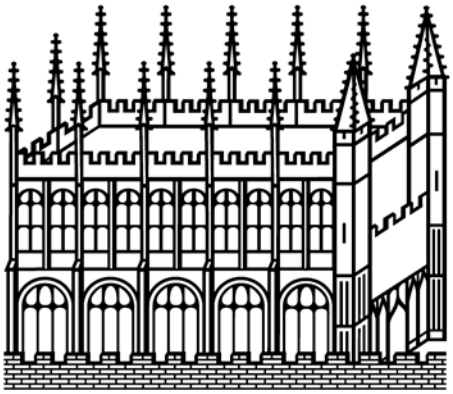


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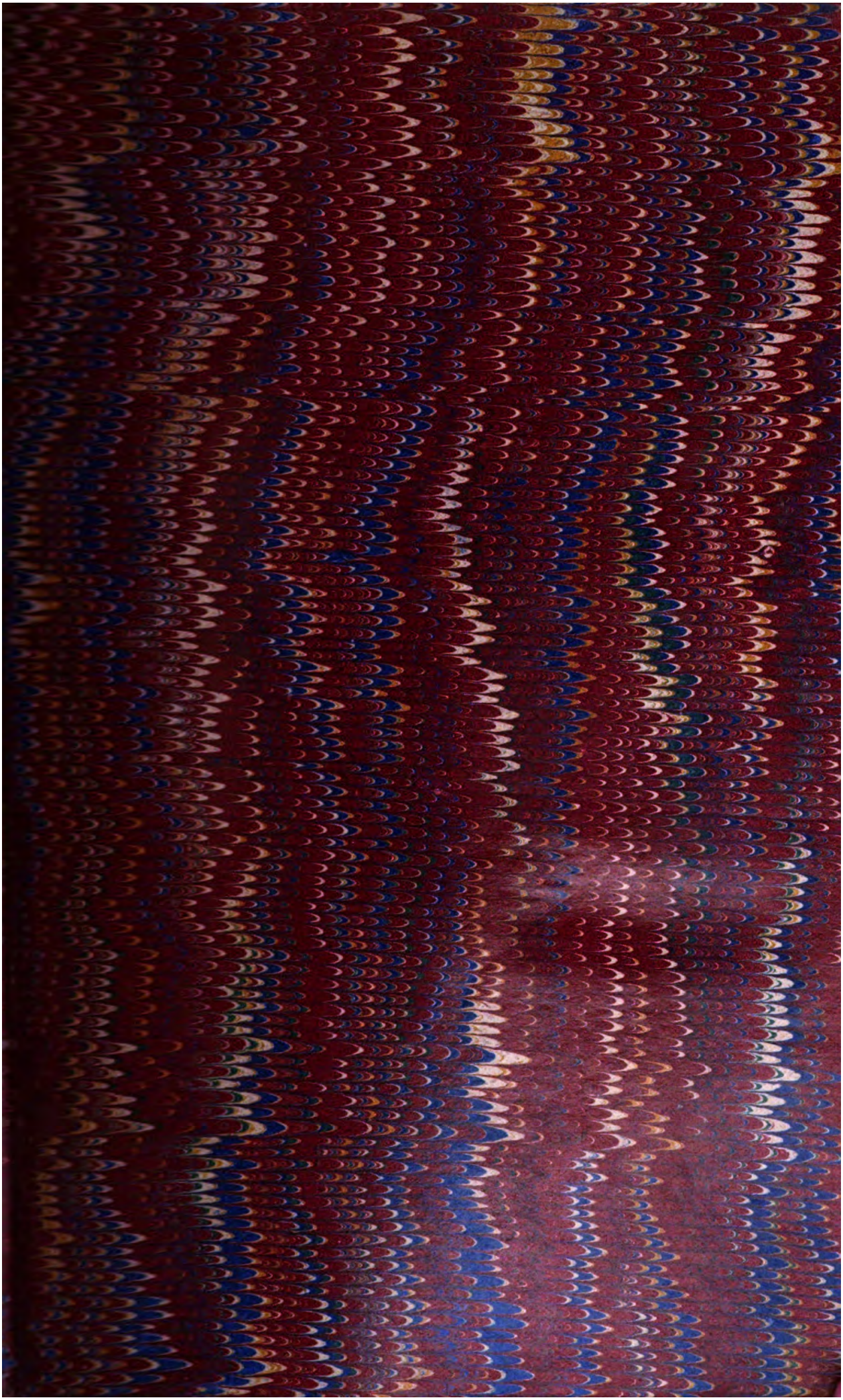




Sydney Gedge, M.P.,

OF

Mitcham Hall, Surrey.



THE

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VOL. XXIX.

THE

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HANDS WERE LOOSENING HIS NECKERCHIEF.

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1874.

Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF FARMER OAK: AN INCIDENT.



WHEN Farmer Oak smiled, the corners of his mouth spread till they were within an unimportant distance of his ears, his eyes were reduced to mere chinks, and diverging wrinkles appeared round them, extending upon his countenance like the rays in a rudimentary sketch of the rising sun.

His Christian name was Gabriel, and on working days he was a young man of sound judgment, easy motions, proper dress, and general good character. On Sundays he was a man of misty views, rather given to a postponing treatment of things, whose best clothes and seven-and-six-penny umbrella were always hampering him: upon the whole, one who felt himself to occupy morally that vast middle space of Laodicean neutrality which lay between the Sacrament people of the parish and the drunken division of its inhabitants

—that is, he went to church, but yawned privately by the time the congregation reached the Nicene creed, and thought of what there would be for dinner when he meant to be listening to the sermon. Or, to state his character as it stood in the scale of public opinion, when his friends and critics were in tantrums, he was considered rather a bad man; when they were pleased, he was rather a good man; when they were neither, he was a man whose moral colour was a kind of pepper-and-salt mixture.

Since he lived six times as many working days as Sundays, Oak's appearance in his old clothes was most peculiarly his own—the mental picture formed by his neighbours always presenting him as dressed in that way when their imaginations answered to the thought "Gabriel Oak." He wore a low-crowned felt hat, spread out at the base by tight jamming upon the head for security in high winds, and a coat like Dr. Johnson's, his lower extremities being encased in ordinary leather leggings and boots emphatically large, affording to each foot a roomy apartment so constructed that any wearer might stand in a river all day long and know nothing about it—their maker being a conscientious man who always endeavoured to compensate for any weakness in his cut by unstinted dimension and solidity.

Mr. Oak carried about him, by way of watch, what may be called a small silver clock; in other words, it was a watch as to shape and intention, and a small clock as to size. This instrument being several years older than Oak's grandfather, had the peculiarity of going either too fast or not at all. The smaller of its hands, too, occasionally slipped round on the pivot, and thus, though the minutes were told with the greatest precision, nobody could be quite certain of the hour they belonged to. The stopping peculiarity of his watch Oak remedied by thumps and shakes, when it always went on again immediately, and he escaped any evil consequences from the other two defects by constant comparisons with and observations of the sun and stars, and by pressing his face close to the glass of his neighbours' windows when passing by their houses, till he could discern the hour marked by the green-faced timekeepers within. It may be mentioned that Oak's fob being painfully difficult of access by reason of its somewhat high situation in the waistband of his trousers (which also lay at a remote height under his waistcoat), the watch was as a necessity pulled out by throwing the body extremely to one side, compressing the mouth and face to a mere mass of wrinkles on account of the exertion required, and drawing up the watch by its chain, like a bucket from a well.

But some thoughtful persons, who had seen him walking across one of his fields on a certain December morning—sunny and exceedingly mild—might have regarded Gabriel Oak in other aspects than these. In his face one might notice that many of the hues and curves of youth had tarried on to manhood: there even remained in his remoter crannies some relics of the boy. His height and breadth would have been sufficient to make his presence imposing, had they been exhibited with due considera-

tion. But there is a way some men have, rural and urban alike—for which the mind is more responsible than flesh and sinew—a way of curtailing their dimensions by their manner of showing them; and from a quiet modesty that would have become a vestal, which seemed continually to impress upon him that he had no great claim on the world's room, Oak walked unassumingly, and with a faintly perceptible bend, quite distinct from a bowing of the shoulders. This may be said to be a defect in an individual if he depends for his valuation as a total more upon his appearance than upon his capacity to wear well, which Oak did not. He had just reached the time of life at which "young" is ceasing to be the prefix of "man" in speaking of one. He was at the brightest period of masculine life, for his intellect and his emotions were clearly separated: he had passed the time during which the influence of youth indiscriminately mingles them in the character of impulse, and he had not yet arrived at the stage wherein they become united again, in the character of prejudice, by the influence of a wife and family. In short, he was twenty-eight, and a bachelor.

The field he was in sloped steeply to a ridge called Norcombe Hill. Through a spur of this hill ran the highway from Norcombe to Casterbridge, sunk in a deep cutting. Casually glancing over the hedge, Oak saw coming down the incline before him an ornamental spring waggon, painted yellow and gaily marked, drawn by two horses, a waggoner walking alongside bearing a whip perpendicularly. The waggon was laden with household goods and window-plants, and on the apex of the whole sat a woman, young and attractive. Gabriel had not beheld the sight for more than half a minute, when the vehicle was brought to a standstill just beneath his eyes.

"The tailboard of the waggon is gone, Miss," said the waggoner.

"Then I heard it fall," said the girl, in a soft, though not particularly low voice. "I heard a noise I could not account for when we were coming up the hill."

"I'll run back."

"Do," she answered.

The sensible horses stood perfectly still, and the waggoner's steps sank fainter and fainter in the distance.

The girl on the summit of the load sat motionless, surrounded by tables and chairs with their legs upwards, backed by an oak settle, and ornamented in front by pots of geraniums, myrtles, and cactuses, together with a caged canary—all probably from the windows of the house just vacated. There was also a cat in a willow basket, from the partly-opened lid of which she gazed with half-closed eyes, and affectionately surveyed the small birds around.

The handsome girl waited for some time idly in her place, and the only sound heard in the stillness was the hopping of the canary up and down the perches of its prison. Then she looked attentively downwards. It was not at the bird, nor at the cat; it was at an oblong package tied

in paper, and lying between them. She turned her head to learn if the waggoner were coming. He was not yet in sight; and then her eyes crept back to the package, her thoughts seeming to run upon what was inside it. At length she drew the article into her lap, and untied the paper covering; a small swing looking-glass was disclosed, in which she proceeded to survey herself attentively. Then she parted her lips and smiled.

It was a fine morning, and the sun lighted up to a scarlet glow the crimson jacket she wore, and painted a soft lustre upon her bright face and black hair. The myrtles, geraniums, and cactuses packed around her were fresh and green, and at such a leafless season they invested the whole concern of horses, waggon, furniture, and girl with a peculiar charm of rarity. What possessed her to indulge in such a performance in the sight of the sparrows, blackbirds, and unperceived farmer, who were alone its spectators—whether the smile began as a factitious one, to test her capacity in that art, nobody knows; it ended certainly in a real smile. She blushed at herself, and seeing her reflection blush, blushed the more.

The change from the customary spot and necessary occasion of such an act—from the dressing hour in a bedroom to a time of travelling out of doors—lent to the idle deed a novelty it certainly did not intrinsically possess. The picture was a delicate one. Woman's prescriptive infirmity had stalked into the sunlight, which had invested it with the freshness of an originality. A cynical inference was irresistible by Gabriel Oak as he regarded the scene, generous though he fain would have been. There was no necessity whatever for her looking in the glass. She did not adjust her hat, or pat her hair, or press a dimple into shape, or do one thing to signify that any such intention had been her motive in taking up the glass. She simply observed herself as a fair product of Nature in a feminine direction, her expressions seeming to glide into far-off though likely dramas in which men would play a part—vistas of probable triumphs—the smiles being of a phase suggesting that hearts were imagined as lost and won. Still, this was but conjecture, and the whole series of actions were so idly put forth as to make it rash to assert that intention had any part in them at all.

The waggoner's steps were heard returning. She put the glass in the paper, and the whole again into its place.

When the waggon had passed on, Gabriel withdrew from his point of espial, and descending into the road, followed the vehicle to the turnpike-gate at the bottom of the hill, where the object of his contemplation now halted for the payment of toll. About twenty steps still remained between him and the gate, when he heard a dispute. It was a difference concerning twopence between the persons with the waggon and the man at the toll-bar.

"Mis'ess's niece is upon the top of the things, and she says that's enough that I've offered ye, you grate miser, and she won't pay any more." These were the waggoner's words.

"Very well; then mis'ess's niece can't pass," said the turnpike-keeper, closing the gate.

Oak looked from one to the other of the disputants, and fell into a reverie. There was something in the tone of twopence remarkably insignificant. Threepence had a definite value as money—it was an appreciable infringement on a day's wages, and, as such, a higgling matter; but twopence——"Here," he said, stepping forward and handing twopence to the gatekeeper; "let the young woman pass." He looked up at her then; she heard his words, and looked down.

Gabriel's features adhered throughout their form so exactly to the middle line between the beauty of St. John and the ugliness of Judas Iscariot, as represented in a window of the church he attended, that not a single lineament could be selected and called worthy either of distinction or notoriety. The red-jacketed and dark-haired maiden seemed to think so too, for she carelessly glanced over him, and told her man to drive on. She might have looked her thanks to Gabriel on a minute scale, but she did not speak them; more probably she felt none, for in gaining her a passage he had lost her her point, and we know how women take a favour of that kind.

The gatekeeper surveyed the retreating vehicle. "That's a handsome maid," he said to Oak.

"But she has her faults," said Gabriel.

"True, farmer."

"And the greatest of them is—well, what it is always."

"Beating people down; ay, 'tis so."

"Oh no."

"What, then?"

Gabriel, perhaps a little piqued by the comely traveller's indifference, glanced back to where he had witnessed her performance over the hedge, and said "Vanity."

CHAPTER II.

NIGHT: THE FLOCK: AN INTERIOR: ANOTHER INTERIOR.

IT was nearly midnight on the eve of St. Thomas's, the shortest day in the year. A desolating wind wandered from the north over the hill whereon Oak had watched the yellow waggon and its occupant in the sunshine of a few days earlier.

Norcombe Hill—forming part of Norcombe Ewelease—was one of the spots which suggest to a passer-by that he is in the presence of a shape approaching the indestructible as nearly as any to be found on earth. It was a featureless convexity of chalk and soil—an ordinary specimen of those smoothly outlined protuberances of the globe which may remain undisturbed on some great day of confusion, when far grander heights and dizzy granite precipices topple down.

The hill was covered on its northern side by an ancient and decaying plantation of beeches, whose upper verge formed a line over the crest, fringing its arched curve against the sky, like a mane. To-night these trees sheltered the southern slope from the keenest blasts, which smote the wood and floundered through it with a sound as of grumbling, or gushed over its crowning boughs in a weakened moan. The dry leaves in the ditch simmered and boiled in the same breezes, a tongue of air occasionally ferreting out a few, and sending them spinning across the grass. A group or two of the latest in date amongst this dead multitude had remained on the twigs which bore them till this very mid-winter time, and in falling rattled against the trunks with smart taps.

Between this half-wooded, half-naked hill, and the vague still horizon its summit indistinctly commanded, was a mysterious sheet of fathomless shade—the sounds only from which suggested that what it concealed bore some humble resemblance to features here. The thin grasses, more or less coating the hill, were touched by the wind in breezes of differing powers and almost differing natures—one rubbing the blades heavily, another raking them piercingly, another brushing them like a soft broom. The instinctive act of human-kind here was to stand and listen, and learn how the trees on the right and the trees on the left wailed or chaunted to each other in the regular antiphonies of a cathedral choir; how hedges and other shapes to leeward then caught the note, lowering it to the tenderest sob; and how the hurrying gust then plunged into the south, to be heard no more.

The sky was clear—remarkably clear—and the twinkling of all the stars seemed to be but throbs of one body, timed by a common pulse. The North star was directly in the wind's eye, and since evening the Bear had swung round it outwardly to the east, till it was now at a right angle with the meridian. A difference of colour in the stars—oftener read of than seen in England—was really perceptible here. The kingly brilliancy of Sirius pierced the eye with a steely glitter, the star called Capella was yellow, Aldebaran and Betelgueux shone with a fiery red.

To persons standing alone on a hill during a clear midnight such as this, the roll of the world eastward is almost a palpable movement. The sensation may be caused by the panoramic glide of the stars past earthly objects, which is perceptible in a few minutes of stillness, or by a fancy that the better outlook upon space afforded by a hill emphasises terrestrial revolution, or by the wind, or by the solitude; but whatever be its origin, the impression of riding along is vivid and abiding. The poetry of motion is a phrase much in use, and to enjoy the epic form of that gratification it is necessary to stand on a hill at a small hour of the night, and, first enlarging the consciousness with a sense of difference from the mass of civilized mankind, who are horizontal and disregardful of all such proceedings at this time, long and quietly watch your stately progress through the stars. After such a nocturnal reconnoitre among these astral clusters, aloft from the customary haunts of thought and vision, some men may feel raised to a capability for eternity at once.

Suddenly an unexpected series of sounds began to be heard in this place up against the sky. They had a clearness which was to be found nowhere in the wind, and a sequence which was to be found nowhere in nature. They were the notes of Farmer Oak's flute.

The tune was not floating unhindered into the open air, but it seemed muffled in some way, and was altogether too curtailed in power to spread high or wide. It came from the direction of a small dark object under the plantation hedge—a shepherd's hut now presenting an outline to which an uninitiated person might have been puzzled to attach either meaning or use.

The image as a whole was that of a small Noah's Ark on a small Ararat, allowing the traditionary outlines and general form of the Ark which are followed by toymakers, and by these means are established in men's imaginations among their firmest, because earliest impressions, to pass as an approximate pattern. The hut stood on small wheels, which raised its floor about a foot from the ground. Such shepherds' huts are dragged into the fields when the lambing season comes on, to shelter the shepherd in his enforced nightly attendance.

It was only latterly that people had begun to call Gabriel "Farmer" Oak. During the twelvemonth preceding this time he had been enabled by sustained efforts of industry and chronic good spirits to lease the small sheep-farm of which Norcombe Hill was a portion, and stock it with two hundred sheep. Previously he had been a bailiff for a short time, and earlier still a shepherd only, having from his childhood assisted his father in tending the flocks of large proprietors, till old Gabriel sank to rest.

This venture, unaided and alone, into the paths of farming as master and not as man, with an advance of sheep not yet paid for, was a critical juncture with Gabriel Oak, and he recognized his position clearly. The first movement in his new progress was the lambing of his ewes, and sheep having been his speciality from his youth, he wisely refrained from deputing the task of tending them at this season to a hireling or a novice.

The wind continued to beat about the corners of the hut, but the flute-playing ceased. A rectangular space of light appeared in the side of the hut, and in the opening the outline of Farmer Oak's figure. He carried a lantern in his hand, and closing the door behind him, came forward and busied himself about this nook of the field for nearly twenty minutes, the lantern light appearing and disappearing here and there, and brightening him or darkening him as he stood before or behind it.

Oak's motions, though they had a quiet energy, were slow, and their deliberateness accorded well with his occupation. Fitness being the basis of all beauty, nobody could have denied that his steady swings and turns in and about the flock had elements of grace. Yet, although if occasion demanded he could do or think a thing with as mercurial a dash as can the men of towns who are more to the manner born, his special power, morally, physically, and mentally, was static, owing little or nothing to momentum, as a rule.

A close examination of the ground hereabout, even by the wan starlight only, revealed how a portion of what would have been casually called a wild slope had been appropriated by Farmer Oak for his great purpose this winter. Detached hurdles thatched with straw were stuck into the ground at various scattered points, amid and under which the whitish forms of his meek ewes moved and rustled. The ring of the sheep-bell, which had been silent during his absence, recommenced, in tones which had more mellowness than clearness owing to an increasing growth of surrounding wool, and continued till Oak withdrew again from the flock. He returned to the hut, bringing in his arms a newborn lamb, consisting of four legs large enough for a full-grown sheep, united by an unimportant membrane about half the substance of the legs collectively, which constituted the animal's entire body just at present.

The little speck of life he placed on a wisp of hay before the small stove, where a can of milk was simmering. Oak extinguished the lantern by blowing into it with pouted lips, and then pinching out the snuff, the cot being lighted by a candle suspended by a twisted wire. A rather hard couch, formed of a few corn sacks thrown carelessly down, covered half the floor of this little habitation, and here the young man stretched himself along, loosened his woollen cravat, and closed his eyes. In about the time a person unaccustomed to bodily labour would have decided upon which side to lie, Farmer Oak was asleep.

The inside of this hut, as it now presented itself, was cosy and alluring, and the scarlet handful of fire in addition to the candle, reflecting its own genial colour upon whatever it could reach, flung associations of enjoyment even over utensils and tools. In the corner stood the sheep-crook, and along a shelf at one side were ranged bottles and canisters of the simple preparations pertaining to ovine surgery and physic; spirits of wine, turpentine, tar, magnesia, ginger, and castor-oil being the chief. On a triangular shelf across the corner stood bread, bacon, cheese, and a cup for ale or cider, which was supplied from a flagon beneath. Beside the provisions lay the flute, whose notes had lately been called forth by the lonely watcher to beguile a tedious hour. The house was ventilated by two round holes, like the lights of a cabin, with wood slides.

The lamb, revived by the warmth, began to bleat, and the sound entered Gabriel's ears and brain with an instant meaning, as expected sounds will. Passing from the profoundest sleep to the most alert wakefulness with the same ease that had accompanied the reverse operation, he looked at his watch, found that the hour-hand had shifted again, put on his hat, took the lamb in his arms, and carried it into the darkness. After placing the little creature with its mother, he stood and carefully examined the sky, to ascertain the time of night from the altitudes of the stars.

The Dog-star and Aldebaran pointing to the restless Pleiades were half way up the Southern sky, and beneath them hung Orion, which gorgeous constellation never burnt more vividly than now, as it swung itself

forth above the rim of the landscape. Castor and Pollux with their quiet shine almost rested on the ground: the barren and gloomy Square of Pegasus was creeping round to the north-west; far away through the plantation, Vega sparkled like a lamp suspended amid the leafless trees, and Cassiopeia's chair stood daintily poised on the uppermost boughs.

"One o'clock," said Gabriel.

Being a man not without a frequent consciousness that there was some beauty in this life he led, he stood still after looking at the sky as a useful instrument, and regarded it in an appreciative spirit, as a work of art superlatively beautiful. For a moment he seemed impressed with the speaking loneliness of the scene, or rather with the complete abstraction from all its compass of the sights and sounds of man. Human shapes, interferences, troubles, and joys were all as if they were not, and there seemed to be on the shaded hemisphere of the globe no sentient being save himself; he could fancy them all gone round to the sunny side.

Occupied thus, with eyes stretched afar, Oak gradually perceived that what he had previously taken to be a star low down behind the outskirts of the plantation was in reality no such thing. It was an artificial light, almost close at hand.

To find themselves utterly alone at night where company is desirable and expected makes some people fearful; but a case more trying by far to the nerves is to discover some mysterious companionship when intuition, sensation, memory, analogy, testimony, probability, induction—every kind of evidence in the logician's list—have united to persuade consciousness that it is quite alone.

Farmer Oak went towards the plantation and pushed through its lower boughs to the windy side. A dim mass under the slope reminded him that a shed occupied a place here, the site being a cutting into the slope of the hill, so that at its back part the roof was almost level with the ground. In front it was formed of boards nailed to posts and covered with tar as a preservative. Through crevices in the roof and side spread streaks and dots of light, a combination of which made up the radiance that had attracted him. Oak stepped up behind, where, leaning down upon the roof and putting his eye close to a hole, he could see into the interior clearly.

The place contained two women and two cows. By the side of the latter a steaming bran-mash stood in a bucket. One of the women was past middle age. Her companion was apparently young and graceful; he could form no decided opinion upon her looks, her position being almost beneath his eye, so that he saw her in a bird's-eye aërial view, as Satan first saw Paradise. She wore no bonnet or hat, but had enveloped herself in a large cloak, which was carelessly flung over her head as a covering.

"There, now we'll go home," said the elder of the two, resting her knuckles upon her hips, and looking at their goings-on as a whole. "I do hope Daisy will fetch round again now. I have never been more frightened in my life, but I don't mind breaking my rest if she recovers."

The young woman, whose eyelids were apparently inclined to fall together on the smallest provocation of silence, yawned without parting her lips to any inconvenient extent, whereupon Gabriel caught the infection and slightly yawned in sympathy. "I wish we were rich enough to pay a man to do these things," she said.

"As we are not, we must do them ourselves," said the other; "for you must help me if you stay."

"Well, my hat is gone, however," continued the younger. "It went over the hedge, I think. The idea of such a slight wind catching it."

The cow standing erect was of the Devon breed, and was encased in a tight warm hide of rich Indian red, as absolutely uniform from eyes to tail as if the animal had been dipped in a dye of that colour, her long back being mathematically level. The other was spotted, grey and white. Beside her, Oak now noticed a little calf about a day old, looking idiotically at the two women, which showed that it had not long been accustomed to the phenomenon of eyesight, and often turning to the lantern, which it apparently mistook for the moon, inherited instinct having as yet had little time for correction by experience. Between the sheep and the cows, Lucina had been busy on Norcombe Hill lately.

"I think we had better send for some oatmeal," said the elder woman; "there's no more bran."

"Yes, aunt; and I'll ride over for it as soon as it is light."

"But there's no side-saddle."

"I can ride on the other: trust me."

Oak, upon hearing these remarks became more curious to observe her features, but this prospect being denied him by the hooding effect of the cloak, and by her forehead coming in the way of what the cloak did not cover, he felt himself drawing upon his fancy for their details. In making even horizontal and clear inspections, we colour and mould according to the wants within us whatever our eyes bring in. Had Gabriel been able from the first to get a distinct view of her countenance, his estimate of it as very handsome or slightly so would have been as his soul required a divinity at the moment or was ready supplied with one. Having for some time known the want of a satisfactory form to fill an increasing void within him, his position moreover affording the widest scope for his fancy, he painted her a beauty.

By one of those whimsical coincidences in which Nature, like a busy mother, seems to spare a moment from her unremitting labours to turn and make her children smile, the girl now dropped the cloak, and forth tumbled ropes of black hair over a red jacket. Oak knew her instantly as the heroine of the yellow waggon, myrtles, and looking-glass: prosily, as the woman who owed him twopence.

They placed the calf beside its mother again, took up the lantern, and went out, the light sinking down the hill till it was no more than a nebula. Gabriel Oak returned to his flock.

CHAPTER III.

A Girl on Horseback: Conversation.

The sluggish day began to break. Even its position terrestrially is one of the elements of a new interest, and for no particular reason save that the incident of the night had occurred there, Oak went again into the plantation. Lingering and musing here, he heard the steps of a horse at the foot of the hill, and soon there appeared in view an auburn pony with a girl on its back, ascending by the path leading past the cattle-shed. She was the young woman of the night before. Gabriel instantly thought of the hat she had mentioned as having lost in the wind; possibly she had come to look for it. He hastily scanned the ditch, and after walking about ten yards along it, found the hat among the leaves. Gabriel took it in his hand and returned to his hut. Here he ensconced himself, and looked through the loophole in the direction of the rider's approach.

She came up and looked around—then on the other side of the hedge. Gabriel was about to advance and restore the missing article, when an unexpected performance induced him to suspend the action for the present. The path after passing the cowshed bisected the plantation. It was not a bridle-path—merely a pedestrian's track, and the boughs spread horizontally at a height not greater than seven feet above the ground, which made it impossible to ride erect beneath them. The girl, who wore no riding-habit, looked around for a moment as if to assure herself that all humanity was out of view, then dexterously dropped backwards flat upon the pony's back, her head over its tail, her feet against its shoulder, and her eyes to the sky. The rapidity of her glide into this position was that of a kingfisher—its noiselessness that of a hawk. Gabriel's eyes had scarcely been able to follow her. The tall lank pony seemed used to such phenomena, and ambled along unconcerned. Thus she passed under the level boughs.

The performer seemed quite at home anywhere between a horse's head and its tail, and the necessity for this abnormal attitude having ceased with the passage of the plantation, she began to adopt another, even more obviously convenient than the first. She had no side-saddle, and it was very apparent that a firm seat upon the smooth leather beneath her was unattainable sideways. Springing to her accustomed perpendicular like a bowed sapling, and satisfying herself that nobody was in sight, she seated herself in the manner demanded by the saddle, though hardly expected of the woman, and trotted off in the direction of Tewnell Mill.

Oak was amused, perhaps a little astonished, and hanging up the hat in his hut, went again among his ewes. An hour passed, the girl returned, properly seated now, with a bag of bran in front of her. On nearing the cattle-shed she was met by a boy bringing a milking-pail, who held the reins of the pony whilst she slid off. The boy led away the horse, leaving the pail with the young woman.

Soon a soft spirt, alternating with a loud spirt, came in regular succession from within the shed. They were the sounds of a person milking a cow. Gabriel took the lost hat in his hand, and waited beside the path she would follow in leaving the hill.

She came, the pail in one hand, hanging against her knee. The left arm was extended as a balance, enough of it being shown bare to make Oak wish that the event had happened in summer, when the whole would have been revealed. There was a bright air and manner about her now, by which she seemed to imply that the desirability of her existence could not be questioned; and this rather saucy assumption failed in being offensive, because a beholder felt it to be, upon the whole, true. Like exceptional emphasis in the tone of a genius, that which would have made mediocrity ridiculous was an addition to recognized power. It was with some surprise that she saw Gabriel's face rising like the moon, behind the hedge.

The adjustment of the farmer's hazy conceptions of her charms to the portrait of herself she now presented him with, was less a diminution than a difference. The starting-point selected by the judgment was her height. She seemed tall, but the pail was a small one, and the hedge diminutive; hence, making allowance for error by comparison with these, she could have been not above the height to be chosen by women as best. All features of consequence were severe and regular. It may have been observed by persons who go about the shires with eyes for beauty, that in Englishwomen a classically formed face is seldom found to be united with a figure of the same pattern, the highly-finished features being generally too large for the remainder of the frame; that a graceful and proportionate figure of eight heads usually goes off into random facial curves. Without throwing a Nymphean tissue over a milkmaid, it must be said that here criticism checked itself in examining details to return to where it began, and looked at her proportions with a long consciousness of pleasure. From the contours of her figure in its upper part, she must have had a beautiful neck and shoulders; but it may be stated that since her infancy nobody had ever seen them. Had she been put into a low dress she would have run and thrust her head into a bush. Yet she was not a shy girl by any means; it was merely her instinct to draw the line dividing the seen from the unseen higher than they do it in towns.

That the girl's thoughts hovered about her face and form as soon as she caught Oak's eyes conning the same page was natural, and almost certain. The self-consciousness shown would have been vanity if a little more pronounced, dignity if a little less. Rays of male vision seem to have a tickling effect upon virgin faces in rural districts; she hastily brushed hers with her hand, as if Gabriel had been irritating its pink surface with a long straw, and the free air of her previous movements was reduced at the same time to a chastened phase of itself. Yet it was the man who blushed, the maid not at all.

"I found a hat," said Oak.

"It is mine," said she, and, from a sense of proportion, kept down to a small smile an inclination to laugh distinctly; "it flew away last night."

"One o'clock this morning?"

"Well—it was." She was surprised. "How did you know?" she said.

"I was here."

"You are Farmer Oak, are you not?"

"That or thereabouts. I'm lately come to this place."

"A large farm?" she inquired, casting her eyes around, and swinging back her hair, which was black in the shaded hollows of its mass; but it being now an hour past sunrise, the rays touched its prominent curves with a colour of their own.

"No; not large. About a hundred." (In speaking of farms the word "acres" is omitted by the natives, by analogy with such old expressions as "a stag of ten.")

"I wanted my hat this morning," she went on. "I had to ride to Tewnell Mill."

"Yes, you had."

"How do you know?"

"I saw you."

"Where?" she inquired, a misgiving bringing every muscle of her lineaments and frame to a standstill.

"Here—going through the plantation, and all down the hill," said Farmer Oak, with an aspect excessively knowing with regard to some matter in his mind, as he gazed at a remote point in the direction named, and then turned back to meet his colloquist's eyes.

A perception caused him to withdraw his own from hers as suddenly as if he had been caught in a theft. Recollection of the strange antics she had indulged in when passing through the trees, was succeeded in the girl by a nettled palpitation, and that by a hot face. It was a time to see a woman redden who was not given to reddening as a rule; not a point in the milkmaid but was of the deepest rose-colour. From the Maiden's Blush, through all varieties of the Provence down to the Crimson Tuscany, the countenance of Oak's acquaintance quickly graduated; whereupon he, in considerateness, had turned away his head.

The sympathetic man still looked the other way, and wondered when she would recover whiteness sufficient to justify him in facing her again. He heard what seemed to be the flitting of a dead leaf upon the breeze, and looked. She had gone away.

With an air between that of Tragedy and Comedy, Gabriel returned to his work.

Five mornings and evenings passed. The young woman came regularly to milk the healthy cow or to attend to the sick one, but never allowed her vision to stray in the direction of Oak's person. His want of tact had deeply offended her—not by seeing what he could not help, but by letting her know that he had seen it. For, as without law there is

no sin, without eyes there is no indecorum; and she appeared to feel that Gabriel's espial had made her an indecorous woman without her own connivance. It was food for great regret with him; it was also a contre-temps which touched into life a latent heat he had experienced in that direction.

The acquaintanceship might, however, have ended in a slow forgetting, but for an incident which occurred at the end of the same week. One afternoon it began to freeze, and the frost increased with evening, which drew on like a stealthy tightening of bonds. It was a time when in cottages the breath of the sleepers freezes to the sheets, when round the drawing-room fire of a thick-walled mansion the sitters' backs are cold even whilst their faces are all aglow. Many a small bird went to bed supperless that night among the bare boughs.

As the milking-hour drew near, Oak kept his usual watch upon the cow-shed. At last he felt cold, and shaking an extra quantity of bedding round the yeaning ewes, he entered the hut and heaped more fuel upon the stove. The wind came in at the bottom of the door, to prevent which Oak wheeled the cot round a little more to the south. Then the wind spouted in at a ventilating hole—of which there was one on each side of the hut.

Gabriel had always known that when the fire was lighted and the door closed, one of these must be kept open—that chosen being always on the side away from the wind. Closing the slide to windward, he turned to open the other; on second thoughts, the farmer considered he would first sit down, leaving both closed for a minute or two, till the temperature of the hut was a little raised. He sat down.

His head began to ache in an unwonted manner, and, fancying himself weary by reason of the broken rests of the preceding nights, Oak decided to get up, open the slide, and then allow himself to fall asleep. He fell asleep without having performed the necessary preliminary.

How long he remained unconscious Gabriel never knew. During the first stages of his return to perception peculiar deeds seemed to be in course of enactment. His dog was howling, his head was aching fearfully—somebody was pulling him about, hands were loosening his neckerchief.

On opening his eyes, he found that evening had sunk to dusk, in a strange manner of unexpectedness. The young girl with the remarkably pleasant lips and white teeth was beside him. More than this—astonishingly more—his head was upon her lap, his face and neck were disagreeably wet, and her fingers were unbuttoning his collar.

"Whatever is the matter?" said Oak, vacantly.

She seemed to experience a sensation of mirth, but of too insignificant a kind to start the capacity of enjoyment.

"Nothing now," she answered, "since you are not dead. It was a wonder you were not suffocated in this hut of yours."

"Ah, the hut!" murmured Gabriel. "I gave ten pounds for that

hut. But I'll sell it, and sit under thatched hurdles as they did in old times, and curl up to sleep in a lock of straw! It played me nearly the same trick the other day!" Gabriel, by way of emphasis, brought down his fist upon the frozen ground.

"It was not exactly the fault of the hut," she observed, speaking in a tone which showed her to be that novelty among women—one who finished a thought before beginning the sentence which was to convey it. "You should, I think, have considered, and not have been so foolish as to leave the slides closed."

"Yes, I suppose I should," said Oak, absently. He was endeavouring to catch and appreciate the sensation of being thus with her—his head upon her dress—before the event passed on into the heap of bygone things. He wished she knew his impressions; but he would as soon have thought of carrying an odour in a net as of attempting to convey the intangibilities of his feeling in the coarse meshes of language. So he remained silent.

