sorrow dare not enter.

In 1826 appeared the first series of "Whims and Oddities," and in 1830 his "Comic Annual," both of which raised him still higher in the public estimation. In 1834, however, he was involved in pecuniary difficulties through the failure of a firm with which he was connected. Like Sir Walter Scott, he determined to make up his deficiencies by economising and living abroad. For five or six years he lived either at Coblenz or Ostend, issuing his "Comic Annual," year by year, to the delight of young and old, in spite of his consumptive cough and slowly wasting constitution. He returned in 1840, and next year was appointed editor of the "New Monthly," at a salary of £300; but this gleam of sunshine did not last long. Then came that unfortunate venture, "Hood's Magazine," which, though succeeding very well at first, finally went down, and with it all the energies of Thomas Hood. A pension of £100 from Sir Robert Peel's government, came too late to be of any effectual service, for the thread of life was almost unwound, the headache and the heartache were almost over. On Saturday, May 3, 1845, "after long struggling with the storms, and many tossings amongst the billows of life's sea, poor Hood went down. Many a wild wave had burst over him and his frail bark; still they rose and righted from each shock, bearing right gallantly on. And, just as he seemed to touch land mentally, and win a firm freehold whereon to stand and do yet higher work; just when the harbour was in sight, and multitudes of friends stood on shore, ready and eager to welcome the brave sailor, down he went in sight of them and home."

Having thus rapidly glanced at the life of the man, let us proceed to an investigation of his works, or to an analysis of the more prominent features of them. These may be classed under three great divisions: the *comic*, the *satirical* and the *serious*.

In the *comi*: element of his character Hood stands unrivalled. We could bring forward no name which could bear to be compared to him in his power of turning even the most trivial thing, and what would be beneath the notice of another, into a subject of laughter. He seems to be possessed with the God of Fun, and to be entirely under his control, bewildering us by his surprising power of turning everything into ridicule. He used to say that he thought all ideas entered his head upside down. It is, perhaps, for this reason that "he excelled all other men in the art of twisting words, of bringing into sudden contact two opposite ideas which at a touch should explode in laughter. In like manner he has the way of introducing the most startling, innocent-looking puns, and other ticklish twins, with great apparent artlessness and absence of effort." As examples of this, continued with reckless extravagance and unbounded exuberance, we have only to name some of his pathetic ballads, such as "Tim Turpin," "Faithless Sally Brown," and "Faithless Nelly Gray."

That Hood should have been able to have manufactured these jokes when his life was one long serious affliction, is a matter of wonder to us, but our wonder increases when we find that he makes these the subject of laughter to others. Speaking in a letter, to a friend respecting his illness and his emaciated frame he proceeds: "My coats have become great coats, and I seem to have retained my shadow and sold my substance. In short, as happens to prematurely old port wine, I am of a bad colour with very little body. But what then? That emaciated hand still *lends a hand* to embody in words and sketches the creations and recreations of a merry fancy; these gaunt sides yet shake as heartily as ever, at the grotesque, and Arabesque, and droll picturesques that my good genius charitably conjures up to divert me from more sombre realities. How else could I have converted a *serious illness* into a *comic wellness*?—by what other agency could I have transported myself, as a cockney would say, from *Dullage* to *Grinnage*?" Again, when he passed over to the Continent, after the failure of his friends, though he seems to have suffered severely in a storm which wrecked eleven vessels off the coast of Holland, and almost to have blown his last bubble, all he says is, that it was rather rough, and that it was on this occasion a *squeak for the comic*. Again, when speaking of the continental doctors, and their bleeding and blistering powers, he remarks: "I heard, the other day, of a man who had fifty-five leeches upon him. As for their blisters, one of them *would draw a waggon*." With reference to his expectoration of blood, he jokingly said, that his own epitaph should be "Here lies one, who, in the course of his life, spat more blood and made more puns than any of his contemporaries." But decidedly the best of all his puns upon

himself, was made by him at a dinner at Greenwich, where his health was proposed, in a very flattering manner, by Monckton Milnes, the present Lord Houghton. He said he ascribed the terms of the toast to his notoriously bad health; and assured them that their wishes had already improved it—that he felt a brisker circulation, and more genial warmth about the heart, and explained that a certain trembling of his hand was not from palsy, or his old ague, but from an inclination in his hand to shake itself with everyone present. The saddest joke of all, however, and that which hardly provokes a smile, was made when on his death-bed. Sir Robert Peel had not only procured him a pension, but also written to him a letter worthy of himself. The Premier was then living at Burleigh, and when he received the news of the pension he sent a letter by an express to him, so that Hood received it on the Saturday night instead of on Monday morning. Poor, dying Hood, with a heart full of gratitude towards his noble benefactor, must crack his joke, must allow the overflowing feelings of his soul to find vent in the following: “If it be well to be remembered by a minister, it is better still not to be forgotten by him in a ‘hurly Burleigh.’”

But we cannot follow him through all his comicalities, for time would not permit us, and the task would be endless. His jokes are, in general, so good, that it would be a matter of envy to the others if we were to cull any of them. All know his definition of an eclipse, “that it is along of the sun’s standing in his own light;” his reason for the title of the “Republic of Letters”—“Because its members had not a *sovereign* amongst them;” and his remark of Miss Berry’s, “Men aint what they was; it used to be females fust, now it’s furnitur.” His imaginary titles for books were also very good. Listen to a few of them: “Rules for Punctuation, by a Thorough-bred Pointer;” “On the Affinity of the Death Watch and the Sheep Tick;” “On Cutting off Heirs with a Shilling, by Barber Beaumont;” “Percy Vere in Forty Volumes;” and one that will be of some interest at present, “On the Right of the Poles to Stick Up for Themselves.”

But, even when punning, his play upon the words stimulates his fancy to produce the picture. Thus, as a representation of Hungerford Market, he gives us a stall laid out with all kinds of food, and two emaciated wretches gazing upon it with longing eyes; in “Animals, after Landseer,” the great painter is represented taking to his heels, with a whole menagerie after him; in the illustration, “Away with Melancholy,” he sketches a group of Cupids shouting with laughter while they tug out of sight an enormous *melon*, whose presence had stopped their antics; or in that terrible piece of satire, in which a masked and coronetted lady of rank, with pen for fishing-rod, weighted by a skull, stoops

smilingly to the side of a grave, and says to the rough man delving therein, "Short of bait; give me a worm!" or in that illustration of "Temperance," where a tipsy man is represented tottering to a pump, with his maudlin, "We hav'n't met this age!" These, and such as these, we can only hint at, the pictures themselves being inimitable and past description, and placing Hood before us, not only as a first-class punster, but also as a first-class sketcher.

Hood had also the extraordinary power of rising to the highest flights of even the tragic muse, sustaining these to the end, and then convulsing you with laughter by some odd and grotesque simile. The most remarkable instance of this kind to be found in our language is his "Demon Ship." In it he first gives a description of a storm, into which he collects and crowds everything that can add to its horror, and by this means produces a picture that may be safely put in comparison with that of any other author on the subject. Then come the sensations of death, his being picked up by the crew of the Demon Ship, and the feelings engendered in his mind when he awoke to consciousness, and saw the Grimly One that stood beside the mast:

" His cheek was black—his brow was black—his eyes and hair as dark;
His hand was black, and where it touched, it left a sable mark;
His throat was black, his vest the same, and when I looked beneath,
His breast was black—all, all was black, except his grinning teeth.
His sooty crew were like in hue, as black as Afric's slaves!
Oh, horror! e'en the ship was black that ploughed the inky waves!"

After making a vain petition to those grim beings, and begging them to spare his life, for love of truth and blessed mercy's sake, he continues:

" Loud laughed the Sable Mariner, and loudly in return,
His sooty crew sent forth a laugh, that rang from stern to stern—
A dozen pair of grimly cheeks were crumpled on the nonce—
As many sets of grinning teeth came shining out at once;
A dozen gloomy shapes at once enjoyed the merry fit,
With shriek and yell, and oaths as well, like demons of the pit.
They crowed their fill, and then the chief made answer for the whole—
'Our skins,' said he, 'are black, ye see, because we carry coal;
You'll find your mother, sure enough, and see your native fields—
For this here ship has picked you up—the 'Mary Ann of Shields!'"

This, though a remarkable, is by no means a solitary instance of his combination of the comic and tragic muse. We have only to name the "Desert Born," "The Wee Man," "A Plain Direction," "The Black Job," and a host of others whose names would be legion. Like Byron, he often introduces these at the end of a stanza, and changes in a moment your grave features, into the broad grin of laughter. No doubt the contrast adds to the ludicrous effect, and makes us enjoy it the more. So fond is he, indeed, of this, that you have to watch him closely, for often in his

most serious moods he is only luring you on, so that he may draw out your sympathies, and when your heart is full to overflowing, and you are surprised at this phase of his character, he suddenly turns the tables upon you, and laughs at your gullibility. Take a few instances of these, *ad aperturam*, for there is no lack. In describing the reception of the company at Miss Kilmansegg's party by her father, he says :

' Sir Jacob stood to welcome the crowd,
And rubbed his hands, and smiled aloud,
And bowed, and bowed, and bowed, and bowed,
Like a man who is sawing marble.'

Again at the christening of his daughter—

" Sir Jacob, the father, strutted and bowed,
And smiled to himself, and laughed aloud,
To think of his heiress and daughter—
And then in his pockets he made a grope,
And then, in the fulness of joy and hope,
*Seemed washing his hands with invisible soap,
In imperceptible water.*'

And in speaking of our midnight couch, he says :

" To the happy, a first-class carriage of ease,
To the Land of Nod, or where you please ;
But alas ! for the watchers and weepers,
Who turn, and turn, and turn again,
But turn, and turn, and turn in vain,
With an anxious brain,
And thoughts in a train
That does not run upon *sleepers.*"

In recording the death of Ben the Carpenter, he pathetically remarks :

" And then he tried to sing ' All's Well,'
But could not, though he tried ;
*His head was turned, and so he chewed
His pigtail till he died.*
His death, which happened in his birth,
At forty-odd befel ;
*They went and told the sexton, and
The sexton tolled the bell.*"

He thus beautifully describes Night, as Bianca dreamed.

" The flowers had shut their eyes—the zephyr light
Was gone, for it had rocked the leaves to sleep,
And all the little birds had laid their heads
Under their wings—*sleeping in feather beds.*"

In his four " Domestic Poems " he scatters his puns like wild-fire, and in such profusion that they will not bear quoting. But to our mind the quaintest, most innocent, and best of all his puns is in that verse where he naïvely says :

" And Christians love in the turf to lie,
Not in watery graves to be ;
*Nay, the very fishes would sooner die
On the land than in the sea.*'

In this serio-comic element of his character, Hood is perfectly unapproachable. He deals out his puns with such exuberance, and in such unexpected ways, that you positively marvel at the power which he displays. He is for ever playing some trick upon you, and leading you, in the most innocent manner, into the most droll dualities. "His wit," says one, "is the merest wild flower that flows in the flowing stream, swaying this way and that to breeze and ripple, with the most 'tricksy' tendencies, only it is perfect in kind, and serves to draw us near enough to see the deeper nature wherein lies the richer wealth." As remarkable instances of the truth of the foregoing and sustained efforts in this style, we would refer the reader to his "Retrospective Review," "Ode on a Distant View of Clapham Academy," "The Progress of Art," and "Morning Meditations."

We have said nothing of his power of punning in prose, but to show that he is equally at home in this as in poetry, we will quote the following paragraphs, in which the character of the Irishman is most graphically and comically delineated:—

"In politics he is commonly a partisan, his main aversion being a trimmer, or, as he describes him, a man who sits on both sides of the House at once. He holds the Emerald Isle to be the brightest ruby in the British Crown, and recommends England and Ireland to unite in repealing the Union. He hath a scheme for reducing tithes from a tenth to a fifth, and another for furthering the education of the poor by means of Sunday-schools twice a week.

"In hospitality, he is prince-like, for he giveth all he hath, though it be but a potatoe. 'It is not much,' he saith, 'but you are as welcome as the flowers in May, if it was twice as little.'

"In amicability, he will stick to his friend as long as he hath a stick to do it withal; for he is not so much a member of a club as a club is a member of him—to wit, his shillelagh, which, as it cannot write written hand, always makes its mark. To see him in glory, as the *Fidus Achates* of all mankind, you must behold him at the fair of Donnybrook, where the heads look up at the cudgels like a Scottish man at an auld acquaintance, when he says unto him, 'Come, gie's yer cracks.'

"Next to Donnybrook, his delight is a duel, or pistol-duet, wherein he prefers to play first rather than second; but he takes it amiss if there be not ability even on his own side. Rather than fail of a challenge, he would call out a deaf man to a ball in his ear; nay, he hath been known, for want of other satisfaction, to fly to self-satisfaction, by blowing out his own proper brains. Hence, war, which is the multiplication of a duel, is quite his element, only that he is far more fierce in multifarious fight, his last threat to his enemy being that he will 'Cut off his head, and throw it in his face.'

"In love, his flame is like unto a kitchen fire, which requireth a wide range, for he is a sexagenarian, or in love with some sixty of the sex at once! yet, for all this special licence, doth not incline to marry—"For

it is better,' he saith, 'to be a-walking with a darling jewel of a girl, by the sweet light of the young May moon, in the beautiful groves of Blarney, than to be the man in the honey-moon, looking about for himself with a lantern.'

"Sometimes, however, he will hunt a fortune, by way of chance—but he is apt to outrun it, as well as his own, whereupon he betakes himself to poteen, which consols him for his single blessedness by making it seem double. To conclude, he ends, as he had lived, with spirit; for, taking a drop of the creature, he dies like a creature of the drop—to wit, in a rope; for why? As he saith, 'It is better to hang than to be dependent.'"

The satirical power of Hood is best displayed in the "Ode to Rae Wilson," his "Tract," his "Open Question," and in that most extraordinary poem, "Miss Kilmansegg." The first was written because Mr. Wilson had characterised his verses as "profaneness and ribaldry," and spoken of him and his eternal prospects in the very measured terms. This was more than even good-natured Hood could stand, and so he came forward as the champion of toleration and genuine religion. He sharply reproves that bigotry of opinion which considers itself right, and every other person wrong; honestly confesses that, in his opinion—

"Spontaneously to God should tend the soul,
Like the magnetic needle to the pole,"

and that men should not be driven to good as cattle to the slaughter, or that there can be an easy way to heaven for the rich, "whereas the poor and lowly must work their passage, as they do in ships." Then turning the whole force of his sarcasm on his aggressor, he attacks spiritual pride and hypocrisy, and in a most beautiful manner elaborates that remark of our Divine Example, that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, and that they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth:—

"Shun-pride, O Rae! whatever sort beside
You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride!
A pride there is of rank, a pride of birth,
A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,
A London pride—in short, there be on earth
A host of prides, some better and some worse;
But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaint,
The proudest swell's a self-elected saint.

* * * * *

The Saints!—the Formalists, the extra pious,
Who think the mortal husk can save the soul,
By trundling, with a mere mechanic bias,
To church, just like a lignum-vitæ bowl!

The Saints! the Pharisees, whose beadle stands
Beside a stern coercive kirk,
A piece of human mason-work,
Calling all sermons contrabands
In that great temple that's not made with hands!

Thrice blessed, rather, is the man with whom
 The gracious prodigality of nature,
 The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the bloom,
 The bounteous providence in every feature,
 Recall the good Creator to his creature,
 Making all earth a fane; all heaven its dome!
 To *his* tuned spirit the wild heather-bells
 Ring Sabbath knells;
 The jubilate of the soaring lark
 Is chaunt of clerk;
 For choir, the thrush and the gregarious linnet;
 The sod's a cushion for his pious want;
 And, consecrated by the heaven within it
 The sky-blue pool, a font—
 Each cloud-capped mountain is a holy altar;
 An organ breathes in every grove;
 And the full heart's a psalter,
 Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love!

* * * * *

Oh! simply open wide the temple door,
 And let the solemn, swelling organ greet,
 With *voluntaries* meet,
 The *willing* advent of the rich and poor!
 And while to God the loud Hosanna's soar,
 With rich vibrations from the vocal throng—
 From quiet shades that to the woods belong,
 And brooks with music of their own,
 Voices may come to swell the choral song
 With notes of praise they learned in musings lone."

In his Tract it is the same subject—toleration of thought in religious matters, and a vindication of his faith against those who mistook the real purpose of his wit. But there was little need of this, for "his religion breathed through all his life, workdays as well as Sundays. It ascended like incense in his own household, sweetening the sick chamber, enriching the young life of his little ones, hallowing his love, and passing with the force of tenderest pity into his poetry. It enlarged his heart spiritually, until his charity could embrace those whom the world had cast out, and those for whom the sects were too narrow." But in proportion as he felt the truths of religion, and from his shy nature would not openly declare his feelings, so intensely did he hate all cant, and those who from over-zeal and false reasoning made that religion he so loved be evil spoken of. It is such as these that he satirises in his "Open Question"—those who lay the blame of all sin to the breaking of the Sabbath. With them, as Hood says, "it is the source of every crime in the county—the parent of every illegitimate child in the parish. The picking of a pocket is ascribed to the picking of a daisy—the robbery on the highway to a stroll in the fields—the incendiary fire to a hot dinner,—on Sunday. All other causes—the want of education—the want of moral culture—the want of bread itself, are totally repudiated. The criminal him-

self is made to confess at the gallows that he owes his appearance on the scaffold to a walk with 'Sally in our alley' on the 'day that comes between a Saturday and Monday.' "

"Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg" is by far the severest satire we have in our language on the love of gold, and the adoration paid to it. In a grotesque form it performs its part as successfully as ever Horace, Juvenal, Swift, or Pope did. After reading it you have a greater contempt for those who so far forget their manhood as to give themselves up to the debasing worship of the golden calf. It satirises most successfully that opinion predominant with some, that wealth confers upon its possessor the right of breaking through the usages of society, and of taking liberties which would not be tolerated in those of poorer means. The final catastrophe, though extremely ludicrous, is still true to the aim of the poem, and proves that any passion carried to excess will retaliate upon the actor.

The comic side of Hood's character was the one by which he was best known during his life; but as the grave, the dark and lonesome grave, closed o'er him, and that voice that made sport of all men and everything was for ever hushed, the public began to see that there was an underlying melancholy, an under-current of seriousness, which *now* struck the heart as do the tones of a funeral bell. When reading his works more attentively they discovered instances of this where they had never before supposed them to exist; they found in the midst of his most uproarious punning thoughts that made them pause and deliberate, and at last come to the conclusion that the author must have had a deep meaning in his punning, a deep purpose in his extremest jokes. It is true that Hood loved a joke for its own intrinsic merit too much, and that his greatest truths are conveyed to us under the veil of humour. Divest them, however, of these, remove the gilded frame which serves to distract your attention from the picture, and you will find that truths of the utmost value to mankind, pathos of the deepest sort, feelings the strongest for the sufferings of others, lie buried beneath them. Let his wit have its way, let his humour revel in that region peculiarly his own, and when they have had their dance, when they have thrown themselves into the most grotesque attitudes possible, they will in the end settle down into a rich precipitate of golden wisdom.

In speaking of his more serious poems we do not intend to refer to those by which he is so well known, such as the "Song of the Shirt," "Eugene Aram's Dream," and the "Bridge of Sighs." These have become with us "household words," jewels carefully treasured up in the inmost recesses of our hearts, as "things of beauty and as joys for ever." To others, not less beautiful in their

own way, and often overlooked, we would beg to introduce the reader.

In this division of his poetry Hood's imagination has a much wider range, and proves itself to be of a very high order. But it is his chief glory that he was the friend of the poor and desolate, and that he at no time wrote so well as when writing in their behalf. His warm humanity, which pervades all his writings, and is one of the finest traits of his character, becomes God-like as he writes of those overwrought ones who live high up the ricketty, dark, and unwholesome staircases of his own native London; who never gaze on the sun but through a dark cloud of smoke, and to whom the green fields are but the remembrance of childhood's days. Their longings after a better state of existence he photographs with a master hand, worthily obtaining for himself that monument sketched by his own dying hand, bearing the inscription, "He sung the 'Song of the Shirt.'"

But though he could thus so faithfully describe the yearnings of the poorest poor after the free and glorious gifts of God, he could as vividly portray the horror of the lady fair as she lay in her soft, warm couch, and dreamed of the evils she had "wrought by want of thought." This, the directly opposite view of the subject from his "Song of the Shirt," is to be found in his "Lady's Dream," which contains as great an advocacy, as deep a pathos, and as startling an effect as is to be found in his prince of songs. In terror wild she starts up, and, gazing on the vacant air, seems to see the phantoms of "death, death, and nothing but death," flitting past her:—

"The very curtain shook,
Her terror was so extreme;
And the light that fell on the brodered quilt
Kept a tremulous gleam;
And her voice was hollow, and shook as she cried—
'Oh me! that awful dream!

And oh! those maidens young,
Who wrought in that dreary room,
With figures drooping and spectres thin,
And cheeks without a bloom;
And the voice that cried, For the pomp of pride,
We haste to an early tomb!

For the pomp and pleasure of pride
We toil like Afric slaves,
And only to earn a home at last
Where yonder cypress waves!
And then they pointed—I never saw
A ground so full of graves!"

She, exempt from grief, had never given any attention to the sorrows she might have soothed and the unregarded tears; requiring in no way to exert herself for her daily bread, she had never paid

the slightest heed to the many, many troubles endured by thousands and tens of thousands in their course through life; gratified in every whim, she had never thought of the hearts that daily break, the tears that hourly flow, the naked she might have clothed, and the hungry she might have fed. But now all is before her as a vividly real picture, and in the horror created by it she cries out—

“ Woe, woe for me if the past should be
Thus present when I die !

No need of sulphureous lake,
No need of fiery coal ;
But only that crowd of human kind,
Who wanted pity and dole,
In everlasting retrospect
Will wring my sinful soul !

Alas ! I have walked through life
Too heedless where I trod ;
Nay, helping to trample my fellow worm,
And fill the burial sod,
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls
Not unmarkèd of God !

I dressed as the noble dress,
In cloth of silver and gold,
With silk, and satin, and costly furs,
In many an ample fold ;
But I never remembered the naked limbs
That froze with winter's cold.

The wounds I might have healed !
The human sorrow and smart !
And yet it never was in my soul
To play so ill a part ;
But evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart ’ ’

It is supposed that Hood obtained his idea of the “ Haunted House ” from an old place named Lake House, where he resided for some time previous to his migration to the Continent. It was in a shocking state of repair, and in the twilight the rats used to come and peep out of the holes in the wainscot. From the feelings engendered by such a place, he has produced a poem the most weird we ever read, into which is collected everything that can add to the horror that comes over you, and culminating in the utmost feelings of awful solitariness. It has been well said that “ it is one of the most perfect pictures of still life to be found in all poetry. It is true and graphic, as though the writer had spent years on years in some such desolate ruin, on the shadowy border-land of life and death ; peered into all the dim and dusty nooks, with the vision strained to that preternatural acuteness which takes note of the minutest details of physical circumstances ; had lain awake o' nights, and felt the phantoms flitting through the gloom, or caught glimpses of them crossing the moon-rays ; had known all

the mute significance of the conscious silence, and listened until there came from out it those strange sounds that underlined the stillness, as it were, and made it more boding and fearful! It required the finest mental apprehension, the white heat of imagination, the most sensitive perception, to take such a picture as this, wherein the indefinite is caught and fixed so definitely; the dim and shadowy is turned to tangible reality with a most startling distinctness; the abode of death, darkness, and doom is quickened and set swarming with ghastly life; and a living, lonely human being is thus isolated and suspended betwixt the spirit-world of the air overhead and the reptile-world of crumbling ruin at the feet." What also adds very much to the solitary feeling, and deepens the gloom, is the refrain which every now and then comes in when the feelings are strung to the highest pitch:—

"O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit haunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!"

We cannot criticise at length the whole of his serious poems, and will only mention the more important of them. His "Elm-Tree, a Dream in the Woods," is very pretty and full of deep pathos. As it stands in the silent air, awaiting its doom, you seem to hear the fearful tree

"Through every fibre, twig, and leaf,
With aspen tremour shake;
Through trunk and root,
And branch and shoot
A low complaining make."

And when it has fallen, and death approaches "with silent pace, as shadows come, and dark as shadows be," frightening by his grimly presence the dappled fawn, the melodious thrush, and the whistling ousel, his laugh of horrid glee and his exultant words are wafted towards us as he utters denunciations against the whole human race. Again, in his "Plea of the Midsummer Fairies," he makes those dear loves of our childhood twine still closer around our hearts; recalls many a pleasure that had been driven back far into the recesses of memory, and covered by the accumulating dust of years; and shows us, as we had never thought of it before, that immortality which Shakespeare has conferred on the fairy mythology by his "Midsummer Night's Dream." His "Hero and Leander," particularly at the beginning, is beautiful and full of grand imagery, and as you read you seem to see their parting; his leaping from "the rocky crest into the scooping brine, that shocks his bosom with a double thrill;" Hero "on her bleak summit, weeping and bereft," praying to the King of Waves and brother of High Jove to shield him from all harm and bring him safe to land;

you seem to see the face meeting him, "fair as the wave-bleached lily of the stream," which took from him all power, and carried him beneath, "as Hero's name dies bubbling on his lips;" you seem to see her bearing him "through the dusky green," to that ocean-floor whereon she lays him, that she may gaze with her hungry eyes upon his lovely face; you seem to hear her song, soft and low, that she might not disturb his slumbers, and see her start as she gazes into those glassy eyes, never more to be radiant with the glory of life; you seem to hear her wail of agony, as "lifeless, but beautiful" he "lies across her knee with cheek still colder than the stilly wave," and her resolve that since love had been death, death should also be love to her; you seem to see her bearing him to the clear blue air, and laying his body on the glowing sand, the fishers watching her unavailing efforts to restore him to life; her diving to find a softer bed for him, his removal by the fisherman, her frantic cries and gestures, her lone appearance on the rocks, and her leap, like a seal, into the wave; and, in fine, you seem to see "the weeping maiden on high Sestos' steep, waving aloft her bright and ruddy torch" to guide that Leander whose wet lips she never more would press; you seem to experience her feelings as no Leander comes, and the waves howl into her ear the horrid tale that "Leander floats amid the surge;" you seem to hear her resolve to lie beside him "on the same green pillow that curled above them with its dewy spray;" and

" One moment then, upon the dizzy verge
 She stands, with face upturned against the sky;
 A moment more, upon the foamy surge
 She gazes, with a calm, despairing eye;
 Feeling that awful pause of blood and breath
 Which life endures when it confronts with death.

Then from the giddy steep she madly springs,
 Grasping her maiden robes, that vainly kept
 Panting abroad, like unavailing wings,
 To save her from her death. The sea-maid wept,
 And in a crystal cave her corse enshrined;
 No meaner sepulchre should Hero find!"