She made him sit up, and then Oak began wiping his face and shaking himself like a Samson. "How can I thank ye?" he said at last, gratefully, some of the natural rusty red having returned to his face.

"Oh, never mind that," said the girl, smiling, and allowing her smile to hold good for Gabriel's next remark, whatever that might prove to be.

"How did you find me?"

"I heard your dog howling and scratching at the door of the hut when I came to the milking (it was so lucky, Daisy's milking is almost over for the season, and I shall not come here after this week or the next). The dog saw me, and jumped over to me, and laid hold of my dress. I came across and looked round the hut the very first thing to see if the slides were closed. My uncle has a hut like this one, and I have heard him tell his shepherd not to go to sleep without leaving a slide open. I opened the door, and there you were like dead. I threw the milk over you, as there was no water, forgetting it was warm, and no use."

"I wonder if I should have died?" Gabriel said, in a low voice, which was rather meant to travel back to himself than on to her.

"Oh, no," the girl replied. She seemed to prefer a less tragic probability; to have saved a man from death involved talk that should harmonise with the dignity of such a deed—and she shunned it.

"I believe you saved my life, Miss —— I don't know your name. I know your aunt's, but not yours."

"I would just as soon not tell it—rather not. There is no reason either why I should, as you probably will never have much to do with me."

"Still, I should like to know."

"You can inquire at my aunt's—she will tell you."

"My name is Gabriel Oak."

"And mine isn't. You seem fond of yours in speaking it so decisively, Gabriel Oak."

"You see, it is the only one I shall ever have, and I must make the most of it."

"I always think mine sounds odd and disagreeable."

"I should think you might soon get a new one."

"Mercy—how many opinions you keep about you concerning other people, Gabriel Oak."

"Well, Miss—excuse the words—I thought you would like them. But I can't match you, I know, in mapping out my mind upon my tongue as I may say. I never was very clever in my inside. But I thank you. Come, give me your hand!"

She hesitated, somewhat disconcerted at Oak's old-fashioned earnest conclusion to a dialogue lightly carried on. "Very well," she said, and gave him her hand, compressing her lips to a demure impassivity. He held it but an instant, and in his fear of being too demonstrative, swerved to the opposite extreme, touching her fingers with the lightness of a small-hearted person.

"I am sorry," he said, the instant after, regretfully.

"What for?"

"Letting your hand go so quickly."

"You may have me again if you like; there it is." She gave him her hand again.

Oak held it longer this time—indeed, curiously long. "How soft it is—being winter-time, too—not chapped or rough, or anything!" he said.

"There—that's long enough," said she, though without pulling it away. "But I suppose you are thinking you would like to kiss it? You may if you want to."

"I wasn't thinking of any such thing," said Gabriel, simply; "but I will—"

"That you wont!" She snatched back her hand.

Gabriel felt himself guilty of another want of tact.

"Now find out my name," she said teasingly; and withdrew.

CHAPTER IV.

Gabriel's Resolve—The Visit—The Mistake.

The only superiority in women that is tolerable to the rival sex is, as a rule, that of the unconscious kind, but a superiority which recognizes itself may sometimes please by suggesting at the same time possibilities of impropriation to the subordinated man.

This well-favoured and comely girl soon made appreciable inroads upon the emotional constitution of young Farmer Oak.

Love, being an extremely exacting usurer (a sense of exorbitant profit, spiritually, by an exchange of hearts, being at the bottom of pure passions, as that of exorbitant profit, bodily or materially, is at the bottom of those of lower atmosphere), every morning his feelings were as sensitive as

the money-market in calculations upon his chances. His dog waited for his meals in a way so like that in which Oak waited for the girl's presence that the farmer was quite struck with the resemblance, felt it lowering, and would not look at the dog. However, he continued to watch through the hedge at her regular coming, and thus his sentiments towards her were deepened without any corresponding effect being produced upon herself. Oak had nothing finished and ready to say as yet, and not being able to frame love-phrases which end where they begin; passionate tales—

> —Full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing—

he said no word at all.

By making inquiries he found that the girl's name was Bathsheba Everdene, and that the cow would go dry in about seven days. He dreaded the eighth day.

At last the eighth day came. The cow had ceased to give milk for that year, and Bathsheba Everdene came up the hill no more. Gabriel had reached a pitch of existence he never could have anticipated a short time before. He liked saying "Bathsheba" as a private enjoyment instead of whistling; turned over his taste to black hair, though he had sworn by brown ever since he was a boy, isolated himself till the space he filled in the public eye was contemptibly small. Love is a possible strength in an actual weakness. Marriage transforms a distraction into a support, the power of which should be, and happily often is, in direct proportion to the degree of imbecility it supplants. Oak began now to see light in this direction, and said to himself, "I'll make her my wife, or upon my soul I shall be good for nothing!"

All this while he was perplexing himself about an errand on which he might consistently visit the cottage of Bathsheba's aunt.

He found his opportunity in the death of an ewe, mother of a living lamb. On a day which had a summer face and a winter constitution—a fine January morning, when there was just enough blue sky visible to make cheerfully disposed people wish for more, and an occasional sunshiny gleam of silvery whiteness, Oak put the lamb into a respectable Sunday basket, and stalked across the fields to the house of Mrs. Hurst, the aunt—George, the dog, walking behind, with a countenance of great concern at the serious turn pastoral affairs seemed to be taking.

Gabriel had watched the blue wood-smoke curling from the chimney with strange meditation. At evening he had fancifully traced it down the chimney to the spot of its origin—seen the hearth and Bathsheba beside it—beside it in her out-door dress; for the clothes she had worn on the hill were by association equally with her person included in the compass of his affection; they seemed at this early time of his love a necessary ingredient of the sweet mixture called Bathsheba Everdene.

He had made a toilet of a nicely adjusted kind—of a nature between the carefully neat and the carelessly ornate—of a degree between fine-market-day and wet-Sunday selection. He thoroughly cleaned his silver

watch-chain with whiting, put new lacing-straps to his boots, looked to the brass eyelet-holes, went to the inmost heart of the plantation for a new walking-stick, and trimmed it vigorously on his way back; took a new handkerchief from the bottom of his clothes-box, put on the light waistcoat patterned all over with sprigs of an elegant flower uniting the beauties of both rose and lily without the defects of either, and used all the hair-oil he possessed upon his usually dry, sandy and inextricably curly hair, till he had deepened it to a splendidly novel colour, between that of guano and Roman cement, making it stick to his head like mace round a nutmeg, or wet seaweed round a boulder after the ebb.

Nothing disturbed the stillness of the cottage save the chatter of a knot of sparrows on the eaves; one might fancy scandal and *tracasseries* to be no less the staple subject of these little coteries on roofs than of those under them. It seemed that the omen was an unpropitious one, for, as the rather untoward commencement of Oak's overtures, just as he arrived by the garden gate he saw a cat inside, going into various arched shapes and fiendish convulsions at the sight of his dog George. The dog took no notice, for he had arrived at an age at which all superfluous barking was cynically avoided as a waste of breath—in fact he never barked even at the sheep except to order, when it was done with an absolutely neutral countenance, as a liturgical form of Commination-service, which, though offensive, had to be gone through once now and then just to frighten the flock for their own good.

A voice came from behind some laurel-bushes into which the cat had run:

"Poor dear! Did a nasty brute of a dog want to kill it!—did he, poor dear!"

"I beg yer pardon," said Oak to the voice, "but George was walking on behind me with a temper as mild as milk."

Almost before he had ceased speaking, Oak was seized with a misgiving as to whose ear was the recipient of his answer. Nobody appeared, and he heard the person retreat among the bushes.

Gabriel meditated, and so deeply that he brought small furrows into his forehead by sheer force of reverie. Where the issue of an interview is as likely to be a vast change for the worse as for the better, any initial difference from expectation causes nipping sensations of failure. Oak went up to the door a little abashed: his mental rehearsal and the reality had had no common grounds of opening.

Bathsheba's aunt was indoors. "Will you tell Miss Everdene that somebody would be glad to speak to her?" said Mr. Oak. (Calling yourself merely Somebody, and not giving a name, is not by any means to be taken as an example of the ill-breeding of the rural world: it springs from a refined sense of modesty, of which townspeople, with their cards and announcements, have no notion whatever.)

Bathsheba was out. The voice had evidently been hers.

"Will you come in, Mr. Oak?"

"Oh, thank ye," said Gabriel, following her to the fireplace. "I've brought a lamb for Miss Everdene. I thought she might like one to rear: girls do."

"She might," said Mrs. Hurst, musingly; "though she's only a visitor here. If you will wait a minute, Bathsheba will be in."

"Yes, I will wait," said Gabriel, sitting down. "The lamb isn't really the business I came about, Mrs. Hurst. In short, I was going to ask her if she'd like to be married."

"And were you indeed?"

"Yes. Because if she would, I should be very glad to marry her. D'ye know if she's got any other young man hanging about her at all?"

"Let me think," said Mrs. Hurst, poking the fire superfluously. . . . "Yes—bless you, ever so many young men. You see, Farmer Oak, she's so good-looking, and an excellent scholar besides—she was going to be a governess once, you know, only she was too wild. Not that her young men ever come here—but, Lord, in the nature of women, she must have a dozen!"

"That's unfortunate," said Farmer Oak, contemplating a crack in the stone floor with sorrow. "I'm only an every-day sort of man, and my only chance was in being the first comer. . . . Well, there's no use in my waiting, for that was all I came about: so I'll take myself off home-along, Mrs. Hurst."

When Gabriel had gone about two hundred yards along the down, he heard a "hoi-hoi!" uttered behind him, in a piping note of more treble quality than that in which the exclamation usually embodies itself when shouted across a field. He looked round, and saw a girl racing after him, waving a white handkerchief.

Oak stood still—and the runner drew nearer. It was Bathsheba Everdene. Gabriel's colour deepened: hers was already deep, not, as it appeared, from emotion, but from running.

"Farmer Oak—I—" she said, pausing for want of breath, pulling up in front of him with a slanted face, and putting her hand to her side.

"I have just called to see you," said Gabriel, pending her further speech.

"Yes—I know that," she said, panting like a robin, her face red and moist from her exertions, like a peony pêta before the sun dries off the dew. "I didn't know you had come (pant) to ask to have me, or I should have come in from the garden instantly. I ran after you to say (pant) that my aunt made a mistake in sending you away from courting me (pant)—"

Gabriel expanded. "I'm sorry to have made you run so fast, my dear," he said, with a grateful sense of favours to come. "Wait a bit till you've found your breath."

"—It was quite a mistake—aunt's telling you I had a young man already," Bathsheba went on. "I haven't a sweetheart at all (pant), and I never had one, and I thought that, as times go with women, it was *such* a pity to send you away thinking that I had several."

"Really and trewly I am glad to hear that!" said Farmer Oak, smiling one of his long special smiles, and blushing with gladness. He held out his hand to take hers, which, when she had eased her side by pressing it there, was prettily extended upon her bosom to still her loud-beating heart. Directly he seized it she put it behind her, so that it slipped through his fingers like an eel.

"I have a nice snug little farm," said Gabriel, with half a degree less assurance than when he had seized her hand.

"Yes: you have."

"A man has advanced me money to begin with, but still, it will soon be paid off, and though I am only an every-day sort of man, I have got on a little since I was a boy." Gabriel uttered "a little" in a tone to show her that it was the complacent form of "a great deal." He continued: "When we are married, I am quite sure I can work twice as hard as I do now."

He went forward and stretched out his arm again. Bathsheba had overtaken him at a point beside which stood a low, stunted holly-bush, now laden with red berries. Seeing his advance take the form of an attitude threatening a possible enclosure, if not compression, of her person, she edged off round the bush.

"Why, Farmer Oak," she said, over the top, looking at him with rounded eyes, "I never said I was going to marry you."

"Well—that *is* a tale!" said Oak, with dismay. "To run after anybody like this, and then say you don't want me!"

"What I meant to tell you was only this," she said eagerly, and yet half conscious of the absurdity of the position she had made for herself: "that nobody has got me yet as a sweetheart, instead of my having a dozen, as my aunt said; I *hate* to be thought men's property in that way, though possibly I shall be to be had some day. Why, if I'd wanted you I shouldn't have run after you like this; 'twould have been the *forwardest* thing! But there was no harm in hurrying to correct a piece of false news that had been told you."

"Oh, no—no harm at all." But there is such a thing as being too generous in expressing a judgment impulsively, and Oak added with a more appreciative sense of all the circumstances—"Well, I am not quite certain it was no harm."

"Indeed, I hadn't time to think before starting whether I wanted to marry or not, for you'd have been gone over the hill."

"Come," said Gabriel, freshening again; "think a minute or two. I'll wait awhile, Miss Everdene. Will you marry me? Do, Bethsheba. I love you far more than common!"

"I'll try to think," she observed, rather more timorously; "if I can think out of doors; but my mind spreads away so."

"But you can give a guess."

"Then give me time." Bathsheba looked thoughtfully into the distance, away from the direction in which Gabriel stood.

"I can make you happy," said he to the back of her head, across the bush. "You shall have a piano in a year or two—farmers' wives are getting to have pianos now—and I'll practise up the flute right well to play with you in the evenings."

"Yes; I should like that."

"And have one of those little ten-pound gigs for market—and nice flowers, and birds—cocks and hens I mean, because they are useful," continued Gabriel, feeling balanced between prose and verse.

"I should like it very much."

"And a frame for cucumbers—like a gentleman and lady."

"Yes."

"And when the wedding was over, we'd have it put in the newspaper list of marriages."

"Dearly I should like that."

"And the babies in the births—every man jack of 'em! And at home by the fire, whenever you look up, there I shall be—and whenever I look up there will be you."

"Wait, wait, and don't be improper!"

Her countenance fell, and she was silent awhile. He contemplated the red berries between them over and over again, to such an extent, that holly seemed in his after-life to be a cypher signifying a proposal of marriage. Bathsheba decisively turned to him.

"No; 'tis no use," she said. "I don't want to marry you."

"Try."

"I have tried hard all the time I've been thinking; for a marriage would be very nice in one sense. People would talk about me, and think I had won my battle, and I should feel triumphant, and all that. But a husband——

"Well!"

"Why, he'd always be there, as you say; whenever I looked up, there he'd be."

"Of course he would—I, that is."

"Well, what I mean is that I shouldn't mind being a bride at a wedding, if I could be one without having a husband. But since a woman can't show off in that way by herself, I shan't marry—at least yet."

"That's a terrible wooden story."

At this elegant criticism of her statement, Bathsheba made an addition to her dignity by a slight sweep away from him.

"Upon my heart and soul, I don't know what a maid can say stupider than that," said Oak. "But, dearest," he continued in a palliative voice, "don't be like it!" Oak sighed a deep honest sigh —none the less so in that, being like the sigh of a pine plantation, it was rather noticeable as a disturbance of the atmosphere. "Why won't you have me?" he said appealingly, creeping round the holly to reach her side.

"I cannot," she said retreating.

"But why?" he persisted, standing still at last in despair of ever reaching her, and facing over the bush.

"Because I don't love you."

"Yes, but——"

She contracted a yawn to an inoffensive smallness, so that it was hardly ill-mannered at all. "I don't love you," she said.

"But I love you—and, as for myself, I am content to be liked."

"Oh, Mr. Oak—that's very fine! You'd get to despise me."

"Never," said Mr. Oak, so earnestly that he seemed to be coming by the force of his words, straight through the bush and into her arms. "I shall do one thing in this life—one thing certain—that is, love you, and long for you, and *keep wanting you* till I die." His voice had a genuine pathos now, and his large brown hands trembled a quarter of an inch each way.

"It seems dreadfully wrong not to have you when you feel so much," she said with a little distress, and looking hopelessly around for some means of escape from her moral dilemma. "How I wish I hadn't run after you!" However she seemed to have a short cut for getting back to cheerfulness, and set her face to signify archness. "It wouldn't do, Mr. Oak. I want somebody to tame me; I am too independent; and you would never be able to, I know."

Oak cast his eyes down the field in a way implying that it was useless to attempt argument.

"Mr. Oak," she said, with luminous distinctness and common sense; "you are better off than I. I have hardly a penny in the world—I am staying with my aunt for my bare sustenance. I am better educated than you—and I don't love you a bit: that's my side of the case. Now yours: you are a farmer just beginning, and you ought in common prudence, if you marry at all (which you should certainly not think of doing at present) to marry a woman with money, who would stock a larger farm for you than you have now."

Gabriel looked at her with a little surprise and much admiration.

"That's the very thing I had been thinking myself!" he naïvely said.

Farmer Oak had one-and-a-half Christian characteristics too many to succeed with Bathsheba: his humility, and a superfluous moiety of honesty. Bathsheba was decidedly disconcerted.

"Well, then, why did you come and disturb me?" she said, almost angrily, if not quite, an enlarging red spot rising in each cheek.

"I can't do what I think would be—would be——"

"Right?"

"No: wise."

"You have made an admission *now*, Mr. Oak," she exclaimed, with even more hauteur, and rocking her head disdainfully. "After that, do you think I could marry you? Not if I know it."

He broke in, passionately: "But don't mistake me like that. Because

I am open enough to own what every man in my position would have thought of, you make your colours come up your face, and get crabbed with me. That about your not being good enough for me is nonsense. You speak like a lady—all the parish notice it, and your uncle at Weatherbury is, I have heard, a large farmer—much larger than ever I shall be. May I call in the evening—or will you walk along with me on Sundays? I don't want you to make up your mind at once, if you'd rather not."

"No—no—I cannot. Don't press me any more—don't. I don't love you—so 'twould be ridiculous!" she said, with a laugh.

No man likes to see his emotions the sport of a merrry-go-round of skittishness. "Very well," said Oak, firmly, with the bearing of one who was going to give his days and nights to Ecclesiastes for ever. "Then I'll ask you no more."

CHAPTER V.

Departure of Bathsheba: A Pastoral Tragedy.

The news which one day reached Gabriel, that Bathsheba Everdene had left the neighbourhood, had an influence upon him which might have surprised any who never suspected that the more emphatic the renunciation the less absolute its character.

It may have been observed that there is no regular path for getting out of love as there is for getting in. Some people look upon marriage as a short cut that way, but it has been known to fail. Separation, which was the means that chance offered to Gabriel Oak by Bathsheba's disappearance, though effectual with people of certain humours, is apt to idealize the removed object with others—notably those whose affection, placid and regular as it may be, flows deep and long. Oak belonged to the even-tempered order of humanity, and felt the secret fusion of himself in Bathsheba to be burning with a finer flame now that she was gone—that was all.

His incipient friendship with her aunt had been nipped by the failure of his suit, and all that Oak learnt of Bathsheba's movements was done indirectly. It appeared that she had gone to a place called Weatherbury, more than twenty miles off, but in what capacity—whether as a visitor, or permanently, he could not discover.

Gabriel had two dogs. George, the elder, exhibited an ebony-tipped nose, surrounded by a narrow margin of pink flesh, and a coat marked in random splotches approximating in colour to white and slaty grey, but the grey, after years of sun and rain, had been scorched and washed out of the more prominent locks, leaving them of a reddish-brown, as if the blue component of the grey had faded, like the indigo from the same kind of colour in Turner's pictures. In substance, it had originally been hair,

but long contact with sheep, seemed to be turning it by degrees into wool of a poor quality and staple.

This dog had originally belonged to a shepherd of inferior morals and dreadful temper, and the result was that George knew the exact degree of condemnation signified by cursing and swearing of all descriptions better than the wickedest old man in the neighbourhood. Long experience had so precisely taught the animal the difference between such exclamations as "Come in!" and "D— ye, come in!" that he knew to a hair's breadth the rate of trotting back from the ewes' tails that each call involved, if a staggerer with the sheep-crook was to be escaped. Though old, he was clever and trustworthy still.

The young dog, George's son, might possibly have been the image of his mother, for there was not much resemblance between him and George. He was learning the sheep-keeping business, so as to follow on at the flock when the other should die, but had got no further than the rudiments as yet—still finding an insuperable difficulty in distinguishing between doing a thing well enough and doing it too well. So earnest and yet so wrong-headed was this young dog (he had no name in particular, and answered with perfect readiness to any pleasant interjection), that if sent behind the flock to help them on, he did it so thoroughly that he would have chased them across the whole county with the greatest pleasure if not called off, or reminded when to stop by the example of old George.

Thus much for the dogs. On the further side of Norcombe Hill was a chalk-pit, from which chalk had been drawn for generations, and spread over adjacent farms. Two hedges converged upon it in the form of a V, but without quite meeting. The narrow opening left, which was immediately over the brow of the pit, was protected by a rough railing.

One night, when Farmer Oak had returned to his house, believing there would be no further necessity for his attendance on the down, he called as usual to the dogs, previously to shutting them up in the outhouse till next morning. Only one responded—old George; the other could not be found, either in the house, lane, or garden. Gabriel then remembered that he had left the two dogs on the hill eating a dead lamb (a kind of meat he usually kept from them, except when other food ran short), and concluding that the young one had not finished his meal, he went indoors to the luxury of a bed, which latterly he had only enjoyed on Sundays.

It was a still, moist night. Just before dawn he was assisted in waking by the abnormal reverberation of familiar music. To the shepherd, the note of the sheep-bell, like the ticking of the clock to other people, is a chronic sound that only makes itself noticed by ceasing or altering in some unusual manner from the well-known idle tinkle which signifies to the accustomed ear, however distant, that all is well in the fold. In the solemn calm of the awakening morn that note was heard by Gabriel, beating with unusual violence and rapidity. This exceptional ringing may be caused in two ways—by the rapid feeding of the sheep,

bearing the bell, as when the flock breaks into new pasture, which gives it an intermittent rapidity, or by the sheep starting off in a run, when the sound has a regular palpitation. The experienced ear of Oak knew the sound he now heard to be caused by the running of the flock with great velocity.

He jumped out of bed, dressed, and tore down the lane through a foggy dawn, and ascended the hill. The forward ewes were kept apart from those among which the fall of lambs would be later, there being two hundred of the latter class in Gabriel's flock. These two hundred seemed to have absolutely vanished from the hill. There were the fifty with their lambs, enclosed at the other end as he had left them, but the rest, forming the bulk of the flock, were nowhere. Gabriel called at the top of his voice the shepherd's call.

"Ovey, ovey, ovey!"

"Not a single bleat. He went to the hedge—a gap had been broken through it, and in the gap were the footprints of the sheep. Rather surprised to find them break fence at this season, yet putting it down instantly to their great fondness for ivy in winter-time, of which a great deal grew in the plantation, he followed through the hedge. They were not in the plantation. He called again: the valleys and furthest hills resounded as when the sailors invoked the lost Hylas on the Mysian shore; but no sheep. He passed through the trees and along the ridge of the hill. On the extreme summit, where the ends of the two converging hedges of which we have spoken were stopped short by meeting the brow of the chalk-pit, he saw the younger dog standing against the sky—dark and motionless as Napoleon at St. Helena.

A horrible conviction darted through Oak. With a sensation of bodily faintness he advanced: at one point the rails were broken through, and there he saw the footprints of his ewes. The dog came up, licked his hand, and made signals implying that he expected some great reward for signal services rendered. Oak looked over the precipice. The ewes lay dead at its foot—a heap of two hundred mangled carcases, representing in their condition just now at least two hundred more.

Oak was an intensely humane man: indeed, his humanity often tore in pieces any politic intentions of his bordering on strategy, and carried him on as by gravitation. A shadow in his life had always been that his flock ended in mutton—that a day came and found every shepherd an arrant traitor to his defenceless sheep. His first feeling now was one of pity for the untimely fate of these gentle ewes and their unborn lambs.

It was a second to remember another phase of the matter. The sheep were not insured. All the savings of a frugal life had been dispersed at a blow; his hopes of being an independent farmer were laid low—possibly for ever. Gabriel's energies, patience, and industry had been so severely taxed during the years of his life between eighteen and eight-and-twenty, to reach his present stage of progress, that no more seemed to be left in him. He leant down upon a rail, and covered his face with his hands.

Stupors, however, do not last for ever, and Farmer Oak recovered from his. It was as remarkable as it was characteristic that the one sentence he uttered was in thankfulness:—

"Thank God I am not married: what would *she* have done in the poverty now coming upon me!"

Oak raised his head, and wondering what he could do, listlessly surveyed the scene. By the outer margin of the pit was an oval pond, and over it hung the attenuated skeleton of a chrome-yellow moon, which had only a few days to last—the morning star dogging her on the right hand. The pool glittered like a dead man's eye, and as the world awoke a breeze blew, shaking and elongating the reflection of the moon without breaking it, and turning the image of the star to a phosphoric streak upon the water. All this Oak saw and remembered.

As far as could be learnt it appeared that the poor young dog, still under the impression that since he was kept for running after sheep, the more he ran after them the better, had at the end of his meal off the dead lamb, which may have given him additional energy and spirits, collected all the ewes into a corner, driven the timid creatures through the hedge, across the upper field, and by main force of worrying had given them momentum enough to break down a portion of the rotten railing, and so hurled them over the edge.

George's son had done his work so thoroughly that he was considered too good a workman to live, and was, in fact, taken and tragically shot at twelve o'clock that same day—another instance of the untoward fate which so often attends dogs and other philosophers who follow out a train of reasoning to its logical conclusion, and attempt perfectly consistent conduct in a world made up so largely of compromise.

Gabriel's farm had been stocked by a dealer—on the strength of Oak's promising look and character—who was receiving a per-centage from the farmer till such time as the advance should be cleared off. Oak found that the value of stock, plant, and implements which were really his own would be about sufficient to pay his debts, leaving himself a free man with the clothes he stood up in, and nothing more.

South Siberian Stories.

As two Tartar princes were riding afield one day, far away from home, they agreed that if a son should be born to the one, and a daughter to the other, the children should be mutually betrothed. Soon afterwards came tidings that to the one had been born a boy named Tajyr, and to the other a girl named Saura. The two princes set off at once for their homes, but Tajyr's father was thrown from his horse by the way and killed. A few years passed by and the two children became intimate associates, but they knew nothing about the betrothal compact. At last, one day, as they sat side by side at school, Tajyr pressed Saura's hand on their book. Saura told this to her mother, who cried, "O my child, thou hast a father, but Tajyr is an orphan; to him we will not give thee in marriage." And soon afterwards Saura was carried away by her father, who took up his abode in a distant city of which he became the ruler.

For some time Tajyr remained at home, but at length the story of his betrothal came to his ear; then he took leave of his mother and set out in search of his bride. After many adventures he came to a city in which lived a childless old woman, and she adopted him as her son. One day as he wandered about the streets there came to his ears the sound of children reading aloud in a school, and he went home and wept bitterly. His adopted mother marvelled thereat; he told her that he could not but weep when he heard the voices of schoolchildren, and he asked what manner of school this was. She told him that it was one in which forty maidens were taught, and that their teacher was the daughter of a stranger prince who had become the ruler of the city. Tajyr begged her to get leave for him to study in that school; so she went to the prince and besought him to allow her son to learn to read together with the forty maidens, and the prince granted her prayer. So Tajyr went to the school, and in the teacher he recognized his betrothed. Beginning at the bottom of the class he each day gained a place, and at the end of forty days he found himself by Saura's side. Then he made himself known to her, and she recognized in him her rightful lord. So she dismissed her forty pupils, saying that she would teach no more. When her father learnt what had taken place he was wroth, and he seized Tajyr, not knowing who he really was, shut him up in a great chest, and set it afloat on the sea. But Tajyr escaped, and after a time he made his way back to his bride. Again did her father seize him, and this time he gave orders that the audacious stranger should have his head struck off. So Tajyr was led away to the place of execution.

In vain did "many lords and viziers and Tartars," moved by Saura's prayers, entreat the prince to pardon her lover. But at last came Saura herself, her hair all dishevelled, her face all torn and bleeding, and so bitterly did she weep that at last the prince consented to spare Tajyr's life. Off set a messenger to bid the headsman stay his hand. But the respite came too late; Tajyr was already dead. Then Saura called to her the forty maidens with whom she had been at school, and with them she set out for the spot where Tajyr's body lay. But when they drew nigh, fear came upon the maidens. So Saura kissed them and let them go, but she herself went on. And when she had found the corpse she threw her arms around it, and between it and her own fair breast she set a sharp dagger in such a manner that when she straitened her embrace the dagger pierced her heart, and so she died.

They buried her and Tajyr apart; but even in death he would not be severed from her, and a few days later the bodies of the two lovers were found in the same grave. Then they buried them in two graves between which water flowed. Forty days later they who passed that way saw that a poplar had grown up at the head of each grave, and the two trees had bent towards each other and intertwined their boughs, forming a leafy arch above the stream. On these boughs stood storks, and amid the foliage nightingales sang. And there, amid the birds and the green leaves, might the gliding forms of Tajyr and Saura be seen.

Such is the outline of a story current among the Tobol Tartars—one of the numerous branches of the great Turkish family in Siberia. It is quoted here as the first of a few specimens of the popular tales of that family, not on account of any originality of theme, for it is, like most of the stories of its class, merely an echo of an alien tale; nor for any special dexterity of handling, for its details are full of confusion and obscurity; but because it contains more of human interest than is usually to be found in the wild legends of these uncultured peoples. Of the numerous stories contained in the bulky volumes which the erudite industry of Dr. Radloff, one of the Professors in the University of Kazan, is devoting to the "Folk-literature of the Turkish races of South Siberia," * the greater part describe the adventures of heroes who, being clearly mythological, have but little in common with the ordinary weaknesses of humanity. By way of illustration of this statement we will give a very condensed version of the metrical romance of Altyn Pyrkan, a poem of more than usual obscurity, and no less than 1,630 lines long. Another of the poems, it may be observed, runs to the length of 3,825 lines.

Until his sixtieth year had passed away the rich Kara Kan was child-

* "Proben der Volkslitteratur der türkischen Stämme Sud-Sibiriens, gesammelt und übersetzt von Dr. W. Radloff," St. Petersburg 1866-72—a work of which it is impossible to speak too highly. Four volumes have, as yet, appeared. The tale of Tajyr and Saura occurs at vol. iv. p. 340. Dr. Radloff's spelling of proper names has been followed throughout, except in the case of some modified vowels, in which the diacritical points have been discarded as needless encumbrances, Saura being substituted for Säürä, &c.

less; then a babe was born to him. But at that very time he was attacked by an irresistible foe, Altyn Argak by name, who, in obedience to the commands of his father, Saryg Kan, carried off into captivity Kara Kan and all that belonged to him. Only in one thing did Altyn Argak disobey his father, in that he did not slay Kara Kan's new-born babe. Now when Altyn Argak drew nigh to his father's abode, he ordered a hut to be built of reeds, and in it he left Kara Kan with his wife and infant child, while he himself rode on to report to his father what he had done. But when Saryg Kan learnt what had taken place he waxed wroth with his son because he had not slain Kara Kan's child, and he cried aloud, "Ho ye who dwell beneath the earth, Ye Seven Naked Men, come forth!" Then the whole earth trembled, and the Seven Naked Men appeared and listened to the commands of Saryg Kan. And they seized Altyn Argak and bore him away to a mountain peak. There they bound him and his horse by nine chains to a mighty pyre, formed of all the wood which the mountain forests could supply; and, having set the pile alight, they watched it while it burnt. Nine years long did it burn before it was all consumed. Then a wind arose and scattered the ashes far and wide. Where the fire had blazed sprang up a rich crop of grass, and the spot on which Altyn Argak perished could by no eye be recognized, "neither by the god who dwells on high nor by the demon who dwells below."

As Saryg Kan rode towards the reed-hut in which Kara Kan dwelt with his family, he became aware of a wondrous Foal. Golden was its mane, and golden were its fore hoofs; its hind hoofs and its tail were of silver. He strove to catch it, but it ran to the reed-hut, caught up into one of its nostrils Kara Kan's babe, and disappeared. Saryg Kan sent after it his "two black hounds" and "the two king-eagles which dwell in the sky;" then he summoned "the Seven-headed Tschälbägän, with the iron mace, who dwells below the earth;" the fish-god, Kär Palyk, "who lives at the bottom of the sea;" and the terrible "Swan-wife with the fallow mare," and ordered them to seek the Foal within the earth, and below the earth, and in all the waters of the earth. Having done this, he tried to find, by means of a golden mirror, which way he ought to ride. But neither by gazing at the sun and moon in it, nor by counting "the stars of heaven," and "all the water-drops," and "the roots of the herbs," could he make out in which direction the Foal had fled. So he rode blindly on. Meantime Kara Kan and his wife had died. "Of hunger and of thirst perished both the aged ones."

Long did Saryg Kan ride on. At length one day, on the summit of a bare "iron peak," over which no bird could fly, up which no beast could climb, he found the Foal resting, and beside it, on a broad stone, the Babe. Bending his bow with such force that his face, from being "whiter than snow," and "redder than blood," turned "all black," he let fly an arrow at the Foal. "Upon this earth was there no people which did not hear the whirring of the bowstring;" but the arrow flew idly by, and the Foal disappeared. A second time did Saryg Kan climb a hill, and

from it he again caught sight of the Foal, held at bay by his two black hounds on the shore of the "white sea." Again did he shoot; but his arrow killed only his hounds, and the rescued Foal dashed into the water. There Kär Palyk tried to swallow it; but it turned into a fish, which disturbed the stones at the bottom of the water, so that the baffled monster got his mouth full of them, and then it emerged at the other side. There it dropped the child in a grassy spot, assumed the form of a hunter, pierced forty elks with a single shaft, and fed the child daintily upon the marrow from their bones. Then, as a Foal, once more it caught up the child and recommenced its wild career.

At length the fugitives reached a spot where gleamed a golden castle, and near it rose nine hills over which forty maidens were roaming at play. In the hands of the forty maidens were forty kerchiefs of gold. "Forty songs did the maidens sing as they played." The Foal made a grassy couch on which it laid the Babe, covered it over with a canopy of leaves, and then—turned itself into forty maidens, each holding in her hand a silver cloth. The two bands of maidens united and sported together. "That months went by they heeded not; the fourscore maidens played. That years passed by they heeded not; without a pause they played." At length the Foal remembered the Babe, and went in search of it. But in vain; the Babe had disappeared, leaving no trace behind except its rustling canopy of faded leaves. Then the Foal changed into a Maral, and began furiously tearing up the ground with its golden horns. After a time "on this earth shone no more the sun; the day and the night were both alike. By the dust was the moon darkened; the moon no longer shone upon the earth." The world seemed to be coming to an end, when suddenly the stolen Babe, now a blooming boy, was restored, the Foal resumed its former shape, and for a while all went well.

But, before long, the boy, while wrestling with a playmate, fell and broke his neck. On earth there was none to aid him; so the Foal flew aloft into the sky, soared above the abode of "The Nine Creators," above the higher region of another mystic being, and at length reached the residence of "The Maidens Three" who can give life to the dead. "On the golden bed sat the Three Maidens; on their golden table was spread the best of fare." And they listened favourably to the Foal's appeal, bidding it watch by the dead boy's side, to see that neither worm nor fly attacked the corpse before their aid arrived. So the Foal returned to earth, and there fanned the dead body with its head, while "into blood turned the tears from its eyes; into ice turned the dew from its nostrils." At length came, in the shape of a cuckoo, the youngest of the three sisters. She sprinkled the corpse with the water of life; she laid in its mouth "the nine-fold yellow herb." Then the dead arose, and mounted what was no longer a Foal, but a full-grown coal-black steed, all gleaming with equipments of gold. "When he struck his sable steed with the whip, the lightning blazed in the sky. When he swang the whip the sky darkened, the black earth rocked." And the lad cried, "O sable steed, that wast my

father, O sable steed that wast my mother, give me a name! Every stag has hair, every man has a name. Give me my name!" Then the steed named him Altyn Pyrkan, bade him be of good courage, and bore him on and on till he reached the land of Saryg Kan.