Hood's minor poems are, we think, underrated, darkened by the shadows which fall upon them from such poems as his "Bridge of Sighs," "Song of the Shirt," and "Eugene Aram's Dream." He is a perfect master of rhythm, and can adapt his measure to the subject, so that the very jingle of the lines suggests to us what he is endeavouring to illustrate. In these short pieces, also, he has more openly unbosomed himself to the world, shown us more vividly the tender feelings which underlay that propensity of his nature which compelled him to make fun of everything. Where could you find better illustrations of this than in his "Lee Shore,"

“Death Bed,” “Ruth,” “Autumn,” “The Exile,” and “The Sea of Death?” How tenderly, too, does he touch on the past in his “Retrospective Review!” and in that other poem where he says—

“I remember, I remember,
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn ;
 He never came a wink too soon,
 Nor brought too long a day ;
 But now I often wish the night
 Had borne my breath away !

I remember, I remember,
 Where I was used to swing,
 And thought the air must rush as fresh
 To swallows on the wing ;
 My spirit flew in feathers then,
 That is so heavy now,
 And summer pools could hardly cool
 The fever on my brow !

I remember, I remember,
 The fir-trees dark and high ;
 I used to think their slender tops
 Were close against the sky ;
 It was a childish ignorance,
 But now 'tis little joy
 To know I'm farther off from heaven
 Than when I was a boy.”

But the shades of the gloaming were spreading over his prospects ; the curtain that separated the seen from the unseen was about to be uplifted, and he was to pass into that land in which there would be no more heartache and headache, no more sorrow, no more pain. But as he lay, hearing, as he himself expresses it, “Death’s door creaking on its hinges,” he must touchingly describe his sensations, and “show us the aspect of the man facing eternity, leading us to believe that he had found his exaltation on the cross of suffering, knowing that, of all this world’s highest places, it could lift the spirit nearest heaven ; and that when he felt the hand of ‘one standing in shade’ was upon him, he likewise felt the transfiguring touch of one standing in light.” Listen to the last words he ever wrote :—

“Farewell life ! my senses swim,
 And the world is growing dim ;
 Thronging shadows cloud the light,
 Like the advent of the night.
 Colder, colder, colder still,
 Upwards steals a vapour chill ;
 Strong the earthly odour grows—
 I smell the mould above the rose !

Welcome life ! the spirit strives !
 Strength returns, and hope revives
 Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
 Fly like shadows at the morn,—

O'er the earth there comes a bloom ;
 Sunny light for sullen gloom ;
 Warm perfume for vapour cold ;—
 Ismell the rose above the mould !”

Our task is done. We put aside his poems, we close his memorials with lingering regret, and think of the life of the man who so catered to the taste of the public for fun. After all, it is Hood's life which leaves the most indelible impression upon us—which moves our sympathies, and shows us what a brave heart was concealed under that frail tenement of clay. When we have come to the conclusion that his race is about to terminate, that the golden bowl is about to be broken, we are amazed to find that the frail bark has weathered the storm, and seems more buoyant than ever. We wonder, and search for the cause, and find, as Longfellow has beautifully expressed it—

“ As torrents in summer,
 Half-dried in their channels,
 Suddenly rise, though the
 Sky is still cloudless ;
 For rain has been falling
 Far off at their fountains ;
 So hearts that are fainting
 Grow full to o'erflowing,
 And they that behold it
 Marvel, and know not
 That God at their fountains
 Far off has been raining.”

We look at the emaciated frame, at the figure propped up by pillows, and making jokes on his own infirmities ; we read his Memorials, which are, in reality, an invalid's diary, an unvarnished account of the many, many ills to which his flesh was heir ; and after we have done all this, what is the impression left on our mind ? That of the most heroic endurance, the most uncomplaining meekness of spirit—the mortal triumphing over the ills of mortality, and transfiguring them till they became the veriest passing appearances ; in fine, the image of a beautiful patience smiling from out the pain. We find that his idea of life was not that we should carp and cavil at our alien lot, but that, looking upon the bright side of everything, we should work while our day lasts ; that while sitting in darkness we should turn the sunniest side of our nature towards our fellow-men, so that when we are committed to the dust, and the spirit ascends to God who gave it, our memories may be fondly cherished, not only by those dear ones that watched by our dying couch, and cooled our aching head, but also by a large circle of friends, who have been influenced by our example and benefited by our means, and who will be conscious to themselves that the fragrance of our good deeds has ascended to the throne above with as sweet a savour as that of a morning sacrifice.

THE HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

PART III.

MILITARY OPERATIONS OF 1644—BATTLE OF MARSTON MOOR— THE NEW MODEL ARMY—NASEBY—THE BITTER END.

ON the 25th September the solemn covenant was taken by 222 members at Westminster ; and in the same month the Scots came on the scene as the declared allies of the Parliament. The Parliament, thus reinforced, opened the campaign of 1644 with considerable vigour, but not with uniform success. An action near Newark, between Prince Rupert and Sir John Meldrum, terminated most unfortunately for the latter, who entered into a capitulation, surrendering 3000 small arms and 11 guns. This disaster was, however, in some measure compensated for by a brilliant success gained by Fairfax over Colonel Bellasis at Selby, on the 11th of April. The result of this action was the retirement of the Marquis of Newcastle to York, and the abandonment of a great part of the East Riding to the enemy.

On the 20th of April, Fairfax effected a junction at Tadcaster with the Scottish army under the Earl of Leven, nearly 20,000 strong. Newcastle being superior in cavalry, Fairfax summoned from the eastern counties the troops under Manchester, with which Cromwell was serving. The latter in their march reduced Lincoln, capturing many prisoners and stores ; and on the 3rd of June joined the allied armies before York. It was time for the cause of the Parliament to be reinvigorated, for Prince Rupert, going forth conquering, if not to conquer, was winning town after town. His relief of York in the face of the combined armies opposed to him is probably his most notable feat of generalship. On the 2nd of July the hostile armies confronted each other at Hessam, otherwise Marston Moor. It is said that the Marquis of Newcastle was opposed to fighting, holding it more prudent to await the arrival of Colonel Claverney with 3000 men from the north. The royal forces at this time amounted to 14,000 foot, 9000 horse, and 25 guns. Rupert, with the imposing force of 5000 cavalry, was posted on the right, the left was led by Sir Charles Lucas and Colonel Hurry. I cannot ascertain by whom the centre was commanded ; but Goring, Porter, and Tessier served in it. Of the Parliamentary army, the right wing, consisting of 80 troops, probably nearly 4000 men, was under the command of Sir Thomas Fairfax. The centre

was led by Lord Fairfax, having Leven with his Scots on the left; they in their turn being flanked by cavalry under Manchester and Cromwell. As far as a non-military man can make out the place of the engagement, Rupert seems to have weakened his line of battle by unduly extending it. The artillery, which was singularly ill-served on both sides during the war, commenced firing at three o'clock, and continued a desultory cannonade for about two hours. Then ensued a lull, broken by the advance of Manchester and the Scots infantry, who, at a double, cleared a small ditch and bank separating the two armies, and had the best of it in a close engagement.

Rupert's cavalry outflanked Cromwell's division, and took it in the rear, a position from which, as in the charge of the heavy cavalry at Balaclava, the more resolute troopers cut their way out. Meanwhile a charge of the Scots regiments, attached to Manchester's left, broke and utterly routed the Prince's right wing. Newcastle's white coats, the *corps d'élite* of the army, fell almost to a man. On the Parliament's right, however, things had gone badly, for although Fairfax had some success in a charge, which seems to have been made obliquely, to the support of Cromwell, the impetuous advance of the Royalist cavalry under Hurry threw Lord Fairfax's raw levies into disorder, hurled them back on Sir Thomas Fairfax's infantry, and disorganised the Scots in reserve. Cromwell, returning in the nick of time from the pursuit of the Prince's right, by dint of hard fighting routed the Royal forces, taking all their artillery and 10,000 small arms, 100 stand of colours, and 1500 prisoners. A careful review of the number of slain, as given by Rushworth, fixes the Royalists' loss in killed at 3000; that of the victors at 1150, although they modestly reduced it to 300.

This was about the turning-point of the war. The defeat of the allied armies would have thrown the neutrals into the cause of the king, and have opened the south to his advance. As it was, all the fruits of Rupert's victories were lost in a day. Soon after the battle York surrendered, Newcastle was taken, and the hopes of the king's party, in this their own coign of vantage, dwindled away. The partisans of the throne, however, did not escape reverses elsewhere. Lord, late Sir Ralph, Hopton, who had projected an inroad into Sussex and Kent, was routed on Cheriton Down by Sir William Waller, to whom Winchester and Andover opened their gates. The king's movements seemed to have been as follows. Anticipating a victory, on the part of Rupert, in the north, he had on the 3rd of June left Oxford with the intention of joining him, and made his way to Worcester, watched by Waller, while Essex was ordered to Somersetshire. Charles, however, proved himself a better general

than his adversary, whom he out-manceuvred and threw on a false scent. Then, after winning some advantage in an interchange of blows between his rear guard and an opposing detachment at Copredy Bridge, he made for the west. Waller abandoned the quest of him, and retired to London. The result of the king's expedition was the capitulation of Essex's army, abandoned by their leader, in Cornwall. It speaks ill for Essex's resolution, that his subordinate, Sir William Balfour, with 3000 horse, broke through the enemy and escaped. On the 15th of October the king left Somerset for his old quarters at Oxford, the neighbourhood of which he proceeded to clear of the enemy by despatching the Earl of Northampton to raise the siege of Banbury. The Earl performed the service effectually, but his absence reduced the forces under the immediate command of the king to an inferiority in point of number to the opposing Parliamentary armies of Essex, Manchester, and Waller. The Parliamentary armies of the west, disarmed by virtue of the recent capitulation, had been well supplied, and their ranks were filled up by the addition of 5000 Londoners. The king would have done well, ere giving battle, to have awaited the junction of Northampton's detachment, and that of 3000 cavalry, the defeated heroes of Marston Moor. Near the old battle-ground of Newbury, the combined forces of the three leaders fell in with the king. As well the preliminary movements as the tactics of the day seem somewhat confused; but the King's dispositions, in the face of enemies whose combination he could scarcely have foreseen, appear to have been in the main good.

At about three o'clock on Sunday, the 27th October, the battle began. The Parliamentary cavalry, in which served the gallant Balfour, advanced with resolution; the foot, fighting desperately, followed, and, by push of pike, drew the Cavaliers from their entrenchments; the London train-bands singing psalms as they marched gallantly on. The "*Mercurius Aulicus*" (Royal Gazette) claimed a glorious victory for the king, but this untruthfully, inasmuch as the result was a serious loss of men and material, and the retreat of the Royal army to Oxford. Essex, who was suffering from illness, took no part in the action, and Cromwell improved the occasion by accusing him of an intention rather to reduce the king to terms than to annihilate his hopes. In the west-midland counties, Colonel Massey, a high-minded and active officer in the service of the Parliament, had rendered signal services to the cause. His remark on the taking of Malmesbury is eminently creditable to him. A demand having been made that the town should be given up to plunder, he rebuked the troops in these words—"I cannot judge any part of England to be an enemy's country, nor any English town capable of devastation by English soldiers." The mere

mention of the illustrious names of those in the Royal army who fell in the most insignificant skirmish will convince the reader how sorely Charles's resources were reduced by casualties. The Parliament, having a larger population to recruit from, suffered in a less proportion. In the winter of 1644, they proceeded to form that new model army which played so important a part in our history. The scarcely concealed object of this disposition was the elimination of what little remained in their ranks of the aristocratic element, to the preponderance of which they attributed the undecisive character of their previous successes. By "the self-denying ordinance," members of the House were declared ineligible for command. Notwithstanding that Essex and others resigned their commissions, Cromwell (equally disqualified) was allowed to remain in the service, and was entrusted with the command of a strong body of cavalry, with which he sadly harried the Royalists in Oxfordshire. On the 7th of May, 1645, the king took the field, relieved Chester, besieged by Sir William Brewerton, and had the best of it in some minor engagements. A signal triumph was the capture of Leicester, on the 30th of May. Things looked more hopefully elsewhere for the Royal cause. In Somerset its adherents had gained some slight advantages. Fairfax was beaten in a smart cavalry action before Oxford, and Skippon fared badly in an attack on Burstal House, near Thame.

After this brief burst of very sickly sunshine came darkness as of Egypt. On the 5th of June, Fairfax quitted his quarters before Oxford, and marched northwards, to give the king battle. By the 12th of the same month, he had got unobservedly to Gilsborough, close to the Royal quarters. Cromwell, who was keeping an eye on the fen counties, was sent for on the 11th; on the 13th he obeyed the mandate, and reinforced his superior officer with 600 good cavalry. Councils of war were held by both armies, Cromwell's appearance coinciding with the session of that of the Parliament. Much indecision marked the deliberations of the Royal army. There were ugly fears about the king's ability to extricate his rear, if he were to retire from Harborough to Leicester. There were marchings and counter-marchings, and feverish scoutings, to very little purpose. On Saturday, the 14th of June, Fairfax advanced, by three in the morning, from Gilling towards Naseby. By five, his army *rendezvoused* near the town. The last lying speech which was put in the mouth of the king's scouts was that Fairfax was retreating. Acting on this belief, the Royal army quitted a good position about a mile south of Harborough to take up another nearer the enemy. The Royal forces were thus commanded: the centre by the king in person, the right by Prince Rupert and Prince Maurice, the left by Sir Marmaduke Langdale, and the battalions of the reserve by the Earl of Lindsay and Lord Ashley, Lord Bard, and Sir George Lisle.

Of the Parliament, Fairfax and Rippon commanded the main body, Cromwell the right wing, and Ireton the left—the reserves being under the command of Rainsborough, Hammond, and Pride. The battle commenced at about ten, with a fiery charge of Rupert on Ireton's forces, which, despite a vigorous resistance, he broke, taking their general, who was severely wounded, but ultimately recaptured. Lord Ashley, with the reserve, on the wing opposed to Ireton also made good progress, in spite of the difficulty of the ground. A dashing attack made by Cromwell on Langdale's columns meanwhile checked their advance, outflanked them, and hurled them back in wild disorder. Now was the critical moment for the "white king." To do or die was evidently the more prudent resolve; but ere that resolve could be acted on, a misconception approaching a panic seized his cavalry. They could not be brought to the charge; the infantry gave ground, and the battle—and with it the realm—was lost. Clarendon puts the loss of officers alone in the Royal army at 150. The triumph of the Parliamentary cause was complete. Vittoria is almost the only parallel in modern history—the capture of a king's carriage and correspondence being common to both actions. Cromwell's despatch to the Parliament—which despatch may be seen in Carlyle's "Letters and Speeches"—is a model of conciseness and modesty, while the description of the battle given by the editor is strikingly picturesque. One of the most stirring of Macaulay's lays is that in which Ireton's sergeant sings an *Io Pæan* over his triumph. The main—perhaps, the only fault—about the ballad, is its finish. Obadiah binds their kings in chains, and their nobles in links of iron (how did he get his name?) would have used much worse metre and much more inverted phraseology than are perceptible in such stanzas as these :

"They are here !—they rush on ! We are broken—we are gone !
 Our left is borne before them, like stubble on the blast,—
 O Lord, put forth thy might !—O Lord defend the right !—
 Stand back to back, in God's name, and fight it to the last !

Stout Skippon hath a wound—the centre hath given ground ;
 Hark ! hark ! what means the trampling of horsemen on our rear ?
 Whose banners do I see, boys ? 'Tis he !—thank God, 'tis he, boys !
 Bear up another minute—brave Oliver is here !

Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,
 Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dykes,
 Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the accurst,
 And at the shock have scattered the forest of his pikes !"

The defeat at Naseby was crushing ; the history of the Royal cause, after that event, is an almost unchequered chronicle of losses. Leicester fell on the 17th of July. On the 11th September Bristol yielded. On the 14th of October Newcastle surrendered to the

Scots. Chester, Hereford, and Worcester were all lost; and the unhappy king, at the commencement of the year 1646, was lord of but little more than himself—that heritage of woe. The last stronghold which held out was Raglan Castle, maintained by the Marquis of Worcester until the 15th of August in that year. However haughty and high-handed the king might have been when, in the plenitude of his power, he set at naught the rights of the Commons, there is something very touching about his fall. We recognise the resemblance which Charles's devoted adherents loved to trace between their master and the fugitive king of Israel. Fleeing "like a bird unto the mountains" became the least hopeless expedient of the fallen monarch. On the 27th of April, accompanied by only two attendants—Dr. Hudson and Mr. Ashburnham—he quitted Oxford in disguise, and taking the route of Brentford, Harrow, St. Albans, and Harborough, threw himself on the mercy of the Scots at Newark. It was at one time contemplated to surrender to Fairfax, and the Presbyterians consider that that leader's magnanimity would have been equal to the occasion. After the surrender of the king, the towns of Newcastle, Oxford, Banbury, Wallingford, and Farringdon, were, by his direction, given up to the conquering party. The Scottish nation has been unduly censured, and perhaps too warmly defended, for the conduct of the army in giving up their royal prisoner. The negotiations respecting his safe keeping savour much of pedantry. The Scottish army received £200,000 on account of their arrears of pay, and had certain promises of ulterior advantages (in the result unfulfilled) made them; and marched northwards, leaving the king at Newcastle, to be dealt with by Commissioners of both Houses. How far the payment of the arrears was the prime cause of their thereunto moving is a delicate question. A somewhat analogous case, save in point of pecuniary consideration, is to be found in the circumstances attending the surrender of Napoleon I. to the captain of a British man-of-war. No Englishman blushes for the conduct of his country in declining to break up an alliance for the sake of an unsolicited fugitive.

Time will not admit of our dealing with the personal history of the king in the honourable captivity to which the Parliament consigned him, nor with the more than thorough way in which Cromwell dealt with resistance in Ireland and Scotland. The tale is told with anything but sentimentality in the pages of Carlyle. To him belongs the credit of having, as the phrase is, rehabilitated the lord-general. Doubtlessly the author has done justice to his favourite. The adoration paid by the brilliant man of letters to the memory of the relentless man of the sword is the very sublimity of hero-worship; but, try as I will, I cannot overcome my

repugnance to Cromwell. As we read the now famous letters, and behold their writer as himself "the secret spirit free," we seem to be contemplating a son of Lerniah, an Attila, the man of the time, inflexible as destiny—a man by whom the Lord, in some sort, sent deliverance to His people. To me, at least, he suggests such thoughts as present themselves on the contemplation of the forms of the earliest inhabitants of our globe. Strong of claw and iron of hide, they had their day, and in some mysterious way prepared the world for gentler denizens. Have we not heard enough of the snivel-and-smite stamp of demigod? There is an indication of healthy reaction in the terms in which Kingsley treats the subject. "There is," says he, "a sentimental admiration of imperialism growing up now-a-days under the pretentious title of hero-worship and strong government."

The fate of the king hung long in the balance; the infatuated man could scarcely be persuaded that the Parliament, which had deprived many of his subjects of their lives and himself of his liberty, would have the hardihood to consummate their success by the execution of their sovereign. Even in battle he had clung to the belief that the opposing party would have shrunk with horror from working the dissolution of their body, a result which would constitutionally follow from his death.

I am inclined to attribute the execution of the king to the jealousy of the Independents of their quondam allies, the Presbyterians, rather than to abstract malice. The latter had preserved some show of constitutional forms. They sought, or affected to seek, to preserve the balance of the constitution by elevating the Commons and weakening the Crown. The king, even in his highest flight of aggression, had stooped to listen to reason. It was not beyond the reach of possibility that the adoption of the Presbyterian form of Church government would patch up an alliance between the vanquished and one section of the victors, in which case it would fare badly with the more uncompromising foes of the monarchy. The preparation of the indictment against the king must have sorely taxed the ingenuity of the Parliamentary lawyers. How was the king to have sinned against the peace of "our lord the king, his crown, and dignity?" the gist of all the offences against the common law. The address of Cook (solicitor for the Commons) bears evident tokens of the difficulty. He reasons, not as an English lawyer, but as a Roman consul charged to take care that no detriment ensued to the Commonwealth. His argument falls infinitely short of the power and research which characterise the pleading of St. John in Hampden's case. The higher law seems to be constantly appealed to. However difficult it be to define a breach of this vague canon of right, it is almost impossible to justify or

palliate such a breach. We wander into the realm of the great unconditioned at once. I consider, therefore, that the conduct of the king in refusing to recognise the jurisdiction of the court was alike prudent and dignified. Such a trial could have but such an issue. To Charles, probably, the eve and morn of his execution were the only happy periods of his troubled life. To him death came as a friend. We become, like Keats, "half in love with easeful death," when we reflect on the heavenly tenderness which spreads before an erring man one sublime opportunity of redeeming, by an heroic end, the faults and follies of a life. They only are translated who, walking with God, need no such opportunity of rectifying the results of frailty. A few words will perhaps be well directed to the consideration of some of the proceedings of the Parliament since their open rupture with the king. The abolition of episcopacy, passed by 139 votes against 108, soon followed his retirement. In 1643, the Commons passed an ordinance for sequestrating the estates of all notorious delinquents. On the 10th of January, 1644, Laud, impeached by both Houses, was beheaded on Tower-hill, dying with marvellous dignity. The 6th day of December is the anniversary of the occasion known as Pride's Purge, (1648) when the Presbyterian members of the Commons were finally expelled by a colonel of infantry. On the 5th of February, 1849, of our reckoning, the House of Peers was abolished. The 20th of April, 1653, witnessed the subversion of parliamentary government by the forcible dissolution of the long Parliament at the hands of their sworn servant, the Lord-General Cromwell, who thereupon entered on the exercise of powers but little less ample than those which Charles Stuart had claimed by inheritance.

At this period, monarchy crushed, the Church subverted, royalists and episcopalians without head or heart, it became an interesting question, to what cause are we to attribute the swift and sudden reaction in favour of the beaten cause? It may appear a paradox to maintain that like circumstances to those which led to the downfall of Charles tended to the restoration of his son. Jeshurun had waxed fat, and kicked against statecraft and priestcraft, and, in spite of many lets and hindrances, the tendency to fatten and kick had gone steadily on under Commonwealth and Protector. The people of England, at the close of the 17th century, were probably rather practical than sentimental in their new-blown loyalty. They had had some experience of tyranny by prescription, and tyranny by merit, and of the two, the latter was the least endurable. The England, which, after withstanding Charles, succumbed to Cromwell, was no enfeebled state, like many of those which yielded to Goth, Norman, or Moor. The privileged classes, which, after a long and creditable contest, gave

way before superior resources and discipline, had but little to reproach themselves with, save the choice of the weaker cause. The English aristocrat might have had a leaning to absolutism, but he was neither craven nor dullard. Unlike the French *noblesse* of the 18th century, he had not outlived his day, and his day came. The deterioration of individual character is ever the first symptom of the decrepitude of states. A glance at the names of those who adorned the world of politics, theology, and letters, will show how eminently fertile the period, denominated Caroline, was in genius, vigour, and research.

“ Not by one portal, not one path alone,
God's holy messages to men are known.”

The modern Englishman, proud of and grateful to Puritan, as well as Royalist ancestors, can appreciate the services rendered by each to the cause of liberty and loyalty, now happily allied. Great was the cause for which alike a Hampden and a Falkland bled, and it is a titled poet who says on such a subject :

“ They never fail who die in a great cause.
The block may soak their gore, their heads may sodden in the sun,
Their limbs be strung to city gates and castle walls ;
But still their spirit walks abroad.
Though years elapse, and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the great and sweeping thought
That overpowers all others, and conducts the world at last to freedom.”

“NO CARDS”

A TALE OF HYMEN

CHAPTER I.

“OH, wonderful to-morrow!” sang little Rose Martyn’s happy, half-incredulous heart.

It was a foggy November afternoon. The girl sat at the window of her father’s dismal London lodging, defying the gloom without upon the strength of a nameless brightness within her.

“Wonderful, unbelievable to-morrow!” the joyful maiden’s heart sang, “what a waking yours will be—a waking such as has never yet been known, except in wild tales of more than earthly happiness. To think that Heaven should smile upon such a grave little life as mine! Oh, Frank—dear Frank!—your love has built up out of weary nothings a magic world of bliss for me to live in. There is no shadow, no sadness anywhere about me now! It is all sunshine now, and you are my sun; all harmony, without a suspicion of a discord. There are flowers on every side, but there is not a single thorn. Oh, sweet, wonderful to-morrow, that will give me Frank for ever!”

Her cheek still blushed and throbbed its involuntary acknowledgment of his “Good-bye” kiss, and the fingers which his great, brown hand had lately clasped trembled with lasting consciousness of that dear custody. And now she watched through the fog for the last ray from his sunlike face. One more, she knew, was sure to shine upon her before the cloud of his absence fairly closed in. She was not disappointed. As he climbed into his Hansom he gave a fond glance upwards, and once more indulged the little worshipper with a full view of her idol.

What did it matter to Rose that the afternoon (out of doors) was of a colour no more cheerful than that of dirty brown paper, and that the lodgings themselves presented an appearance less brilliant still? It did not matter to her at all. She had grasped the substance of happiness—its outward symbols might go and come as they pleased.

The brightness of Rose’s anticipated future was enhanced by contrast with her past. Rose’s life had hitherto been but gloomy. “Poor, dear, little, old papa,” as she called him, who, in days of (to her) apocryphal bliss, had been a wealthy and courted man, had, in her early childhood, lost well-nigh all his property by a sudden stroke of ill-fortune. A second stroke—this time from Goliath paralysis—had crushed out of the poor man all hope of re-

gaining his lost *status*. It had left him a helpless invalid, to endure, as best he might, the chronic mental pains arising from continual comparison between rose-coloured antecedents and prospects which were all indigo.

With nothing left, then, but a daughter and three hundred a-year, Mr. Michael Martyn had long borne the stress of his reverses in the dreary retirement of an obscure metropolitan lodging. His windows, which had formerly gazed luxuriously across a velvet lawn upon the silver Thames, now fixed their melancholy stare on that depressing enclosure, the Foundling playground, and on the dull old figure of benevolent Thomas Coram. The vulgar stir of a noisy London street, sometimes diversified by the cries of the foundlings, now filled his ears in the place of that gentler music which had formerly met them in his Twickenham Eden—the music of plashing oars, of rustling cedars, or of servants’ voices subdued.

But, through all changes, the sick and ruined man had kept his Rosebud. He had worn her in his bosom as the one beauty of his ugly lot. The gentle glow and pure fragrance of her sweet youth had brightened and perfumed each hour of his weary old life. And now a new, strange joy had arisen for both father and child. A man whom he appoved, and whom she loved—a man with a large heart and a full purse, had gained the promise of her hand and her devotion, and had given in exchange the promise of his own. Yes; this man—a generous, impulsive, boylike creature—had wrought the old, old magic upon the girl’s heart. Heart? She had none now! It was gone! Francis Thoroboye had stolen it. To-morrow she was to be his. “Poor, dear, little, old papa” would put on his pretty new waistcoat of pale, figured silk, and and despite his half-disabled condition of body, would rise early, and take his darling to church. (How Rose had disliked that frowsy, *renaissance* church hitherto, with its unmeaning cornices of plaster, and hideous painted galleries! And yet, in the light of the happy ceremony which was soon to illuminate it, it had become, to her sight, a place as glorious as was the Temple of the Shekinah to pious Jews.) And Rose herself would be dressed in silver-grey silk, making no parade of her happiness before the world through the medium of Honiton lace or orange-blossoms. The two would be taken to church in the most un-noteworthy of hired Broughams; and altogether the wedding was to be of the quietest kind. This had at first been Frank’s, and therefore Rose’s wish. Frank had admitted, however, on second thoughts, that it was unlucky to disregard usage in a matter like a wedding, and had said that he would almost rather, afterall, have followed the lead of custom and fashion, running through the accepted programme—down even to “No cards,” in the *Times*’ notice. However, since an opposite decision

had been arrived at in the first instance, every one thought it well to abide by that decision. But in the plans all propriety was, as Rose remarked, daringly set at defiance. There were to be no bridesmaids, no wreaths, veils, favours, sparkling wines nor speeches. And yet there *were* to be "cards"—old-fashioned papa had decreed this. Frank finally dismissed the subject by saying, that since he was going to marry a potent enchantress, he could afford to dispense with all observances usually offered to propitiate that feeble magician, Luck.