Altyn Pyrkan rode up to, and entered, the golden castle of Saryg Kan, whom he found sitting on his golden bed, combing his beard, and whom he at once attacked. In vain did Saryg Kan invoke the aid of "the Seven-headed Tschälbägän." The youthful hero seized the Seven-headed demon by the feet, and flung him down "below nine earth-surfaces." There lay he senseless. Just as ill fared "the Swan-wife with the fallow mare." Her the youth struck on the cheek. "No people is there on this earth which heard not the sound of his hand." Down below nine earth-surfaces fell the Swan-wife and her steed. "Very nearly did she give up the ghost. All thought of this world did she forego." Still worse was the fate of "The Seven Naked Men." Them did the hero nail, pierced by the same arrow, to a white peak. Afterwards he cleft in half the two black hounds, and tore in twain the two king-eagles, and then he seized Saryg Kan by the feet, and dashed him to pieces against the bridle-post. "For the magpies to pick remained his flesh. For the ravens to hack remained his flesh. For the dogs to lap remained his blood. Into earth and sand mouldered away his bones."

Then the youth rode away to seek the remains of Altyn Argak, the hero who had been burnt to death for sparing his life. Having found the spot where the fire had blazed, and from which a wind from the left had carried away the victim's ashes, he summoned a wind from the right which brought them back again. "All these ashes did he collect, thrice did he stamp upon the ground, thrice did he whistle." The dead Altyn Argak became himself again, and then he and the youthful hero who had brought him back to life agreed to live together as brothers. Time passed by and the friends determined to get married. The younger asked the hand of a maiden for the elder; but her two brothers replied, "We will not give her. Binding a stone to her neck will we rather fling her into the sea;" and they added to insult the injury of blows. Then Altyn Pyrkan seized one of the brothers, gripped him tightly under his left arm, and punished him with the right till he died. Afterwards "to the white water he brought him, plucked out his heart, washed it in the white water and so drove out of it its evil nature, and then restored him to life." By a similar operation the other hero was in a like manner benefited, and then the penitent brothers agreed to their sister's marriage with Altyn Argak. Altyn Pyrkan next went in search of a bride for himself. Flying right up into the sky, he first visited the Nine Creators, who received him hospitably, and then he addressed himself to the deity who dwells above them, Ödürbä Tschajan, who thanked him warmly for what he had done to the two brothers. "Them did I create," he said. "They are great and mighty heroes, but their souls were evil. Their souls hast thou washed, a white soul hast thou given to

them; therefore be thou thanked!" After leaving him, Altyn Pyrkan soared to the still loftier abode of "The Three Maidens," the youngest of whom he asked to be his wife. "Without having fought with a hero will I not marry him. Let us fight at once," she replied. The combat began and lasted long. "How many months passed by they knew not. How many years passed by did not they themselves know." They trampled down the whole earth, so that it could no longer have supported them, had not "all the Creators" come and strengthened it. Not a hill was left standing; not a tree remained upright. At last, after the hero's armour had given way at nine points, he made a final effort, and lifted the maiden high aloft in the air. "But down on the ground he did not dash the maiden; he took pity on his wife that was to be. On the palm of his hand he placed her; in his golden pocket did he stow her away." Then to his own home did he bear her in triumph as his bride. And with so much spirit were the sports at his marriage feast carried on that "the best of the horses died there; there died the best of the men. The bones of the heroes formed a twin-peaked cairn; the blood of the heroes flowed like a sea," and "the dogs which fed on their flesh beside the door could no longer stand on their feet; the magpies which had fed on their flesh beside the smoke-hole in the roof could no longer fly—could only hop along the steppe." *

We are not now engaged upon the solution of mythological problems, otherwise many remarks of more or less value might be made upon this somewhat incoherent tale—one which is the more remarkable inasmuch as in it a being of apparently solar attributes, and certainly connected with ideas of yellowness and light, is annihilated by the son of the Black (*Kara*) Lord of the Sable Steed. But instead of investigating the hidden meaning of these new "Tartar Tales," we will refer to a few more of them, with a view towards conveying a general idea of their characteristic features, and of the picture of nomad life which they bring before the eyes of their hearers. The prose tales are not always true to that life, often dealing with towered cities and the busy haunts of men in a style which betrays their borrowed nature; but the poems, even when the themes are foreign, always teem with allusions to the homes of their reciters in the boundless steppe, their life in the saddle and the *yourt*.

One of the peculiarities of these stories is their mention (due perhaps to Chinese influences) of a singularly protracted kind of crucifixion. The introduction to the poem about Aran Taidschy,† for instance, tells how the childless old Kök Kan said to himself one day, "Beyond thirty heavens lives my friend, the hero, Altyn Mökö. Him will I slay; his wife will I take unto myself." So he set out with that friendly purpose. During his absence a son was born to him, but soon afterwards the demon prince Tschylan Kan came from his abode "beneath seven earth-surfaces," carried off the boy to his subterranean

* Radloff, ii. 89-138. Current among the Sagai Tartars on the Upper Abakan.

† Radloff, i. 415-423.

home, and there "nailed him with iron nails to the top of an iron larch-tree." Such were the tidings told to Kök Kan by his friend Altyn Mökö, who then, "descending under the earth," sought the land of the demon prince. There he found Kök Kan's stolen cattle, and there, on the top of the larch-tree, was Kök Kan's child, still living, though he had now been nailed to it for seven years. Altyn Mökö shot at the larch-tree an arrow which he had borrowed from Kök Kan, and immediately the demon appeared, seized upon the intruder, and treated him with such violence that "the blood from his breast was as a sea; the blood from his mouth was as a sea. The at morn fighting Altyn Mökö was at eventide all but destroyed." But at that moment the boy came running down from the larch-tree to which he had been nailed, exclaiming, "Kill not my friend Altyn Mökö before I arrive," and a terrible combat took place between him and the demon. Many a year did it continue; but at last the youthful warrior, now grown to man's estate, flung the demon so high into the air that he died.

The poem of Puga-Däkä * relates how an orphan of that name, when six years old, asked his nine-year-old sister to tell him about their father. At first she refused; but at length she told him that he had been a mighty hero, but "when he reached his ninetieth year he became a feeble grey-beard." Then came two hero-brothers, carried him off to their home, and there, "with nine iron nails did they fasten him to a pillar." When the boy heard this, he at once set off to rescue his father, and after a time he reached the abode of the two heroes, and tied up his steed to an iron larch-tree which stood beside their door. There, as he looked around him, he saw "a column of rock, ascending to the sky. To it his father, still alive, was fastened by nine iron nails;" and he heard his father cry, "If hither came my only son, much should I have to tell to him. If to the two brothers came my only son, after he had grown to man's estate, no more should I with nine nails be fastened to this rock. My ninety-year-old body, fastened though it be with nine nails, will not die."

In the similar story of Tarba Kindshi,† also told in verse, an athletic boy playfully flips off the heads of three of his companions. Thereat his father is so angry that he shuts him up in a cask, which he then sends to sea. It floats and floats, until at last it reaches the subterranean abode of Erlik Kan, who opens it, sees the boy, and joyfully exclaims, "White flesh have I found for my eating!" However, he surrenders the prize to one of his heroes, who carries the boy away with him, till his horse complains of the double burden, and then he leaves him to his fate. Long time does the boy wander in the underground land where no sun is. "The red flesh from the soles of his feet remains hanging to the stones. The thick flesh of his legs remains lying by the way." Weeping and wailing does he wander, till he comes to "the Smoke-hole of the Earth," the aperture which leads up into the light of day. Through it he is borne by a friendly steed, from off which he falls overpowered "when he sees the

* Radloff, ii. 20–43. † Ibid. 254–277.

radiance of the sun." Hard by is "a golden sea," in which he bathes, and then he fumigates himself with burnt thyme, whereupon "the demon-reek leaves him, the day-reek enters into him." After this he obtains a heroic steed and knightly armour, and rides away to his former home, which he finds ruined and desolate. On he rides, and at length comes to a hill, whence looking down he sees two fires burning in the distance. "When the youth reaches the spot where the two fires are burning, and looks around—there is his father nailed to an iron larch-tree. His father is still alive. The two spots where fire was burning are his father's two eyes."

By other exaggerations of a similar kind are these stories distinguished. Their heroes are remarkably tenacious of life, and expose themselves with impunity to such injuries as the tamer romance of Europe would hesitate to attest. Thus in the partly metrical tale of Ak Köbök,* we find the following picture of a single combat in which that hero engages with Ködön Kan. "Ködön Kan ran him through and through with his lance. Thereupon Ak Köbök cried—

'Well dost thou know how to pierce,
But to lift on high knowest thou not.'

Then Ködön Kan heaved on high the lance, with Ak Köbök on it, and held him above himself. From the lance's point on high, cried Ak Köbök—

'Well dost thou know how to lift on high,
But to shake knowest thou not.'

When Ködön Kan had shaken the lance, down its shaft glided Ak Köbök. And when he had come to the bottom he drew his sword, and struck Ködön Kan's head off. Said Ködön Kan, 'My cap has tumbled off.' Then Ak Köbök drew the lance out of his body, and threw it aside, after which he mounted his horse and rode home. But Ködön Kan's people took a stick, and fitted it into the bone of his neck. On this stick they stuck Ködön Kan's chopped-off head. Ködön Kan remained alive, and returned home to his own people."

An even stranger fight than this occurs in the remarkable history of Altyn Mergan.† That hero's wife having been carried off during his absence by a "Swan-wife," he sets out in search of her. In the course of his wanderings he is obliged to fight an "Earth-Hero." "With his forty-fathom-long lance pierced he the Hero. Then he raised the lance-point aloft, his dappled steed the while standing still, deep in the black earth. Aloft on the point of the steel lance writhed the Hero, the Mighty One, the Earth-Hero. Seven days long remained he there. The forty-fathom-long lance became red-hot." This way and that did it bend. Only after seven days did the transfixed Hero give up the ghost. In a second combat with a similar foe whom Altyn Mergan pierces and holds aloft seven days, his lance becomes red-hot, and bends double; the Earth-Hero falls off it

* Radloff, iv. 56–80. † Ibid. ii. 278–307; a poem 1,002 lines long.

to the ground, and renews the fight, which Altyn Mergan has great difficulty in bringing to a favourable conclusion. As the Swan-wife is one of the most remarkable of the many mythological personages which figure in these tales, it may be added that Altyn Mergan pursues her underground. Coming to a "seven-angled house," the Swan-wife and her horse bound through one of its windows. The Hero immediately dismounts and jumps through the window after her. Inside he finds the owner of the house, who not unnaturally remarks, "People enter a house by the door. By the window do people not enter in." Altyn Mergan accounts for his intrusion, and explains who he is; upon which the stranger, in a fashion not altogether unknown to our own drama, at once claims him as his long-lost brother. Altyn Mergan asks his newly-found relative what he has done with the Swan-wife and her fallow mare. Whereupon the elder brother unrips one side of his bosom, and thence takes out the fallow mare; unrips the other side of his bosom, and thence takes out the Swan-wife. Afterwards he tears in two first the mare and then the Swan-wife, and flings the severed fragments out of the window.

In all genuine folk-tales there is but one step between the actual and the impossible, but in these romances the transition is remarkably abrupt. The story generally commences with a realistic description of steppe life. The head of a yourt arises one day, saddles his trusty steed, and sets off to inspect his wealth of horses and horned cattle. After a time he returns, ties up his horse to the post beside the door, and enters his tent. There his wife has his meal ready for him; he eats and drinks and sleeps. A simple life, chiefly of a healthy and breezy character, so far as the men are concerned. But suddenly, without any warning, it alters its nature. The steppe is no longer a commonplace plain, capable of but slight variety; it is the thin partition between two warring worlds, peopled by hostile inhabitants of supernatural powers. Above stretches the abode of "The Nine Creators," overarched by that of Ödürbä Tschajan, also a Creator but not a restorer to life; and higher still is the sphere of the Three Maidens, Turanian Fates or Nornes, who have power over life and death. Looked at from below, the steppe is seen to be a mere crust spread above infinite abysses, which form the realm of the gloomy Erlik Kan (said to be the Erl King of Western story), the abode of the demon race of Ainas, of the terrible Swan-wife (a being very different from the Aryan "Swan-maiden"), of the Seven-headed Tschälbägän (Turanian Dragon, Giant or Ogre), of "The Naked Men," and of many other equally objectionable demons. And at a word, at a touch, the steppe yawns asunder; into the common light of day emerge the dwellers in darkness; a fray commences in which the creative beings on high take part against the agents of destruction below; and a man, who has been till then an insignificant roamer in the desert, suddenly becomes the link between heaven and hell, the pivot on which the whole universe turns.

We have made some acquaintance with the mythological side of these

stories.* It may be well, by way of a change, to turn to some of their descriptions of real life. Here and there, especially in the poems, little touches of nature occur, which come home to us more readily than mythological extravagances. Thus, when a hero's faithful steed falls dead: "Beside the head of his black horse did he seat himself; bitterly did he weep and lament. 'O thou black steed, that wast to me a father, O thou black steed, that wast to me a mother, wherefore hast thou died? How can I bring thee back to life?'" In all these stories, it may be observed, a man is known, not only by his own name, but also by the colour of his horse. "Who art thou?" asks one hero meeting another, and employing a settled form of words. "Every stag has hair, every man has a name; tell me thy name." To which the stranger replies, "I am so-and-so with the black steed," or otherwise, as the case may be. Name-giving, by the way, is a serious matter, as may be remarked in the story of Ai Tolysy, at whose naming a chief summons all his people, and proclaims, "He who gives a good name, on him will I confer a brave steed and fine raiment; but he who gives a bad name, his neck will I lay upon the block and cut in twain with the sword." To which the people not unnaturally reply, "We won't give any name at all;" and the chief has at last to cry, "Let him be Ai Tolysy with the sable steed!"

Women do not usually occupy a very exalted position in these tales; but the relations between mothers and their children, sisters and their brothers, are set in a pleasant light. The kindly watchfulness manifested by the elder sister of many of the stories in behalf of an orphan brother is doubtless true to real life, while the rare accounts of unsisterly behaviour are probably to be accepted only in a mythological sense. Of such a nature is the Tartar version in the third volume (p. 321) of a well-known Indian myth, in which a sister conspires with a rival hero against her brother's life, sending him on all sorts of dangerous enterprises, strewing peas under his feet when he wrestles, and eventually supplying the very strangely tempered steel with which he is put to temporary death. His revenge, it may be remarked, is of a particularly ferocious nature. The variants of the story in different lands devote the criminal to various kinds of chastisement, such as being dragged behind or torn between wild horses; or being burnt, beheaded, or otherwise corrected; but the Kirghiz brother behaves to his treacherous sister as follows:

"Then Erkam Aidar seized his sister and bound her on his horse. And after he got home he used to cut a piece of flesh off his sister every

* For a fuller account of their cosmogonical and mythological systems—which appear to be a strange medley of heterogeneous elements, Zoroastrian, Buddhistic, Mohammedan, and even Christian, due to Persian, Mongolian, Turkish, Ugrian, and, to some extent, Russian influences—see the Introduction to Schiefner's *Heldensagen der minussinschen Tataren*, pp. xvii.–xxi. For their ethnology see Castrén's *Ethnologische Vorlesungen über die altaischen Völker*, at the end of which are several *Tatarische Heldensagen*.

day and eat it. After this fashion he treated her for three years. At the end of three years her flesh came to an end and she died."

Some allowance, in such cases as this, must doubtless be made for exaggeration. The Altaic story-tellers are fond of hyperbolical expressions. In one of the poems, for instance, a watchman asks his employer for a meal, observing, with some force, "For a hundred and sixty years have I tasted no food." In a prose story, the hero has been wandering long in the desert. At length, "He came to the fallow steppe, where the magpie flies not; he came to the yellow steppe, where no bird flies. There he thought he heard a crane cry. But it was not the voice of the crane he heard; it was his two shoulder blades that rattled together, so terribly thin had he become."

Courtship, in the poems, is generally carried on in a practical and expeditious manner. Thus the hero Kara Tygan Kan, riding from the Altai mountains, sends a messenger to demand the hand of Ak Kan's daughter. The maiden's father "sits silently there;" does not say, "I will give;" does not say, "I will not give;" but her two brothers reply, "Until our round heads fall, until our berry-like eyes grow dry, will we give her not." Therefore the suitor comes in person, challenges the two brothers, and discharges an arrow at them. The twang of his bow causes a cloud to fall, and for a time the result of his shot cannot be ascertained; but when the air clears, he sees that his arrow has carried off the two brothers. "Of the two brave heroes was nothing left but their right thumbs." After this, of course, his offer is accepted. As for the bride in such cases, she is not allowed much liberty of choice. In one poem, however, she expresses her sentiments to her father with much frankness. He has introduced a suitor to her, saying, "I am going to give thee to this man; wilt thou take him, my child?" "No, I will not take him," she replies. Her father loses his temper, and cries, pointing to what seems to be a bear in the corner of the room, "Perhaps thou wilt rather take the bear that sits there?" To which she replies, "Be he a bear, yet will I take him. Be he a tree-stump, yet will I take him. But the man thou hast brought will I not take." So the angry parent, exclaiming, "As thou wilt not go where I wish, so take thy bear!" flings her into the bear's arms. The supposed bear, it may be observed, is no wild beast, but "a black-headed man," who had, one day, swung a bear out of its skin, eaten its flesh, and donned its hide. This fact he does not mention to his wife's father; but he propitiates him by a present of cooked beef, "sweeter than honey and sugar," so that the mollified parent is forced to exclaim, "Though he be a bear, yet is he an excellent son-in-law."

There are not many descriptions of female beauty in these stories, in which, indeed, love plays a very secondary part. One of the most poetical is that which is given of the beautiful Aju Bika, whose face has never been exposed to the weather, who has never entered any but her father's house, who has never indulged in a horse laugh. She has hair as black as a crow; she bends herself like a pheasant. "Through her throat can

the food she swallows be seen. When she looks towards the sun, the sunbeams are reflected from her face." After marriage the husband seems to think less of his wife's appearance than of her culinary powers; and he is apt to treat her roughly, emphasising his orders with thumps. Sometimes she herself indulges in similar marks of affection. Thus we read that once, when the heroic Sadai Kan returned home, and told his wife that a guest was coming at the end of three days, "up from the golden bed sprang the excellent wife Sandjy Ko, seized the iron stove-rake, and hit him over the head with it." Then "the blood flowed down from the head of the born hero Sadai Kan; quietly did he lie down on the golden bed, and go to sleep," comforting himself, perhaps, with the proverb frequently quoted by his brother heroes (and so popular at the present day in Russia)—

A woman's hair is very long,
But very short are a woman's wits.

Some of the stories, however, offer a direct contradiction to this adage, such as the following curious variant of a familiar tale.* A Prince who understood the language of birds, heard two geese talking to each other one day as they flew. Then he turned to his Vizier, who was not so well acquainted with foreign tongues, asked him what the geese had said, and threatened to cut off his head if he could not give him a correct answer within three days. The Vizier went home, put his winding-sheet in his pocket, and went out for a melancholy walk. The Prince's daughter seeing him a prey to dejection, sent for him, and under the seal of secresy communicated to him what the geese had been talking about. The one which flew in front, she said, was a gander, and the other was its mate. And the gander cried, "Every other year have we flown away after the other birds; why do we this year fly before them?" To which his mate replied, "Every other year have we remained longer than the other birds, because thou wast lame. I have fed and taken care of thee. A good wife can cure a bad husband." The Vizier went away, and repeated all this to the Prince, who forced him by renewed threats of death to give up the name of his instructress. Thereupon the Prince summoned all his vassals, killed a number of mares, and held a feast, proclaiming, "My daughter will I give to the most miserable man among you. We'll see if she can turn a bad husband into a good one." And he kept his word, giving her to "a Scaldhead," whose appearance, as described in an uncitable passage, was decidedly against him, but who, after his marriage, had the good sense to obey his wife in all things. She cooked the dinner, laid the cloth, and fulfilled all other menial duties herself, and by sewing and lacemaking she gained a round sum every day, so that the young couple were enabled to live comfortably, and "four candles burnt upon their table." After a time the Scaldhead was enabled, by his wife's contrivance, to obtain the right of demanding a favour from the Prince. And the favour which, at her suggestion, he asked was, that for

* Radloff, iii. 347–355.

three days and three nights no fire might be lighted in any house but his. So proclamation was made, "that whosoever, with the exception of the Scaldhead, shall light a fire during the next three days and nights, shall have his head cut off." Accordingly, all fires were extinguished, except that which burnt incessantly upon the hearth of the wise Princess. And the consequence was, that "thither came Kydyr, and Fortune, and Prosperity, and gathered themselves together around the fire. When the youth arose in the morning, and looked about, every place was full of cattle; he himself was exceeding rich—was a Lord." Then his wife sent him—no longer a wretched being—to the chase, bidding him invite the Prince to return with him to dinner. And the Prince came, and when he had tasted one of the dishes, he cried aloud, "Oh! that is indeed a savoury dish; such dishes did my daughter cook—she who has gone away from me." Then his daughter revealed herself, and pointing to her now thoroughly respectable husband and her well-appointed home, she said, "The bad one have I made good. A good wife can cure a bad husband; thou canst see it with thy own eyes." Then the Prince burst into tears, and cried, "Oh, my daughter! thou hast been wise, and I a fool; come home with me, and rule my land. And having gone home, he died, and his son-in-law reigned in his stead."

This story has led us far away from the steppes. We are no longer among rough, uncultured Turks or Mongols, but are holding converse with men of Indian, or Persian, or Arabian refinement. But even the most manifestly foreign of these Siberian folk-tales have a certain native charm of their own, derived to a great extent from the simple manner in which they are related. We may take, for instance, the following Buddhistic-Mohammedan moral tale,* told among the Tobol Tartars of the Irtysch district.

Harun al Raschid had remained childless to a good old age, but at last a son was born to him. So dear was the child to him, and so fearful was he of losing it, that he brought it up in an underground dwelling, far from the sight of ordinary men. Only to a few prudent servants and wise teachers was the secret of the young Prince's existence made known.

The child became a good boy, and spent twelve years contentedly in his retreat; but at the end of that time the daylight happened one day to stream in, and he naturally inquired of his mother what it was. She replied that it was the light of the unreal world above which had made its way into his real and actual world. Thereupon he entreated so earnestly to be allowed to visit that false world of which she spoke, that at last he was allowed to leave his cavern and emerge into the common light of day. Great was his astonishment at what he saw, and eagerly did he gaze around him as he walked through street after street, unable to satiate his curiosity. As he wandered along, followed by a vast crowd, there came up a poor man whose brother lay dead, and who begged that some of the Prince's followers would come to the funeral. Now the Prince had never

* Radloff, iv. 411–422.

seen a dead body; so he hastened away to where the corpse lay, stood by while it was washed and properly arrayed, and then followed it to the grave. While he looked on, "there came into his head all manner of thoughts." And he said to himself, "Alas! such is this world! To gain much wealth, to gather together many herds of cattle—this is mere folly; all that a man needs in this world is three pieces of linen for his winding-sheet, and four boards to lay over him." Wherefore should he trouble himself with vanities, he thought, and abide in a city which, at his father's death, he would be called upon to rule, thereby becoming exposed to all sorts of temptations? Better would it be for him to quit a scene as dangerous as false. So he withdrew himself from the sight of the people, and stole away towards the end of the city, and from the end of the city he fled into the steppe.

His father's efforts to find him having proved fruitless, he wandered on undisturbed. Before long, he met a beggar in a tattered garment, who humbly made way for the richly-apparelled stranger. But the Prince called to him to draw near and exchange dresses with him. This was soon done, and "the poor beggar rejoiced mightily over the fine clothes he had put on." But the Prince, when he had donned the poor man's garment, spoke thus: "To God be praise and thanks! Now have I at last attained unto wisdom!" Then he went his way, and after some time he came to a city where it was the custom for the poor to stand in the market-place, and wait till rich men who wanted servants came and took them into their employ. There he entered into the service of a wealthy old citizen, to whom he gave the fullest satisfaction. After a time the Prince went away, saying that his employer, if he needed him, might seek for him at the end of three days.

Hard by that city stood an old mosque, and thither the Prince hastened. And when he had reached it he entered in, twice prostrated himself, and thus prayed to God: "O Thou Almighty One! out of nought hast thou this nought created, hast set me in this vain world of ours. Do Thou now send me sickness. And after Thou hast sent me sickness, give unto me the hour of death. Were I to lead a long life in this vain world, I should heap up sins upon sins." Long time "did he weep bitterly and pray unto the Lord God; and the Lord God heard his prayer, and sent sickness upon him." Two days long did he lie there suffering. On the third day his employer was sitting down to eat, when he suddenly remembered the words of his servant. Then he rose from the untouched meal, and went forth to seek him, and after a long search he found him lying on the floor of the mosque, unable to move. Then the rich man would have taken him home and nursed him; but the Prince said, "O my father, take me not to thy house. This mosque, wherein prayers are said five times a day, is the house of God. Here will I lie, here will I give up the ghost when my death-hour comes." And he drew forth a small piece of money, and asked his employer to buy him a winding-sheet with it. The rich man would fain have bestowed on him fine linen for that

purpose; but the Prince would have none but the coarsest, bought with his own coin. Then he said to the rich man, "My father, the hour of my death is at hand. Now will I breathe my last wishes. When I am gone, do not lament over me, but fasten a cord round my neck, and drag me three times round about the mosque." Then he disclosed the name of his royal father, bequeathed him his ring and his Koran, and, having thus settled all his worldly affairs, he died.

When the rich man saw that the youth was dead, he tied a cord round the neck of the corpse, and was on the point of beginning to drag it about the mosque, when a voice called to him from on high, saying, "Thou fool! shall a friend of God be thus treated?" And at that moment the door of the mosque opened, and three men entered, bearing a golden basin and water in a flagon of gold. They washed the dead body, and then they wrapped it up and carried it away to where a grave awaited it in the midst of a great plain. "Forth from the grave came odours of Paradise and spread themselves around. Then the body was laid in the grave, and all the funeral rites were performed as the law prescribes. Two men read the Koran, and, when the blessing was uttered, the Old Man said 'Amen.'"

It is almost a pity to spoil the effect of this sternly simple tale, which a few verbal alterations would convert into a Christian legend, by quoting the paragraph which follows, and which brings into striking relief the sensuous charm with which Mohammedanism has endowed the ascetic frame of the original Buddhist parable. But thus does the story continue:—

"When the Old Man looked round after the blessing had been spoken, none of those who had stood by were any longer to be seen. Dshäbräil (Gabriel), lauded be his name! brought from Paradise a golden throne, and placed it on the grave. Then the youth came forth from the grave and seated himself upon the golden throne. Thither came four houris, bringing raiment with them, and bearing food from Paradise on platters of gold. Around the youth did they stand, offering him their gifts."

It is true that the story states that, when the Old Man, after conveying to Haroun Alraschid the bequest of his dying son, returned to the grave, he found the houris still offering their gifts to the ascetic youth, while nothing is said about his having accepted any of them.

Many are the stories of this kind which the Turkish races have inherited, together with Mohammedanism, chiefly from the Persians and Arabs. Alnaschar's famous Basket is replaced by a Hare*—which a hunter startles, thereby losing it, by the angry stamp with which he attends his exclamation to the Children whom he expects to have by the Wife whom he hopes to marry after he has sold the foal of the Mare which he intends to buy with the money realised by the sale of the Calf which he calculates upon purchasing with the price given him for the skin of the Hare which he is about to shoot. The Judgment of Solomon is well represented by the story† of how Idägä Pi settled a dispute, as to the ownership of a camel's

* Radloff, iv. 260.

† Ibid. iv. 39.

foal, between a Sart and a man who distilled brandy and prepared koumiss for Toktamysch Kan. First he ordered the disputants to tie up, a little apart, the two camels between which lay the mothership of the disputed foal. Then he fastened the foal between them, and beat it till it uttered cries of pain. One of the camels went on stolidly browsing, paying no heed to the poor thing's cries. But the other, the Sart's camel, left off grazing, turned round its head, and with sorrowful eyes regarded the suffering foal. Whereupon Idïgä Pi decided that the Sart's camel was the real mother of the foal. Everyone is familiar with the story of Bruce and the Spider; how the royal hero was encouraged by the perseverance of the twice-baffled spinner to carry on his attempt to gain the Scottish sceptre. But the following tale may be less generally known. When Aksak Timur [Timur the Lame, our Tamerlane] was sitting at home one day, mourning over his crippled state, he saw an Ant, "which was just as lame as himself," trying to climb up a wall. But, "as its lame foot hindered it, the Ant kept falling down." At last, however, it succeeded in climbing to the roof of the house. Then Aksak Timur cried, "This Ant, which is as lame as I am, has by striving hard got up to the roof of the house. Why shouldn't I, if I work hard, become a Prince?"

Some of our own fairy stories also have their counterparts in the Turkish tales. In one, Fortunatus travels about the world with his wonderful companions; in another, the Sleeping Beauty slumbers heavily, not to be awakened by any kiss; here, the youngest son marries his Frog-wife; there, Puss-in-Boots, in a fox's shape, unblushingly supplies the wants of a Turkish Marquis of Carabas. It were easy to mention many links between our storyland and that of the wild children of the steppes, to adduce many points of contact between their limited world of thought and our larger intellectual sphere. But it must suffice for the present to give, instead, one specimen of their lyric poetry, in order to convey some idea of their expression of feelings which sway all human hearts, irrespective of the degree of civilisation to which the possessors of those organs may have attained. Here is the literal version of a Song* which comes from the Baraba tribe of Siberian Tartars on the river Om. It must be confessed, by the way, that Turkish names may sound unromantic to unaccustomed ears:—

"Heavily falls the rain; along the brook Ak Jän is wending. Ak Jän, thou art my love; how fares it with Ak Jän?

"Across the white sea as I sailed, beside the helm I yearned for home. Songs of longing did I sing whenever I thought of the fair one.

"White doves! blue doves! wherefore do ye gather together on the beam? This trouble, this sorrow, wherefore gathers it above my head?

"Two birds are flying through the heavens—one bound, one free. O sweet sleep of mine at midnight! Could I but waken and kiss her, how glad would be my heart!"

W. R. S. R.

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* Radloff, iv. 99.

Young Brown.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER VIII.

British India.

It was rather a serious business for English residents in India when the *Tanjore* arrived out with reinforcements of raw recruits, and many incomprehensible instructions from the home country. Unseasoned lads marched about in the heat, drank, and died very fast. Middle-aged military dandies from Pall Mall were laid up in scores. The contradictory orders of official personages who knew much of the parliamentary game of question and answer, but little of our Eastern Empire, confused the heads of local authorities already sore perplexed. Moreover, many alarmed personages in high place now began for the first time to understand that they were not beloved by the natives; and they were conscious of an uneasy presentiment that if the British arms received another check they would be all massacred. Not only India proper, but Afghanistan, Cabul, Candahar, Turkistan, Persia, and Koordistan, were watching events, and ripe for revenge against the hated infidels. The Mohammedan revival, of which so much has since been said, had commenced; and had another successful blow at our power been struck after that at Dinapore, it is probable that not a living Frank would have been left to tell the story between Calcutta and Trebizond. When the well-appointed British cavalry therefore rode through the streets to barracks after they had disembarked from the ship, with music playing and colours flying, they were greeted by deafening cheers from their fellow countrymen; and as Colonel Oakes reined in his charger, and made him curvet beneath the balconies where groups of ladies waved them welcome and strewed flowers on their way, he nodded to Lord Kinsgear, and said:

"This looks as if we were going into action pretty soon. The General won't play with his command: we may be sure of that."

Their hopes or expectations were not disappointed. They were marched and countermarched wherever cavalry could do service. Moreover Lord Kinsgear was almost immediately attached to the staff of General Violet, and young Brown accompanied him. They were present at the capture of Secunderabagh—at the taking of Cawnpore and the brilliant affair of Jhansi. The two young men, though so different in rank, were drawn still closer together during the campaign, because they were

often obliged of necessity to occupy the same tent, and to take their meals in sight of each other, if not together. They rode often within earshot of each other for hours, and with no one else to talk to. They were together in many dangers and successes; they were friends and brothers in all but name.

It was not that William Brown, who had been bred a peasant, and was now a soldier in the best sense of the word, presumed in the slightest degree upon the kindness which was shown to him by a nobleman who was his captain. Not all the sad things he had heard of the Wyldwyls in any way influenced or diminished his respect to his superior officer; and indeed he had not imbibed many of the Merchant's democratic theories, or, if the truth must be told, had he very clearly understood or cared to understand them. He was by nature docile, obedient, simple. He knew his duty and he did it; and that is the stuff of which veterans and heroes are made. He never intruded his presence upon Lord Kinsgear unless summoned, or entered into conversation with him without saluting; but he was removed from the rank and file of his regiment by his duties as an orderly; and so the young men were seldom separated for more than an hour or two at a time.

Also Colonel Oakes had kept his word, and young Brown had advanced as rapidly in the regiment as possible for one not born to military honour. He was made lance-corporal, and soon after full corporal; then, after the Jhansi affair, where several non-commissioned officers of the 1st were slain and where young Brown twenty times looked death in the face, he was promoted to a sergeantship. He generally spent much of his time in reading when alone, having no taste for rum and skittles; and he probably owed his life and health to the interest he found in a few books among the Marquis of Kinsgear's kit. As a sergeant having more leisure and ease on his hands, he eagerly devoured works upon history and tactics, and often got absorbed in the study of a good map. He loved to go minutely over the positions of the decisive battles of which he read, with a few pins and corks and a sheet of cardboard. He was a silent and reserved young man, never tired of his own company, and never impatient of solitude. He neither drank nor smoked, and was a very moderate eater, living chiefly upon rice, which seemed to him cleaner and more wholesome than the greasy messes prepared by the Indian cooks. Therefore, as he kept his blood cool, the heat of the climate did not affect him as it did Lord Kinsgear and most of his brother officers. Abstinence was not, perhaps, any great credit to him. It was of course easy enough for young Brown to do as he liked about eating and drinking. No one pressed him to indulge in iced Clicquot and old Madeira, of which there was no great supply; but at General Violet's own table, where the Marquis dined whenever there was a halt long enough for the tents to be pitched and the commissariat waggons to come up, the case was very different. Thirsty young aides-de-camp who had been galloping about under an Indian sun with field-glasses held to their eyes in a blinding dust, were glad to slake

their parched throats and revive their spirits with as much wine, pawnee, pale ale and cigars as they could get. Tiffin, and sherry cobblers, and cheroots and punch were set out under the tent, or in the quarters of one or other of them, all day long; and the Marquis of Kinsgear, who was not of a very strong constitution, would sometimes lie down in the small hours under his own canvas with throbbing temples, and a head which felt like a lump of lead upon his shoulders.

One evening after a very late sitting with the General's staff, where Windham, Seaton, Grant, and Rowcroft had been all present to fight their battles over again, the Marquis of Kinsgear returned to his tent with a heavy footstep, made somewhat unsteady by the length of an Oriental dinner where the hookah and the nargilly had succeeded the wine, and the younger men had gone off to eat anchovy toast and drink again afresh afterwards. Young Brown, who had come into the captain's tent with a troop roster which needed inspecting, was so immersed in a book he had found on the table that he did not hear the young officer enter the tent, and Lord Kinsgear went silently up to him and looked for a minute over his shoulder and down at the book without speaking.

They would have made a fine picture of Work and Play: the one so calm and placid, so tranquil and happy; the other hot, fevered, dissatisfied, and sorrowful.

The Marquis seemed to feel the contrast, and to stand rebuked before himself. He was not naturally given to excess, but he had been of late beguiled into intemperance by the contagion of example, the influence of companionship, and the fear of ridicule. He almost envied the studious sergeant, who had passed so quiet and profitable an evening with a good author, for he saw that young Brown had been reading Macaulay's bright description of the gallant death at Killiecrankie of Bonny Dundee.

"How goes the day?" asked the Marquis, repeating the latest words of Claverhouse, as he remembered that deathless and beautiful story.

"Well for King James, my lord," answered the young man, smiling and saluting his officer.

"Then it matters the less for me," added the Marquis; and there was a sad tone in his voice, as if the words were an augury of evil.

CHAPTER IX.

RULE, BRITANNIA.

General Violet, with a few handfuls of British troops, was advancing to meet the enemy. It was a fearful march through a country devastated by fire and sword and famine. Often as far as the eye could reach from a high hill top not a tree, nor a living thing, nor a human habitation could be

seen. Sometimes they passed by heaps of rubbish, which a few months ago had been smiling villages; and the bones of men, horses, and elephants, dried by the sun, bleached by the wind, and half-gnawed by jackals, strewed the way at irregular intervals.

Every now and then, as the slender column of Europeans toiled through the dust and heat of an Indian summer, Lord Kinsgear, or another of General Violet's aides-de-camp, would gallop up to the front and salute, with the awful announcement that some scores or hundreds of the rebels had been captured.

"Taken with arms in their hands?" would drawl the General, in that affected voice of his; and if the reply was "Yes, sir," as it usually was, he would wave his white, womanly hand gracefully, as one who would have done quickly with a tiresome subject, and add, "To the rear; O yes, to the rear;" which meant that they were to be shot—and they were shot there and then, just as if the unknown clerk at the India Office had signed their death-warrant for execution at the Old Bailey.

Indeed, there was no help for it. Prisoners were brought into the British camp and line of march in such numbers from the flying hosts of Beni Mahdo and Ferozeshah, after the successes of Lugard Mitchell and Lord Clyde, that it was impossible to detain or to feed them. There was not a crumb of bread, or an ounce of meat, but what the English wanted for themselves, nor a draught of water; and to drag forward a rabble rout of prisoners, more numerous than themselves, would have been an experiment too dangerous for any general to risk. So thousands of these dusky-skinned Indians were sent daily and hourly into eternity, without any fuss or outcry beyond the whistling of balls through the air, and the dull thud with which they sank buried in living flesh. Fortunately there were no newspapers to look on, and scream "Murder!" Our own correspondent kept enterprisingly out of the way. If he had not done so, General Violet had privately determined to hang him, because it was no time for trifling, and writing sensation articles about what could not be helped. When a clerk has once loosed and unchained the dogs of war, we all know how they moisten their fangs, whether ink is shed for the fate of those they tear or not.

General Violet overtook his enemy rather suddenly at last. It was during the hottest part of an Indian day when the pickets came galloping in with news of the enemy, and the pale face of England's bravest general became tinged with a pink as delicate as the colour upon a piece of Sèvres porcelain.

"We have got them now, gentlemen," said he, turning with a languid smile to his staff; and in the same calm, polite language he would have used on parade, he made the necessary arrangements for the coming battle before a standard was unfurled. Ten minutes afterwards the opening thunder of the Begum's guns cast a death shade over the ranks of the little army.

"We must hit hard, and hit quickly," said the General affably; and

as the trumpets sounded the advance, regiment after regiment, or what remained of them, moved down into action, with music playing, and colours flying—the bagpipes of the Highlanders answering the fifes and drums of the English, and some Irish shouts of "Erin-go-bragh."

The battle began with infantry, as usual, and General Violet watched it with his staff from a commanding position. The Indians fought like wild cats: but their nervous excitement, terrible as it was, and frantic as the clerk had made them, was no match for the dogged pertinacity and the burly beef-fed strength of the mighty Western islanders by whom they were opposed. They came on again and again, furiously, drunk with excitement, drunk with bhang; but they were always beaten back, and they seemed to break themselves when they met the British troops, as waves break upon a rock. By-and-by their fire began to slacken, and there were signs of wavering in the Asiatic ranks when the smoke cleared away.

From the height which General Violet had occupied during the battle, with the officers of his staff around him, he could now see through his field-glasses that the enemy was bringing forward some teams of artillery horses with the lasso tackle attached to them, and was evidently preparing to retreat over the Nepaulese frontier, carrying his guns and treasure with him.

The General looked round to his officers, his eyes agleam with the fire of battle, and there was a mute appeal in them, as if he were about to call upon brave men for desperate service.

The Marquis of Kinsgear rose in his stirrups, and bent forward with eager response in his face, while the boldest held their breath for a time.

The English Commander turned to the Quartermaster, who was close at his side, and dictated an order, which that officer quickly embodied in a few pencil lines, written upon a slip of paper resting upon his sabre-tache. It was very short:—

"General Violet wishes the 1st Lancers to advance rapidly to the front, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns. Immediate.

(Signed) "A. Bracebridge,"

which was the name of the Quartermaster. Nothing more—few words to brave men.

General Violet gazed for an instant upon the clouds of Indian horsemen scouring the plain beneath him, and the fierce hail of iron which ploughed it up, so that nothing could pass through it save by miracle, and with a natural movement not wanting in chivalrous grace, he involuntarily raised his plumed hat and saluted the Marquis of Kinsgear. Then laying his hand upon the young lord's bridle rein, he said: "You see your regiment posted at the skirt of the wood yonder. All depends on the speed with which our squadrons advance. Now or never is the time when cavalry may be used with effect."

Lord Kinsgear brought down the point of his sword in salute, and the next moment he was gone. Old grey-beards still remember how the Plantagenet noble rode away. The hill on which the General's staff was posted was a thousand feet above the level of the plain beneath, and its sides were steep and rugged. Neither horse nor horseman faltered, but went down it straight as the crow flies, swift as an arrow.

Settling himself firmly in his seat, and taking a strong grasp of the rein with his bridle arm, he seemed to lift his horse off the ground, and he descended with a swoop as true as a falcon's to the wood side where his regiment was posted, impatient of the delays which had hitherto kept them idle, and longing to take part in the honours of the fight. He had no consciousness of his danger. In that supreme moment his thoughts turned only to some minute improvement in his horse's bit, about which he had talked the day before with William Brown; and he congratulated himself upon it, as it enabled him to dodge and distance every attempt at capture, so well it kept his striding thorough-bred in hand.

Colonel Oakes was sitting in the saddle in front of his troops, and stroking his charger's mane, when Lord Kinsgear came speeding down with the General's order, and never was command more welcome to a soldier.

"Now, men," he called out, in a deep, sober voice, "remember what I have told you, and keep together." So he put spurs to old Sampson, his favourite charger, and cantered once down the ranks to see that all was well. Having thus done all things in order, the Colonel turned quietly to his people, and said, "The regiment will advance."

Now when once a body of cavalry is in motion, it must dispense for a time with orders; and though the trumpets may be sounding "a gallop," or "a charge," it must rely chiefly for guidance upon the leader of the force. Colonel Oakes therefore placed himself quite alone, at a distance of about half-a-dozen yards in advance of his first line, and began to lead with perfect steadiness, while Lord Kinsgear, unscathed as yet, fell into his proper place, and headed his own troop.

So in serried ranks the small group of European horsemen moved along the plain, apparently enveloped in clouds of dusky enemies, and unable to see before them from the smoke around, although it was every moment riven by a lurid glare, which showed that another messenger of death had been sent among them.

For some time both men and horses behaved as well as in the riding-school. As often as a death gap was made in the ranks, the troopers closed up when they had ridden clear of the disturbing cause, and went on as before. The crash of lancers overthrown only alternated with the dry word of command—"Back right flank!" "Keep back, Sergeant Brown!" "Close into your centre!" "Look to your dressing; right squadron keep back!"

But as they drew nearer to the enemy, the regiment gradually became more impatient of restraint. The troopers, whose numbers were thinning so fast, longed fiercely to close with the foe whose guns were galling

them; and a feeling of contempt for the enemy added to their fury. Even Lord Kinsgear, who commanded the squadron of direction, became anxious to get out of fire, and endeavouring with that view to force the pace, pressed forward so far as to come almost alongside of Colonel Oakes's bridle-arm. The sagacious veteran laid his sword at once across the Captain's breast, and called out to him with frank good-humour to "follow his leader," in a voice which rang above the din, like the sound of a clarion. Otherwise, not a word passed the English leader. His faith in his cause was very knightly and whole-hearted. He never fell into any doubt concerning the path of his duty, and his troops followed him, as troops only can do when led straightforward.

At length, however, not even one of the best cavalry officers in the service could restrain some of the younger men and officers from dashing in front, and the line was hurled forward and broken up into racing horsemen. The ceremonious advance of disciplined soldiery was changed into an ungoverned onset. The steeple-chasing spirit of English sportsmen broke out, some trying to pass their comrades, some determining not to yield an inch.

William Brown was one of the last who retained some command over his horse, but a flesh-wound in the neck from a rifle-ball made the brute lose temper. He was then within sight of the Indian battery, and a torrent of flame burst forth in front of him. The next moment his horse made a mighty jump, a plunge, a scramble, and he was in the midst of the enemy. Far divided from his comrades, he had driven full into the Indian ranks, and being instantly confronted by a gigantic Nepaulese, he soon came to grief, because he incautiously gave point to his adversary. His sword, driven home to the hilt, ran the Indian through, and he fell headlong, drawing down with him in his fall the sword which had slain him; and Sergeant Brown, with all his strength, was unable to unloose the blade from that ponderous body, or to disengage himself from the wrist-knot. It resulted, that though he kept his saddle, he was tethered to the ground by his own sword-arm. It is not an uncommon case in battle. Five minutes afterwards he was knocked down; but soon rose again, and in the midst of the strife became so eager to prevent the enemy from hauling off one of the pieces, that, at a moment when the six miserable artillery-horses and their swarthy drivers were the subject of a raging combat, he disengaged the gun from the harness, and presently heard the deep voice of Colonel Oakes damning him in tones of admiration. "Catch this horse, Sergeant Brown," shouted the Colonel, cutting down an Indian chief, as he burst like thunder into a shrinking group of Asiatics, and was lost in flame and smoke. That seemed the Colonel's way of thanking his trooper.

Meantime, Lord Kinsgear, who was not a good swordsman, and conscious of his deficiency, considered for a moment how he should best act when his troops broke away from him. He determined to rely on the main strength of his horse, hurled at full speed against the enemy;

and singling out an Indian chief whom he perceived to be the leader of the opposing force, he resolved to overthrow him by the shock of a heavy concussion. So his lordship forgot the stiff lessons of the riding-school, clenched a rein in each hand; got his head somewhat down like a bull preparing to butt; and as though he were forcing a cantankerous horse at a nasty jump, drove full at the Indian. The man fell as if struck by a catapult, and the next moment Lord Kinsgear had broken into the centre of the enemy, and blinded by smoke, scorched by fire, hacked by a dozen scimitars, he turned to bay, and defended himself by twirling his sword like a millwheel. He was hurled from his saddle, however, speedily, and beaten to his knees with an Indian lance thrust deep into his breast, when there was a mighty clash above him of contending horsemen, and then there came all at once a mist before his eyes.

On recovering his senses he found his head supported on Sergeant Brown's knees, and around them was an open space covered with the remains of the wounded and the dying. The Indians had gone down before the English swords like corn before the sickle; still the day was not won: and unless William Brown could assist his captain to remount and take him to a place of safety, they might both be shot down at any moment. The sergeant did not hesitate. Hoisting Lord Kinsgear into his own saddle, he supported him to the rear, walking slowly through the ghastly scene around him, where dying men to whom no help could come shrieked madly for water, and broken-backed horses, raising themselves on their forelegs, looked piteously for help, in their horrible anguish. Every moment he heard the ping of the bullet, the sighing and humming of the cannon-ball, and the harsh whirr of jagged fragments cast from bursting shells, with the plunge of round shot as it buried itself with a slosh in the trunk of some mounted horseman.

But he bore the Marquis with unflinching pluck to the ambulance-waggons, supporting him in the saddle with hand and arm as he walked beside him. Having there given his captain over to the surgeon of the regiment, he rode back to the front and took part in the final charge which completed the victory of the day. The Indians, beaten at all points, threw themselves off their horses and crept under them to find shelter. They whined and entreated for quarter, grovelling in the dust in their abasement, after their guns, to which they attributed an almost miraculous power, were silenced. But then occurred that fearful sight which shows how grim a thing is war. Some of our men, and even of our officers, performed ghastly wonders in the way of slaughter. They were seized with the blood phrenzy, and in the close of the battle did what they could to confirm the belief of the maddening effects of that wholesale killing which is said not to be murder. Some raged wildly against the miserable wretches who cringed and cried for mercy, slashing them down with reeking hands already besmeared by gore; and others made ceaseless use of their revolvers. Among the few who tried to check this ghastly butchery of the unresisting was Sergeant Brown; and again he heard the

manly voice of Colonel Oakes above the crash and roar of the fight, speaking words of approval to him.

It was a great success for the English arms, one of the most decisive victories of the war. It occasioned the foundation of a new order of knighthood. General Violet, who gained it, was raised to the rank of Commander-in-Chief. The largest amount of loot and prize-money gained by any British force since the peace with the Burmese fell into the hands of the conquerors; and it disposed of what was called the Indian difficulty for nearly eleven months.

CHAPTER X.

After the Battle.

Upon the fortunes of William Brown, the Sepoy Mutiny had a most favourable effect, however inconvenient its results may have been to several other persons. It raised him, for one thing, from the ranks of the army, and obtained for him a commission in Her Majesty's service. The advancement of the young soldier was not brought about very easily. Lord George Wyldwyl, who had just been named Commander-in-Chief, took the nobleman's side of the case, and declared that promotions from the ranks lowered the "tone" of the army, whatever that might mean. When his lordship, however, had conversed with General Violet and Colonel Oakes, he promised to offer no active opposition to the commission being made out, but he added, significantly, that "it must be done in the usual way." Now, among the precious legacies which have been bequeathed to us as a people, is the inestimable blessing of "Routine;" and therefore, when Lord George Wyldwyl remarked that young Brown's commission would have to be made out in the usual way, he meant in the routine way, which was saying a great deal more than he expressed. Accordingly, six weeks after the recommendation of Sergeant Brown's immediate superior, that his conduct in the field should be rewarded by a commission, a very formal document was received from head-quarters. It was marked "confidential," but its contents of course transpired; and they were to the effect, that "Lord George Wyldwyl was unable to accede to a request which was so little in accordance with the good of the service, and might interfere with the proper discipline which it was necessary to preserve between officers and men, by confounding the distinction of ranks. Lord George also considered it right to add, that the wife of an officer raised from the ranks often felt herself in a false position among the ladies of her husband's regiment, and that the apparent honour conferred upon him by a commission was really nothing but a source of vexation and expense to himself, as well as dissatisfaction to those gentlemen who had obtained their military rank in the customary manner by purchase, and who had sufficient means not only to maintain their position, but to join in the

expenses and hospitalities of the mess without inconvenience." This document, which resumed in a windy and rigmarole manner all the platitudes which were current in garrison towns, to show that money made all the difference between a commander and a private, was signed by the august and puissant name of Bodger, Sir Ajax Bodger, K.C.B., K.S.I., &c. &c. &c., being at that time Adjutant-General of Her Majesty's forces in India.

"George knows nothing about it—I dined with him yesterday," said General Violet, referring to the Commander-in-Chief.

"We must try again," observed Colonel Oakes; "the beggars never give in the first time. Young Brown has fairly won his commission, and by jingo he shall have it. The mess has sent in a round robin about it to Lord George."

"Won his commission!" drawled the General, shaking some eau-de-Cologne languidly over his handkerchief; "he deserves to be made a captain instead of a cornet. I never saw a cooler fellow of his age under fire—a salamander, I declare. By the way, Oakes, you will be glad to hear I have got him the Victoria Cross on your report. They could not refuse it him, though they tried hard. Let us go and talk to the Commander-in-Chief; perhaps he will give us a wrinkle."

The two officers ordered round their horses, and it being towards the cool of the day, they rode off to catch Lord George Wyldwyl before he went out for his ride. He could give them no help about young Brown, however.

"Things must take their course, Ned," said the Commander-in-Chief of the Queen's troops to the most famous general under him. "I can do nothing, you know."

"I suppose there's a way of managing it if we could only find out how to pull the wires?" answered General Violet. "You and I and Tom Oakes together ought to be able to get a cornet's commission. Eh, George?"

"I don't know that," replied the Commander-in-Chief, scratching his ear in a perplexed manner. "Both Bodger and his brother-in-law are very obstinate men when their backs are up. However, you know I will help you if I can, Ned; and if you take my advice you'll use private influence. When you can contrive among you to get young Brown's commission made out, I promise to sign it."

"Hang it, the chief is a brick!" said General Violet as he and Colonel Oakes rode away from head quarters. "I am almost sorry he is going home, though I must now in the ordinary course of things succeed him. But we have not done our work yet. How are we to get at Bodger? I don't know him well enough to ask a favour; do you, Tom?"

"Never saw him in my life, either in action or in a hunting field, where most of my acquaintanceships have been made," returned the Colonel. "He generally happens to be ill on gunpowder days, and performs prodigies of humanitarianism among the wounded. He writes letters for

them to their friends, and that sort of thing. I never heard of his doing it in peace time."

"You see these great characters take their own road to glory," laughed General Violet. "It does not much matter; they always get there."

"Then you think it is all U.P. about young Brown's commission?" asked Colonel Oakes.

"I think it is something deuced like it, unless we can square Bodger," answered the General. "But there is Lady Laura Petty-Pells and her ponies. She ought to be able to do the trick, if she will, Tom. She keeps open house here, and nobody ever refuses her anything, on principle."

Her ladyship bowed over her parasol whip to the two heroes of the latest great battle which had saved India.

"Haaah ye, General?" she screamed in that highly pitched voice which delights the fashion. "Haaah ye, Colonel? What do you both think of my ponies? Lord Hanaper has sent them out in exchange for the Ranee's shawls I took home last time I went to England."

"They are worthy of the Queen of Sheba," replied General Violet gallantly, alluding to the title by which her ladyship was best known in the drawing-rooms of Calcutta.

"They are quite thorough bred," screamed her ladyship again. "Lord Hanaper bought them of Lady Selina Bodger, whose husband you know is at the Mundane Office. Quite a charming person, who has the best horses in London."

General Violet, hearing the omnipotent name of Bodger, looked towards Colonel Oakes, as much as to signify, "Now then here goes;" and then he addressed himself to her ladyship.

"We want to present a petition, great Queen," said the General, stroking the beautiful Arab which he rode at a smooth canter within an inch of her ladyship's phaeton wheels.

"Then one of you must go away," screamed Lady Laura at the top of her voice. "It is sinful waste to burn two heroes at the same time. I shall want you to make love to me one after the other."

"When will my turn come, Lady Lo?" enquired Colonel Oakes, who was nearly related to the Calcutta beauty, though they had not met for a dozen years, whereas General Violet was one of her intimates.

"It will come whenever you can find your way into my house without leaving a card and running away," cried her ladyship shrilly. "I am at home every day at tiffin."

General Violet was a prime favourite with Lady Laura Petty-Pells. It was even whispered that he was one of those who sighed in her train. He was also extremely popular with ladies. He knew how and when to talk to them. Lady Laura was delighted to have the brave and kind-hearted exquisite escorting her carriage in the first flush of his great renown, and with all Calcutta looking on to envy her. Her face was all

alight with triumph and pleasure. She determined to give a ball, two balls and a dinner (or two dinners and one ball, which should it be ?), to show this illustrious paladin in her chains before the bloom of his valiant deeds wore off him.

As soon as General Violet, however, spoke of Sir Ajax, her ladyship pinched up her lips, and evinced extreme annoyance. "To say the truth, General," observed her ladyship in tones almost natural, and very much lower than usual, so that not even her miniature groom could hear what she said, "Sir Ajax Bodger is not a gentleman."

CHAPTER XI.

Raised from the Ranks.

"How are you, William Brown ?" enquired a hearty voice of the young sergeant as he walked rather disconsolately about the streets of Calcutta during the inexplicable postponement of his hopes of promotion. The next moment the young man's right hand was held in a grip of iron, while two kind, honest blue eyes looked out from a rugged old face at him.

"You must come and eat a haggis with me, if you are off duty," said the Scotch Merchant whose acquaintance he had made on board the *Tanjore*. "I see that you have risen to the rank of Sergeant; and it is a grand credit to you in these times, unless ye had some interest in the regiment, the which I mind me now was the case through that minister boddy who came on board with your mother. Poor lassie, her face reminded me of my sister's when she lie down so pale and fainted. Mayhap, lad, it was that which first drew me on to take a fancy to ye."

William Brown, though dispirited enough, was glad to meet the Merchant, because, when we are dejected and out of conceit with ourselves, any kind voice is welcome, and his was of the kindest. He went home with the Merchant too, and found a plentiful lunch or tiffin, the name by which Mr. Brown disguised an early dinner, spread out. Very curious and characteristic was the half-concealed sense of degradation which the well-to-do Merchant felt at asking a common soldier to sit at the same table with him, and he scrupulously called him "Sergeant," and spoke to him with an awkwardly assumed air of patronage before the well-to-do clerks who boarded with him. Had William Brown worn gold lace instead of worsted, the Merchant would have been conscious of some inferiority, military officers being really the princes of all countries, and common soldiers the Pariahs of every people.

Young Brown, however, possessed the invaluable mental armour of what is called "a thick skin." He was by no means sensitive or prickly-minded, probably because he was in robust health, and too honestly occupied with the business of life to be self-conscious. The Scottish

Merchant's dinner was excellent, and cooked by a Scotch cook, with as much Scotch material as possible. There was dried salmon and haddock, potted game, shortbread and marmalade, all from the Land of Cakes, with amber ale of potent strength, and some extremely fragrant whisky, all of which things form refreshing diet in hot countries.

"I'll not ask ye to tak' ony spirits, Mr. Broon," said the owner of these good things, helping himself, "because whisky is not good for the young; but I'll aye drink your health and success to you;" and he helped himself.

The Merchant spoke in that pleasant and kindly Scotch accent which was probably as deeply impressed upon his mind as on his tongue, and which few have heard often without finding that their hearts warmed to it as a Highlander's beneath the tartan. It is as impossible to convey any idea of it by the incorrect spelling of English words as it would be to make roses out of heather-bloom by the use of coarse paint. To the present writer it has represented so much that is great and good in human nature that he can seldom listen to it without that emotion which is made up equally of memory and hope. It reminds him of the many honest lips from which it came, and seems to convey the prophecy that he may yet make another friend.

The taste of his native liquor seemed to open Mr. Brown's heart, and presently afterwards he said, "I've been thinking, Sergeant, that ye'll not like to remain for ever with a red coat upon your back and a musket on your arm; so if you would wish to enter my office, I'll see about buying your discharge one of these days. I can give you a hundred pound a year, your board and house room, for a moderate amount of work daily."

"Thank you, sir," replied the soldier straightforwardly, "but I like the army better than any other calling, and my superiors have promised to do their best to get me a commission." The Sergeant's hopes had revived after a good dinner, and he was now disposed to take a more cheerful view of his prospects than he had done an hour or two before.

"Whew!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, making a whistling sound peculiarly Scotch, and feeling an enormous increase of respect for his guest. "So you have distinguished yourself as highly as that, have you, my lad? How comes it then that ye have not got your commission already? It is getting a long while now since the last battle was fought, and I imagine ye'll not get your commission out of the parade ground."

The Sergeant then told his host as much as he knew of the obstacles which had arisen in his way to advancement. He did not know much but he was aware that General Violet and Colonel Oakes had both recommended him, also that the officers of his regiment had sent in a round robin in his favour to head-quarters, and that nothing had come of it. Moreover for the last few days Colonel Oakes had plainly avoided the subject, though formerly he had been very ready to talk of it, and had tried in various rough good-natured ways to make up for his disappointment.

Mr. Brown listened very attentively to all he said, and then answered, slowly stroking his chin, "I am thinking that you have no friend at Court, Mr. Brown, and that the true hitch lies there. Tell me now, do ye mind that ye ever offended anyone who could put a spoke in your wheel, and prevent it turning round? I've ofttimes heard of such mishaps."

The Sergeant declared that he had never consciously given offence to any one; that he had been upon active service all through the Mutiny, and that he was well considered by all his superiors, without exception.

"Still ye might like enough be hated by some of the officials without knowing it, though if ye have been kept out of their way, that can scarcely be. I apprehend, therefore, Mr. Brown, that it is pure wrongheadedness on their pairt. But are ye quite sure o' the General and the Colonel? They are, I am free to acknowledge, brave and good men, but in these matters ye will learn, if you live, that folks are not over trustworthy."

The Sergeant readily answered for both these officers, and then a queer sort of smile broke over the Scotch Merchant's face.

"Well," he observed dryly, "maybe I may be able to serve you better than a bigger man. I am tendering for a contract for military saddles, and I have to see Mr. Toll Bodger, the storemaster, about it no farther off than to-morrow. He is related somehow to Sir Ajax, who has all British India under his thumb, and is as strong, through his connections in the Governor-General's Council, as he is in his proper department. I'll make you no promises," added the Merchant, "but if it's true that you haven't given any personal cause of affront to the Bodger family or their friends, I can see a short way to your epaulettes —though you might do better, laddie, you might do better if you would put a pen behind your ear, as I have done."

Young Brown then returned to barracks, thinking very little more of the Merchant or his conversation. He had that easy creed which comes of sound sleep and a good digestion. The world was pleasant to him: everything seemed to him well as it was, and likely to become still better. There was nothing morbid—nothing of what soldiers call the "cocktail," about him. Certainly his ambition and self-esteem had been aroused by the chance of promotion so far beyond every reasonable expectation he could have formed on enlisting. He had thought of what the Curate would say at home there at Wakefield-in-the-Marsh, and how his mother's fond eyes would kindle, and how erect his father would stand when they silently shook hands next time. And then he thought of what he would and could do for his brothers Jack and Gill, and Tom and Harry. It was an honest trait in the young fellow's character, that his day-dream had not spoiled him, and that even when indulging it he never thought of denying his humble origin, or casting off any one of his poor peasant kinsfolk in the far Oxfordshire village away in the homeland, but that all his schemes of future happiness centred there. Even Susan Jincks was not forgotten, though he often wondered how little the remem-

brance of her seemed to move him. He recollected his child sweetheart indeed very much as a pretty picture he had seen long ago, perhaps in another state of existence. His own identity with the village boy of three years before was not quite clear to him. He was sitting alone in his barrack-room on the evening of the day after he had dined with the Scotch Merchant, and admiring the solemn beauty of an Indian night, with its large moon and stars looking so near and familiar, when he heard the voice of Lord Kinsgear faintly calling to him from an open window.

Hastening to his Captain's quarters in reply to this summons, he found the Marquis propped up by cushions, as he had been ever since that day when the sergeant had carried him at risk of his life from under the Indian fire. His lordship did not seem to gain strength. The surgeons said he was a sickly patient; that he had inherited a bad constitution, and that he had not enough vitality to heal his wounds.

"Brown," said the Marquis feebly, for he had latterly accustomed himself to break down all social distinctions between them when they were alone, "you saved my life a few weeks ago, and the least I can do is to try and lessen your sorrow now. Prepare yourself, my poor fellow, for bad news."

"I must bear it, my lord, whatever it be," returned the soldier, looking very straight and stalwart as he stood upright, and prepared for evil fortune as firmly as he would have confronted an armed enemy; for he had not yet learned what terrible weapons there are in the hands of Fate, and had never once heard the fall of a thunderbolt from heaven. He heard it then for the first time.

"Why do you say 'My Lord'?" asked the sick man, with affectionate petulance. "Come here; let me have you near me while you suffer. Perhaps I may find an antidote, though I must give you poison, poor fellow."

The Marquis fell back exhausted on his pillow, and closed his eyes before he resumed. "On my desk there, at the other side of the room, you will find two letters. The one came by the English mail this afternoon, under my father's cover. It is from Mr. Mowledy, the clergyman of Wakefield. He has also been so kind as to write to me, begging that I would prepare you for the contents of his letter, which is, you see, bordered with black. He must be a Christian gentleman, that country parson, and he is a good friend of yours, Brown.

"The other letter," added Lord Kinsgear after a pause, which showed how painful a labour it was for him to speak, "was brought only ten minutes ago. I see it is official, and must bring you good tidings, though it was sent with 'Mr. Brown's compliments,' which I do not quite understand. You recollect the old Scotch contractor who came out with us, and hated me for being a Marquis?" The wounded nobleman smiled sadly, and took the sergeant's hand in his, as if to keep him from the momentous news which awaited him a few minutes longer. He even gazed up into his face with some anxiety, and as he did so the one young

man looked like the pale and wasted reflection of the other, seen through some distorting glass, which marred its attitude and fair proportions. Having satisfied himself that the sergeant was calm-minded and stout-hearted enough to meet his sorrow steadily, "Read your letters now, Brown," he said; "but take the black-bordered one first, and let me hold the other for you till you have read the worst."

Then side by side, descending upon him from on high together, came, as they always come, suddenly, wonderfully, and without warning, the supreme joy and sorrow of his life. In a few short moments he had learned from a scrap of paper that his whole family had gone down to their death at sea in a ship of which he had never so much as heard before. There was the paper in his hand, quite mute and silent, yet so big with news. It had been pricked all over with holes, and fumigated, till the writing on it was almost unintelligible, lest it should be a messenger of evil, and yet it had stricken him to the heart.

As the young man stood, appalled and stunned by the tremendous blow which had smitten him, he felt the soft frail fingers of the Marquis close gently on his own. "Read the other letter now, Brown, pray. Read it at once, for my sake."

Sergeant Brown took the official envelope mechanically in his hand, broke the great seal of it, and took something out. He could not see what it was, and held the envelope with its contents before him, one in his right hand, the other in his left, as though he offered them for Lord Kinsgear's inspection, with military stiffness. He evidently did not know what they were, and all his thoughts were far away in his mother's grave, where the willows wept in the quiet church-yard, and beneath the troubled waves of Mona, where the *Royal Oak* and her living freight of human souls went down.

Fortunately he was a very young man. He was not yet seared by misfortune, so that it scars and dilapidates body and mind, shattering them with each successive stroke. The fountain of his tears was not yet dried up, and the Lethean waters, which wash away so much of our early anguish, came to his relief. Two large drops, great as storm rain, coursed each other slowly down his ghostly cheeks, and fell with a dull sound upon the floor.

"Cry, Brown, and sit down here beside me," said the young lord, with brotherly tenderness. "You need not go away, for we are comrades now. That despatch announces that you have been appointed a Cornet in the 1st Lancers, and to-morrow you are to have the Victoria Cross."

CHAPTER XII.

RACE.

WILLIAM BROWN felt much more at large and at his ease in his new position. He took to it naturally, much as a duck takes to water, though bred in a

hen-roost, or as a race-horse falls into his stride at a gallop as though he had never been forced to trot uneasily in the shafts of a butcher's cart or a Hansom cab. The lad had the bearing and manners natural to a gentleman—the proud soldierly head, the upright mien, and clearly cut features, the white shapely hands, and well-defined nails. There is as much difference between men as between animals; and in all the inferior creatures there is a general appearance of stumpiness, coarseness, and clumsiness; whereas in the king beasts all is fine, cleanly made, and graceful.

While these lines are writing there is a bird-show at the Crystal Palace, and the strong point of the show is a collection of canaries comprising no less than thirty-five out of seventy-seven of the different classes into which those little birds may be divided by observant naturalists. To one of these varieties, the original canary of the Canary Islands stands in the same relation as did William to his comrades in the rank and file of the army; or as the wild crab-apple stands to the finest fruit of the gardener's catalogue. The breeding even of so small a thing as a canary is a cunning mystery; and the gradations are infinite, beginning with the lizard-coated songster of the islands, and ending with those costly birds bred to the exact shade of yellow, and just marked with a dark feather in some appointed spot of head or wing. It takes many generations to produce the finer tints and markings, and of course the fanciers sometimes try to steal a march on time, as an enriched usurer buys a noble name; but there is a law of nature which no clipping, drawing, trimming, painting, or colouring of the bird's plumage can set aside; and the poor winged creature, however bedizened it may be, will neither sing nor look rightly if it is not thorough-bred. Therefore the great object of the canary-breeders, who are a philosophical money-making class (at present much unconcerned with the government of this or any other nation), is to produce a bird of a fine shade of yellow; and it is certain that, as a matter of fact, it actually can be produced "ticked," or marked either on the wing or on the back, the breast, the neck, or the top of the head, as desired. Such birds practically may be bred to a single feather, though it is important to note that hundreds of eggs may have been laid and hatched before the exact plume makes its appearance.

So it matters little where or when a man may have been born: he is certain to rise up to his own level in every state of society which the world has seen; not perhaps in name, but in fact. Provided only he possesses the rudiments of education, he will come out of any dark and fiery trial whatsoever into the pure daylight of heaven the first time he has a chance if there is anything in him; and we all have chances enough and to spare—some that we spoil, some that we lose, some that we throw away disdainfully.

The first steps on the ladder of life are always a little difficult for a man who has to make his own way quite unaided up it. But then aid so soon comes to him in the ordinary course of things, if his footing is firm

and his eye steady, so that he does not tumble down in the mud disgracefully at first starting. There is a natural instinct among the better class of people to protect and aid the young. A bold honest lad wins friendship and love without effort, and they smoothe many difficulties over which their elders have to stumble painfully enough. Also the first gleam of success is almost certain to go on increasing till it becomes quite a halo, if not put out by any malevolent influence, and one honour is always security for more.

William Brown had been a mere village boy at seventeen years old; and in the usual course of things he could hardly have expected to culminate in anything higher than a farrier or a wheelwright. But in his veins flowed the blood of a race of kings, many of whom were of an indifferent sort, or had come to nothing, and some were fools, some rogues, some scoundrels of a deeper dye (just like the spoiled or addled eggs of the canaries), till at last here was a bird of the true feather, a man of the right stamp. His fate was uncertain till Mr. Mowledy had taught him to read, just as the canary would have no value if it could not sing, and was lost in a hole where no one could find it out. But from the moment he had learned his alphabet thoroughly, and could put pen to paper without difficulty, he might have been left naked in the streets in the morning, but he would have been found supporting himself creditably and winning good opinions three days afterwards.

Moreover, as good luck never comes alone, young Brown was presently appointed aide-de-camp to Lord George Wyldwyl, who had lately become Lord Punjaub with remainder to his daughter, the Hon. Miss Amabel Wyldwyl. That young lady was at present residing in England with the Marchioness (Abigail) of Newcomen, a rather necessitous peeress, of irreproachable character, who had consented to act the part of governess and companion to her rich and beautiful relative for such a handsome consideration as the great Indian soldier's means enabled him to afford without inconvenience. Indeed, there had been quite a public competition among the General's poor relations as soon as it was known she was to be sent to England to complete her education; and the old soldier had been put over and over again to the blush by their rapacity and importunities.

Cornet Brown owed his position as aide-de-camp to this distinguished military man, firstly of course to the warm recommendation of his nephew the Marquis of Kinsgear, who never rested till he had got the place for him; but he kept it and won the personal friendship of his chief by his own merits; for patronage and recommendations at best will only carry any man a certain distance unless there is very high rank to back them. Young Brown, however, was at heart a soldier; and as his chief was a soldier too—brave, single-hearted, simple, sincere—they had only to be once brought together to understand each other thoroughly; so that within six months of his appointment Lord Punjaub had given over the management of his stable, his household, his accounts, and the whole of his large hospitable establishment to his aide-de-camp, who accepted it with good-humoured

readiness, doing all that was required of him and nothing more, in a quiet, easy way.

Among the things which should be noticed as most conducing to success in life is having the good luck to serve under a congenial chief for the first time. There are many admirable people who cannot agree with each other more than oil and water, which are both good things, but cannot mingle. Now William Brown and Lord Punjaub liked each other because they understood each other.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

LORD PUNJAUB.

THE famous Indian General and Administrator, long known as Lord George Wyldwyl, was a younger brother of the late Duke of Courthope, and consequently uncle to the present peer. The late Duchess, his sister-in-law, had remained so long without giving birth to a son and heir, that he had naturally expected to succeed to the title and estates, when the present Duke was so unexpectedly born in the presence of Countess Pencarrow. Then all his hopes had vanished; vanished so suddenly, so surprisingly, that many rumours went abroad upon the subject.

Among these reports there was especially one which obtained much credence with persons who are generally well-informed concerning the affairs of the nobility. It was therein stated that the newly-born Marquis of Kinsgear was neither the son of the Duke nor of the Duchess of Courthope, but of the late Lord Alfred Wyldwyl and the Countess of Pencarrow, whom he had secretly married.