"Rose," she said to herself that evening, looking in the glass to test the effect of her quiet bridal bonnet, "can this gay, happy creature indeed be you?" And then she wondered strangely what "Rose" was, and why a particular shape of animated matter should constitute "Rose" at all. At last she fell to doubting whether, indeed, there were any such person or thing as "Rose" in existence, and the doubt assumed almost alarming proportions as she subsequently opened the packet of cards, and read the strange words, "Mrs. Francis Thoroboye." She began to think that she must be somebody else, and growing nervous at the idea, it struck her that it was time for her to go back to her father.

Papa was seated by the fire as she returned to him. She wheeled a table to his side, and setting the backgammon board upon it, invited him to a game.

"No, my dear," he said; "not to-night. Let us talk. Who has been here, do you think, while you have been looking after the bridal toilette?"

"Mr. Larpent, perhaps?"

"No other, clever little guesser! Larpent—your Frank's bosom friend."

"Well, dear papa?"

"You like him—don't you, Rose?"

"Oh, yes, papa, so very much! So true, and real, and thorough, Frank says he is!"

"I like him, too, my child. He has proved himself, to-night, a good friend; always remember this, my Rose—Larpent has been your father's very good friend; and I am in a position now to need such a friend."

"How, papa?" said the girl, frightened at the gravity of her father's manner.

"In this way, Rose—but, my happy little daughter, I must not throw a shadow over the sunshine of your heart——"

"Dear papa, if anything has occurred to make you anxious or unhappy, I shall, of course, share your anxiety and unhappiness. My own joy only makes me the better able to share it. That is how you must look at the matter."

Mr. Martyn kissed his daughter.

“I have heard then,” he gently said, “some bad news to-night.”

Rose questioned eagerly with her shining eyes.

“The investment for my money which Mr. Larpent found for me a year ago, which has paid such good interest, and which seemed so safe, turns out—at all events for the present—to be a disappointment. The scheme is suddenly brought to a standstill. The money is not entirely lost, for the nature of the security renders that impossible. But for the present there are no dividends forthcoming.

“Under these (to me) fatal circumstances, Larpent acts towards your father like a son. With a generosity which I can scarcely comprehend, he guarantees me my full interest from his private resources, until the enterprise is fairly on its legs again.”

“Hush, Rose!” the old man continued, petulantly, as he saw his daughter’s lips shaping themselves into a remonstrance against an arrangement which would render her father practically dependent upon a man on whom he had no claim. “Don’t tease me! I know what you would say, but I cannot help myself. Remember, he strongly recommended me to take the step which now brings me into this dilemma; after all, therefore, it is not strange for him to offer, or for me to allow him, to stand by me. At any rate, you should think of him with gratitude. But now let us speak no more of this.”

Mr. Martyn’s temper had suddenly veered, as the tempers of invalids will, from a fair to a foul quarter. Rose knew it, and immediately acceded to her father’s request, that nothing more might be said on the subject which had upset him.

After all, then, an ugly corner of night’s black wing was to stretch itself over her golden day! The truth of the old saws about thorns to every rose, and shadows attendant upon each sunbeam, was, it seemed, to be verified anew. But from these hard thoughts the young spirit soon gaily rebounded. Was not Frank’s love a panacea for every species of malady, whether of mind, body, or estate? Could any new grievance possibly arise which *that* would not cure? So, notwithstanding the pecuniary blot on the otherwise white page of her bridal happiness, the child’s imagination still wrote upon the fair sheet histories of unsullied future delight. “Strange, eventful histories” these were; and of each Frank was the matchless, godlike hero. Rose fell asleep that night grieving indeed over her father’s loss and annoyance, but rejoicing all the more in her Frank’s true love.

When the eye of morning again opened, it was still bleared and dim with fog. But Rose never gave “out-of-doors” a moment’s

consideration. She had dressed by candlelight, and scarcely noticed the awakening of the day. A single thought filled her mind—the thought that her day of days had come.

A joyful wonder of a person it was who drove with papa to church that morning. This somebody, having been carried through the dingy streets in a swirl of half-unconscious happiness, found herself landed at length beneath a *renaissance* portico, which to her appeared to be the gate of Paradise. And now, leaning upon papa's arm—papa looked remarkably well in his waistcoat of pale figured silk—the rapt little maiden marched up between painted pews to the seventh heaven. There, with eyes which filled, swam, and overflowed into diamond drops—the only jewels that adorned her—the bride caught happy sight of the one face.

Was that face strangely anxious, flushed, and disturbed? Did it tell of something more than pure eagerness for the bride? Did it betray the excitement and unrest of one who longs for the present to take its place in the past? So, perhaps, a cool and close observer of the countenance might have thought.

But little Rose could only worship the splendid image of manhood which her lover presented. Observation was impossible; it was all enjoyment. Her mind reeled under an intoxicating sense of his nearness. The clear olive face, lighted on its cheeks with changeful carmine flames; the great eyes of deep grey, radiant with untold emotion; the beardless chin and curly black hair; the general easy boyish pose of the tall figure—each and all, as she gazed, wrought upon her girl's heart with a mighty magic which forbade every thought and feeling save those belonging to simplest adoration. The service began. He stood beside her. Behind him was his friend and groomsman, Larpent—a remarkably handsome man; a man in every respect strictly gentlemanly as to appearance; of face well featured and well coloured; of stature not tall, but in build perfectly proportioned. Mr. Larpent's aspect was all the more impressive, since, amidst his uncommon good looks, and despite the grace and propriety of his toilette, there was not about him a hint that he belonged to what Mr. Carlyle has called the "dandiacal body." It was clear at a glance that he was no mere clothes-wearing nonentity. Beyond question he was a somebody.

The introductory address was closing. The clergyman impressively read the final words:—"Therefore, if any man can shew any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak——"

So far he had proceeded, when there was a slight stir in the aisle. Mr. Larpent suddenly glanced round with an expression of natural wonder and annoyance upon his handsome face. Raising her happy eyes before her, Rose saw that the officiating clergyman

was gazing inquiringly upon somebody or something behind her. The next moment an arm was stretched, as though to form a barrier between her and Frank. The arm terminated, as most arms do, in a hand; and in the hand was held a long narrow paper. The clergyman took the paper, which was evidently intended for his perusal, and laying it on his open book, read from it as follows:—

1862. Marriage Solemnised at the Parish Church, in the Parish of Rushcombe St. Mary In the County of Somerset.								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
29	May 14, 1862.	Francis Thoroboye	Full	Bachelor	Gentleman	Ruscombe Court	Montagu Thoroboye	Deceased
		Arabella Smithard	Full	Spinster	—	Ruscombe	Martin Smithard	Deceased
Married in the Parish Church, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Licence, By me, Reginald Browne, M.A., Vicar.								
This Marriage was solemnised between us		Francis Thoroboye, Arabella Smithard,	In the presence of us		John Thoroboye, Marian Thoroboye.			
A true copy. Reginald Browne, M.A., Vicar.								

Somehow Rose became aware that something was terribly wrong, when afterwards she attempted to remember what had first given her the idea, she recalled a ghastly figure of Frank—of Frank with a frightening, agonised face, from which all light and colour had fled, with his hands tightly clasped, and his eyes bent upwards as he exclaimed, “O Heaven! to think that this should come to light at such a moment!”

The sudden destruction of intense happiness in an innocent heart is a visitation from which, with a shudder, we turn our thoughts away, as we once turned them from the story of that aristocratic young bride whom a cruel lightning flash tore in an instant from her husband's side. Yet human nature is sometimes called upon to undergo such visitations; such an one now fell upon poor little Rose.

She heard the clergyman whispering to her, and as soon as she could collect her powers of attention, she caught these words—“My dear young lady, the marriage cannot go on now. I must make inquiries—I must, indeed. Let us hope that this will all turn out to be a mistake.”

So the clergyman spoke, and in a horrible dream she was taken away from her darling. He stretched his arms towards her; he noisily protested, besought, and somehow vanished. She did not know in what way, for she swooned. When she came too, her pale father was bending over her, the wedding waistcoat of figured silk shaking like palsy itself. And there was the clergyman beside her too, gentle and sympathising; and in distance of the gloomy vestry stood a small white man—the owner of the dreadful arm which had divided her from Frank—a neat man, bald on the forehead,

although apparently under thirty, with thin firm-set lips, and sharp eyes looking everywhere from beneath overhanging brows.

This last was Mr. Nicholas Bindweed, late parish clerk of Ruscombe St. Mary, Somerset; the man who, doubtless with a disinterested eye to the public morality, had brought forward the evidence which seemed to show that Francis Thoroboye, who had represented himself to Rose and her father as a single man, was in fact the husband of a lawful wife. The evidence thus adduced had of course been sufficient to delay the marriage, until, at any rate, the death of the previous wife could be satisfactorily established, or some other effectual explanation be offered.

There was only one refuge for little Rose's hunted soul. To that refuge she fled for dear life—the refuge of sheer incredulity. She repelled, as the suggestions of the devil, those ugly doubts of her darling's honesty which perjured chances were daring to whisper into her ear. Separation from Frank she might bear, but to live on believing him false was impossible. Surely some perfect explanation would be immediately forthcoming! She determined to believe it; for such belief was the only thing which now seemed to stand between her and insanity.

Alas! for the awful wretchedness of her return to Guildford-street! The young foundlings shouted with their usual persistency. Thomas Coram wore his accustomed air of wearisome mild benevolence. The milk-men and muffin-boys filled the air with their ordinary matutinal sounds, and the stir of the London street was as busy and eager as ever. And amidst all these familiar symbols of that old loveless, joyless existence which, an hour ago, she had believed was at an end for ever, little Rose set her whole soul to struggle with the terrible doubt of Frank, his truth and goodness.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Lucifer Larpent, always self-possessed, so soon as he saw the marriage would not proceed, put his arm firmly through that of Frank Thoroboye, and unheeding of his remonstrances, seated him in a cab, and directed the driver to proceed to his (Mr. Larpent's) office, in Bedford-row. Arrived there, Mr. Larpent took Frank to his private room, locked the door, handed his friend a chair, and placed himself in another.

"Now," he said, regarding the pale, excited Frank with an expression of amiable consideration, "tell me this story fully out, my poor fellow. Why have you kept it from me hitherto?"

There was a touch of injured kindness in the tone in which the latter words were uttered. It told, and was intended to tell, upon Frank's conscience.

“Have I done wrong, then?” inquired the disappointed bridegroom, as though he addressed the question to himself. “Surely not,” he added, swinging from his seat with a boyish gesture, and quickly pacing the room. “No; I believe still I have done right. I did well to keep the secret as long as I could, and it must be the devil who has brought it to light this morning.”

“The devil, then,” said Larpent, “in the person of one Nicholas Bindweed; lately, as he informs me, parish clerk at the village of Ruscombe St. Mary, Somersetshire. I am deeply sorry, my boy, for this diabolical interference. Let me hear your tale.”

“You shall,” said Frank, still walking about, a beautiful object for delineation by some gifted pencil, with his flushed face and disordered black hair. “Now,” he added, coming to a sudden stand in front of his friend, “look straight into my eyes, Larpent. Is there the trace of a lie there?”

“There is not,” Larpent answered, promptly.

“As I live, then,” continued Frank, “I am no more a married man than yourself. By Heaven, I am as free as you are!”

Frank paused. Larpent’s eye just slightly faltered at those last words. Even Frank, not usually observant of facial changes, noted the momentary vacillation; and some involuntary fancy, which it awakened, led him to repeat the assurance that had produced it.

“As free as yourself, upon my life and soul,” he said again. “When I asked Rose Martyn to marry me, I asked what I had a full right to ask. This barrier, which seems to have arisen between her and me, is no real barrier at all. I can, and shortly will, demolish it to atoms! Listen! Three years ago, when I was just of age, I returned from a continental tour to my father’s place in Somersetshire—Ruscombe Court. You know what the curse of my life has been?—my lack of a profession. On my return I idled about at home, *ennuyé à la mort*, at the dulness of the paternal mansion, and ready to tumble headlong into the first lively folly that might present itself. Thus I committed the mistake which I am now about to describe. That mistake consisted in the contraction of a (supposed) marriage, under these circumstances:—

“Just at the time of my return to Ruscombe, there came to reside in a cottage on my father’s estate, a certain lady named Bewdley. Notwithstanding her general unattractiveness, it happened that many of the neighbouring gentry called upon her—for this reason: a young ‘ward,’ as she styled the girl—a Miss Arabella Smithard—who lived with her, was discovered to be a person of great gifts and accomplishments. There arose, in fact, in the neighbourhood, a perfect Smithard rage. The girl’s beauty and talents were so manifestly above the average, that this was not

perhaps greatly to be wondered at. No *soirée*, or dinner, was complete now without the fascinating beauty's presence; and the slight mystery reported to attach to her early history, did not detract from the universal favour with which she was regarded.