Upon the one hand it was said that the Countess could not avow her marriage without the complete loss of her fortune, under the conditions of her late husband's will; and it was equally impossible that she should acknowledge her own child without the entire forfeiture of her reputation and self-esteem, however innocent she might really be. Upon the other hand, the Duke of Courthope was known to be deeply and even dangerously embarrassed. Lord Trecorne and several of the Whig peers were talking loudly of an impeachment, hiding their party purposes (for that Duke was one of the pillars of the Tory party) under an affected zeal for the public good. Moreover, the Duke's creditors were extremely alarmed, because, in case of his death without direct heirs, they had no security whatever for their claims, nor was it possible they could ever obtain any. For the Duke alone, and without the consent of his next heir, was powerless over the entail; and there was something in the honest, unbending nature of Lord George Wyldwyl which would render it extremely hazardous to approach him with any scheme for raising money to pay off usurers at the expense of the permanent dignity and means of his family. If, however, a son could be born to the Duke and Duchess of

Courthope, the wisest course which the creditors could take would be to wait patiently till he grew up to man's estate, and could be induced to make himself responsible for their claims. Then, and then only, by means of rent charges, life assurances, and a new deed of settlement, they might be paid every fraction of their due. It was urged therefore, with some show of reason, that the Duke himself, pressed upon all sides, and especially being under heavy pecuniary obligations to Lady Pencarrow, as well as sole surviving trustee and executor of her husband, had been induced to father the late Lord Alfred's son in order to save the Pencarrow estates for the Countess, and that the Duchess had consented to give a colour to the proceeding, in order to save him from utter ruin and ignominy.

Everything is known in this world, there being no secret in existence which could survive a properly directed enquiry for forty-eight hours; and what was thought by well-informed persons was very nearly true. Lord George Wyldwyl declined to set any enquiry on foot; but a family deed was shortly afterwards drawn up by Mr. Mortmain, the hereditary solicitor of the Courthopes, providing that the Marquis of Revel should not marry, and that his line of the Dukes of Courthope should become extinct with him. By-and-by, however, it happened, as time passed on and Lord George had only one daughter to inherit his family honours, his wife having died early, that the conditions of the deed above mentioned were modified, lest the great dukedom of Courthope and Revel should die out altogether. It was then stipulated that the present Duke should marry forthwith, and that his son, should he have one, should be formally betrothed to Lord George's daughter. This arrangement was carried out, and the two young people, who were born within eighteen months of each other, were solemnly bound to love, honour, and cherish each other in the family interest before they could speak or hear for themselves.

Meantime Lord George had founded a new name and fortune for himself. He had consented to follow an Indian career at a time when very few men of his rank were disposed to serve at such a distance from home. He had therefore had the cream of everything in the East, and had risen with extraordinary rapidity. His pay and allowances for a long time had seldom been less than ten thousand a year, with free quarters, forage, and rations. He cumulated all sorts of high employments in his own person, and being a Lord, and therefore in a manner born into high place, nobody was jealous of him or tried to upset him. So he rose step by step, sending home prize money in plenty, and getting twelve per cent. for all his investments in India, till he did not know what he was worth. Mr. Mortmain, a very discreet old gentleman, having a huge admiration for this calm-hearted soldier who had disdained a dukedom, managed all his affairs for him, and managed them very prosperously. It was said at Lincoln's Inn and about the parlours of Lombard Street, where people know a great deal of the property of their neighbours, that Lord George Wyldwyl's heiress would be one of the greatest matches in

England, and that his Lordship's fortune could hardly fall short of three-quarters of a million sterling since his last great hauls of prize money.

The Indian General did not care much for money himself. He was a broad, bluff-looking man, with a lion-like head, who kept his guineas in a bag, out of which his friends and servants and all who came near him might help themselves. His aides-de-camp and secretaries, who all loved the open-hearted nobleman, were constantly occupied in protecting him from the importunities of beggars, and the moment his horse was seen in the street quite a flock of them seemed to start out of the earth to surround and accompany him whithersoever he went. He was enabled to save a city once because a Sepoy, who was quite willing to abolish the rest of the Christian race, could in no wise be persuaded to harm a hair of his head, and so warned the fine old soldier of his danger.

In his time, life in India was such a very different thing to what it has now become. The world was altogether a better place for a gentleman to live in. The higher officials, especially if they belonged to illustrious families, enjoyed kingly authority, respect, and immunities. Lord George was very happy there, very prosperous, and very useful. In England he would have been lost among the crowd of Toms and Harrys who are entitled to call themselves lords by courtesy. At most he would have been known as a good shot on the moors, or perhaps as an enterprising salmon fisher in Norway. He must have played the part of Jock, the laird's brother, living at free quarters, penniless, ignominious, and contented, till he was fit for nothing else, since he did not choose to assert his real rank at the cost of his kinsmen's honour. But at Calcutta he was a live authentic lord and something more; and very odd it was to see whole herds of middle class people copying the bluff nobleman's dress and bearing in the minutest particulars, so that one day, when he chanced to forget his cravat, all Calcutta adopted the fashion of going about bare-necked till he was seen again with a stock on.

Only one event had ever disturbed the even tenor of his life. More than forty years before the Indian Mutiny broke out, he had gone on furlough to England; and as soon as his arrival had been announced in the newspapers, he had received a strange incoherent letter from a place called Wakefield-in-the-Marsh, and it was signed "Margaret Wyldwyl." The writer said that she was the wife of Mr. Odo Wyldwyl; and he knew that there was but one person of that name, who was his brother, now the Duke of Courthope and Revel, who had so lately succeeded to the title, that his own patent of precedence as a duke's son was but just issued. If, therefore, the woman's statement meant anything, it would signify that she was Duchess of Courthope, and that there must be two duchesses of that name in existence. Moreover, Margaret Wyldwyl declared she had a daughter, and if this were true, and she could prove that she was his brother's wife, that daughter would be some day Countess of Winguid—a title which descended in the female line, with some very large estates in Scotland, where the marriage was alleged to have been

performed, and where it might indeed have happened without any publicity, or the slightest intelligence of the fact having reached England, considering that a Scotch marriage is merely a verbal contract between the parties concerned, which may be entered into at any time and place in the presence of witnesses.

Honest Lord George, therefore, was sorely puzzled. He had many doubts about his brother, and thought it quite possible that he might have gone farther than he intended before he had attained to such high fortunes. He saw him, interrogated him, and his answers were by no means calculated to set at rest suspicion. He prevaricated, cursed a little, and said he was very sorry he had ever been to Scotland, and "that it was all the fault of that canting old Majoribanks," with much to the same effect, which really meant nothing but that he was angry and alarmed. He was also suffering from some bruises about the face, which led up to the inference that he had been worsted in a stand-up fight with somebody.

Lord George, therefore, who was obstinate and pertinacious in his way, and quite incapable of countenancing any underhanded dealing, told his brother plainly that he would ferret out the truth, and that if there were two wives in the case, he ("honest George" as they called him) would stand by the first.

Down he went therefore in a yellow postchaise-and-four to Wakefield-in-the-Marsh, travelling all night to do so, and throwing his Indian outfit money about right royally. He arrived at the "Chequers" at about four o'clock on a summer's morning, making a great rumpus; and at five he had galloped away again, feeling convinced that there was nothing worth further notice in that business but what money could set right, bad as it was. The woman who called herself Margaret Wyldwyl still persisted in her story; she was pretty, though apparently far advanced in a consumption, and she had an infant daughter. That was all which she could make clear. She showed a box too which bore his brother's cypher and the family coronet; but there was nothing in it, though she maintained in a confused sort of way that there was, but that it had a secret fastening which she could not find. Her sister, however, or, as she seemed to say, her foster-sister, one Mrs. Giles, the wife of a publican who had been butler to old Dick Porteous, evidently did not believe the girl's story. She said there could be no marriage without a parson, as she herself knew, having been married only after having been called three times in church.

So thought honest George, leaving her a cheque for 50*l.*, which he found next day sent back to his hotel without a word. But his conscience was now at peace. He had done what he could to clear up a mystery which startled him; had cleared it up, as he thought, and there was an end of it, otherwise no considerations of expediency would have kept him quiet while a wrong was being done. With his own interests he had done as he pleased; he had given them up rather than shame and misery should light on his brother, but he certainly would not have compromised the interests of others. The whole affair had long since

passed from his memory, and General Lord Punjaub, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's forces in India, little thought that his smart aide-de-camp, Cornet Brown, was the shapeless infant which his brother's widowed wife had held in her arms on the summer morning when she wept to him in vain at the village inn.

CHAPTER II.

PEACE.

BY far the most precious gift which a young man can possess at the outset of his career in life is the faculty of attracting the good will of those who are placed in authority over him. It is a natural and not an acquired gift. Possibly it may depend upon causes too subtle for verbal analysis, words being as yet but clumsy and imperfect instruments. Like all natural endowments, however, it is of a better and higher quality than any of those which we can win by our own efforts—or prayers. It makes all the difference between success and failure in every profession. The men who rise rapidly, who attain distinction and honours at an age when they have a real value, are seldom clever; they are merely the men who are liked. Talent and even genius, though useful to the world, has never been well received by it; nor is good conduct by any means popular. All the valuable advice of friends, all the rules of moralists and philosophers, however scrupulously obeyed, never did much for any one. Probably it may be as well not to get into scrapes; but there is a notable difference in scrapes. If a young man who is liked gets into scrapes he will get out of them, or be got out of them, good humouredly, and thought still more kindly of for having exercised the Christian virtues of his friends perhaps. On the other hand, if a young man who is not liked gets into no scrapes, people will drag him into scrapes, shove him into scrapes, put him into other people's holes and wrongs, and leave him there.

William Brown was a favourite with everybody. The greatest curmudgeons in the regiment—the Major who had a chronic toothache and a short temper, Lieutenant Highlowes who had great ideas of the respect due to him, and a light purse; Captain Skrape who was in difficulties with the authorities—all troublesome folk in their way—were equally ready to say a kind word for him. It is likely enough that he owed at least some part of these good wishes to the fact of his being just a little stupid. He had no perception of the faults or shortcomings of other people, no sense of humour. He could see nothing funny in the Major's hair-dye, or Lieutenant Highlowes's tall-heeled boots; and when allusions were made to these standard topics of mess-room merriment, his face did not depart from its handsome gravity. When he spoke of other men behind their backs he did so in such a manner as to convey

the impression that he liked and esteemed them, or he said little. He never used flattering expressions, he never toadied anyone; but there were tones of deference and consideration in his voice, extremely simple and winning. Perhaps he was innately kind-hearted, and therefore innately polite.

So this young fellow had the best of all good things. He was to be seen at the Governor-General's balls, and in Lady Laura's pew at church when the Bishop preached. Even the right reverend prelate himself returned the Cornet's modest bow when they met with a half paternal smile; and Major-General Sir Ajax Bodger, a far more important personage than viceroy, lady, or bishop, deigned to give him a short grunt of recognition such as he seldom bestowed on anybody who had not at least one member of the House of Commons behind him.

Now among the innumerable ways in which it was possible a few years ago for well-disposed seniors to help a young man who pleased them up the ladder, was by sending him home with despatches announcing what everyone knew long before. The case is somewhat altered now. The Departments have grown sulky, or have given up this branch of business for the present; so that an officer coming home with despatches is very often left to pay his own travelling-expenses. But not long ago it was a generally understood thing in the army that the bearer of news of victory or a treaty of peace received a step in his profession, with a gratuity of five hundred pounds. Therefore, shortly after the Thanksgiving Day for the success of the British arms had been observed in England and in India; when peerages had been distributed to the victorious generals, and the storm of discontented pamphlets and angry disclaimers, of those who had got nothing or not enough, was beginning to subside, Lord Punjaub thought he might do something for his aide-de-camp by sending him home with a formal announcement of the cessation of hostilities.

"When can you start, Brown?" asked Lord Punjaub with his mouth full of tiffin, telling the good news to his aide-de-camp, that "he had managed the thing with Bodger," and he was to be sent home officially.

"*Now*," replied the young soldier.

"Quite right, Brown," said the General; "just like me. When Ellenborough, who was a dandy, sent me to Somnauth, he asked Sir Mungo Barker what I should take with me for outfit. 'Give him a tin pot, my Lord,' replied Sir Mungo, and I took one; nothing else, I assure you, Brown." And the General blew his nose loudly in a yellow pocket-handkerchief, to give emphasis to his discourse.

"Baggage is a bore, unless it's the enemy's," observed Cornet Brown, sitting down to table and helping himself to a slice of York ham which is a part of the usual cooling food we take in hot climates.

The General laughed till he was in danger of choking. "Enemies' baggage!—damn the boy, he'll suffocate me,—loot, eh, you mean?"

"Yes, my Lord," replied the youthful hero.

"Ah!" ejaculated the General, suddenly becoming grave as an owl, after drinking a large glass of Madeira enough to drown a weak man's thoughts. "I sha'n't be long after you, Brown. Violet is to take my command in July, which is only a month off, and the Indian army is to be amalgamated with the Queen's service. This is what I have worked up to all my life," added the General, rolling his eyes and tongue about solemnly; "for the Company's officers were in a false position as to rank, and I am glad that my task has ended. They will not be quite so well pleased with the liberalities of the War Office as they were with large-handed 'Old John;' but they must make the best of it, and console themselves with the thought that gain and glory do not go together, or I for one should not be so well off."

"There are exceptions to every rule," answered the aide-de-camp readily, and he smiled so as to leave no doubt that he really thought his General had earned fortune and fame together. There was not much wonderful about the fact that a young man was liked who could imply admiration so delicately without giving it utterance. Lord Punjaub, who was very simple minded, as most true soldiers are, felt the subtle tribute of the brave youth's honour, and colouring to the roots of his hair, began to bluster something about it being a hot day in the Hooghly; but the careless shaft at random sent had gone home to his breast, and he drew nearer to young Brown, taking him affectionately by the arm.

"You'll go and see my nephew at his place, Beaumanoir. It is a very fine place, and perhaps should have been mine if everyone had what belongs to them; but I am quite as well without it. I have made my own way in life, which is better than picking up other people's leavings."

The aide-de-camp nodded, as who should say, I should think so indeed; but he had the rare art of agreeing silently, an art most useful and pleasing when practised upon age and garrulity.

"Yes, Brown," spluttered Lord Punjaub, "you must see my nephew. He has all the vices, and is an accomplished nobleman." The General's lion-like face glowed with good humour, so that kind words bubbled out of him like water from a spring; and every sentence was flavoured with deep hidden thoughts, as water is charged with the properties of the soil through which it passes in its upward course to air, undergoing some such transformations as the voice when it rises into meaning.

"I have all your private letters with me, and shall never allow them to be out of my sight till they are delivered, you may be sure of that, my Lord," said Young Brown, showing an unfeigned sense of the importance of his trust. It was important, too, though only the loving scrawl of an old soldier to his only daughter. His pothooks could not have been very well formed, for his right hand had been maimed at Sobraon, but sweet girlish eyes would brighten when they saw them.

"Good fellow, good fellow!" blustered the General, patting his aide-de-camp on the shoulder as if he had been a horse. "I am sorry you won't see Amabel; she is with the Dowager Marchioness of Newcomen

in Ireland, but I shall present you as soon as I come home, and tell Missey to be on her best behaviour. Always call her Missey, Brown, you know, because she pulls my moustachios if she does not get her own way. You never saw such a tartar"—and "the dear old boy went off at score, being quite inexhaustible about that young person who was the pride and torment of his life," said General Brown, as he told this part of his story one day at Beaumanoir to the present writer, whereat his wife immediately pinched him and ordered her hero to speak more respectfully of her.

There had been another parting previously between Young Brown and the Marquis of Kinsgear, who had never answered to the call of bugle since the Nepaulese spear had struck him down. There had been consultations between the most eminent medical men of Calcutta about his state; but they could arrive at no other conclusion than that there was a lack of vitality in his constitution, and then it was remembered that his mother, the late Duchess of Courthope, had died early, and one of the Princes of Science declared that long life, like everything else worth naming which we either bring into this world or which takes us away from it, is hereditary. The wounds which he had received, though serious, were not such as would occasion any alarm in a healthy subject, being but flesh wounds, wherein none of the centres of life were concerned. Young Brown or Colonel Oakes, or even older men — Lord Punjaub or General Violet—would have shaken them off by the sheer force of nature. The blood of the Marquis, however, was more torpid than theirs. It was only when strongly roused, as he had been upon the field of battle, that he was capable of sustained physical effort; so the Prince of Science shook his head, and although he maintained that those new forms of life which we call death should never display themselves in a young human form, yet the feeling round the mess table of the 1st Lancers, as week after week left the Marquis's place still empty, was anything rather than hopeful.

Lord Kinsgear himself did not share these forebodings, for we are very seldom conscious of the nearest approaches of death. He thought that he should soon be well again when he got back to England, and could continue some experiments in electricity which interested him a great deal.

"Give my father the turquoises, Brown, that Meerza Ibraheem sent me from Persia, and tell him General Violet, who is a judge, says that these are of the purest colour from the old rock. I have been promised, also, the pick of the Begum's shawls when the 'loot' is sold, for Lady Overlaw; and Willie, try to like my father; I want you to make Beaumanoir your home."

"All right," returned his brother officer, briefly. "His Grace is such a swell that the best I can hope is that he will like *me*. No fear on the other side, you know. And now make haste and get well. That's the first thing to think about."

Housekeeping.

WHAT is the origin of evil? That is a question to which no satisfactory answer will be found until the philosopher of Chamisso's song has learnt how by twisting and turning to make his pigtail hang before him. It should be less hopeless, and yet experience seems to prove that it is almost equally difficult to find the explanation of certain particular evils which still afflict, as they have afflicted, society from the earliest ages. For how many centuries have people complained of feminine extravagance in dress? Did the complaints begin when our forefathers first substituted clothes for paint, or was it a familiar topic in the prehistoric ages of the kitchen middens? The lamentation over the sorrows of housekeepers has doubtless lasted for an equal time and we seem to be no nearer the end of it. Perhaps in the good old days of slavery the arrangement was regarded as tolerably satisfactory by one at least of the parties. When you could buy a man for a trifle, and knock his brains out or put him into a fishpond if he showed symptoms of insubordination, it was your own fault if things did not go pleasantly. A servile war might happen now and then, but in the intervals the masters should have had a good time of it. Those happy days, however, have departed; one man has been pretty nearly as good as another for some generations, but we are beginning to look back with fondness to the relics of old feudal customs. The complaint, indeed, was flourishing over two centuries ago, as we know from the familiar old song. His countrymen fondly remembered the queen's old courtier, who kept twenty old fellows in blue coats and badges, and were scandalised by his successor's French cooks and valets, who approximated to the modern type of flunkeydom. The attached old servant who valued the honour of the family above his own comfort, who would follow his master to death and to exile, and who in return was cherished and honoured in his old age, is rapidly sinking into the traditionary stage. He still appears occasionally in novels or domestic dramas; but we should ask for him in vain at the agency of a co-operative society, and we begin to regard him as a myth. Caleb Balderstone strikes us as an exaggeration even in a historical novel, and we incline to think that he would be a bore in real life. The maxim has obtained currency amongst masters that old servants are tyrants and nuisances; whilst servants are beginning to think that they are false to their order if they stay more than a year or two in one household. The old loyalty and the old spirit of protection is pretty nearly dead. Here and there it may possibly linger; at rare intervals we may still find an

ancient nurse who has presided over the cradles of a family and become a part of their domestic traditions. The sight of her may suggest to us how brutal must be the temper of mind which has converted "old woman" into a term of reproach, and may sometimes lead us to fancy that a similar relation may once have been beautiful in other cases. Of course that is all foolish sentiment. There is, at least, much to be said on the other side. The serving men who appear in our old literature are generally of a drunken and disreputable type, whom one would rather not have fixed upon one for life. They breathe the spirit of an excellent song in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, with the characteristic climax:

> But I would be in a good house,
> And have a good master too;
> And I would eat and drink of the best,
> And no work would I do.

Life seen from the kitchen had, perhaps, pretty much the same aspect then as now; though the ambition involved less locomotion, and the horizon was generally confined within the parish bounds. Indolence, gluttony and selfishness, indeed, are of no particular age, though they find different modes of gratification. And, doubtless, if the tie was closer the service was rougher. It is recorded of those twenty good fellows, and apparently reckoned amongst their virtues that they never knew what belonged to coachman, footman, or pages. If more honest they were much clumsier than our friends Morgan and Littimer. In fact—and this we have lately been told with much emphasis is the true secret of the difference—society was then inadequately differentiated. Now differentiation is a word which very rightly carries with it a certain scientific prestige. It has been made popular by one of our first thinkers; and, when we hear of it, we are fully sure that a reference to the inexorable laws of political economy will not be far off. Whatever little remonstrances we may be contemplating will be summarily knocked on the head by formulæ about supply and demand, the wages paid and the laws of population. Differentiation is part of evolution, and evolution is the great shibboleth of scientific reformers. *In hoc signo vinces!* Differentiate and all will be well. To put this magic formula into more commonplace language, we may say that the change which is taking place in the conditions of service is only part of a much wider change which is going on everywhere and inevitably, and to which we had therefore best submit without repining. In the good old days a rich man who wanted to send a message dispatched one of his blue-coated followers expressly for the purpose; the poor man who wanted to send a message didn't. In modern times rich and poor alike have a share in a postman, who takes all the messages, thereby vastly economises time and trouble. On the old plan, the private messenger was, perhaps, kicking his heels in idleness for nine days out of ten, and when he took one letter he might as well have been taking a hundred. On the new plan, the public official is kept

steadily at work and supplies a thousand wants which were previously left unsatisfied. So far we are much better off; and it would be irrelevant to say that the old servant had a sense of loyalty and personal affection, whereas the postman takes no more interest in his employers than in the lamp-posts, except for a spasmodic outburst of sentiment about Christmas time. Now, it is suggested, let us carry out the same principle in all matters of household arrangement. As one man supplies a district with its letters, let another black all its boots, a third brush all its coats, and a fourth cook all its dinners. Then everything will be comfortable, and all difficulties about service be finally solved. This is called co-operative housekeeping, and co-operation is rapidly becoming a kind of sacred name with all reformers. That it has done much good is undeniable, though I will confess that I for one am becoming just a little bored when I read the hundred and first description of the Rochdale Pioneers; and even that I am not quite so certain as might be wished that those most deserving persons have succeeded in preaching the gospel which is to save us in this nineteenth century.

That the process thus described is continuing, is likely to continue, and, moreover, that it may be applied to housekeeping with great advantage, I am by no means inclined to deny. Whether it is necessarily a matter for rejoicing, or a process to be pushed on as fast as possible, appears to be a little more doubtful. The advantages, indeed, which such a system holds out are unequivocal. No reasonable person will deny that if we seriously set about the task of organizing domestic service on rational principles a vast amount of trouble might be saved. At first sight, it may be, there is something rather distressing about the prospect of possessing only the tenth part of a cook, and waiting to have your coat brushed till the servant who was now employed at No. 1 in the street should work through all the intermediate numbers to 99. But when we have once arranged all the wheels of the machinery with anything like that expenditure of ingenuity which is applied in a cotton manufactory the apparent inconveniences will disappear. It is easy to suggest any number of expedients. A great amount of labour goes in an English house to the duty and disagreeable task of preparing the fires, which squander so rapidly our remaining stock of coal. In an American house, where saving of labour has become a pressing necessity, the trouble is minimised by a simple arrangement. A single furnace is lighted, and the rooms are warmed by hot air, which can be admitted or excluded at pleasure. In England we cling to the belief that our own plan, which means exposure to any number of cold draughts playing about our backs as we toast our toes, and allows us to move through all climates between our kitchens and our garrets, is healthier and more comfortable. However that may be, it is clearly more laborious. A similar principle might be carried out in almost every department of domestic life. We need not have furniture specially adapted to collect layers of London dust; every separate family need not cook its own chop in its own kitchen; and, in short, we

might in time arrive at a consummation in which the chief drudgery of a household should be a pleasant occupation for a gentleman wishing to get an appetite for breakfast, and meals should come from a food manufactory on the simple summons of a bell. In a moderate household it may now take half-a-dozen people to do the menial duties necessary for a single couple ; in the ideal household of the future the proportions might be reversed, or perhaps one servant might be enough for three families. The figures may be altered, according to the sanguine disposition of the inventor ; but, assuming all this to be done to any conceivable degree of perfection, there still remains a question or two. Co-operative housekeeping, though without all the refinements suggested, is by no means a novelty. It is carried out to some extent wherever there is an inn. The advice comes, in short, to this, that the family of the future is to live in a gigantic hotel, with a great, and as yet unimaginable, number of labour-saving appliances. Possibly we kick a little at the prospect. We remember old sayings about the Englishman's love of his own home, and certain taunts which we used to throw out at our unfortunate American cousins for the demoralization supposed to flow from their hotel life. Perhaps it would have been more reasonable to wonder that in a country where a servant is synonymous with a newly imported Irish girl, and housekeeping is consequently a hardship calculated to wear out nerves of whipcord, delicate women should ever submit to the worries and toil which it involves. And when we reflect that as labour diffuses itself more equally we are likely to fall into the same condition, we may admit that hotel life may come to be the least of two evils. Let us rather congregate in caravansaries than attempt to carry on the struggle in detail against the irrepressible menial. Let us fairly shake the yoke off our necks, and let each party go its way. The desire to keep up a separate establishment for each family is merely an antiquated superstition. The wish to exercise a certain influence over our servants is a relic from the old protective system. Henceforth the man who blacks our boots for us shall stand in no closer connection to us than the man who turns on the gas. We will buy our dinners as we buy our coats, and have no more pretence to keep a cook upon the premises than a tailor. Life will be infinitely easier without all this cumbrous state which it is at present incumbent upon everybody to support. Why should every private gentleman maintain a miniature court, with miniature chamberlains, and masters of the horse, and ladies in waiting, and have elaborate rules of etiquette devised for the maintenance of pomp rather than for the supply of his wants ? Are we not inexpressibly snobbish and silly, with all the pretentious apparatus of daily life which astonishes foreigners, and forces Englishmen to make themselves more elaborately uncomfortable with a greater expenditure of money than any other civilized race ? If, in order to accomplish this desirable object, it is necessary to break all the ties which at present connect masters and servants, is not the reward worth the sacrifice ? As it is, the connection has become all but unprofitable to either party. The servant is rapidly becoming

ashamed of the very name, and the master has ceased to feel any personal interest in his dependants. We live in the house with our fellow-creatures in plush, and scarcely know their names; we should often pass in the street without recognition the very woman who has laid our fires for months; they and we are in bodily contact, but live in two different worlds of thought and feeling; we read different newspapers, go to different churches, and never have any personal relation, except of a pecuniary kind, from one year's end to another. To attempt to restore the old state of things is to try to have serfdom again without its costs, and, in short, to resuscitate the dead. Why not snap off chains which are now galling because purely mechanical, and reposing upon no genuine sentiment on either side? Let us pack up our portmanteaus, go to the nearest hotel, and there lead simple and sensible lives, without the vexations and weariness of flesh which result from a mutually false position.

So far as this appeal rests upon a genuine wish for greater simplicity of life, it deserves all respect. But it is at this point that a little difficulty begins to intrude. Are we so clear that our lives would be simpler and nobler when passed in hotels, or, if you will, in co-operative clubs? We should be set free from a certain number of responsibilities and bothers. Might not our first step be possibly to plunge into others? Why is English life such a complicated and cumbrous business? Is it not that, for some reason or other, we are desperately inclined to be extravagant, and that the richer we grow the more money we are disposed to spend? The increased efficiency of labour has not resulted in our having more time to devote to rational purposes and refined enjoyments; but, at least as much in our devising new methods of throwing away money senselessly. Our extravagance keeps pace with our saving, and society has therefore grown more troublesome as it has grown more wealthy. Such at least is the doctrine which is frequently preached for the benefit of the poorer classes. What is the use, say people who pay wages, of doubling the wages of an artizan? The only practical result is, that he spends the increment upon gin. How far that imputation is true it is not for an outsider to say. I should hope that part of it at least may be set down to a very natural desire for discovering a good reason for resisting awkward demands. But, whatever its truth, it might be retorted with some plausibility upon the classes who make it most frequently.

When the alderman became rich, Pope may tell us what was the result in his time. Sir Peter had been content with a pudding on Sundays:—

> Live, like yourself, was now my lady's word,
> And lo! two puddings smoked upon the board.

Human nature has not radically changed in a century and a half; and there is a good deal of it in most classes of society. An increased command of wealth does not of necessity bring with it an increased skill in its employment. A man who has been so debased by extreme poverty

that he has only cultivated his animal appetites, inevitably regards higher wages merely as a means of gratifying them more fully. A gentleman whose income is raised from one to three thousand a year, cannot make precisely the same error; he cannot, that is, spend the whole entire two thousand exclusively upon his stomach; but he may easily discover means of getting rid of it not much more elevating. If we were content to live upon the same scale as our forefathers, and to use all our surplus means for public-spirited purposes, or for refined pleasures, the difference between our civilisation and theirs would be much more marked than it is. Unluckily it is much plainer that a modern gentleman has more luxuries than his father than that he leads on the whole a nobler and more intellectual life. Doubtless there is an improvement in very many respects. We are not so coarse in our tastes or so brutal in our manners as the leaders of the old-fashioned school; but perhaps we devote nearly as large a proportion of our energies to mere frivolities which do little good to ourselves or to anybody else. And therefore it is less necessary to teach people how to grow rich—a lesson which they are perfectly well disposed to learn for themselves—than to teach them how to use their wealth when they have got it. In the scientific language which imposes upon us so much, integration is as essential a part of evolution as differentiation. In simpler words, the improvement of the social machinery must be followed by an adaptation of our old instincts to our new position, or the total result will be decay instead of development.

This question of domestic service is, as we are truly told, part of a wider change. We are accustomed to lament over the widening gap between different classes. If in old days a bit of work was required in your house, you went to the village carpenter, whom you had known from infancy, who had a character to lose, and who probably stood in more or less of a friendly relation towards you. Between you and him there was a mutual confidence which was some guarantee for his doing his work honestly. Now you go to a great employer of labour to whom you represent an infinitesimal unit in the general public. He sends for a man who is too independent to care much for his employer and who cares still less for you. He does the work or scamps it according to circumstances, and the chances are that neither of you will ever see the other's face again. You gravely complain that the man doesn't take a pride in his work and take occasion to lament the progress of socialism, communism, and other diabolical inventions of modern revolutionists. The political economist laughs at you, and tells you that it is all owing to the inevitable progress of differentiation. You might as will complain of the rising of the tide or find fault with the procession of the equinoxes. Classes have drifted, and will drift, further apart as certainly as society makes progress, and all lamentations over the process are simply so much empty sentimentalism. The tendency is for all classes to become independent of each other, and for society to resolve itself into a chaos of disconnected units. If this were, in fact, the last word to be said upon the subject, it

must be admitted that the prospect would not be encouraging. The old means of preserving sympathy between classes are to be destroyed and nothing is to take their place: the world is not approaching a millennium but drifting into utter anarchy. The political economist may convince us that time cannot be made to run backwards, but it will be at the price of demonstrating that going forwards means moral deterioration. Some very excellent people pretty nearly accept that conclusion. As they watch the disappearance of the old ties, and fail to see any adequate substitute provided for them, they turn pessimists and indulge in sweeping denunciations of all those changes which are the texts of popular orators about progress. Now, pessimism is a very uncomfortable frame of mind, if a too complacent optimism is apt to be an irritating one. To avoid it, however, we must believe that in some way or other the benevolence, the loyalty, and the sympathy which displayed themselves under the old system will not be destroyed, but find new and, it may be hoped, more effective channels for uniting themselves under the new. Differentiation, or division of labour, undoubtedly brings grave evils with it, unless some compensation be discovered; and it is not likely to be discovered soon if everybody who points out the evils is denounced as a foolish Utopian or a hopelessly retrograde thinker. It is plain, for example, that a man who passes his whole life in putting heads upon pins is so far in an inferior position to his forefather who could go through all the processes necessary for making a complete pin, and still more inferior to the earlier ancestor who was capable of providing for all the wants of a simple existence. A great many more pins are made, as Adam Smith very properly explained under present arrangements; but that is a very small comfort if each of the pin-makers is to be a mere infinitesimal wheel in a vast machinery instead of a complete and independent human being. A society composed of a million people, each of whom is a mere fraction of humanity, is a less cheerful object of contemplation than a society of a thousand, where each unit has a full chance of developing his faculties to the uttermost. The true solution can only be realised when the promoter shares in the general results of the co-operation and can, by a moderate amount of labour, win the capacity for leading a rational and elevating life during the remainder of his time. At the other parts of the scale we have everywhere a similar result. The progress of scientific knowledge, for example, would give small cause for congratulation if it merely implied so vast an accumulation of knowledge that each thinker could only have an infinitesimal share of it to himself. The modern specialist, who is familiar with the structure of a particular insect, is a very inferior man to the old philosopher who took all knowledge for his province, even though all the knowledge of that day was comparably less than all the knowledge of this. The compensation is to be found in the fact that science has been so far organised that each thinker may be acquainted with its general truths as well as follow out some particular branch of enquiry to its furthest ramifications. The whole field has been mapped out, whilst plans on a larger scale have been

made of particular portions; and were that not the case the accumulation of knowledge would crush the intellect without enlarging it.

It is, however, time to come back to the servants, from whom we have been digressing pretty freely. The division between masters and servants is to extend and widen, like the division between labourers and capitalists, or between rich and poor generally. We are no longer to flatter ourselves with the sense that we are patrons, or that our servants are dependants. We are not to extend protection to them, or to receive loyalty from them. The man who comes to clean our boots is not to enter into any formal or permanent relation towards us, but is simply to supply bootcleaning as the shopkeeper supplies boots. We are to drift together for the moment, and then to drift apart, without any obligation received or contracted on either side. Let us make up our minds to it, and solace ourselves as well as we can in the bosom of our families, unless the family too is to become a matter of temporary arrangement, and all human organizations to be mere accidental aggregations of independent units, combining or separating according to the interests of the moment. If that is to be, we must submit to it. Still, to take this process by itself, and to assert that because it is taking place it is perfectly right, and includes all that we can possibly desire, is to preach mere fatalism. The habit of expecting the millennium to begin every moment, or of professing to invent an impromptu Utopia is doubtless a mischievous one, and can only lead to disappointment. It is idle to regret what we cannot expect to alter; but it is also true that there is not much use in being reasonable creatures at all, unless we can observe the bad as well as the good symptoms of the changes that are coming, and seek to alleviate them by any means in our power. And therefore admitting that the relation between master and servant is being radically transformed, the real object of reformers should be to take care how the transformation may sweep away as little as possible of what is really good in the old relation. We should not say, "As we are to part, let us part as quickly as possible," but, "As we are to part, let us try to part in the most friendly manner." Moreover, the parting is not likely to take place in this generation or the next. In a good many years to come there will be domestic servants in many thousands of families, and it is therefore worth while to enquire how the relation may be turned to the best account before the inevitable separation comes. Simply to say that it is inevitable helps us very little, and throws no light upon the question of the feelings which will be involved in the process. The whole art of politics consists in substituting a peaceful reform for a violent revolution, and the same problem is usually proposed to the humbler reformers of our domestic institutions. To attempt to lay down the definite means by which this should be effected, lies beyond the province of an outsider, as, indeed, it is probably beyond the skill of any of our social philosophers. The object of this paper is not to propose a solution of the problem, but to show what is its real nature; or, rather, to urge that to talk about the inevitable tendency to

differentiation and the like is rather to shirk our responsibilities than to show how we can most effectually meet them.

One or two remarks, however, may possibly be suggested of a very general nature. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that we have entered the distant Utopia. If we could realize its probable character a little more distinctly, we might see a little better how to prepare ourselves for its advent. Imagine, then, that we have all taken to living in large hotels organized in the most admirable fashion. The machinery of life will work without half its present creaking and waste of useful force. Ladies, in particular, will not be condemned to spend whole mornings in conversation with their cooks, or in looking over the petty details of housekeeping. A great deal of energy will thus be set free, which at present is employed to no adequate purpose. To what other purposes will it then be applied? The answer suggested is that ladies will then have the professions thrown open to them, and will be lawyers, physicians, and professors. Assuming that this will take place, the difficulty still remains. Unless crime and disease increase in the same proportion, which, it is to be hoped, will not be one of the results of our Utopia; the amount of employment for lawyers and physicians will remain what it was; and for every feminine labourer a masculine will be displaced. Neither, it is to be hoped, need we accept the conclusion that all the freed energy will be devoted to purely selfish purposes. If so, we should be merely substituting two puddings for one; and life, though simplified in one direction, would become more cumbrous in others. Charity in its present form is of course to be discouraged; for political comments have satisfactorily proved that alms-giving is nothing but an indirect mode of patronising public houses. Perhaps, therefore, it may be hoped that in some form or other one peculiarity of Utopia will be that in some shape or other the rich and cultivated will employ some part of their spare energies for the benefit of the public, and even of their poorer neighbours. Poverty, indeed, in its present sense will in due time be abolished; because in Utopia nobody will be naked or hungry, or if any people are, they will be treated as criminals, and sentenced to starvation. The claim too, of neighbourhood will lose its force, inasmuch as the relationship between different persons will be reduced to mere commercial transactions. We must not, however, look quite so far ahead; but may assume that, at least in the earlier ages of Utopia, there will be some people poorer and more ignorant than others, and that propinquity will occasionally develop a more or less friendly feeling. If so, the benevolent instincts need not be abolished, and the problem will be how to unite a certain amount of kindly relations with an absence of any claims to patronage on one side, or any admission of dependence upon the other. It is possible for gratitude to exist amongst friends without infringing upon the strictest equality, and if we gave in to the wildest pretensions ever put forward by one of the servant girls caricatured in *Punch*, we might still be on good terms without exciting unpleasant susceptibilities. There is a certain ceremony which

we have all witnessed without, it is feared, always receiving an impression of due solemnity. When the servants fall in to family prayers in solemn procession, one may sometimes fear that the butler's thoughts are running more upon his plate than upon the passage of Scripture, and that the cook is calculating the time in which the cutlets will be spoilt. But, without dwelling upon discordant details, the performance suggests that people of different status may meet for certain purposes upon terms which are not degrading to either, and which may well be extremely improving to both. Unluckily, it is only for a few minutes that we meet upon the common ground; and as soon as we cease to be miserable sinners, we spring up with remarkable rapidity into the stiff, if not hostile, attitude of masters and servants. One set goes to church and the other to the meeting-house, and the momentary union of Christian sentiment appears to be little better than a hollow truce between mutual antipathies. In Utopia, however, all these jarring sentiments will be remedied; for by that time we shall all have found out the truth, and be converted to—whatever is the reader's form of opinion. The higher ranks will be separated from the lower by having received a wider culture, but there will not be a total breach of sympathy. At present they are kept apart by a gulph like that which intervenes between foreigners who talk different languages; then the distinction will be analogous only to that which divides a learner from a master. The superior will be able to say without due presumption: I have had greater advantages than you, and am therefore able to give you good advice or useful instruction or to help you to rational modes of enjoyment without insisting upon obedience to any arbitrary authority. The inferior will cheerfully recognise the fact, and be glad to receive friendly assistance, and pay for it by honourable service. Merely to indicate such a relation in the vaguest way is to prove that we are indeed thinking of Utopia, and not of any social condition hitherto realized amongst men. But the fact that some such condition is strictly speaking conceivable if indefinitely distant, is enough to prove that independence need not necessarily mean hostility or even indifference. No living person, it is true, can look forward to a day when a master will be to a servant what an elder brother is to a younger, or a respected tutor to his pupil. We have some difficulty in imagining a state of things in which a rich man can take an interest in his poorer neighbours without dictating or bullying, or being flattered to his face and behind his back.

But difficult as it may be to imagine such a state of things, and hopeless as it may be to go any distance towards realising it, that is no reason why we should not endeavour to make what trifling approximation is possible. And, therefore, as it seems to me, the real object of reformers should not be to show that classes are drifting further apart, and encourage us to rejoice over the material advantages which may result, but rather to tell us by what means mutual good feeling may still be cultivated under changed circumstances, and a friendliness, degrading to nobody, be substituted for the old relations of patronage and respect. Surely, with

all the desire of a large class of charitable persons to be "doing good," in some sense of that very wide phase, they might possibly find some outlet for their energies in good offices towards the persons who are drifted into a temporary relation to them, in the shifting sense of modern society. We are all very anxious to take part in grand schemes of charity which make a great deal of noise and do a great deal of mischief. Some expenditure of ingenuity in discovering how we might do good to people who live in the same house with us, in spite of all the jealousies and susceptibilities that have been lately aroused or inherited from former times, would not be altogether thrown away. It is, doubtless, very picturesque to go out into the highways and hedges and give money to paupers who will still touch their hats and make curtsies for money; but it would also be of some practical advantage to discover means of knowing something of a human relation to the people who are so much to us and yet so strangely separated from our sympathies. But, perhaps, such a suggestion verges upon the Utopian.

The Swallows.

Ah! swallows, is it so?
Did loving lingering summer, whose slow pace
Tarried among late blossoms, loth to go,
Gather the darkening cloud-wraps round her face
And weep herself away in last week's rain?
Can no new sunlight waken her again?
"Yes," one pale rose ablow
Has answered from the trellised lane;
The flickering swallows answer "No."

From out the dim grey sky
The arrowy swarm breaks forth and specks the air,
While, one by one, birds wheel and float and fly,
And now are gone, then suddenly are there;
Till lo the heavens are empty of them all.
Oh fly, fly south, from leaves that fade and fall,
From shivering flowers that die;
Free swallows, fly from winter's thrall,
Ye who can give the gloom goodbye.

But what for us who stay
To hear the winds and watch the boughs grow black,
And in the soddened mornings, day by day,
Count what lost sweets bestrew the nightly track
Of frost-foot winter trampling towards his throne?
Swallows, who have the sunlight for your own,
Fly on your sunward way;
For you has January buds new-blown,
For us the snows and gloom and grey.

On, on, beyond our reach,
Swallows, with but your longing for a guide:
Let the hills rise, let the waves tear the beach,
Ye will not balk your course nor turn aside,
But find the palms and twitter in the sun.
And well for them whose eager wings have won
The longed-for goal of light;
But what of them in twilights dun
Who long but have no wings for flight?

Augusta Webster.

Sir Edwin Landseer.

When he was a very little boy, Edwin Landseer used to ask his mother to set him a copy to draw from, and then—so his sisters have told me—complain that she always drew one of two things, either a shoe or a currant pudding, of both of which he was quite tired. No wonder that this was insufficient food for the eager young spirit for whose genius in after life two kingdoms were not too wide a range. The boy, when he was a little older, and when his bent seemed more clearly determined, went to his father and asked him for teaching. The father was a wise man and told his son that he could not himself teach him to be a painter, that Nature was the only school, Observation the true and only teacher. He told little Edwin to use his own powers; to think about all the things he saw; to copy everything: and then he turned the boy out with his brothers—they were all three much of an age—to draw the world as it then existed upon Hampstead Heath. There seem to have been then, as now, little donkeys upon the common, old horses grazing the turf and gorse, and chickens and children at play, though I fear that now, alas! no little curly-headed boy is there storing up treasures for the use of a whole generation to come.

Day after day the children used to spend upon the Heath in the fresh air, at their sports and their flights, but learning meanwhile their early lesson. Their elder sister used to go with them, a young mentor to keep these frolicsome spirits within bounds. One can imagine the little party, buoyant, active, in the full delightful spring of early youth. Perhaps youth is a special attribute belonging to artistic natures, to those whom the gods have favoured, and the old fanciful mythology is not all a fable. . . . Some boys are never young. When I last saw Sir Edwin Landseer, something of this indescribable youthful brightness still seemed to be with him, although the cloud which dimmed his later years had already partially fallen. But the cruel cloud is more than half a century distant at the time of which I am writing, and, thanks be to Heaven, the whole flood of life, and work, and achievement lies between.

Little Edwin painted a picture in these very early days, which was afterwards sold. It was called the "Mischief-makers:" a mischievous boy had tied a log of wood to the tail of a mischievous donkey. The little donkey's head in the South Kensington Museum may have been drawn upon Hampstead Heath—a careful black-lead donkey, that cropped the turf and looked up one day, some sixty years ago, with a puzzled face.

Perhaps it was wondering at the size of the artist standing opposite, with his little sympathetic hand at work. The drawing is marked "E. Landseer, five years old." This little donkey, of the line of Balaam's ass, had already found out the secret and knew how to speak in his own language to the youthful prophet. Our little prophet needs no warning on his journey; he is not about to barter his sacred gift, and from Hampstead Heath, and from many a wider moor, he will honestly give his blessing to the tribes as they come up. The tribe of the poor; the tribe of the hardworking rich; the tribe of Manchester; the tribe of Belgravia. Which is there among them that has not been the better for it? There are other sketches in the frame at the Kensington Museum; a policeman pointed them out to me. "*He* knew Sir Edwin's pictures well, and his sketches, too; why, he was only six year old when he draw that dog," said the policeman, kindly. The dog is a pointer curling its tail; there is the household cat, too, with broad face and feline eyes. There is a more elaborate sketch done at the age of fifteen, and probably representing the same pointer grown into an ancient model now, and promoted from black-lead to water-colour. The young painter himself must have been near starting in life by this time: born with his fairy gift, the time was come to reveal it.

Little Edwin was eight years old when he first engraved a plate of etchings; asses' heads, sheep, donkeys were all there, and then came a second plate for lions and tigers. He was always drawing animals. When he was thirteen he exhibited the portrait of a pointer and puppy, and also the portrait of Mr. Simpson's mule, "by Master E. Landseer," as mentioned in the catalogue. In this year his father took him to Haydon the painter, for there is a notice in Haydon's "Diary":—

"In 1815 Mr. Landseer, the engraver, had brought me his sons, and said: 'When do you intend to let your beard grow and take pupils?' I said, 'If my instructions are useful or valuable, now.' 'Will you let my boys come?' I said, 'Certainly.' Charles and Thomas, it was immediately arranged, should come every Monday morning, when I was to give them work for the week. Edwin took my dissections of the lion, and I advised him to dissect animals as the only mode of acquiring a knowledge of their construction.

"This very incident generated in me the desire to form a school, and as the Landseers made rapid progress, I resolved to communicate my system to others."

In 1817 Landseer exhibited a picture of "Brutus," the family friend. After "Brutus" comes a picture called "Fighting Dogs getting Wind," which was his first real success. It was, I believe, bought by that friendly umpire of art, Sir George Beaumont. In 1818 Wilkie writes approvingly to Haydon, saying: "Geddes has a good head, Etty a clever piece, and young Landseer's jackasses are also good." Most of these facts I have read in a helpful little biography in the South Kensington Museum, which contains a list of Sir Edwin's early works. The list is a marvel

of length and industry. There are many etchings mentioned, and among them "Recollections of Sir Walter and Lady Scott." When Sir Edwin gave up etching, it was Thomas Landseer who engraved his pictures. And here I cannot help adding that, looking over the etchings of that early time, and of later date, my admiration has not been alone for Sir Edwin, but for his brother's work as well.

Haydon's advice about depicting lions seems to have stood the young student in good stead. There is mention made of roaring and prowling lions, of a lion disturbed at his meal, on a canvas six feet by eight. Haydon, as we know, was for extremes of canvas and other things. I heard a philosopher describe him only yesterday as "a strange medley of genius and vanity, of high intention and money operations—a man who did good work in his time, and who died for jealousy of Tom Thumb." Leslie, in his autobiography, has his appreciative word for Haydon: "I was captivated with Haydon's art," he writes, "which was then certainly at its best, and tried, but with no success, to imitate the richness of his colour and impasto . . . At a much later period I was struck with his resemblance to Charles Lamb's 'Ralph Bigod, Esq.,' that noble type of the great race of men—'the men who borrow.' I even thought, before Lamb declared Fenwick to be the prototype of Bigod, that Haydon was the man, and I am not sure that Lamb did not think of him as well as of Fenwick. All the traits were Haydon's. Bigod had an *undeniable* way with him. He had a cheerful, open exterior, a quick, jovial eye, a bald forehead, just touched with grey, *cana fides*. He anticipated no excuse, and found none. When I think of this man—his fiery glow of heart, his swell of feeling—how magnificent, how *ideal* he was, how great at the midnight hour, and when I compare him with the companions with whom I have associated since, I grudge the saving of a few idle ducats, and think that I am fallen into the society of *lenders* and *little* men."

There is a sketch in Mr. Symonds's book about Greek poets which also recalls Haydon, and gives us a classical image of him in brazen sandals and purple draperies.

In 1822 Landseer received a premium from the British Institution for a picture called "The Larder Invaded." In 1824 he paints the celebrated "Catspaw: the monkey's device for eating hot chestnuts." It was sold for 100*l.*, and would fetch near 3,000*l.* now. Then he is made A.R.A.; and in 1826 the scene changes from lions' dens and monkeys' pranks to the well-loved moors and lakes—to the misty, fresh, silent life of the mountain that he has brought into all our homes.

Some of his earliest paintings are illustrations out of Walter Scott's romances. He loved Scott from the beginning to the very end of his life, and kept some of his books and some of Shakespeare's plays by his bedside, to read when he could not sleep. One of his very first oil pictures, however, was not out of a book: it was the portrait of his sister as a little baby girl, toddling about in a big bonnet.

There is a pretty little paragraph in Leslie's autobiography, about

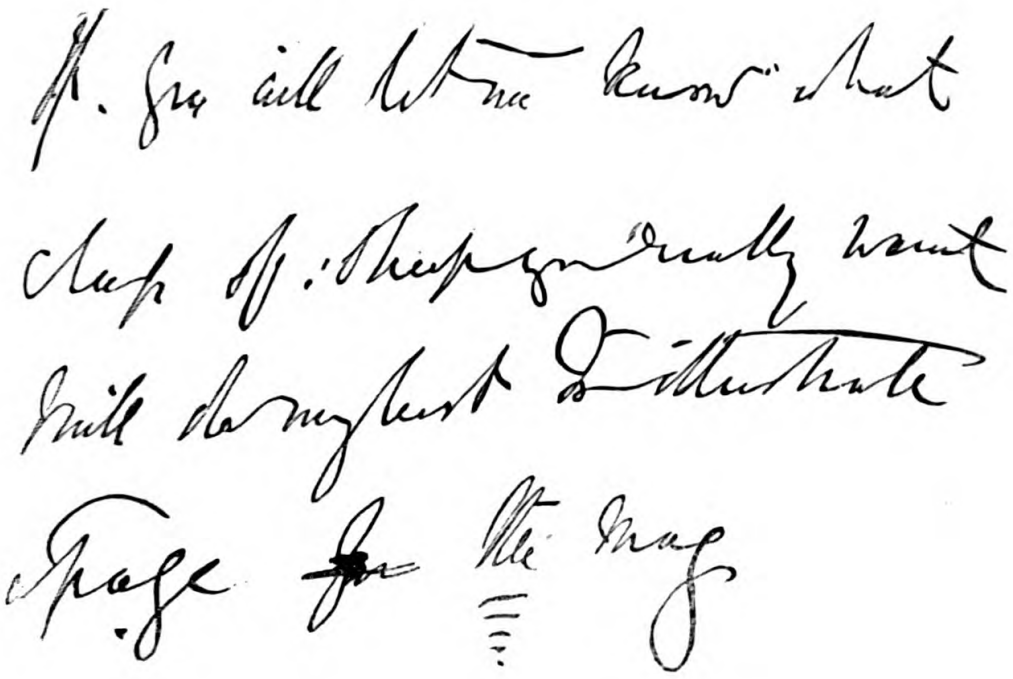
Sunday 20 Pk

Dear Mr. Thackeray

Old Adams bk. invited me to meet you, shall really immediately Ask am I to do?



Turn over —





Landseer after he became a student at the Royal Academy. "Edwin Landseer," he says, "who entered the Academy very early, was a pretty little curly-headed boy, and he attracted Fuseli's attention by his talents and gentle manners. Fuseli would look round for him and say, 'Where is my little *dog-boy*.'"

The few words tell their story, and at the same time reveal the kind heart of the writer, who all his life seems to have admired and loved his younger companion, of whom there is frequent mention in his books.

"Art may be learnt, but can't be taught," says Leslie, as the elder Landseer had said. "Under Fuseli's wise neglect Wilkie, Mulready, Etty, Landseer, and Haydon distinguished themselves, and were the better for not being made all alike by teaching, if indeed that could have been done."

Fuseli's system seems to have been to come in with a book in his hand and to sit reading nearly the whole time he remained with the students; and here I cannot help saying that, notwithstanding his gentle vindication, Leslie himself followed a very different method. It is true that when he taught young painters he used to say very little, but "he would take the brushes and the pallet himself and show them a great deal," says his son George.

It is now about fifty years since the little *dog-boy* (who was only some nineteen years old) set up in life for himself, hired a tiny little cottage with a studio in St. John's Wood. The district even now is silent and unenclosed in many places. In those days it must have been almost a country place. A garden paling divided the painter and his young household from friendly neighbours; and Mrs. Mackenzie, his sister and housekeeper in those youthful days, has told us of pleasant early times and neighbourly meetings before the great eddying wave of life and popularity had reached the quiet place; while the young man works and toils at his art, and faces the early difficulties and anxieties that oppress him, and that even his fairy gift cannot altogether avert.

In one of the notices upon his pictures it is said that as a boy and a youth he haunted shows of wild beasts with his sketch-book, and the matches of rat-killing by terriers. Cannot one picture the scene, the cruel sport; the crowd looking on, stupid or vulgarly excited, and there, among coarse and heavy glances and dull scowling looks, shines the bright young face, not seeing the things that the dull eyes are watching, but discerning the something beyond—the world within the world—that life within common life that genius makes clear to us?

What are the old legends worth if this is not what they mean? Our Sir Orpheus plays, and men and animals are brought into his charmed circle. Qualities delicate, indescribable, sympathies between nature and human nature are revealed.

There is a description in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Transformation* of Donatello and the animals. The young count calls in the forest, filling the air with a modulated breath; the poet describes the broad dialect —broad as the sympathies of nature—in which the human brother speaks to the inarticulate brotherhood that prowl the woods or soar upon the wing; intelligible to such extent as to win their confidence; and then comes the description of their answer:—

"Donatello paused two or three times and seemed to listen; then, recommencing, he poured his spirit and life more earnestly into the strain; and, finally—or else the sculptor's hope and imagination deceived him—soft treads were audible upon the fallen leaves. There was a rustling

among the shrubbery, a whirr of wings, moreover, that hovered in the air. It may have been all an illusion; but Kenyon fancied that he could distinguish the stealthy, cat-like movement of some small forest citizen; that he could even see a doubtful shadow if not really its substance. But all at once, whatever might be the reason, there ensued a hurried rush and scamper of little feet."

Some such art as Donatello's must have belonged to our Sir Edwin.

There is a world to which some favoured spirits belong by natural right; others, more distant from its simple inspiration, want the interpreter who is to tell them the meaning of those sudden brown lights and wistful glances; those pricking ears and tails a-quiver; those black confiding noses, humorous and simple, snuffing and sniffing the heathery breezes. It is he who has summoned those little feet for us, coming, as in Donatello's charm, suddenly scampering down the mountain pass; we seem to hear the gentle flurry; or again, we are on the mountain itself; the figures lie motionless wrapped in their plaids, the stag is unconscious and quietly grazing, in branching dignity; it is the little doe, watchful, with sweet, up-pricked head, who is turning to give the alarm; or again it may be a tranquil mist through which the light forms are passing; or a stag wounded and trailing across the sunset waters to die.

Who does not know the picture called "Suspense": the noble hound watching at his master's closed door? The painter has painted a whole heart, tender reproach, silence, steady trust, anxious patience. The theme is utterly pathetic, and tells its story straight to the bystander; the door is closed fast and will never open; the frayed feather from the master's plume has fallen to the ground. He must have been carried by, for there is a drop of blood upon the feather and another on the floor beyond, and the helpless tender friend has been shut out. I can hardly imagine any picture more tranquil, more pathetic. Who that has ever been shut out, but will understand the pang?

And then, again, what home-like glimpses do we owe to Landseer—he has painted warmth, content, and fidelity. Look at that fireside party; the tender contentment of the colley, whose faithful nose is guarding the old shepherd's slippers; or the highland breakfast scene, with its gentle, almost maternal, humours; the baby, the proud mother, the little fat puppies that are a pleasure to behold. In the well-known painting of the "Shepherd's Last Mourner," the pathos consists as much in that which is not as in that which is there. The dog with silent care rests his head upon the lonely coffin. He does not understand very much about it all: life he can understand, not death. His feeling is more touching in its incompleteness than if he could grasp anything beyond the present strange wistful moment. Is there aspiration is such a picture? There is natural religion most certainly, as there must be in all true nature. No saint depicted in agony, no painted miracle, could give a more vivid realisation of simple natural feeling, of the mysterious love and fidelity which is in life, and which the very dog can understand, as he silently watches by his old master's coffin.

As I write a friend is saying that some people complain, and not without justice, that Landseer, in some instances, makes his animals almost too human. The picture of Uncle Tom and his wife in chains has been instanced. In the "Triumph of Comus" the blending of animal and human nature is almost painful to look at, and it is a relief to turn from its nightmare-like vividness to those peaceful cliffs hanging on the wall beyond, where the fresh daylight comes over the crisping waters, where the children are at play and the sheep grazing at the cannon mouth.

One can recognize in some of the earlier paintings of Sir Edwin the impression of the mental companionship of those who influenced the school of art at the beginning of this century. Regarding this, the school of Wilkie, of Mulready, I can only turn once more to Leslie's temperate criticisms. "Every great painter," he says, "carries us into a world of his own, where, if we give ourselves up to his guidance, we shall find much enjoyment, but if we cavil at every step, we may be sure there is a greater fault in ourselves than any we can discover in him."

We do not lower our individuality because we submit for a time and learn to see life from different points of view. I have often heard my father say that every beginner who has anything in him imitates somebody else at first, and a true and original worker does not lose but gains by merging himself for a time into the spirit of others.

The school which preceded Edwin Landseer was a placid and practical school, looking for harmonies rather than for contrasts, somewhat wanting in emotion and vividness of feeling. The meteor-like Turner blazed across the path of these quiet students without inspiring them with his own dazzling and breathless grasp of time and light. Leslie, writing of art, looks back wistfully to the times of Stothart, Fuseli, of Wilkie, Lawrence, Etty, and Constable; but, with all their harmony of colour and merits of natural expression, they do not strike the human chords that Sir Edwin has struck in his highest moments of inspiration. This much one cannot deny that his pictures are unequal, sometimes over-crowded, sometimes wanting in tone and colour; there are subjects too which seem scarce worthy of his consummate pencil. His very popularity is a hard test, and the constant reproduction of his pictures on every wall must needs blunt their fresh interest. But this is hypercriticism. How many blank front parlours, how many long dull passages and tiresome half hours of life has he changed and brightened. Remembering some of these half hours, one could almost wish that none but pleasant associations might belong to those familiar apparitions of playful paws, and trustful noses. A pretty little page returning from the chase was the playfellow of our own early life; the sun fell on his innocent head as he hung on the wall of our high-perched Paris home. Here, by a foggier fireside, the children grow up companionably with the dear big dog that is saving the little child from the sea. It was the beneficent painter himself who sent this big dog to live with us with a friendly cypher in a corner of the frame.

A friend has told us the story of another dog bestowed by the same kind hand: "About ten years ago Sir Edwin wished me to keep a dog, thinking that when I came home I should not be so lonely; he also said that he would look for one for me himself. I told him that my business occupations would not allow me to give a dog proper attention, and although Sir Edwin mentioned the subject more than once I still refused. About a month afterwards he came to dine with me one day, and when he arrived he brought a beautifully finished picture of a dog, saying, 'Here H., I have brought you a parlour boarder, I hope you won't turn him out of doors.'"

A writer in the *Daily News*, in a charmingly written notice, describes Sir Edwin's manner of working:—

"His method of composition was remarkably like Scott's, except in the point of the early rising of the latter. Landseer went late to bed and rose very late—coming down to breakfast at noon; but he had been composing perhaps for hours. Scott declared that the most fertile moments for resources, in invention especially, were those between sleeping and waking, or rather before opening the eyes from sleep, while the brain was wide awake. This, much prolonged, was Landseer's time for composing his pictures. His conception once complete, nothing could exceed the rapidity of his execution. In his best days, before his sense of failing eyesight and the rivalship of rising pre-Raphaelite art aggravated his painful fastidiousness, his rapidity was quite as marvellous as Scott's. The speed was owing to decision, and his decision was owing to the thorough elaboration of his subject in his mind before he committed it to the management of his masterly hand." The stories are numberless of the rapidity with which he executed his work. There are two little King Charles' in the South Kensington Museum, wonders of completeness and masterly painting, whose skins are silk, whose eyes gleam with light. They were said to have been painted in two days. I have read somewhere also the melancholy fact in addition that both the poor little creatures died by violent deaths.

The *Daily News* quotes a rabbit picture exhibited in the British Gallery under which Sir Edwin wrote "painted in three quarters of an hour."

The first time I was ever in Sir Edwin's studio was about twelve years ago, when we drove there one summer's day with my father to see a picture of the "Highland Flood" just then completed. We came away talking of the picture, touched by the charm and the kindness of the master of the house, laden with the violets from the garden, which he had given us. Another time the master was no longer there, but his house still opened hospitably with a kind greeting for old days' sake from those who had belonged to him and who had known my father. We were let in at the side gate. There stood the great white house that we remembered; we crossed the garden, where the dead leaves were still heaped, and some mist was hanging among the bare branches of the trees, and so by an

entrance lined with pictures into the great studio once more, where all the memories and pictures were crowding, hanging to the walls, piled against the easels. We seemed to be walking into the shrine of a long life, and one almost felt ashamed, and as if one were surprising its secrets. All about the walls and on the ceiling were time stains spreading in a dim veil; he used to say that he hated whitewash, and that he would never allow any workman but himself about the place. It seemed to me at first as if the cloud of his later days still hung about the room, where he had suffered so many cruel hours; but, looking again, there were his many bright and sweet fancies meeting us on every side, and the gloom suddenly dispelled. Everywhere are beautiful and charming things, that strike one as one looks. Perhaps it is a tender little calf's head tied by its nose, perhaps a flock of sheep against a soft grey sky. There are old companions over the chimney, Sir Roderick and David Roberts looking out of a gloom of paint; there is a lion roaring among the rocks that seems to fill the room with its din.

As we look round we see more pictures and sketches of every description. There is a little princess, in green velvet, feeding a great Newfoundland dog; there is the picture of the young man dying in some calm distant place, with a little quivering living dog upon his knee looking up into his face; near to this stands a lovely little sketch about which Miss Landseer told us a little story. One day the painter was at work when they came hurriedly to tell him that the Queen was riding up to his garden-gate, and wished him to come out to her. He was to see her mounted upon her horse for a picture he was to paint. It seemed to me like some fanciful little story out of a fairy tale, or some old-world legend. The young painter at his art; the young queen cantering up, followed by her court, and passing on, and the sketch remaining to tell the story. He has painted in the old archway at Windsor Castle; the light and queenly figure is drifting from beneath it, other people are following, the sun is shining. Many of these sketches are hasty, but there is not one that does not bear traces of the master's hand.

We all know Sir Joshua's often-quoted answer to Lord Holland, when he asked him how long he had been painting his picture.

"All my life," is written in many a picture, as it is written indeed in many a face. Take the likeness of Gibson, with his keen downcast head, simple, manly, and refined. Is not his whole life written there? With the *thrill* of this noble portrait rises a vision within a vision of another studio miles and years away. The click of the workman's hammer comes echoing through Roman sunshine—the marble dust is lying in a heap at our feet —there stands the sculptor in his working dress, pointing to the band of colour in the Venus' waving hair.

There is another portrait in the room, to which the painter has given all his best and noblest work. He has opened his magic box—Pandora's was nothing to it—and there stands a lady with her child in her arms, endowed with a gentle might of grace, of womanly instinct and beauty.

The baby's little foot is caught in the lacework of the shawl; the mother's face is turned aside. It is a charming group, refined, full of sentiment. But for all women Edwin Landseer had this courteous feeling of manly deference. There is a Highland mother sitting with a little Highland baby in her arms among limpid grays and browns; there is a lovely marchioness with a dear little chubby innocent-eyed baby upon her knee. It is all the same feeling, the same grace and tenderness of expression.

Ruskin describes somewhere the attitude of mind in which a true artist should set to work. Sham art concocts its effect bit by bit; it puts in a light here, a shade there; piles on beauties, rubs in sentiment. The true painter will receive the impression straight from the subject, and then, keeping to that precious impression, works upon it with all his skill and power of attention. Anybody can understand the difference. Even great artists like Landseer sometimes paint pictures out of tune with their own natures, where the painter's skill is evident, and his industry, but his heart is not.

But here is his heart in many a delightful sketch and completed work: —in the "loveable dogs' heads," that my companion liked so much, with eyes flashing and melting from the canvas; in the pointer's creeping along the ground; in the sportsmanlike eagerness and stir of the "otter-hunt;" in the tender uplifted paw of the little dog talking to Godiva's horse; in many a sketch and completed picture.

When Landseer first became intimate with Mr. Jacob Bell, he was not a rich man, nor had he ever been able to save any money, but under this excellent and experienced good advice and management the painter's affairs became more flourishing. When Mr. Bell died, his partner devoted himself, as he had done, to Sir Edwin's interests. The little old cottage had been added to and enlarged meanwhile, the great studio was built, the park was enclosed, the pictures and prints multiplied and spread, the painter's popularity grew.

One wonderful—never to be forgotten—night my father took us to see some great ladies in their dresses going to the Queen's fancy ball. We drove to —— House (it is all very vague and dazzlingly indistinct in my mind). We were shown into a great empty room, and almost immediately some doors were flung open, there came a blaze of light, a burst of laughing voices, and from a many-twinkling dinner-table rose a company that seemed, to our unaccustomed eyes, as if all the pictures in Hampton Court had come to life. The chairs scraped back, the ladies and gentlemen advanced together over the shining floors. I can remember their high heels clicking on the floor: they were in the dress of the court of King Charles II.; the ladies beautiful, dignified, and excited. There was one, lovely and animated, in yellow; I remember her pearls shining. Another seemed to us even more beautiful, as she crossed the room all dressed in black—but she, I think, was not going to the ball; and then somebody began to say,

"Sir Edwin has promised to rouge them," and then everybody to call out for him, and there was also an outcry about his moustaches that '*really* must be shaved off,' for they were not in keeping with his dress. Then, as in a dream, we went off to some other great house, Bath House perhaps, where one lady, more magnificently dressed than all the others, was sitting in a wax-lighted dressing-room, in a sumptuous sort of conscious splendour, and just behind her chair stood a smiling gentleman, also in court dress, whom my father knew, and he held up something in one hand and laughed, and said he must go back to the house from whence we came, and the lady thanked him and called him Sir Edwin. We could not understand who this Sir Edwin was, who seemed to be wherever we went. Nor why he should put on the rouge. Then the majestic lady showed us her beautiful jewelled shoe, and one person, who it was I cannot remember, suddenly fell on her knees exclaiming, "Oh, let me kiss it." Then a fairy thundering chariot carried off this splendid lady, and the nosegays of the hanging footmen seemed to scent the air as the equipage drove off under the covered way. Perhaps all this is only a dream, but I think it is true: for there was again a third house where we found more pictures alive, two beautiful young pictures and their mother, for whom a parcel was brought in post-haste containing a jewel all dropping with pearls. Events seem so vivid when people are nameless, are only faces not lives, when all life is an impression. That evening was always the nearest approach to a live fairy tale that we ever lived, and that ball more brilliant than any we ever beheld.

No wonder Edwin Landseer liked the society of these good-natured and splendid people, and no wonder they liked his. To be a delightful companion is in itself no small gift. Edwin Landseer's company was a wonder of charming gaiety. I have heard my father speak of it with the pride he used to take in the gifts of others.

I see a note about nothing at all lying on the table, which a friend has sent among some others of sadder import; but it seems to give a picture of a day's work, written as it is with "the palette in the other hand," at the time of Sir Edwin's health of labour and popularity.

"I shall like to be scolded by you," he writes. "This eve I dine with Lord Hardinge, and have to go to Lord Londesborough's after the banquet, and then to come back here to R. A. Leslie, who has a family hop—which I am afraid will entirely fill up my time, otherwise I should have been delighted to say yes. Pray give me another opportunity.

"Written, with my palette in the other hand, in honest hurry."

Perhaps Edwin Landseer was the first among modern painters who restored the old traditions of a certain sumptuous habit of living and association with great persons. The charm of manner of which kind Leslie spoke put him at ease in a world where charm of manner is not without its influence, and where his brilliant gifts and high-minded scrupulous spirit made him deservedly loved, trusted, and popular. To artistic natures especially, there is something almost irresistible in the attraction of beauty

and calm leisure, refinement. They seem to say more perhaps than such things are really worth in themselves—a lovely marchioness leaving her world of brilliant conversation and well-rubbed plate and beautifully dressed companions of high rank to devote herself to a little baby, or to tend some gentle home affection, is certainly a more attractive impersonation of domesticity than the worried and untidy materfamilias in the suburban villa who has been wearily and ignobly struggling with a maid-of-all-work, and whose way of loving and power of affection is so hurried and distracted by economies of every sort.

Lords and ladies have to thank the intellectual classes for many of the things that make their homes delightful and complete: for the noble pictures on their walls, the books that speak to them, the arts that move them; and, perhaps, the intelligent classes might in their turn learn to adorn their own homes with something of the living art which belongs to many of these well bred people, who sometimes win the best loved of the workers away from their companions and make them welcome. No wonder that men not otherwise absorbed by home ties are delighted and charmed by a sense of artistic fitness and tranquility, which surely might be more widely spread, by a certain gentleness and deference that often strike one as wanting among many good, wise, and true hearted people, who might with advantage improve their own manner and their wives' happiness by some admixture of chivalry in the round of their honest hard-working existence.

A friend has sent me the following pages, which describe Sir Edwin at this time, and I cannot do better than give them here as they have come to me.

"'The world knows nothing of its greatest men,' was not applicable to Landseer. Though not one of its greatest men, he was a man of acknowledged genius, and was courted, admired, made much of, by all who knew him. 'Landseer will be with us,' was held out as an inducement to join many a social board, where his wit, gaiety, and peculiar powers of mimicry rendered him a delightful guest. But I am speaking of him as he appeared before the fine spirit was darkened by one of the heaviest of calamities!

"Landseer's perceptions of character were remarkably acute. Not only did he know what was passing in the hearts of dogs, but he could read pretty closely into those of men and women also. The love of truth was an instinct with him; his common phrase about those he estimated highly was that 'they had the true ring.' This was most applicable to himself; there was no alloy in *his* metal; he was true to himself and to others. This was proved in many passages of his life, when nearly submerged by those disappointments and troubles which are more especially felt by sensitive organizations such as that which it was his fortune—or misfortune—to possess. It was a pity that Landseer, who might have done so much for the good of animal-kind, never wrote on

the subject of their treatment. He had a strong feeling against the way some dogs are tied up, only allowed their freedom now and then. He used to say a man would fare better tied up than a dog, because the former can take his coat off, but a dog lives in his for ever. He declared a tied-up dog, without daily exercise, goes mad, or dies, in three years. His wonderful power over dogs is well known. An illustrious lady asked him how it was that he gained this knowledge. 'By peeping into their hearts, ma'am,' was his answer. I remember once being wonderfully struck with the mesmeric attraction he possessed with them. A large party of his friends were with him at his house in St. John's Wood; his servant opened the door; three or four dogs rushed in, one a very fierce-looking mastiff. We ladies recoiled, but there was no fear; the creature bounded up to Landseer, treated him like an old friend, with most expansive demonstrations of delight. Some one remarking 'how fond the dog seemed of him,' he said, 'I never saw it before in my life.'