"Upon my return to the monotonies of my widower father's old-fashioned *ménage*, I soon discovered that Miss Smithard's companionship was the only excitement which I could hope for during my stay at the Court. I sought that companionship, and found that the fascinating but somewhat flighty girl was no unwilling accomplice in my plans for the relief of my tedious existence. You guess the sequel. I was fool enough to fall in love, or to fancy that I fell in love with the young lady, and she soon gave me to understand, on her part, that the sentiment was reciprocated. My father was not pleased at the attachment; but while it was at its height—that is, at the commencement of the year 1862—he died. I was left sole inheritor of his property; perfectly free, also, to act, with respect to matrimony, as I pleased. I made use of that freedom, and knowing next to nothing about her connections and antecedents, I married Arabella Smithard on the fourteenth of May of that same year. As a matter of course, after our wedding-tour, we took up our residence at the family mansion—Ruscombe Court.

"Before long, however, I made discoveries with respect to my wife, which led me to believe that I had committed a grave blunder in marrying her; but these discoveries were as nothing to another which shortly followed them. A former tutor of mine, the Reverend Andrew Strong, late vicar of St. Leonard's, Westhaven, who, shortly after my marriage, had accepted an appointment as provost in a colonial college, was on the eve of leaving the country, and unexpectedly came to pay me a farewell visit. His meeting with my wife struck me as most extraordinary, and gave me the greatest uneasiness. Both of them, upon being introduced, betrayed a singular astonishment, and my wife appeared to be upon the brink of fainting.

"As soon as I could speak to my friend alone, I begged him to explain, if he could, the cause of this extraordinary behaviour on her part. He did so with manifest reluctance and pain. Not a year before, he had himself married to another man, at his own church of St. Leonard, Westhaven, the woman who now called herself my wife! The circumstances of the wedding had been somewhat peculiar, and the person of the bride had been indelibly impressed upon the vicar's memory. Was it possible, he asked me, anxiously, that in the brief space of a twelvemonth, the lady could have buried and forgotten her former husband? At first I indignantly repudiated the vicar's dreadful insinuation. But when

I came seriously to ask myself what I really knew of Arabella's past history, I was obliged to admit that my knowledge was almost *nil*, and that for anything I could show to the contrary, the tale I now learnt, and the horrid imputation which it implied, might both be equally well-founded. And a new and puzzling corroboration of the vicar's conviction arose so soon as I told him the *name* which my wife had borne previous to her marriage with me. ‘Why,’ he exclaimed, ‘*Arabella Smithard* was unquestionably the identical name under which she had been married on the former occasion!’

“From the moment of this mysterious and astounding revelation, I gradually discovered that I had been the victim of a hideous plot. The former husband was not dead! My wife was not my wife! Arabella had been married and deserted by a worthless man, who had traded upon her love for him—which was deep and true—that he might lay hands upon her property. An evil spirit of spite and revenge against him had seized the flighty, excitable girl. She had vowed that she would contract a second marriage in her maiden name, in order that her true husband might know how lightly she regarded—how wholly she abjured the ties which had bound her to him! This had been her motive for assuming no feigned name upon coming to Ruscombe. She had risked discovery in order to gratify her vengeance; and to that vengeance I had fallen an innocent victim. The agony that followed I cannot attempt to describe. I was mad with anger and humiliation, and the affection which I fancied I had entertained towards the woman vanished at once and for ever.

“I now learnt that the name of her real husband was John Taylor, although I soon satisfied myself that this was probably an assumed one. But I had no wish to examine into the matter, nor in any way to add to my knowledge of the story. As a matter of course, I parted with the woman. She had a trifle of her own property remaining, sufficient for her to live upon, and she had not the shadow of a claim upon me. I dismissed her from my house without compunction, but, I trust I may add, without undue severity. I now left Ruscombe, let my house there, and started off to begin my life again *en garçon* somewhere else. After travelling for a twelvemonth, I came back to town, and from the date of my arrival here—a year and four months ago—you know my history, for our introduction took place then, and our friendship has been unbroken ever since.

“It is exactly thirteen months ago that I became engaged to Rose Martyn. You know the nature and strength of my affection for her, and the patience with which I have waited for our marriage. You also know now the ugly story which I never had the courage to relate to Rose herself. Tell me, was there any necessity

for me to relate it? Was there any reason why the awkward tale should oppress her mind as well as my own? Did I not do right in resolving to keep the secret for a time—until our marriage should have prevented the possibility of that secret's separating us?"

"You must reply to those questions for yourself," said Larpent, quietly. He spoke in a manner which convinced Thorboye of what he had before suspected, viz., that he had committed a grave blunder. "But come, cheer up!" continued Larpent. "The mishap of to-day is, as your tale shows, simply a delay. We have but to produce proof of the marriage of Arabella Smithard with John Taylor, and we shall be all right. The matter is not, that I know, likely to come into a court of justice, or we might, it is true, have greater trouble than I anticipate. As it is, we have only to convince Mr. Martyn and the clergyman. You don't doubt that both of them will be satisfied, do you, when this little difficulty is cleared up as I have suggested? You don't doubt either, I should think, the endurance of the lady's own affection?"

A remarkable change passed upon Mr. Lucifer Larpent's face as he put these last questions. The tint of the skin surrounding his well-shaped lips and nose became perceptibly whiter than before, and the diamond glitter of his eye seemed to break out into positive radiations of silvery fire.

"*She* will be true—will believe in me still, I'm sure," said Frank, seating himself, and burying his brown face in his brown hands. "But, for God's sake, Larpent, tell me what to do—what step to take first. You are my best friend—a lawyer, a man of sense and judgment. In Heaven's name, tell me how to act."

"I will," answered Mr. Larpent, calmly. "First of all, write a note to Miss Martyn, and tell her that the evidence adduced at the church to-day, on the strength of which your marriage has been postponed, is capable of a thoroughly satisfactory explanation; lament the error of judgment which deterred you from mentioning to her the circumstance of your first unlucky but unreal marriage; and tell her, finally, that the necessary evidence will be immediately forthcoming."

"I'll do that this moment," Frank replied. And he sat down to a desk, and thundered out his truth and honesty in those irregular lines of tremendously black characters which poor little Rose had been wont to regard as the oracles of heaven. He enclosed the note, and addressed it; then looked up at his friend, and asked—"What next?"

The answer was promptly given.

"Trust the note to my keeping. Take a cab to your lodgings, pack your portmanteau directly, and start by the noon express for

Westhaven. Be calm and sensible, and quietly possess yourself of the marriage certificate we need. There is no difficulty—you know the date, place, and names. You will be able to return to town with the certified extract in your custody to-morrow afternoon.”

Frank Thorboye was unaware of a fact with which Mr. Larpent was well acquainted, viz., that the marriage record in question was obtainable at a place much nearer than the remote city of Westhaven. The reader may imagine, if he pleases, that, appreciating the value of definite occupation for a man who is troubled in mind, Mr. Larpent wished to despatch his friend upon this distant errand in order to afford him the relief of employment.

“But, Larpent, my dear fellow,” Frank objected, “had you not better come as well?”

“Not at all. I shall have to attend to other matters connected with this business, and they will imperatively demand my presence in town. Moreover, the important mission which I have allotted to you will, if its execution rest upon you alone, have the effect, I trust, of occupying your thoughts, and of saving you pain.”

“You are right, Larpent, I believe,” said Frank, rising, and shaking his friend by the hand. “You always *are* right. What a blessing to have you to apply to in this direful emergency! Send my note at once, won’t you?”

“As soon as you’re gone,” answered Larpent. Good-bye!”

“Good-bye, old fellow! So you think you’ll see me through this frightful affair, eh?”

“See you through it? No doubt.”

Satisfied by this assurance, Mr. Frank Thorboye hastened out to the street. Watching him from a window, Larpent saw him get into a hansom, and heard him direct the driver to drive quickly to his lodgings, in Jermyn-street, St. James’s.

As soon as he was alone, Mr. Lucifer Larpent again locked his door, and then seated himself at his table. His handsome face was radiant with its usual smile, and his brown eyes glittered upon the inanimate objects of his office precisely as they had lately done upon the agitated face of his friend. Frank’s note to Rose lay before him. He took it daintily up between his well-shapen thumb and finger, and having read the black, blundering address, he raised the pencilled arches of his eyebrows, and parted his ruby lips into—yes, the word must be employed, although we describe the beautiful Mr. Larpent—a grin. But then the grin displayed teeth as regular as the hours, and as white as ivory. A moment afterwards, he cleverly tossed the fond missive into the centre of the fire, saying to himself—

“It has been written, and in being written it has answered my end. I promised to send it as soon as he was gone. But I did *not*

promise that it should go to *Miss Martyn*. I prefer sending it up the chimney."

As he muttered the words, the trembling black ash, traversed by expiring sparks, quivered upwards out of sight.

"Now for my own letter," continued Mr. Larpent. Whereupon he took writing materials, and wrote as follows:—

"Bedford-row, 15th November, 1864.

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is impossible for me to express to you the distress which the occurrence of to-day has occasioned me. I imagined that Frank Thoroboye had no secrets from me, but the event which this morning has revealed was, I assure you, as strange and surprising to me as to yourself. I am grieved beyond measure at it, and you must not do me the injustice to associate me with the suppression of the important truth, the discovery of which has at last so singularly taken place.

"Mr. Thoroboye has related to me some strange story which, he says, justifies his conduct. But I cannot refrain from saying that I regard this tale with entire mistrust, and that I have called upon him to prove its truth, with little hope that he will be able to do so. If he fails, I need not tell you that he will be immediately erased from the list of my friends; and I hope, therefore, that I need not, through my late intimacy with him, forfeit your own friendship and regard.

"Permit me to say, before I close, that a further consideration of the pecuniary affairs which we discussed last night fully confirms me in the determination I then expressed.

"I am, my dear sir,

"Yours very faithfully,

"L. LARPENT."

"P.S.—Pray present my best regards and sincere condolences to your daughter.

"MICHAEL MARTYN, ESQ."

Having penned this communication, Mr. Larpent rang his bell, and sent the letter by an office-boy to Guildford-street. In half-an-hour the following answer was brought back:—

"Guildford-street, 15th November, 1864.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your kind letter. The whole tone of it peremptorily forbids me to associate you with the young scoundrel who has ruined my daughter's happiness. I cordially reciprocate your friendly sentiments, and only request that the name of Thoroboye may never again be mentioned between us.

"Your's very truly,

"MICHAEL MARTYN."

"L. LARPENT, ESQ."

"Good so far," said Mr. Larpent to himself as he folded up the note. He now looked at his watch; the hands pointed exactly to twelve. "The train is just starting," he added, "and that young

fool is well out of the way. Bindweed will be here directly." As he whispered the words, there came a loud knock at the door, and Mr. Larpent quickly rose to admit the late parish clerk of Ruscombe St. Mary, to whom—judging from the greeting which followed—he was no stranger.

CHAPTER III.

MR. BINDWEED now composedly seated himself. After a few second's silence, Mr. Larpent rose, opened a safe, and produced therefrom a cash-box, purposely making the coins inside it rattle and chink, as he carried it to his table. At the sound thus produced, Mr. Bindweed's eyes underwent a significant change, a change into sudden acuteness and energy analogous to that observable in a terrier when the idea of a rat is suggested to his canine intelligence. This change will suffice to place in the reader's hand the simple key to Mr. Bindweed's entire character. Mr. Larpent resumed his chair, and an impressive silence ensued.

"Well, Bindweed," the lawyer presently said, "you did your work this morning, and you shall have your pay."

"Thank'ee, sir," answered the neat little man. "It cost me a heffort to disappint the good-looking young lady, and a heffort, sir, made successful', is always worth something."

To this remark Mr. Larpent replied simply by counting some gold into the small man's greedy palm. That transaction over, the handsome man fell into deep thoughtfulness, in which fit of abstraction he continued until Mr. Bindweed aroused him by blowing his nose. Thus reminded of the necessity for action, Mr. Larpent unconsciously used his own cambric handkerchief, and then proceeded to address his companion.

"Now, Bindweed," he began, "listen! The production of that certificate is but a small part of the work which I have allotted you. Hitherto you have answered my purpose. You have presented the important document alluded to in the character of a disinterested and public-spirited parish clerk, anxious to hinder an act of open immorality. You are paid for your work. So far, good. I will now employ you further, on the same terms as before:—handsome remuneration for bold, but secret action. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, sir," replied the little pale man, stroking his bald forehead.

"For the sake of making my wishes clear," the lawyer proceeded, "I will recount, Mr. Bindweed, the circumstances under which we first met, and will remind you of the relations in which we stand to each other."

"Certainly, Mr. Larpent," Bindweed replied, assuming an attitude of respectful attention.

"You will remember, then," Larpent went on, "that it is just four months since I came across you in the parish church of Ruscombe St. Mary, Somerset."

"Just four months," agreed Mr. Bindweed.

"I had visited that delightfully rural village, anticipating the matrimonial occurrence of this morning, and designing the prevention of so ill-advised a ceremony, by procuring evidence by which I could hinder it, which evidence I knew the Ruscombe registers would supply. I thus naturally fell, Mr. Bindweed, into your engaging society."

"You flatter me, sir," said the ex-clerk, blandly smiling.

Mr. Bindweed's smiles were calculated to inspire any uninitiated observer with unmixed alarm. They bore the same awful relationship to other smiles, that the apes bear to the human species. Watching them, you felt the hideous absurdity of smiling, and wished that you might never yourself smile again.