"Would that horse-trainers could have learnt from him how horses could be broken in or trained more easily by kindness than by cruelty. Once when visiting him he came in from his meadow looking somewhat dishevelled and tired. 'What have you been doing?' we asked him. 'Only teaching some horses tricks for Astley's, and here is *my* whip,' he said, showing us a piece of sugar in his hand. He said that breaking-in horses meant more often breaking their hearts, and robbing them of all their spirit.

"Innumerable are the instances, if I had the space, I could give you of his kind and wise laws respecting the treatment of the animal world, and it is a pity they are not preserved for the large portion of the world who love, and wish to ameliorate, the condition of their 'poor relations.'

"There were few studios formerly more charming to visit than Landseer's. Besides the genial artist and his beautiful pictures, the habitues of his workshop (as he called it) belonged to the élite of London society, especially the men of wit and distinguished talents—none more often there than D'Orsay, with his good-humoured face, his ready wit, and delicate flattery. 'Landseer,' he would call out at his entrance, 'keep the dogs off me' (the painted ones), 'I want to come in, and some of them will bite me—and that fellow in de corner is growling furiously.' Another day he seriously asked me for a pin, and when I presented it to him and wished to know why he wanted it, he replied, 'to take de thorn out of dat dog's foot; do you not see what pain he is in?' I never look at the picture now without this other picture rising before me. Then there was Mulready, still looking upon Landseer as the young student, and fearing that all this incense would spoil him for future work; and Fonblanque, who maintained from first to last that he was on the top rung of the ladder, and when at the exhibition of some of Landseer's later works, he heard it said, 'They were not equal to his former ones,' he exclaimed in his own happy manner, 'It is hard upon Landseer to flog him with his own laurels.'

"But, dear A——, I am exceeding the limits of a letter; you asked me to write some of my impressions about Landseer, and I am sure you and all his friends will forgive me for being verbose when recalling, not only the great gifts, but delightful qualities of our lost friend."

Here is one of his early letters to this lady :—

"February 2, 1856.

"Dear ——,—I must not allow more time to vanish without thanking you for that old friendly note of yours, re-read some days ago. I fully expected to thank you personally on Wednesday last, only it was the wrong eve. I am sure that you will be pleased to hear that my brother Charles is so much better. The seaside has put him on his legs again. When are you to be at home? Remember me to Mr. Craufurd and his darling daughter.

"Believe me gratefully and sincerely yours."

"My worn-out old pencil will work with friendly gladness in an old friend's service," he writes to my father, who had asked him to draw a sketch for the *Cornhill Magazine*. Elsewhere will be read the facsimile of a second letter he sent him on the same subject.

Some years after :—

"I quite forgot that I dined with a group of doctors (a committee) at two o'clock. R. A. business after dinner. This necessity prevents me kissing hands before your departure. Don't become too Italian; don't speak broken English to your old friends on your return to our village, where you will find no end of us charmed to have you back again; and amongst them, let me say, you will find old E. L. sincerely glad to see his unvarying K. P. once more by that old fire-side."

So he writes in '63 to the friend to whom I owe the notes already given here. There is the "true ring," as he himself says, in these faithful greetings continued through a lifetime. And now that the life is over, the friend still seems there, and his hand stretches faithfully from the little blue page.

He writes again September 2, 1864 :—

"Do you think you could bring Mrs. Brookfield to my lion studio to-morrow between five and six o'clock? I have forgotten her address, or would not trouble you. Have you still got that cruel dagger in your sleeve? If you can also lasso my friend Brookfield I shall be grateful, and beg you to believe me your used up old friend, "E. L."

A little later I find a note written in better spirits. His work is done, and those great over-weighing sphinxes are no longer upon his mind. "The colossal clay," he says, "is now in Baron Marochetti's hands, casting in metal. When No. 2 is in a respectable condition remind me of Colonel Hamley's kind and highly flattering desire to see my efforts. We can, on the 3rd, discuss pictures, lions, and friends.

"Your's always, E. L."

What efforts his work had cost him, and what a price he paid for that which he achieved, may be gathered from a letter to another correspondent, which was written about this time:—

"Dear H.," he says, "I am much surprised by your note. The plates, large vignettes, are all *the same* size. The sketches from which they were engraved for the deer stalking work being done in a sketch-book of a particular shape and size. Those of the O form all the same, as also the others. I have got quite trouble enough; ten or twelve pictures about which I am tortured, and a large national monument to complete. . . . If I am bothered about everything and anything, no matter what, I know my head will not stand it much longer."

"I cannot even leave off to read Gosling's letter," he says, writing to this same T. H. "If you will call at three you will find me." Then again, in another note, "Have the kindness to read the enclosed. Perhaps you could kindly call on the party." Then comes, "the matter which you are kind enough to express willingness to look into;" it is one long record of good advice rendered and gratitude freely given. Elsewhere Landseer writes to this same correspondent. "I have just parted from your friend P. He strongly urged me going to 45, where I have been so kindly received of late. I told him you were an object for plunder in this world, and that I was ashamed of living on you as others do." This letter is written in a state of nervous irritation which is very painful; he wishes to make changes in his house; to build, to alter the arrangements; he does not know what to decide or where to go; the struggle of an over-wrought mind is beginning to tell. It is the penalty some men must pay for their gifts; but some generous souls may not think the price of a few weary years too great for a life of useful and ennobling work.

The letters grow sadder and more sad as time goes on. Miss Landseer has kindly sent me some, written to her between 1866 and 1869. The first is written from abroad:—

"I have made up my mind to return, to face the ocean! The weather is unfriendly—sharp wind and spiteful rain. There is no denying the fact, since my arrival and during my sojourn here I have been less well. The doctors keep on saying it is on the nerves; hereafter they may be found to be in error. Kind Lady E. Peel keeps on writing for me to go to Villa Lammermoor, and says she will undertake my recovery. I desire to get home. With this feeling, I am to leave this to-morrow, pass some hours in Paris (with W. B., in a helpless state of ignorance of the French language); take the rail to Calais at night, if it does not blow cats and dogs; take the vessel to Dover; hope to be home on the 6th before two o'clock. If C. L. had started to come here he might have enjoyed *unlimmitted* amusement and novelty. B. M. and I wrote to that effect; he leaving on Sunday night . . . . would have found me and B. M. waiting his arrival to bring him here to dinner."

The next is a letter from Balmoral, dated June 1867: —

"The Queen kindly commands me to get well here. She has to-day been twice to my room to show additions recently added to her already rich collection of photographs. Why, I know not, but since I have been in the Highlands I have for the first time felt wretchedly weak, without appetite. The easterly winds, and now again the unceasing cold rain, may possibly account for my condition, as I can't get out. Drawing tires me; however, I have done a little better to-day. The doctor residing in the castle has taken me in hand, and gives me leave to dine to-day with the Queen and the 'rest of the royal family.' . . . . Flogging would be mild compared to my sufferings. No sleep, fearful cramp at night, accompanied by a feeling of faintness and distressful feebleness. . . . All this means that I shall not be home on the 7th."

He seems to have returned to Scotland a second time this year, and writes from Lochlinhart, Dingwall :—

"I made out my journey without pausing, starting on the eve of Thursday the 3rd, arriving here the evening of Friday (700 miles) the 4th. I confess to feeling jaded and tired. The whole of hills here present to the eye one endless mass of snow. It is really cold and winterly. Unless the weather recovers a more *generous* tone I shall not stay long, but at once return south to Chillingham. I was tempted yesterday to go out with Mr. Coleman to the low ground part of the forest, and killed my first shot, at deer. I am paying for my boldness to-day, Sunday. All my joints ache; the lumbago has reasserted its unkindness; a warm bath is in requisition, and I am a poor devil. Unless we have the comfort of genial sunshine, I shall not venture on getting out. . . . I am naturally desirous to hear from you, and to receive a report of the progress of goings on at my home. We have here Mr. C. M. and a third gentleman, just arrived. Mr. Coleman has returned to London on account of his mother's ill health. I have written to H., but in case he has not received my note, let him know my condition; say I shall be very glad to hear from him when he goes to Paris, and how long he remains in foreign parts. I hope you have found Mr. B. and the maids repectfully attentive. "My dear Jessy, affectionately yours,

"E. Landseer."

The years seem to pass slowly as one reads these letters written in snow and rain and depression. Here is another, dated Stoke Park, July, 1868, which contains a few touching sentences : —

"Dear Jessy,—Strange enough, but I have only just found at the bottom of the bag your little package of letters. Many thanks for your pale green note, so far satisfactory. I believe it is best to yield to Mr. C.'s advice, and remain here another day or two. It is on the cards that I try my boldness by a run up to my home and back here the same day. It is quite a trial for me to be away from the meditation in the old studio—my works starving for my hand."

The last letter is written in 1869 from Chillingham Castle, where he seems to have been at home and in sympathy, although he writes so sadly:—

"Very mortifying are the disappointments I have to face; one day seeming to give hope of a decided turn in favour of natural feeling, the next knocked down again. If my present scheme comes off, I shall not be at home again for ten days. If on my return I find myself a victim to the old impulsive misery, I shall go on to Eastwall Park, as the Duchess of Abercorn writes she will take every care of me. Since I last wrote I have been on a visit to the Dowager Marchioness of Waterford, Ford Castle, a splendid old edifice, which C. L. would enjoy. Love to all."

I go on selecting at hazard from the letters before me:—

"Again accept my gratitude for your constant kindness," he writes to his faithful T. H. H. "The spell is broken in a mild form, but the work is too much for me. The long long walk in the dark, after the shot is fired, over rocks, bog, black moss, and through torrents, is more than enough *for twenty-five!*

"Poor C. has been very ill rewarded for his Highland enterprise. Fifteen hundred miles of peril on the rail; endless bad weather whilst he was here, without killing one deer; finally obliged to hurry off. . . . I have begged him not to think of undertaking another long journey on my account, even in the event of his being able to leave home. . . . It is like you to think of my request touching medicines for the poor here. . . . We have a dead calm after the wicked weather; not a dimple in the lake. I am not bold yet. Possibly reaction may take place in the quiet of the studio. I shall not start on great difficulties, but on child's play."

Here is another letter, written in the following spring:—

"March 11th, 1869.

"I know you like water better than oil; but, in spite of your love of paper-staining, I venture to beg your acceptance of these oil studies, which you will receive as old friends from the Zoo.

"In some respects they will recall the interest you took in my labours for the Nelson lions, and I hope will always remind you of my admiration for your kindly nature, to say nothing of my endless obligations to your unceasing desire to aid a poor old man, nearly used up.

"Dear T. H. H., ever sincerely yours,

"E. Landseer."

Here is a letter which is very characteristic:—

"Saturday Eve, 5 June.

"Dear H,—I am not quite content with myself touching the proposed suggestion of our taking advantage of an offer made by —— for the two pictures. He has not put his desire to have the pictures in writing, has he? We must talk it over to-morrow if you come up at four o'clock, or sooner. . . . . The enclosed letters are most friendly, as you will see.

Read them and bring them up to-morrow. I am anything but well; botherations unfit me for healthy work. You must pat me on the back to-morrow; at the same time, if anything has turned up more attractive don't bind yourself to me.

"I should not dislike a drive or a walk to-morrow before dinner."

He writes once again:—

"I have a great horror of the *smell* of a trick, or a money motive."

"My dear Hills,—My health (or rather condition) is a mystery quite beyond human intelligence. I sleep well seven hours, and awake tired and jaded, and do not rally till after luncheon. J. L. came down yesterday and did her very best to cheer me. She left at nine. . . . . I return to my own home, in spite of a kind invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone to meet Princess Louise at breakfast.

"I wonder if you are free to-morrow. I shall try and catch you for a little dinner with me, tho' I am sure to find you better engaged.

"Dear H., ever thine,

"E. L."

Then comes the sad concluding scene—the long illness and the anxious watch. Was ever any one more tenderly nursed and cared for? Those who had loved him in his bright wealth of life now watched the long days one by one, telling away its treasure. He was very weak in body latterly, but sometimes he used to go into the garden and walk round the paths, leaning on his sister's arm. One beautiful spring morning he looked up and said, "I shall never see the green leaves again;" but he did see them, Mrs. Mackenzie said. He lived through another spring. He used to lie in his studio, where he would have liked to die. To the very end he did not give up his work; but he used to go on, painting a little at a time, faithful to his task.

When he was almost at his worst—so some one told me—they gave him his easel and his canvas, and left him alone in the studio, in the hope that he might take up his work and forget his suffering. When they came back they found that he had painted the picture of a little lamb lying beside a lion. This and "The Font" were the last pictures ever painted by that faithful hand. "The Font" is an allegory of all creeds and all created things coming together into the light of truth. The Queen is the owner of "The Font." She wrote to her old friend and expressed her admiration for it, and asked to become the possessor. Her help and sympathy brightened the sadness of those last days for him. It is well known that he appealed to her once, when haunted by some painful apprehensions, and that her wise and judicious kindness came to the help of his nurses. She sent him back a message: bade him not be afraid, and to trust to those who were doing their best for him, and in whom she herself had every confidence.

Sir Edwin once told Mr. Browning that he had thought upon the subject, and come to the conclusion that the stag was the bravest of all

animals. Other animals are born warriors, they fight in a dogged and determined sort of way; the stag is naturally timid, trembling, vibrating with every sound, flying from danger, from the approach of other creatures, halting to fight. When pursued its first impulse is to escape; but when turned to bay and flight is impossible it fronts its enemies nobly, closes its eyes not to see the horrible bloodshed, and with its branching horns steadily tosses dog after dog up one upon the other, until overpowered at last by numbers it sinks to its death.

It seems to me, as I think of it, not unlike a picture of his own sad end. Nervous, sensitive, high-minded, working on to the end, he was brought to bay and at last overpowered by that terrible mental rout and misery.

He wished to die in his studio—his dear studio for which he used to long when he was away, and where he lay so long expecting the end, but it was in his own room that he slept away. His brother was with him. His old friend came into the room. He knew him, and pressed his hand . . .

As time goes on the men are born, one by one, who seem to bring to us the answers to the secrets of life, each in his place and revealing in his turn according to his gift. Such men belong to nature's true priesthood, and among their names, not forgotten, will be that of Edwin Landseer.

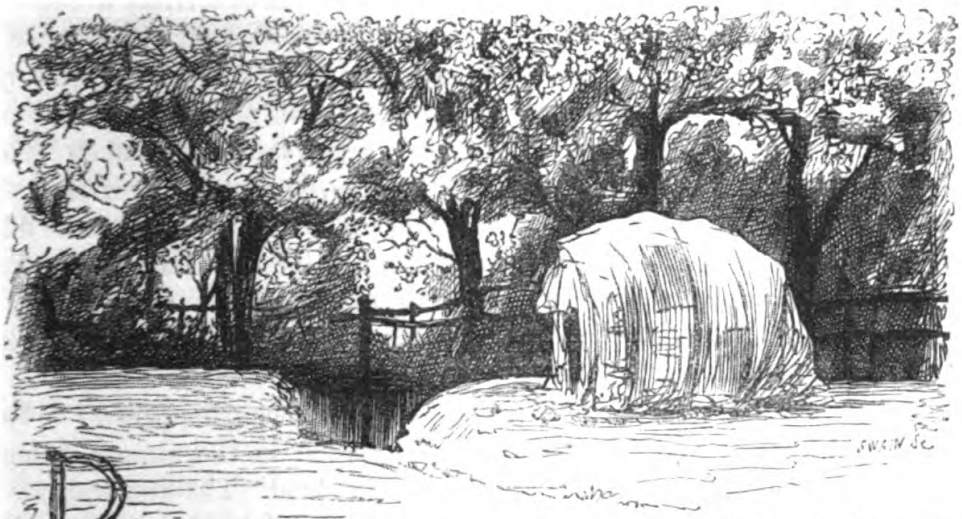


HE SAT BY CLAUDIA'S SIDE IN MUTE DESPAIR.

Zelda's Fortune.

CHAPTER VII.

Zelda Wins.



BUT, as Harold Vaughan would have said, it is Fate that disposes; and his Fate incarnate, Zelda, had still her part to perform. Claudia believed she was the opponent of Aaron in the game—she was in truth the adversary of an unknown player who held unseen and unsuspected cards.

The words "I am not his sister" literally scorched her like fire. What was she then, if, without any intelligible tie of blood between them, he was nevertheless more to her than all the world? She demanded the old tinker's hospitality with the air of one who had just stepped from the invisible universe, and who preferred her claim with the authority of no earthly queen. Then she set out to bring him—him who was not her brother—to the tents of those who were his people and but half hers. But she did not reach him—she sat down under the bush again.

What could it all mean? She had worshipped Harold Vaughan without knowing or heeding why, and had accepted their supposed bond of blood-relationship as a mysterious but still all-sufficient cause. Now that this was swept away, she was driven to look below the surface of her life: and, with a quick rush, every word that Lord Lisburn had spoken when he offered himself to her came back filled with most intense meaning. She was incapable of thought, but her mind saw—and it saw that what Lord Lisburn asked from her she had already, even then, given ten times over to Harold Vaughan. That was why the Earl's words had not

touched her—that was why she had been unable to recognise the name of Love when used by him. It is hard to speak of such a revelation as one of joy—yet what other word can be used, however much it may be mingled with a thousand unrealised shames and self-reproaches, when a woman first learns from her own heart what Love means? If it had not been for this, she would have lived and died, and never known her own soul. And yet, over the joy itself there hung a shadow. She was no martyr to give all and receive nothing in return beyond a brother's tolerance. He must know her even as she knew herself, and what would his answer be? What if her answer to Lord Lisburn should recoil upon her own head, and if her discarded lover should be thus terribly avenged? She had looked forward to their being so happy together in the relationship that she thought it, in her ignorance of all such things, to be the key to all her hopes and desires; and now the key had proved as useless as that of Mrs. Goldrick's strong-box, and her treasure as much like Fairy-gold. Even to pass her life with him, unless under new and perhaps impossible conditions, would now be far worse than her life before she knew herself—for the first time in her life she knew what she desired, and for the first time she almost despaired.

She rose at last with a throbbing heart, and found him, resting obediently where she had bidden him wait for her.

"You are back at last, Zelda! Why what has happened?" he asked, suddenly observing a second transformation in the strange being whom he had passively given up trying to understand. The first transformation, that flashed upon him when she raised her veil, had been the result of the birth of the mind; what he saw now was the final struggle of the heart into the first glorious moment of self-consciousness before the joy is wholly lost in pain. Their wanderings in close and constant companionship, and in a belief that birth had made them more than mere companions, had necessarily brought about much familiarity between them. She was never absent from his side, and used to sit as close to his feet as a loving spaniel. Now she stood far off and looked towards him with tender and timid eyes.

"Nothing," she answered. "We are at our journey's end. I have found food and shelter—that is all."

"Among your people, the Gipsies—I see. Well, so be it. That, for a time, will serve us for a new world. I am dark enough to pass for one myself," he said with a half-smile. "Indeed I wish I had been born one, with all my soul."

"Would you live with them always?"

"I would live anywhere, Zelda; all places are alike to me." "Where Claudia is not," his heart added; and, though she only heard his words, she sighed.

"You are not happy," she said. "How happy I would make you, if I knew how!"

"You are a dear and good girl, Zelda. I judged you all wrongly.

I know you try to make me happy so hard that it is a sin in me to let you fail. But you can't know everything; the world has been harder upon me than a girl like you, who know nothing of its ways, can tell."

"But if you loved?"

"What can you know of love, Zelda—who tell me yourself that a brother is the only man you ever dreamed of caring for?"

"What can I know? Come, let us go in. But tell me, what should you do if——?"

"If what?"

"Nothing—I don't know what I meant to say. Ah, there's the old tinker's dog; and there's the tinker. And now—welcome home."

In spite of all his misfortunes, the Doctor could not fail to take an interest in his new quarters, and made himself as companionable to his host as possible, from whom he gathered more of that world without the world into which he had strayed than most men—ignorant as most of us are of its very existence—gather in a lifetime. Zelda sat apart, with her chin on her knees, listening to their talk with her eyes. When her two companions lay down to sleep under the tent, she made some excuse, and set herself to wake behind her bush under the stars. The poor Corn-flower had thought them the ducats of heaven; Zelda thought them the floating love-dust of the world.

Harold Vaughan had scarcely closed his eyes before he opened them again. He was not disposed for sleep, the tent did not attract it, and he wanted the fresh air. He lighted a pipe—an indulgence of which his vagrant life had taught him the inestimable value—sat down by the dead embers, and thought as men think whose bodies are weary and whose minds are oppressed by painful wakefulness. It was a glorious night, and recalled his former musings under the Pole-star—the only thing in all the visible universe that never seems to change. He had chosen it for the symbol of destiny, fixed and immutable. But his philosophy reminded him that even the Pole-star himself may not be at absolute rest in infinite space, though he might not vary by the breadth of a child's hair in a million years. He might have pursued the thought into a hundred remote and fanciful analogies between what we call fate and its symbol, and have asked himself how the wandering nature of any human life can assume to itself the belief in a fixed destiny that cannot be claimed for the most immutable of the stars themselves, until he traced them to the bottom of his heart, where the image of Claudia attracted in time all other thoughts, as if she herself had been their pole. Doubtless this would have been the end of his reverie, when he was startled by the sound of a low moan.

He listened again; it came from behind the bush, and sounded like the voice of a woman either in sorrow or pain. He went softly round, and, by the light of the stars, saw Zelda crouched together on the turf, weeping bitterly.

He had more tenderness for a woman's weakness than of old—he had seen tears in Zelda's eyes before, through the paint of the stage, and then he had been harsh and stern. Now, he approached her gently. Her solitary, unexpected grief, let loose and confessed to the stars and to the ears of the summer night alone, this weeping out of a girl's unknown sorrows when none but the heavenly watchers were by to see, was so sacred in its mournful solemnity, that he trod as if he had entered a cathedral door and stood before a shrine of tears. How could he think, believing what he did, that these tears were for him ?

He came near to her almost as gently as she always came near to him, and when he saw that she had felt his approach, he took her hand.

"What is it, Zelda, my little sister ? I knew something had happened when you came back to me from the tent—will you not tell me ? "

Zelda's heart was of July, but her tears were of April, when her sun rose. There was more than a little of Marietta in her, besides her trick of stamping on the floor. But it must not be thought that rippling waves are always the sign of a shallow sea. She had her mother's quickness of impulse, but her depths were her own. Still, her mother's milk had given her the gift of swiftly dried tears, and she looked up with eyes whose tear-marks were invisible—at least in the star-beams.

"You came to me because I was fool enough to be crying ? " she said, softly.

"I did not know it was you till I saw you—but I should have come."

"You are kind to me at last, then. Oh, it would be too dreadful if you were not kind to me any more."

"I hope I shall never seem unkind to you, Zelda. You are the only living creature who has ever tried to be kind to me. Surely that is not why you are sitting out here, all alone in the night ? Have I seemed unkind ? "

"You may be as unkind as you like," she said, with bold inconsistency, "all but in one way. Don't leave me—don't send me away."

"That is not likely, is it ? But how can you tell that one of these days you mayn't want to send me away ? "

"I send you—I want to send you ! "

"My dear Zelda, it doesn't follow, does it, that because you cared for your brother better than for Lord Lisburn, that you may always care for him better than for some man—say in our own new world—whom you have never yet seen ? You are young and beautiful—suppose some one comes some day and asks me, your brother, for Zelda ? "

"Suppose—and what should you say ? "

"I should ask you if you loved him. If you said yes, I should say, go to him—only be faithful ; believe only one another, and think everything that others say, however dear to you, is a lie. Be to one another each other's whole world, and let no one else in. I don't know if that would be the right way, but I'm sure any other would be the wrong."

"And I'm sure it is the right way—the only right way. And suppose I said no, like I ought to have to Lord Lisburn?" she asked, with an eager tremor in her tone.

"I don't think you'ld always say no, Zelda. But if you did, you should tramp on with me until your time came."

"Then the time will never come—I'll always tramp on with you. But—would you give me up so easy to anybody that came?"

"I should have no right to keep you. But come—you will catch your death of damp and cold—come nearer the fire, and I'll make you up the best bed I can."

"No—please—not yet," and she laid her hand on his arm, but drew it away suddenly. "Suppose something else—suppose the old Barengro, or anybody, came and told you I was not your sister—as I supposed all along—what then?"

"Don't talk nonsense, there's a good girl. You're tired, and want sleep. I shouldn't believe the old Barengro, that's all."

"I won't go to sleep till you've supposed."

She spoke so anxiously that a dim doubt rose in Harold Vaughan. He thought she was only putting cases, but still he answered kindly, but decisively—

"Then we should have to part, that's all—you your way and I mine—unless, indeed, I married you," he added, with another quarter smile. "And now let me make you a bed by the embers."

"Then you must marry me," she said outright and like a queen. "We won't part, and I am not your sister."

"Zelda—in heaven's name, are you joking—do you mean what you say? Then——"

"Joking? Not I. Ask the Barengro—I heard it from him and Aaron behind the bush here. No—indeed I did not know it before. And now—for God's sake you are not going to say that dreadful thing again—I shall take a knife and cut my throat open if you do. I can't live away from you and without the love you can give me now."

"I can't say a word if this is true. Tell me all. This is terrible. No, Zelda—I don't mean what you think I mean—my poor girl, whether sister or not I would do anything for you in the world—but—tell me all—don't lose a moment."

She told him in broken words, wondering and afraid, yet like a penitent making her confession, everything she knew, even down to her adventure in the house of Mrs. Goldrick. He listened, and as she went on, said not a word, but buried his face in his hands.

How could any man who was not a cur reproach her for what she had done out of sheer love for him? It was impossible for a man of honour, for the gentleman that the gipsy-born workhouse boy tried consistently to be, to take advantage of her confession even to seek to redeem his own name. It seemed to cut him off from Claudia more than ever—perhaps the point of honour had unconsciously a stronger

force with him just because his having been born and bred on the wrong side of the social hedge made him exaggerate its demands. He was a gentleman by conversion, as it were, and converts are notoriously fanatical. He must not be surpassed by Lord Lisburn, who had once presumed to teach him the duties of a gentleman.

"Zelda," he said at last, very gravely, and with a touch of his old sternness, "Zelda—you have given up for me more than you know. I don't say that you have cut me off from the world, but I am cut off, and there's an end. I cannot disbelieve a word you say—you have told me the truth, and it all agrees with what I know and feel to be true. What to do I know not—to-morrow must decide——"

"No—no to-morrow—I cannot bear another hour. And I must live for you, come what may. Kill me if you like—I will kiss your knife and your hand—but tell me now that you will not leave me—now!"

"What can I say?"

"Say what I would have you say—that you will love me still—will love me in my way—or that you will let me love you in my own. I will be your very slave. What more could I have done for you—no, that was nothing—what less could I have done? I have found my soul, and it is all yours. Who is there loves you but I?"

"None—none—I know that; but—no: the sooner I cut that last shred of my old life away, the better for us all. Whatever you have done, you have fairly earned a right to deal with me as yours. You need not tell me what you have done for me—I know it all—you gave up name, fame, rank, wealth, all things, and all for me."

"I gave up nothing," she said proudly. "They were all yours—I had given them up, oh, long before they were mine to throw away for you."

"Zelda," he said at last, after a long silence, in which he sought honestly to do his duty as a gentleman, and so yielded to the storm of passion on which his Fate rode, "you have earned all I have to give—name, fame, and more. You stood by me when all, even my best friends, turned their backs and passed by on the other side. You alone sought to heal my wounds—you are more than my Destiny—you have tried to be its Angel. What I have to give you I must, and I will. You have shown that you know what to be a wife means. Be mine, then, and we two will try to make a world of our own. I will give you my life, and if my whole heart is slow in coming, you must be patient and wait till the end."

Not even then was he false to Claudia, whose one thought was of him. But from her he was cut off for evermore—and who was he that, for the sake of a vanished dream, he should reject the divine consolation of perfect love, and selfishly destroy a second life as well as his own? He took her hand.

"At last!" she exclaimed, pressing it with her lips. Her life's dream was marvellously fulfilled.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Pilgrims.

I am a little ashamed, not for myself indeed, but for a certain side of human nature not the less true for being mightily disagreeable, that a man who was simply no more than a common human shuttlecock, with a few good points about him for feathers, should have been chosen for the prize of a contest between Claudia's true and noble heart and Zelda's passionate soul. Once for all, and for the thousandth time, men, unhappily, are loved less for what they are than for what they are thought to be by those who love them. So it was with Squire Maynard in Vienna, so with Doctor Vaughan in St. Bavons, and so *sicut erat in principio, in sæculis sæculorum*. The Doctor had no *valet*, neither Zelda nor Claudia had a *femme de chambre*, so that he had not to undergo the de-heroizing process of the back-stairs filter. I do not say he would not have made an excellent husband for Claudia. Theirs would have been a match of the truest, firmest, and most sympathetic affection, that begins well, wears well, and ends well. But as a husband who brought but half a heart, as a mere good and honourable man, matched with such a Sylvia of Westphalia and the Oberon as Zelda, what should he be? A Count of Falkenstein, a stage tenor to a *prima donna*, or a broken-down man, crushed with fatalistic fancies, and with his duty-love of habit and gratitude drawing out her heart's love like a vampyre until she woke up one morning to find her veins drained dry? He is no favourite of mine, any more than of fortune, but I own him worthy of a better destiny. In considering his character I find no flagrant fault, not any so-called weakness, whereon to lay my hand. He was brave. He was a man of his word. Therefore a gentleman. He was prompt and ready when his wits or knowledge or instruments were required, his active sympathies and help ever ready, his industry and independence almost extreme, his life temperate and pure. All who knew him would have called him a good man; those who only heard of him would have called him a strong man. And yet he is no favourite of mine. And he has proved himself no hero, and yet he was fought for and loved as if he had been a very hero of romance. I suppose that Claudia and Zelda looked at him with hero-making women's eyes, and I with the hero-unmaking eyes of a fellow-man—or it may be with his own over-self-analysing eyes.

But Zelda was in the seventy times seventh heaven of content, or rather of joy. She loved not the imperfect hero, but the imperfect man; nor was she repelled by a want of special heart-sympathy which wore the air of lofty strength to her. She only half-wondered how her impossible harvest had now been actually reaped and garnered—it seemed to her that all things must have come to pass with such love as hers. Her jealousy of Claudia fled away like a nightmare at morning—she judged all things, and all others, by herself, and could not imagine the case of a man's giving his life to one, while he left his heart in the hands of another.

Though she had herself lived three lives, Zelda, Sylvia, and Pauline, they were now at length merged in one, nor could she ever attain to the complicated idea of a man dividing himself into two. The bond of marriage, which she had been told by two men who were both, of course, so infinitely wiser than herself, and of whom one was the wise man *par excellence*, was the expression and fulfilment of love, must of course also prove to her that world of two in one within an outer world of many of which Harold Vaughan had spoken, and thus solve the secret of all mysteries.

She, knowing and caring nothing about forms or laws, held herself to be his wife from the moment when Harold Vaughan had said his "I will" in the bush-chapel under the stars. She would have needed nothing more. But she listened patiently and attentively while her husband explained to her the need there was, from his point of view, to make her his wife according to the laws of men. The Curate of St. Catherine's had not been wrong in his estimate of Harold Vaughan's respect for diviner laws; but to have omitted placing her in the best position possible would have seemed to him like taking advantage of innocence and purity. She wondered a little that he should still care so much about the ways of men, and that he should pay regard to what others might think or say of him or her; but it was enough for her that it was His desire. But though to him they were merely betrothed, she was never weary of telling herself that she was now his wife, his world, in order that she might realise, as soon as might be, the glory of such a paradise, and he could see that all the forms in the world could not bind her to him more closely than she was already bound. And therefore, in truth, though not by law, he was none the less closely bound to her.

They still had a little money left from the sale of the watch, and the disposal of Zelda's few remaining trinkets, and of their clothes, managed through the old gipsy, brought them a little more. His plan was to strike northwards till they reached Scotland, where Vaughan had an idea that they might become husband and wife according to law without the difficulties which he could not bring himself to face in England. He put on a second or third hand suit of common clothes. Zelda, with the delight of a *belle* dressing for a ball, returned to her old costume of the scarlet hood, in which he had first seen her at Lessmouth. It was her sole piece of extravagance, and she revelled in the purchase, nor could she rest until she had run down the hill to admire herself in the stream. It was thus he found her one afternoon, leaning over the rough rail of a bridge, smiling at her own image, and singing softly to herself the close of her fatal song—

> Through mirk or glim I'd sail with him
> If he would sail with me.

It was then he told her of his plan, and she answered almost in the very words of Ruth to Naomi:

"Where you go I'll go too. Your wishes shall be my wishes—all and always—your love shall be my love. Oh, tell me I look beautiful in my new red shawl!"

It was so obviously impossible to settle down anywhere with such a wife as she, and with his own unsettled and vagrant heart—perhaps the gipsy blood in him was beginning to break out in the free air—that, after revolving every alternative, he determined to bind himself apprentice to his host, and, instead of mending broken legs and arms, to mend broken pots and pans. He could thus repay the cost of the hospitality he had received, and learn to gain his living in the only way by which he could fulfil his duty of making his bride happy. And in such a life, who could tell the good he might not do? He would be an apostle of light to those who need an apostle from among themselves—to the great *imperium in imperio* of thieves and Bohemians who are such because from their birth they are taught to read the book of social ethics upside down, and because they suspect those who come from without to preach to them of trying to deceive them for private ends.

To the old gipsy the look of Zelda the prophetess was law, and the Rom who was wise among the Gorgios was himself a prophet, and a mate for her. I am not sure that Harold did not sink a little on two occasions in his estimation—when he first tried in vain to mend a tin kettle, and when he objected to take part in snaring a hare. But the third kettle the pupil mended as well as the master, and the objection to hare-snaring became a proof of occult wisdom in a man who could tie up a cut more skilfully than an old woman, and who could read like a parson.

The first book he bought out of his earnings for the edification of his companions was the *Pilgrim's Progress*, by their fellow-craftsman—perhaps their fellow-countryman. It was a wise choice, for it made the old man listen, and turned Zelda's vague fancies into thoughts with names, that led to endless questions that took days to answer.

He could not forget Claudia; but the time was not come when a man of his stamp would weary of so simple and savage a life, and of only having to exercise a cultivated mind in being spiritual director to an old man and a young girl, without zeal for the soul of the one, or all-sufficing love for the other. Meanwhile, however, the thought of Claudia, the true helpmeet for him, though undying, was lulled into a troubled sleep. As they wandered on by short journeys, every day was well filled with itself. He worked hard at his trade, earned hunger and fatigue, and Zelda had not nearly reached the end of a legitimate interest that, while it lasted, was no bad substitute for the heart-love which she craved.

There was no apparent reason why such a lull should not go on for ever. But when did false calm ever fail yet to come to an end? Poor Zelda! it was only due to her that she should have one brief season of happiness in a world of which love could not reveal all the secrets.

"Thus they went on," read Harold Vaughan, one evening, "talking of what they had seen by the way, and so made that way easy which would otherwise no doubt have been tedious to them; for now they went through a wilderness. Now when they were got almost quite out of this wilderness, FAITHFUL chanced to cast his eye back, and spied one coming after them, and he knew him. Oh, said FAITHFUL to his brother, who comes yonder? Then——"

It was not Evangelist. Harold's eyes were upon his book, the old gipsy's were on the reader; but Zelda's had a trick of wandering upwards, and they caught sight of a well-known figure crossing the hillside in front of them. She shuddered, for she saw him who now represented all evil to her, and her soul shrank together, like a sparrow before the coming storm. She did not hear a word as Harold read on:—

"Then CHRISTIAN looked and said, It is my good friend EVANGELIST. Aye, and my good friend too, said FAITHFUL, for it was he that set me the way to the gate. Now as EVANGELIST came up unto them, he thus saluted them: Peace be with you, dearly beloved, and peace be to your helpers."

The reading was over, and the figure on the hillside passed by.

The next day Zelda was left with the tent alone. The old man and his apprentice had to visit a circle of three or four hamlets to look for pots and pans, and did not expect to return before nightfall.