"By no means," responded Mr. Larpent, "your society *was* engaging to me. It convinced me that I had met with a sly, secret little rascal, who was just the person I wanted to get hold of." Mr. Bindweed's eyes sparkled under the influence of this compliment. "I therefore," Mr. Larpent continued, "at once improve the acquaintance. We soon come to understand one another. I promised that if you would come to town in order to render me your valuable assistance, I, on my part, would undertake materially to improve your position in life—would obtain you an easy berth in some public office, which would allow you opportunity and leisure to serve me. You acceded, and came to London. I kept my promise, used my influence, and gained you the appointment you now hold. Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Bindweed, that I might have some special plan of my own with reference to this appointment itself? Did it ever strike you that the particular government office into which I was the means of introducing you might be one in connexion with which you could render me an important service?"

"I can't say, sir," replied the ex-clerk, blandly, "that I ever regarded my hinderduction to the *Record Office of Hatches, Matches, and Despatches* in that light."

"No? Like the rest of us, then, you live to learn. It was an important part of my scheme, Mr. Bindweed, to place you precisely where you are. You see this box here, don't you?" It was plain Mr. Bindweed did see it. "This box," said Mr. Larpent, "still contains thirty pounds sterling, all in gold. The box and its contents are yours, if you will accomplish a small piece of business on my behalf."

Bindweed stealthily drew his chair close to that of Mr. Larpent, looked suspiciously towards the door, and then quietly bent down his little head to listen.

“Let me know what the job his, Mr. Larpent,” he said.

Larpent hesitated. He knew that he could proceed no further without placing himself completely in the power of the rascal before him. Was the venture a tolerably safe one? Would there be sufficient break power in the train he was starting? Did the ship he was about to launch carry ballast enough to counteract her sail? He looked at his cash-box, and it answered him yes. He looked at Bindweed’s eyes, and saw how they looked at the cash-box, and Bindweed’s eyes answered him yes. Money, and the hope of more money hereafter, would doubtless make this man a secret and dependable agent. And further, when the agent had once acted, he would become as entirely in the power of his employer, as his employer was about to become in his own.

“It happens then,” said the lawyer, when he had come to the end of this calculation, “that having wished to *produce* the evidence of one marriage, I now want to *destroy* the evidence of another.”

Bindweed reflected. After a few seconds’ silence, he said, “I begin to hunderstand, Mr. Larpent. The young gentleman as we stopped just now from taking the young lady to be his wedded wife was, hafter all, free to marry her? His first marriage was no marriage at all, for she as he married then was, afore that, the wife of somebody else? But you want hour certificate to hold good all the same?”

“You have hit it precisely, Bindweed, with your usual acuteness. The Arabella Smithard who is shown in ‘our certificate’ to be the wife of Francis Thoroboye is not his wife, but the wife of one John Taylor, whom she had previously married in the same name. Our object is, however, permanently to saddle her upon Thoroboye, by destroying all evidence of her true marriage.”

“And if I may make so bold, our *motive* is, that Mr. Larpent is himself hinterested in the young lady as Mr. Thoroboye wants to ——”

“Silence!” interrupted the lawyer, with great severity.

“Hope no offence, sir?” apologised Bindweed, repressed.

“Business, if you please,” Larpent replied, “business only. I will now tell you what has been done, and what you must do. Some months ago, foreseeing the situation of to-day, I took a journey to the city of Westhaven, and gained access to the registers of St. Leonard’s Church in that town, where, as I happened to know, Arabella Smithard’s true marriage had occurred. Everything favoured the execution of the object which I had in view, viz. : the obliteration of all records of that marriage. The clergyman

who had officiated at the ceremony was, as I learnt, on the other side of the Atlantic. The parish clerk who had witnessed the marriage had ceased, through age and imbecility, to be dangerous; and the pew-opener, co-witness with the clerk, had gone the way of all pew-openers. You wonder how I had learnt the names of the persons whose memories were likely to supply the place of an abstracted sheet? Wonder on. It is not necessary for you to be enlightened. My coast was clear. I found the entry, with the greatest ease threw the old clerk off his guard, and removed from the marriage-book the sheet containing the record I desired to get rid of. But, as you, having been a parish-clerk must know, my task, even now, was only half over."

Here Mr. Bindweed gave a knowing professional nod. Mr. Larpent continued—

"The marriage registers are, as you are aware, signed in duplicate; one of the duplicate volumes, when filled, being sent to the District Record Office of Hatches, Matches, and Despatches; the other remaining in the permanent custody of the clergyman. The question now arose, was the duplicate entry of the marriage which I had found still at the church? On inquiry I learnt that it was. More than three years' marriages had been insufficient to fill the volume containing it. By the aid of a timely half-sovereign I induced the old clerk to let me see this volume, and I easily contrived to treat the second record as I had treated the first. Now, Mr. Bindweed, it will strike you, perhaps, that this act of mine was both imperfect and dangerous, because of the interruption in the numbering of the entries which this abstraction involved. I answer,—imperfect, yes; but dangerous, no. Dangerous, no; for this reason. The only persons at all likely to take the trouble to investigate the deficiency are *the people injured thereby*. These persons are completely in my power. I am Francis Thoroboye's lawyer, and as he often affectionately reminds me 'his close friend.' He believes in me implicitly, and would not move a finger in any matter of business without my advise. I have the same hold upon the martyrs, who, by the bye, are not at all likely to be troublesome.

"A more serious difficulty, however, than any I have yet encountered still stands in my way. You have doubtless anticipated what I am about to say. A certified copy of the marriage in question is only too safely deposited in the Metropolitan Record Office of Hatches, Matches, and Despatches. To get rid of this inconvenient document, Mr. Bindweed, has been my main object in using my influence to obtain you your present post."

Bindweed looked at Mr. Larpent, looked at the cash-box, and then said, with emphasis—

"Himpossible, sir!—himpossible! Never do, sir!—never!

And, sir, hif I may make so bold, why couldn't you hoodwink the young gent so well has to the London books has to them in the country?"

"What! trust to his never searching, and leave the record where it can be found close at hand?"

Directly he had answered the question, Mr. Larpent perceived that it had only been put by the crafty Bindweed in order to show in the strongest light the importance of the work required of him. Bindweed now sat for some minutes in a profound meditation. When he emerged from this meditation he did so with these words upon his lips:

"Double your money, sir, and I'll do it."

"You are a confounded cheat, Bindweed!" was Mr. Larpent's deliberate answer; "but I consent. Bring the marriage-sheet to this place, and I pay you sixty pounds. You must lay your own plans. You are not a man to commit yourself."

"I *think* not, sir!" replied Bindweed, with a peculiar and suggestive twinkle in his eye.

"Good!" Larpent resumed; "but this business must be done at once. It must be done to-day. I have got rid of that young fool, Thoroboye, for a time, and before his return I must have all square. By the way, I have sent him innocently off to search the registers of St. Leonard's, Westhaven. You see my game?"

"Frankness disarms suspicion," answered the clerk, quoting from the copy-slips from which, when a pale, grumpy boy, he had written in the Ruscombe parish school. "If you think he won't see through the deficiency, sir, a very good move."

"See through it! Ten to one if the blundering baby observes it at all! If he does, I will undertake to account for it so as to satisfy him."

Mr. Bindweed now rose, and having taken down, at his employer's dictation, the names which he had to remember, the small, pale man made Mr. Larpent a profound bow, and glided from the room, whispering first, as he turned the lock of the door—

"This hevening at eight p.m., Mr. Larpent!"

"I wonder," said the latter gentleman to himself, as his agent left him, "whether that rascal is going to attempt to cheat me—whether he will endeavour to impose upon me a forged copy of the marriage-sheet, that he may avoid the risk of tampering with a document in Government custody? I will check his work, at any rate, before I pay for it."

EVENTIDE

WHAT time the sun is hanging o'er the west—
 With one last, loving look of kind good-night,—
 To light tired Labour to its wished-for rest,
 And draw a curtain on the soul's delight.
 Let me away to haunt by rural lanes,
 And drink the dying glory of the day ;
 Washing my soul from weary worldly claims,
 With wordless spirit-worship let me pray.

Not such poor prayers as trouble or distress
 Wings from a spirit almost desperate,
 But prayers whose promptings we can only guess,
 Vital to us, but hidden as our fate.
 Prayers in which soul goes out its God to meet,
 And seems to blend with nature all around ;
 Breathing, not language, but a feeling sweet,
 More passing sweet than music's softest sound.

At such an hour when day and night are met
 Upon the threshold of their common time,
 When Cynthia reign's not, nor has Phœbus set,
 We seem to wander in a mystic clime ;
 A clime where there is neither night nor day ;
 Where all that is of earth, save beauty, dies ;
 Where we forget that we are only clay,
 And view creation with unearthly eyes.

At such an hour the heavens are a book
 Of fairy pictures, full of angel forms,
 On which the all-inspired eye doth look,
 And see no terror in the path of storms.
 At such an holy hour may I alone,
 With God and Nature for my guides, retire
 To raise a voiceless hymn to Heaven's throne,
 And teach my soul to what it should aspire.

W. A. S.

A GREAT PHILOSOPHER

THE life of a distinguished man is worth recording ; that of a sincere man is worth remembering. For, after all, however great a man's genius or discoveries may make him—however wide-spread may be his name, or influential the position he has filled—if his living has not been in accordance with the spirit of the truths he has made known, or the actions which have made him great ; if, in a few words, he has not been an honourable, an upright, and *good* man, his memory will be of very little use to the general mass of people. History may require that his existence shall be recorded ; that the works, of whatever kind, of which he was the author shall be traced to their source ; that the circumstances under which they were effected shall be noted ; that the dates of his life shall be preserved. But beyond this, nothing. It is the good man's life only which can furnish recollections worth assimilating with our everyday existence ; and when purity of heart and simplicity of manner are united with splendid achievements and brilliant endowments, the works upon which such a man's fame rests are not the greatest part of the benefit his life confers on his contemporaries and upon posterity. If a man be just, his *memory* shall be blessed.

Without having in the outset possessed any of those helps to the acquirement of knowledge and attainment of positions of celebrity which are the privileges of the sons of the wealthy classes ; born of very humble parents and with as humble prospects ; indebted for all his subsequent success mainly to his own energy, perseverance, and genius, the great scientific services which Michael Faraday rendered to the world are a well-authenticated patent of his claim to the title of "distinguished" in its most honourable sense ; while the unpretending simplicity, the singleness of purpose, the quiet and unostentatious working, the unswerving consistency, and the reverent Christian humility, which characterised his life, were sufficient attributes to justify all the praise contained in the application of the term "sincere."

The story of Professor Faraday's life is one of that good old-fashioned sort which is meet for young boys' reading ; the kind of narrative wise men relate to their sons when they wish to plant within them an ambition to be useful men. How a poor boy endowed with a love for that which was lofty, and listening to the promptings of an honourable aspiration, by dint of diligence and earnest zeal ultimately became a great man ; and always preserving throughout his life the same kindly and honest qualities, died, in a ripe old age, full of honours and well-beloved. Our "rough island

story" contains many such narratives; they are pleasant to tell and bear repeating.

Michael Faraday was born in the year 1791, not 1794, as several of the sketches published since his death have stated, in the parish of Newington, Surrey. His father originally came from the very beautiful village of Clapham, in Yorkshire, and obtained his living as a smith. The subject of this paper was sent to a day school in the neighbourhood, at which he received the amount of education which it is usual for a working man's child to receive. At the age of thirteen he was removed to the shop of a London bookbinder, to whom he was in the following year formally apprenticed.

Whether the list of celebrated bookbinders is a lengthy one, the present writer is at the moment unable to state; but though the distance between bookbinding and chemistry is great, the result shows that there was much that was fortunate for and congenial to Mr. Faraday, in the trade to which he was thus bound. He was amongst books at a period when access to them was much more difficult to the poor than at the present day; and his awakening and inquiring intellect soon began to make use of the circumstances of the position in which he was placed. His curiosity in the science which he subsequently developed to such an extent was first aroused by observing an electrical machine in a shop-window one day when carrying home a parcel. It is uncertain whether the punctuality of the despatch of business was ever delayed; I imagine not; but whatever works of a scientific nature passed through the future philosopher's hands were perused by him with avidity.

He duly completed his apprenticeship in the year 1812, and continued to follow the trade of a bookbinder for some time. All his leisure time, however, was occupied with the study of the rudiments of chemistry, and the practice of such experiments as his means permitted him to attempt. Through the influence of one of his master's customers he was permitted to attend a course of lectures delivered in the Royal Institution by Sir Humphrey Davy; and eagerly embracing this opportunity of extending his knowledge, he regularly took careful notes of each lecture, and afterwards wrote out the series in a complete form, illustrating them with rough drawings.

In the life of every successful man there has been a period when some external help became necessary; the duty of assisting each other is a divinely appointed one. The biography of all eminent men who have risen, record the occasion when a friendly hand helped the climber upwards; and not the least honour is due to those, who detecting in the crowd beneath them the willing and fit aspirer, reach out to him the required assistance. A part of the life-duty of each generation consists in conferring this benefit upon its succeeding one.

Mr. Faraday's ambition had begun to assume a tangible form. As his knowledge increased, the desire to devote himself entirely to the beloved pursuits of his leisure, became more earnest and irrepressible; and in the same proportion grew his distaste for the career to which he found himself, as it were, tied. Genius, the natural cravings of his intellect, his innate knowledge of the capabilities he possessed, urged him to seek some more congenial employment. All intelligent men should at one time pause and reasonably inquire as to what is the most proper thing for them to do? what is the thing they can best do. Mr. Faraday's mind gradually attained certainty on this point; he became more and more impressed that in a scientific sphere he could do much, and that in order to do anything at all he required more time and opportunity than were within the reach of a journeyman book-binder, no matter how zealous he might be. But without money and destitute of friends who could assist him, what was he to do? Many and oft-repeated debates would this problem exact; the rewards and security of trade, and the allurements of genius would often be opposed to each other, and the natural timidity of a young mind would have some share in the conflict. But the thought that was in him was too earnest not to assert itself, until at last two things became clear; that a situation, no matter how humble, which would enable him to earn his daily bread and study chemistry at the same time, was the position he at present required; and that to seek such, was the next and immediate thing for him to do. The helping hand was needed here, and was not sought in vain.

Having addressed a letter to Sir Humphrey Davy explaining his wishes, he enclosed with it the reports of the lectures which he had written, and sent the parcel to that celebrated philosopher. An immediate reply was the result, and early in the following year the situation of Chemical Assistant at the Royal Institution was offered to him. What dreams of future success, what uncontrollable delight, succeeded the receipt of this latter communication, will be readily imagined by those who knew the earnest love which Mr. Faraday had for the career upon which he was about to enter. The employment was at once accepted, and shortly after its duties were entered upon, Mr. Faraday, who was then in his 22nd year, taking up his abode in the Institution. In the same year he had the privilege of going abroad in the position of amanuensis with his patron, and thus visited many parts of the Continent. To the broad beauty-seeing and rich mind of Faraday, this tour must have been of very great service. With the future in all the hues of hope unrolling itself before the enraptured student to what reverence and enthusiasm would he be removed as his eyes ranged over the

wondrous works of the Great Creator, of whose laws he was to be an expositor.

He returned to England in 1815, and resumed his humble place in the Royal Institution. Once more in the sphere of work, with steady and love-inspired zeal he commenced a course of experiment and investigation, and from that period his life became a quiet history of study and discovery. His close attention and magnificent intellect early reaped results in the shape of many observations of minor importance, accounts of which he published in the scientific journals of the time; and in 1820, his discovery of the chlorides of carbon, and in the succeeding year, of the mutual rotation of a magnetic pole and an electric current, inaugurated that brilliant series of revelations which have combined to place his name in the very first rank of great philosophers.

As an electrician only, Mr. Faraday's services have been incalculable; and apart from the definite results which his discoveries in that branch have attained, the insight which he afforded into this most wonderful of modern scientific mysteries, has opened up fields of speculation and inquiry which promise more amazing results still. But it is not only by his accomplished work, though that is vast, nor by his magnetic discoveries, that his achievements are to be measured; the hypothetical ideas he has started, and the glimpses he has given into yet unknown territory, are of an importance which cannot be too highly estimated.

The great results which Mr. Faraday was continually presenting to the world were not unappreciated. In 1823 the chemical assistant was elected Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and in 1825 a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1832 the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law was conferred upon him by the University of Oxford, and in the following year he was appointed to the Fullerian Chair of Chemistry in the Royal Institution. In 1835 Government acknowledged his services by a pension of £300 per annum. Amongst other appointments which he received may be mentioned the following:—Chemical Lecturer to the Cadets at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich; Scientific Adviser on Lights to the Trinity House; and Scientific Adviser of Lights to the Board of Trade. He was also a Knight of the Prussian Order of Merit, one of the eight foreign Associates of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at Paris, and a Commander of the Legion of Honour.

The life of a man of science possesses, to a Carlyleish mind, many advantages over those of most other public men. It is a life of most unquestionable dignity—what the Chelsea philosopher would term a silent life—one which is made up of more working than talking, and which must depend for its honour and success

amongst men entirely upon its use. Alone in the laboratory or the study, with patient thought and unceasing attention, with steady and skilful fingers and closely watching eyes, with unmitigated study and truth-loving earnestness, must the man of science pursue his life's labour. The world never sees, rarely hears of him, except when he comes before it to present a result, to disclose a hidden fact, and make public a tangible achievement. He is known only by the unmistakable and lasting work which he has done. Yet, though his duties are so quietly and secretly performed, they influence every department of life, and are of a world-wide importance. A few of the results of his labour are sufficiently stupendous. The locomotives which fly through the length and breadth of the land, conveying brother to brother, and distant friend to distant friend; the steam-ship, which ploughs the deep and makes the waste waters the highway of commerce and civilisation; the ascertained laws which render that navigation possible; the lightning-wire, which brings the ends of the earth together and sends a whisper round the globe; the knowledge which penetrates the thick earth, and reveals the store-houses of its necessary treasures; the science which foretels the storm and erects the strong lighthouse in the midst of the raging waters; the very light which shines therein with such a useful glory,—these are a few of the products of his workshop, and the accomplishments of his labour. He takes the waste materials of the earth, and develops them into food and warmth, and light and beauty; he lays bare the hidden crime, and discloses the sources of disease and its remedy; he unrolls the wisdom of the All-wise, and fulfils His loving providence; he makes possible an extended civilisation and a consolidated and humanised earth.

In proportion to the magnitude and dignity of his mission, the sincere man of science must unite in himself all the nobler qualities of our human nature; for there is this truth associated with his work, that if he is to be greatly successful he requires them. His first maxim must be an uncompromising reverence for truth—truth fixed, eternal. With him there must be no expedient—no sham. The truth, the law, the undeniable certainty, is what he searches for, and he rests not until he has found it. He must also have within him a painstaking and reverent humility of mind; he must be very teachable; for to the haughty discovery will be shy; she oftener shows herself in the simplest forms. With him conclusions must not be jumped at; it is necessary that with patient consideration he should try avenue after avenue, probability after probability, thought after thought, until at last the fact dawns upon him: then he must seek corroboration after corroboration. Often when his conclusions seem well founded will they

prove baseless, and with unrepining thought he will have to retrace his steps, until he finds the right path from which he has diverged. A calm hope must abide with him; his work must be guided by love; for without these he cannot well do; hope for the reward which will not fail the diligent and earnest searcher; love for that which brings him closer and yet more close to Infinite Wisdom, and makes known the ways of Eternal Providence.

The great philosopher to whose memory this is a brief and imperfect tribute, possessed these qualities in an eminent degree. His life was one calculated to fill the young man with enthusiasm, and the old with respectful regard. From the lowest position to one of the most distinguished; through a long life marked by splendid successes, he was the same earnest, consistent, humble-minded man. Ever ready to impart knowledge, and delighted to instruct even children, he was never above learning, even from the lowest. Deeply imbued with religious feeling, he regarded himself but as the servant of the Great Master, and sought only to do His work efficiently and well. It is gratifying to know that all his honours came unasked and unsought for; it is pleasantly characteristic of the man, that many of them had to be urged upon his acceptance.

To an intellect of the highest order he united the profound diligence and caution of a devout student. Whatever was worth doing, with him, was worth doing well. Ingenious and quick as a thinker; seeing the path before clearly for a long way; with an originality of speculation amounting to genius, he possessed also a manipulative dexterity in the working of experiments, which rendered him a facile and skilful lecturer; and a carefulness in concluding, which made his theories have almost the weight of certainties. If he could not know that a thing was, he would know, at least, that it was not. He had, moreover, a clearness and grace of phraseology in stating his opinions, and the results of his observations, which were the outward developments of his shrewd and well-regulated mind.

I have used the word shrewd, and rightly used it; for, combined with his humility and genius, he possessed a practical common-sense which, I think, never deserted him. The dry humour with which this often clothed itself, was in wonderful keeping with his kind, and, at the same time, straight-forward nature. I will quote an instance of this. At a time when England was giving much attention to one of the most ridiculous of modern impostures, Dr. Faraday, amongst other distinguished men—many of whom were present on the occasion referred to—received an invitation to attend a "*seance*," at which the Davenport Brothers were to be present. A note, of which the following is a copy, contained his reply :

"GENTLEMEN,—I am obliged by your courteous invitation, but really I have been so much disappointed by the 'manifestations' to which my notice has at different times been called, that I am not encouraged to give any more attention to them, and I therefore leave those to which you refer in the hands of the professors of legerdemain. If spirit communications not utterly worthless, should happen to start into activity, I will trust the spirits to find out for themselves how they can move my attention. I am tired of them.

"With thanks, I am very truly yours,

"M. FARADAY."

The beauty of his character was most charmingly exhibited on the occasions of his lectures to the young. When a man can talk well to children, there must be very much about him that is gentle and lovely; and nothing could surpass the exquisite and simple diction, and the interesting and appreciating manner, with which Mr. Faraday instructed "the juveniles" at these times. The kindly and expressive mouth, the beaming eye, and the honourable white hair of the lecturer, and the pleasant little jokes with which he interspersed his remarks, must have rendered him a great favourite with his young auditory; while the beautiful little morals which he occasionally drew from his subject, cannot fail to have held an ennobling influence on many a young heart before him. Here is one of them.

"Indeed, all I can say to you at the end of these lectures (for we must come to an end at one time or other), is to express a wish that you may in your generation be felt to compare to a candle; that you may, like it, shine as lights to those about you; that in all your actions you may justify the beauty of the taper by making your deeds honourable and effectual in the discharge of your duty to your fellow-men."

He died on Sunday, the 25th August, 1867. For some time previously the infirmities of age had been gradually overpowering him. He touchingly alluded to his knowledge of the fact on concluding a lecture in the Royal Institution in 1861.

"The gradual loss of memory and my other faculties, is making itself painfully evident to me, and requires every time I appear before you, the continual remembrance of your kindness to enable me to get through my task. If I should happen to go on too long, or should fail in doing what you might desire, remember it is yourselves who are chargeable, by wishing me to remain. I have desired to retire, as I think every man ought to do before his faculties become impaired; but I must confess that the affection I have for this place, and for those who frequent this place, is such that I hardly know when the proper time has arrived."

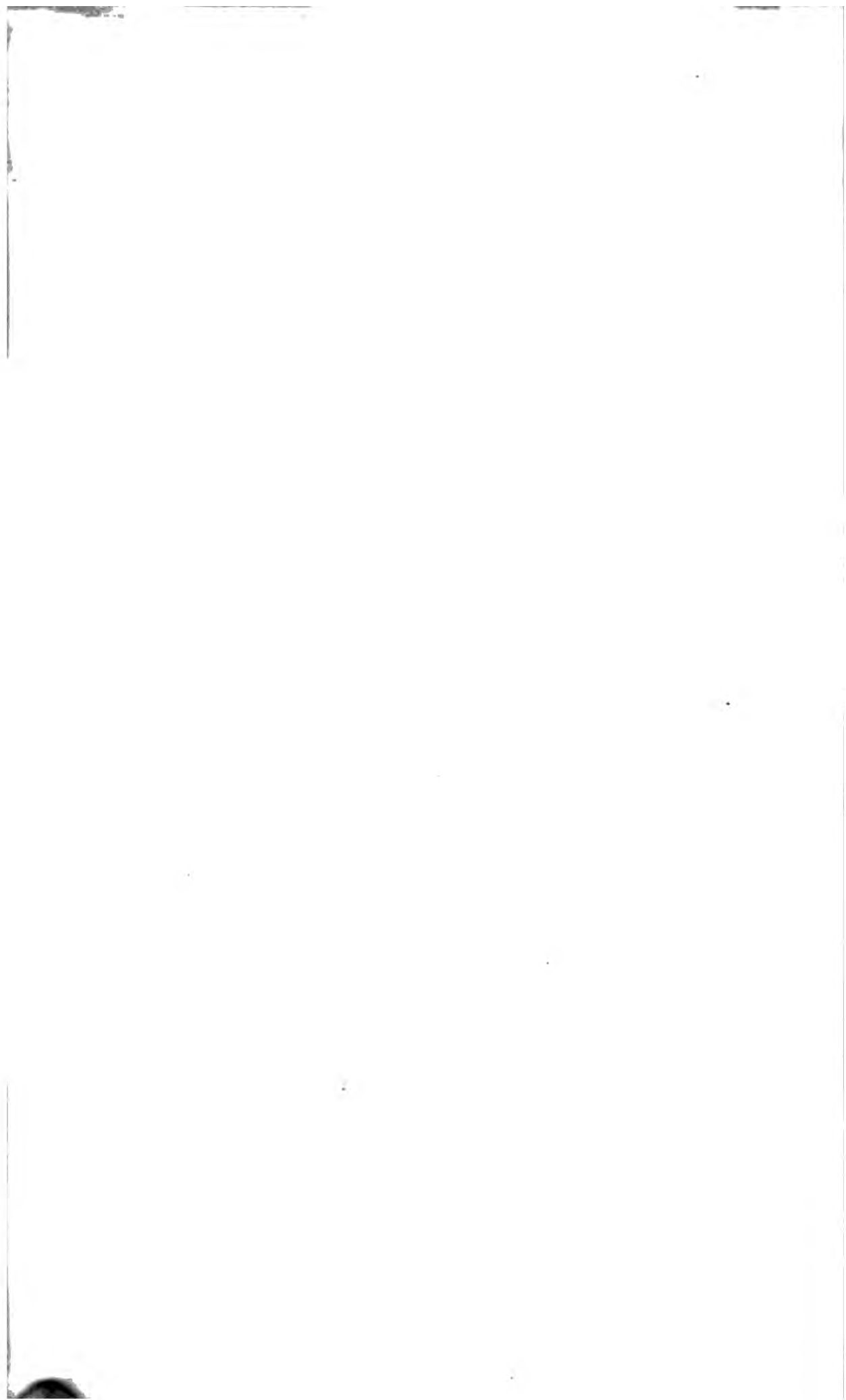
There is something soldierlike, as well as graceful in those words, and they represent the nature of him who uttered them. His death took place in a house on Hampton Court Green, and was

that of one who had completed his work, and was ready for his rest. Well-beloved, and respected by all who knew him; calmly, peacefully, in the fulness of years and honours he fell asleep.

— Apart from our interest in him as a great philosopher, friend reader, is it not good for us to possess a knowledge of what manner of men such as he were and are? In this day especially when there is so much that is *not* sincere, it is beautiful, re-assuring, refining to us to consider of one who, though greatly celebrated, lived truly and humbly, doing his work thoroughly and well; uncontaminated by applause, reverent and just; desiring simply to be a good and faithful servant.

F. J. F.





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