They had left the lurcher to guard the tent and the girl, who set to work to prepare dinner according to the best culinary traditions of her people. She had been well trained in that respect by Aaron, and though Harold was no epicure, the old man and herself—for her soul was lodged in a singularly healthy house—liked to live well. Not even happy love could deprive her of her liking for roast fowl, and she was a *connoisseur* in spring water.

Through mirk or glim,

she hummed, when the lurcher pricked up his ears. She trembled. Was her vision of Aaron Goldrick about to prove reality?

It was not Aaron Goldrick. It was a lady and gentleman—the former in deep black—walking, not arm-in-arm, but side by side. Zelda's far-seeing eyes gave the lie to her lips, which exclaimed "impossible!" Up went her scarlet hood over her black eyes and down over her face till it reached her chin. Scarcely, even had she left her face uncovered, would anyone have recognised Mademoiselle Pauline Leczinska, late of the Oberon, in a vagrant gipsy girl. There would have been a singular, perhaps startling resemblance—nothing more.

The lady in crape stood a little back while the gentleman came near. She left her pot, and dropped him a silent curtsey.

"That's the picturesque made easy, by Jupiter!" he said, taking off his hat and bowing politely to the gipsy girl. "I'm a Bohemian

myself, but here's the real thing. Why it's near as real as Vauxhall—a regular Michael Angelo. Come, my pretty girl—I know you are one—put up that hood of yours; this lady here's a great painter, and she'll draw you, hang you, and quarter you too—unless she likes profile or three-quarters—before you know where you are. It doesn't hurt, I promise you."

"Does the pretty lady want her fortune?" asked Zelda in a sing-song whine.

"No, thank you," said Claudia, coming forward; "I don't care about my fortune. I only want to ask you——"

Carol whispered to her. "You had better," he said. "You won't get nothing for nothing. The lady only wants to ask you her way," he said to Zelda. "We've been out rather a long walk, and want to get home. But if you can tell fortunes——"

"Is it gold fortune or silver fortune for your dear lady?"

"A gold fortune, please—all gold—the very best article on the premises."

Claudia held out her hand. Zelda took it, and the spirit of triumph over her rival came upon her with a strength too exciting to withstand.

"Now listen to me," she half chaunted in a monotonous and high-pitched whine. "It's a gold fortune. There's plenty of gold; but the line of life's long, and the line of money runs dry. No more gold after a while. You'll be rich and you'll be poor. Isn't it true? Now listen to me. I'm a true girl, I am, and don't give lies for gold. If you don't like your Fortune, it's the lines, not me. There's a dark young man you're fond of—I see him as plain as you—and he'll be in trouble and out again. Isn't it true? But he isn't fond of you, nor never will be, want as you will—That'll make her hand shake," thought Zelda: but no; it lay in hers as steady as if made of diamond. It was Zelda's hand that trembled—not Claudia's. "No, I can't make him fond of you, not if you fill my fists with guineas. And he'll marry a dark girl, and go over the sea, and you'll never see him again. But be of good heart, my pretty lady; there's as good fish in the river as ever was brought ashore, and maybe there's a fair young man with moustachios not far away as'll ask you to marry him, and then you'll think on the poor gipsy's words. Thank you, my lady—a good wedding to your ladyship and many of them, if so be you've a mind."

Her shot, intended to be cruel, missed fire; indeed, Claudia scarcely heard what she took for the common-form nonsense about dark girls and fair young men.

"How many are there of you here?" asked Claudia. "Am I right in thinking you have with you an old man and a young gentleman, who is amusing himself in going about the country? Are they here? I am a relation of the young gentleman, and have the most important news for him, and I must see him. You can take a message, I suppose?"

To say that Zelda felt jealous would be absurd. An eagle is not

jealous when guarding her nest, and her love was more to her than if she had been a mother-eagle. She would have denied the young gentleman's existence had she dared; but she dared run no more risks of offending him, and, otherwise, she was not afraid. Her husband was her own, and was not to be torn from her the length of an inch by the hand of woman.

"I dare say I can take a message," she answered, curiously.

"Tell him that I wish to see him. Give him this," and she wrote her name with a pencil, and a few words more. "When will he be back here again?"

"Before sundown."

"I will come again at seven. It is most important, mind. Here is something more for you."

"Good-bye, my dear," said Carol, kissing his hand. "You shall tell my fortune the next time."

Zelda curtsied, watched them out of sight, and then tore up the paper and threw the pieces, with Claudia's money, into the fire.

"She may come back if she likes, she and Carol, but we'll be on another three miles or more by then," she thought, and returned to her cooking. She was more than a little nervous; but she was not going to leave a loophole for a change of fortune now. Claudia must be nothing to him, even a visitor; Zelda must be all. Good or bad news, Harold must now and henceforth know nothing but her.

Suddenly she looked up from her pot to see, on the turf before her, her demon—Aaron. He was lying down like an overwearied man, and he did not even take the trouble to attract her attention.

"So, my young woman," he said, "it's a long time since you've seen me—you hoped it might be longer, maybe."

"I hope it may be for ever. What brings you here?"

"Where else should I come but where you are, that I brought up like as if you'd been my own child? No, I'm not come to stay. I only waited till the coast's clear, and I could say a word to yourself—that's all. No, nor you won't call out. Your friends are far off, and *my* friend—that's my mistress, Miss Brandt—won't be back till I heard when. Maybe you don't call to mind what's between you and me? We're in the same boat, we are."

Zelda fired up, but could not hide her fear of what this double visit might forebode. "If you are found out—if you are running away, you had better be gone. It's true I'm alone, but you mayn't be best pleased if I put the dog at you."

"And you mayn't be best pleased if you don't hear what I've got to say. I know how to quiet dogs, I do—you ought to know that, any how. I'm done, I am—done black. I've been sold by a Gorgio—Benguilango take her: and there she goes."

"Be off. She is nothing to me, nor you."

"She's nothing to you, is she? If she isn't, I'm a scragged man—

and if I'm a scragged man you're a scragged woman, for by heaven I'll give myself up and you for an accomplice."

"Fool!—as though he would believe you before me. Is it to tell me such fools' tales you come here?"

"Fool, am I? Fool yourself, Miss Zelda, if that's your name still. So you don't care for aught but him?"

"I care for no-one now but my husband—if you mean Harold Vaughan."

"And I suppose you think he cares for nought but you? I'm done by a she-devil, Zelda my girl, and so are you. You listen to me, and then say if we're together again, you and I, yes or no."

CHAPTER IX.

AARON'S MOTHER'S LEGACY.

"I AM listening," said Zelda. Even now he was hateful to her because he was Aaron—not simply because his hands were blood-stained. Murder, as I have said, was to her but death, so long as the victim was not Harold Vaughan.

"And so," he said, when he had told her how he had entered Claudia's service, "there was I, a rat in one of Mag's mouse-traps, poor old woman, with a cat to watch me. But I'm a rat the cats are not made to kill. 'Twasn't long, I can tell you, before I began to be Fly-eyed Jack again. The fool of a girl! I kept my light burning rather late the second night, and I thought I heard——"

"You were in the cellar," interrupted Zelda, scornfully.

"Where else the devil should I be? I *was* in the cellar, and I thought I heard a dress move behind a door. But what could I think my lady the painter should be doing out of her warm bed down there? The next night I felt sure: three nights after I knew I was being watched and followed all day and all night. She wasn't made for a detective, not she. I thought for a minute it might be her whim, just to see I wasn't cheating her, or anything that way; but when I thought again, 'twas queer. And all the while she was as soft to me as her own hand. Who's this Miss Brandt, thinks I, a lady born, that hires a lone house in Old Wharf Side, and follows about a poor unfortunate fellow as if she was soft on him? If she'd look after me, I'd ask about her. It made me slap my leg to hear she was the merchant's girl that broke her leg and was mended by—Doctor Vaughan."

"By Doctor Vaughan?"

"By him, and nobody else; and what's more, there was town talk he'd marry her. I got that from the landlord of the George, that used to know—well, a son of mine. Yes, I'm a father, though you mightn't think it to see how I wear. So now I was as sharp as her own needle. I dodged her about, trick for trick; but I had to find my money first

before I showed her my heels. Now comes the devilry—read that there. That's what I found in her desk ready for posting. So I just thought it best to make a copy. Oh you can't read yet, can't you, for all your living with earls and doctors? Then just listen here—who it's to I don't know—but listen. 'Lose no time in coming down. The man is in the house now, and suspects nothing. He entered my service in a false name, and gave a false account of himself. He spends all his time in the cellar. I know he is searching thoroughly, for I laid a sovereign under a brick, and next morning it was gone. *He was the woman's own husband*: the old woman told me of her son, you know. I searched, and he is, or was, the son of Aaron Goldrick and of Margaret Romani, who were married in the parish church of Marshmead. Margaret Romani was the housekeeper of Squire Maynard, and he was a pedlar. That was notorious. There are suspicions and a connecting link at once. But there is more than that. I have found, what with your identification, which we can say was held back in order not to put the real murderer on his guard, or for other reasons we can think of, will convict him if there is any justice or common sense in England—and if not, there is Lord Lisburn's case to come afterwards. Do you come down and arrest him here. The conclusive proof of his guilt that I speak of, apart from your identifying him, is that——"

"Well?" asked Zelda, dreamily.

"Confound her—just as I had copied so far, in she comes on tip-toe. She saw what I was about as plain as Peter, but made believe to be as blind as a mole—so then I saw what was up. She hadn't seen me copying nor reading, but I was huddling the desk up when I heard her dress in the passage, and hadn't time to make all square. 'I'm going into the country for a day, John,' she says as sweet as sugar. 'All right, my lady'—so off she went, and I followed at a respectful distance behind. And where did her trail lead but to you and Harold Vaughan? By the lame devil, Zelda, if you've been telling tales and that letter's to you—for there's no one else on earth was by—I'll brain you as I brained Mag, if I swing twice over."

"I?" said Zelda. "What have I to do with Her? As sure as I live, though I hate you, you are safe from me. Only leave me alone. I have put my husband between him and her. Why do you come to me?"

"What have you to do with her? You blind mole! Ask yourself what she has to do with the Doctor if she swings me. Hasn't she been working for him because she's fond of him? Hasn't he been fond of her? If he could have got her, do you think a Gorgio gentleman 'd have been strolling about the country with the likes of you? Isn't she after him this minute to ask him to marry her for what she's done for him?—for I don't guess that nothing for nothing is the way with the Gorgios any more than with the Roma. No, no—we're in the same boat, my girl; if she lives, she'll swing me and she'll whistle off your swell, and then—well, you'll be sorry, I suppose. *If she lives*—that's

what I say. And I count she must live and do her worst," he said with a whine. "I daren't show my nose any more—it's all up with Fly-eyed Jack, any-how. But I'm real Rom, I am, and I won't be meat for a Gorgio hangman. Look there, my girl—I mean to tramp on while I can, and puzzle the fools. But when I'm driven down to a corner—and if she lives I shall in a week, may-be—I thought of that as I came along and went into a doctor's shop and bought what I put into this here bottle, that'll do you know what for you know who. I'll swallow it in a ditch, and then they may do what they like. It'll be all one to Fly-eyed Jack then—he'll have conjured himself under ground. If she lives, it'll be *Felo de Gibbet* or *Felo de Se.*"

Zelda felt as if turned to ice—but not for him.

"Read me the letter again. What does she know? what does she mean?"

"Ah, if I knew that, the old fox would laugh at the young hen. It means she's spotted the thimble, that's all. It's no good; I'm a broken, hunted down old man; nothing's gone right with me since I took to the managing line. That's ruin—ruin—black and blue. No, 'twasn't your fault, my girl, though you would take my chair at supper. I forgive you—when a man's going to drink off that bottle he can't think of little things. You know the stuff: 'twas my poor old mother's, and there was nobody like her for mixing gruel. She kept it for *drabbing bala*—for the pigs and such like—little she knew 'twould be good for her son! Ah, those old women knew a thing or two, when the crowners weren't so sharp, and people just drank what came, and slept for the long night, and there was an end. 'Tisn't bad—it's rather good in brandy—a few drops 'll do. It makes you giddy and faint, and reel, and then drunk and jolly, and then you go in no time.* The rope—no, thank you, my lord Judge, not for Fly-eyed Jack when he can do the trick by leger-de-main."

"Tell me—why do you come to me?"

"I thought you might have been telling tales, that's all. But you're a good girl, Zelda, a very good girl. Only take care of that girl—she's brewing mischief. I always meant right by you, Zelda—indeed I did; we always were in the same boat, and we're in the same now. Hulloa—there go your dog's ears. Come—take a fellow's hand, just for old times."

"You are a blackguard *Tshor*, and I hope you'll be hanged," she said, while her whole body quivered and her face turned white. "Be off with you to the Devil."

He threw her a last look with his evil eyes and departed—I trust not according to her commands, for I doubt if those who act blindly because

* The late Mrs. Goldrick, or more probably one of her fore-mothers, had probably invented some ingenious decoction of the *Atropa Belladonna*, or Deadly Night-shade. But chemists, like most people, are not unlike Horatio in the matter of philosophy.

they have no eyes are to be blamed over-much because they cannot see. I do not trust that he cheated the hangman any more than I hope that the tiger may cheat the hunter; but that with him, as with his wife, Death may expiate all errors—or let us call them sins—I will both hope and believe with certain of the Rabbis, without much caring whether the creed be orthodox or no.

He was gone; but with singular carelessness after having taken so much trouble, he left his bottle on the floor. It was a small, flat, glass travelling flask, with a cork stopper, and the contents looked like water, but had a singularly unpleasant and pungent odour. It was the vintage of death, and that she knew. But she did not send it after Claudia's coins.

CHAPTER X.

"PÆTE, NON DOLET."

ZELDA had not the faintest sympathy with her old friend Aaron. He might be hanged on the gibbet like a man, or die in a ditch like a dog, for anything she cared, and the sooner the better—he would intrude with his evil eyes upon her new life no more. But Claudia, her old rival—was the "at last" ever to be postponed even after apparent fulfilment; and was there to be no life, new or old, secure from intrusion by her? It was true that her husband had now become all her own by that mysterious bond of marriage in which she had been taught to trust: but in spite of her recent happiness she had felt that something was wanting, and that while Claudia lived, the something could never wholly come. It was a terrible thought that, after all, her husband might only have bestowed upon her the shell of a soul to which Claudia, by right of a first irrevocable gift, had a right even stronger than her own.

Putting herself in her rival's place she thought:

"I, Claudia,"—as if it had been I, Zelda—"gave him all Me before he had ever seen this girl: he gave me all Him. Fortune parted us; I denied her right, and have conquered Fortune. Who is Zelda to stand any more between us now—the girl who could do nothing but give you her love and her black face when I have given you back all things you have lost—myself and more? I am fair, and beautiful, and wise: she is dark, and little, and ugly, and cannot even read. She can only love you and be your slave; I can be your sword and your shield. You were hers because you were unhappy; your happiness is mine, and is for me. You were hers for want of me, but you cannot take back your soul.

"But no," she exclaimed almost aloud, as she rose up and threw back her scarlet hood from her hair. "I, too, have earned his soul with love that was poured out freely, and was not held back until the sky was clear. I shared the storm with him—I have a right to share the sunshine, from whatever hands it comes; and if the sunshine must dry up the storm we share together, then let it never come. Not she, not any

woman, can give him love like mine, and the rain of love is better, even for him, than her cold sunshine. I can give him the better part —if she were only dead and underground or above the skies, I should have no fear. I would love him till the rain of love, though ceaseless, made the flowers spring that sunbeams wither and that smell the sweetest in showers. He should teach me all things—life would give time enough—till I became only less wise than he. I would not fear when she became less and I more to him day by day, if only there were no hideous chance of his beholding again her blue eyes and yellow hair, and of her tempting him back to that world I am teaching him to forget, and that I hate with all my soul. I will not give him up: he is mine now for ever. If she were only dead—if she had only never been born!"

What, indeed, would she not do to keep him now? She had become rich and great—that had failed. She had degraded herself, she had ruined him, she had been ready to commit any crime for him—and could she remove her hand from the plough now, when there only stood between her and him one last furrow before the field of love was fully sown that she might spend all the rest of her life-time in harvesting? Claudia might glean a few ears of memory, and welcome; to have triumphed over a rival would have formed part of her joy. Besides, marriage had given her a right to defend her own—even to death if need be.

It is just possible that if she had not been the child of Herr Maynard and Marietta Romani, if she had been to school, had heard sermons, had broken up her capacities for passion in ball-room flirtations, had read books and newspapers, had been brought up outside the kingdom of temptation, and had been, in short, somebody else, that—she would have been somebody else. I do not think I can go farther. I am the biographer of Zelda, and do not pretend that there are not many better members of society. But then good members are made to order—Zelda was made only in so far as she had been born. One judges a stone fresh from the quarry for its possibilities as raw material, and does not blame it for not being cut as well or as badly as the Koh-i-noor, which has been adapted for men's admiration or otherwise by men's hands.

The lurcher had pricked up his ears for his master and his master's apprentice, who was his mistress's master. Zelda, while the old gipsy went aside to tether his ass in a convenient feeding-place, crept up to the tinker's apprentice beseechingly.

"Harold," she implored, "tell me—am I enough for you?"

He looked down upon her gently.

"Do you doubt it, Zelda? Is not a whole woman's life enough for any man?"

"Could you ever change—could you ever leave me for a woman who loved you less than I——"

"Are you not my wife, Zelda? Could I ever wish to leave you?"

"Never?"

"Never."

"Come what may?"

"Never—come what may. Why do you ask me now?"

"I like to hear you say so—that's all. I have been so long alone—and by oneself one thinks of everything—when I'm with you I only think of you."

"Don't be foolish any more, then—be quite sure."

She did not feel the want of passion in his tone, but was half-content again.

"And when," she asked, "are we going on? Weren't we to move to-day?"

"We were," he answered, and her face fell; "but see there what work we have to do, and all before to-morrow. We must make up a forge, and hammer half the night through."

The battle must be fought, then. "You are quite sure," she said, yet more beseechingly, "that you will let me love you always? That you will never be tired of my loving you?"

"Always and always—never and never. There—will that please you?"

How could she, who trusted his every word, withhold her belief from what she so longed to believe?

The old gipsy returned. She took the fowl from the pot, and when the meal was over the two men prepared for work—the apprentice had inoculated the master with some of his own energy—and Zelda seated herself on the end of the wall to look on. She was no longer unhappy, but she listened to every distant sound, for she knew who was coming to break in upon their peaceful days of rest and labour. Oh, if they could only have escaped before that hateful fair woman's hour was due! Fate seemed to be ever against her, never with her, and only to slumber in order that its attacks might be renewed. The evening felt close and oppressive, as if in sympathy with her own mood—when does Nature, the mother, friend, and consoler of us all, ever fail to sympathise at once with all her children? To one, her rain is like sunshine; to another, her sunshine like a storm. Claudia felt no oppression in the air when, having left her conveyance in the road, she came up the hill-side of the common. No turf was ever so springy, no breeze so fresh and pure. If she had not come to find love, she had come to find its best reward—she had come to give back to her lover all he had lost, and if he cared not to claim her willing hand, she could return to find some other work and duty, with a sigh, indeed, but with a heart that all the blows of misfortune had hardened as blows harden steel, and not broken, as they break crystal. Zelda, like a tigress, began to crouch together for the final struggle. Claudia came up the hill like Una, or like him who had

> The strength of ten,
> Because his heart was pure.

Carol was with her, as before. How he managed to be for ever and always at her beck and call, was probably more than he himself knew. He never even suggested a renewal of his suit, but threw himself light-heartedly—as if assured of Claudia's triumph—into the cause of Harold Vaughan. He had at once rejected all thought of consideration for himself in his intended appearance at Aaron's trial.

"Let them call me coward and cur," he had said to her, "I'll be as true as you are. I'll let them call me so, but we'll do better, Sempronius—that is, Miss Brandt, I mean—we *won't* deserve it. *You* shan't call me so, anyway."

It was an intensely picturesque scene that met Claudia's artist-eye as she reached the level, and then looked down into the little hollow scooped just over its lee shoulder. The sun was setting, and the gorse and heather were just changing from gold and purple into rosy grey. Beyond stretched a broad valley, with a lake-like river of dull silver in the middle distance, and beyond that a dark, softly-outlined chain of hills, and beyond that the evening glow. In front of all was the low tent, like the last touch of peace upon a peaceful scene, with three human figures to give human interest—the grey-haired gipsy blowing up his fire, the young man stripped to the shirt and with bare arms standing by, and the little scarlet-hooded girl perched on the end of the rough stone wall, at whose feet the lurcher was basking in a dog's dream of a Valhalla of eternal hares. For sound, the rooks' rearguard was cawing restward, the grasshoppers were saying good-night, and the June-beetles good-morning, while the brook was finding his quiet voice that was lost by day.

It needed no dog to tell Zelda of the approach of her enemy. Claudia had scarcely caught sight of the scarlet hood than it disappeared among the bushes. Harold Vaughan looked up, and found himself face to face with Claudia. Carol nodded to him and waved his hand from a distance, but let Claudia go forward, and sat down to kill time by whistling on the softest mound he could find.

The old gipsy also looked up and saw the lady. Harold Vaughan excused himself hurriedly, and went forward. She held out her hand—he just touched it. Why had she come back to trouble him when he was doing his utmost to believe her part of a vanished dream, and to forget her for Zelda's sake and her own?

"I have wonderful news—good news—for you," Zelda heard her say from behind the bush. "It will not keep an instant. Where can I speak to you?" and Zelda saw the drawing-mistress and the tinker's apprentice move aside.

The poor girl had long ago given up all idea of being a conventional lady, and it will be remembered that she had never regarded eaves-dropping as unbecoming that complex character. She followed them with her eyes, till she traced them to a gorse-covered mound, and then, throwing off her tell-tale scarlet, followed them, keeping almost as

close to the ground as one of the rabbits that were just coming out to their evening parties. They had so much start of her that she could not hear all they had to say, but she was in time for much more.

Not to feel for Harold Vaughan would be to be pitiless indeed, whether he is accounted weak or strong, blameless or blameable. Claudia told her story simply, and without a word that might seem as though she had put herself forward more than everyone is bound to do who hates injustice and will not have the innocent suffer for the guilty. But he could not fail to see through her modest disguise. She too, like Zelda, had devoted herself to him; but how? One had suffered ruin to fall upon him, in order that she might become his sole remnant of the world; the other had triumphantly devoted herself to the task of saving him from ruin. While Zelda had been creating dangers and troubles, she had quietly braved them and won—she had enabled him to offer her once more an unruined life and a stainless name. And now the cup was offered him only to be dashed from his lips once more. If he had only been faithful indeed—if only through good and ill, through hope and despair, through honour and shame alike he had been true to her, even when her image became dim, dreamlike, and unattainable—even when to hope for her seemed folly, and constancy itself put on the disguise of a sin!

But it was too late. He knew that she loved him—he had never ceased to love her. With her, and with the regained honour due to her, he might face the world again, and re-enter bravely upon his career—his battle with his own ill-fortune and the world's sickness and sorrow. Poor Zelda! Though she loved him, what could she ever be to him any more? She would destroy his life, and give him nothing but her love in return: and what was that to him? But he was not bound to Claudia, and he was bound to Zelda—by chains that, he knew as well as she, needed not the church's sanction or the law's to make them firmer when riveted on the wrists of an honest man. It was too late indeed.

He sat by Claudia's side in mute despair. But how could any man, however strong, however honest—for what man has the strength of a god or angel?—how could any man face such a future without flinching?—how could he be expected to rivet such chains upon his own wrists with his own hands?

I know not what words Claudia expected from him when she had ended her story, and had told how it only wanted Aaron's certain capture and conviction to remove the last lingering shadow from his name. I do know the words he burned to say; but what need to tell what must now be never breathed? He sat in silence, and—it must be owned—thought how, with a good conscience, he could break his chains. He was not married to Zelda after all—what sin could there be, if he must at last be driven to exercise his Free Will and grasp Fortune by the throat, in preferring her whom he loved to her who only loved him? Something told him, indeed, that Claudia could bear the choice, and that Zelda could not bear it—that

he was as responsible for Zelda's future as if he were the actual creator of her soul. Zelda, after all, his conscience whispered, had given him most, for Claudia would still have kept back much; she would never have yielded her truth, her courage, her very inmost soul of souls, even for love's sake; while Zelda, if she had had them, would have yielded them all—nay, have thrown them at his feet, and have let him trample them into the ground.

But if "Too Late" was the sum of all his life to him, past, present, and to come, what swords were left in language to pierce Zelda's heart as she listened to the latter half of Claudia's tale? She who had wrested her rival's secret, almost *clairvoyante*-fashion, from her in London, found it an easy task to read between the lines now. All was as she had feared, and far beyond. Nor could she fail to read yet worse than the utmost she had feared—her husband's attitude of silent despair. She, who knew every turn of his face, saw into his heart even more clearly than into that of her fellow-woman. And even yet she did not despair—if only Claudia were not alive. What were his own very last words—that his life was hers, come what may? Claudia was a serpent in the road, that stood between her and happiness, between him and her. Her heart began to throb so violently that she feared its beatings might be heard. She laid her hand upon it, and felt the glass flask that Aaron had left in her way. Was this the hand of fate also? Was it chance or was it some friendly spirit that had armed her so seasonably with such a sword?

How could she doubt? She was indeed Sylvia, and the lives of Sylvia and Falkenstein were in her hands. A few drops brought to Claudia in an innocent cup of spring water would do more than save Aaron from the gallows by ridding him of his active foe. It would clear her last furrow, and remove the last cloud from her sky. They had driven her soul to bay at last—let them know what she would do to save her soul.

"I will destroy her for his sake," she thought. "He shall not lose a love like mine for all else in the world. She may give him all things, but I can give him all, and more than all."

She had never heard of "Thou shalt do no murder;" and in truth her plight was sore. After being raised so unexpectedly, so gloriously, to the very topmost pinnacle of supreme happiness, it was indeed too much for her flesh and blood to bear. So great was her agony that it amounted to almost unbearable pain, and the two lovers—for such, in spite of all things, they were—must have been intensely absorbed with themselves and their own troubles not to have heard her almost betray her presence by an audible moan. It was not without anguish that even she could reach happiness by staining her hands with blood, even though she would never have blamed Claudia for doing the same by her.

She pressed the flask more closely to her bosom, as if to quell the pain; she never doubted for an instant since the idea had grown up from its root and taken a definite form. It would be so easy—and then no more Claudia, no one but Harold all the rest of her days.

"What was that?" asked Claudia, starting: "did I not hear a noise?"

Her voice broke the spell that transformed Harold into a statue of doubt and despair. It might be the act of a scoundrel to break with Zelda, but hope could not all be dead while Claudia was there by his side; and how could he, in any case, bear to feel that she would leave him there for ever, after all she had done, believing him to be ungrateful, unfaithful, all things that men and women most despise?

"Claudia," he asked at last, "what should you think of a man who —deserted and friendless as I thought myself—not daring to go to her, even, from whom he thought himself cut off for ever by all men's condemnation——"

"You dared not come to *me*? But I understand—I should have done the same!"

"What should you think of him if—a girl that he had hated and scorned, a large-souled woman, who had given him love for hate and worship for scorn; had given up rank, wealth, and fame for him, and had said I will be your sister—your friend——"

Claudia trembled in her turn. "I should have loved her, and thanked her, and I will. Who was she?"

"If the woman—how can I tell you, Claudia?—had given up all these things for the man, caring for nothing but him alone—if they two were alone in the whole world—if she had made herself so utterly dependent upon him that he owed her the devotion of a life in return for hers—if to leave her would be to destroy her—what should he have done?"

"I guess what you mean," said Claudia, in a low tone.

"Should you call it faithlessness to his one love, if he gave its dead ashes—as he was bound to think them—to one to whom fate had thus bound him——"

"I should not call it faithlessness—no, but I should call it—well, I must say it—despair." Was it this, then, she had come to hear? Claudia was not the less to be pitied because she was best able to bear. What is strength of soul but a larger capacity for suffering? Zelda, who heard all, was enraged at her rival's apparent coldness, and pressed her flask harder still. A woman had no right to live who contained herself at such a confession from Harold Vaughan.

"But—if this was all in error—if he found that to give his life where he could not give his heart would make all unhappy—if nothing any longer stood between him and her he loved, and had always loved, but that mistaken thing you have guessed—What then? Must he wreck the happiness of all three—of two women and one man—because he had been too weak to wait for the triumph of truth——"

"He must be indeed unhappy," sighed Claudia. "But all things must be looked in the face—even this thing. There is nothing in this life too hard for man to bear, too fearful to be met bravely. I understand you. I will not say how well. . . . He is married to this girl?"

"By no church—by no law. He may leave her to forget him; he may guard her still, but——"

"But the bond you speak of—is it his word?"

"His error—his wretched doubt—his cowardice—his despair. Claudia—I must say it—I love you, more even than in the old days—more even than when the words were on my tongue, when——"

"No more of this, Harold. Do you wish to kill me? You love me, you say. Then be strong and brave, and follow duty; that is the only love I know. God knows," she said, forgetting at last her life-long self-restraint, "I would give up all things, even myself, for you, and I will. But by you I mean your honour, which is my life—which I made my life ever since that terrible day. You are not bound to me, not even by gratitude. To her you are bound, if I understand you rightly, by all that can bind a man to a woman—by her devotion, her love, and your word—by everything I can dream of. You speak of unhappiness. You must think first of hers, last of yours and of mine. Well, my happiness is in knowing you to be—all that I have always known you were."

"Claudia—I cannot—you are bidding me more than man can do. My strength is my love for you. Do you not love me, then, after all?"

"God knows I do. I need make no secret of it now. I have loved you more than you ever knew."

Even Zelda thought her cold no more. She pressed the flask still closer. What was yet to come?

"And yet," began Harold, "you say you love me, and yet——"

"And yet—no, therefore, I tell you to do by her, whoever she may be—I will not even ask who—all that you owe to honour. You owe me nothing—her all; and I have learned enough to know that happiness does not come of seeking it—does not come of striving for it—perhaps to most of us—to me, to you, never comes at all, but there is always what is right and what is wrong. I shall have more to bear than you, dear Harold, and for your sake I will bear it all to the end. Yes, if you are faithless now to her, you are faithless to me."

"And for this shadow of a tie——"

"A shadow—do you call love a shadow? And how great hers must be!"

Harold groaned aloud. "And is this tie all? If it were not for that you would let me give my life where my heart is——"

"Ah, that if! *If* only all things were not as they are, wrong might be right, perhaps, and right be wrong."

"But—do not let me be quite miserable—give me one ray of light in my darkness. You are right—I own it; there is but one way left to be worthy of you. Only let me have the wretched comfort that if it had not been too late—if it were not for this bond of honour——"

Poor Zelda! Might marriage, then, prove to be not a bond of love, but only of honour, after all?

"If it were not for his bond of honour," he went on, "it is you who

might have been my wife—the word I must hate evermore—and that it is not want of your love that parts us, but hideous duty?"

"Have you not long been answered? I can say no more. But hideous duty? Is that the word of Harold?"

"Forgive me—I am going mad, I believe."

"Harold, it must be. We must bow to what God wills, and wait for the end. Promise me one thing for my sake."

"All things."

"Be kind and true to her, brave and strong for her, as you would have been for me. I do not say it will give you happiness—nor me—but it will give us both all the work on earth that man or woman needs. It is for my sake. Perhaps—perhaps—one day—but not here—we may meet again." She had broken down at last, but even then her heart was firm. "Promise me, dear Harold," she said again.

He took her hand, and the promise, though unspoken, was sealed. The promise was their good-bye.

But Zelda? Alas! which love looked the greater, after all? I know not how to tell the rest. Claudia, for very Love's sake, was giving him up to one who held her death in her hand. What natural heart is not touched to its quick by the revelation of a grander soul? Even thus her rival must not triumph over her—his happiness must come from no hands but her own. She, she who loved him with all her mind and strength, heart, body and soul, was the one stumbling-block in the way of his happiness which all her passion burned to ensure. There was no thought of jealousy, no shadow of blame—she had read Claudia's heart, and had understood it all. Love, then, was something still unknown, and she must prove it all. It was she who must still love him the most—even Claudia's love must be out-done.

Slowly she followed them back as they returned to the tent, with her eyes fixed on him. They were as silent as she, for all their hearts were full. They reached the tent at last. Harold pressed Claudia's hand for the last time. It was then that Zelda joined them, as though she had come from some other way. Claudia saw her, and that she was Pauline. She came to her and took her hand.

"Be good to him," she said, softly. Zelda kissed the hand, and formed with her lips the words "I will."

"Will the lady take nothing?" asked the old gipsy. "They should break bread with us, who come from far to see the Queen. You are fair and handsome, my lady: you must have many good years."

She gave him a piece of money. "A glass of water," she said, "and then I will go."

"I will fetch it," said Zelda. The old gipsy noticed something in her tone.

"No—not you," he said. "I'll go." But she was gone.

She took two horn cups and went to the brook, knelt down, and kissed the ground. It was Mother Earth to whom she was praying—her nurse and her refuge: the last quiet cradle of us all.

But she was a born actress, and she was an actress to the end. Without a touch of the theatre, without the thought of a hundred and seventy-seventh bouquet, not indeed of camellias and violets like those of old, but of forget-me-nots and pansies, perhaps, or—it might be—of immortelles, even death would not be Zelda's. She filled the cups: into one she poured the draught that had not been mixed for her. Carol watched her with idle curiosity, and joined her as she returned.

"We've had many a quarrel, haven't we, us two?" she asked him with a gentle smile. "I cheated you with my red cloak, though, although you're the cleverest man in the world. Good-bye, old fellow—we're not like to quarrel now." To the old gipsy she said, as she passed him, "You've been so good, I've got a thought you'll mind what I say if I ever died before I'm old—I'd like to be buried, if they'd let me, just here where we've all been happy together so long." She smiled so sweetly that he smiled at her girl's fancy, and let her go by. Harold Vaughan was not at hand; he had said good-bye to Claudia, and must see the last of her unseen. Then she gave the cup to Claudia, who drank it like one in a fever. And then Zelda put her own lips to the other cup she had filled.

Harold Vaughan, whose soul, now finally overcome, was listlessly contemplating the first star that rose behind the tent, was suddenly startled and brought back to earth by a cry. His surgeon's presence of mind returned—he ran forward. The cry must have been either Claudia's or Zelda's—it was Zelda's. He saw her throw her arms forward, and reel backwards into the arms of Carol. Throwing his own arm round her, he laid her down upon earth, and then read Poison as legibly as if it had been printed on her cold brow. But, once more, it was too late, and he had no remedies at hand. Such as he could extemporise he used—but the witch's potion, compounded he knew not how, had done its work far too well. As Aaron had foretold, she turned first giddy, then faint: her large eyes dilated and sparkled; her face flushed—before the fierce pains came on she grew radiantly beautiful. At last delirium rendered her unconscious of pain. She was Sylvia, Zelda, Pauline, all in turn and all in one, as she had been in her real life's dream. But the delirium also passed away before she died.

She reached out her hand. Claudia, though blind with tears, took it, and placed it in that of Harold Vaughan. She turned her large, bright, dying eyes on Harold; but her last words were for Claudia.

"It was because I loved him," she said triumphantly. "Be good to him, and care for him half as well as me."

Was this also a barren life, only fit to perish and to be put to sleep in Mother Earth's sweet cradle among the hidden blossoms that no man sees? Or was it with her, the self-slain, as with the poor corn-weed, that death was needed to save and to reveal? If so, who would pity her that she passed away with her sacrifice dimly guessed at and unknown?

With such a radiance on her cheek,
  Such glory in her eyes,
With lips whose very tremblings speak,
  How can ye say "She Dies"?
How can ye dream that here the light
  Of life with death is blent
When blindness grows more clear than sight,
  And silence, eloquent?

With angel voices in her ears
  How should she stoop to ours?
How should she weep with earthly tears
  Who smiles on heavenly flowers?
How should we wish that prayer or vow
  Her lingering should renew—
That she, who sings with seraphs now,
  Should speak again with you?

Then pass, lest life should mock belief
  In love, with love's alloy—
Oh pass, lest thou shouldst share our grief
  Who cannot share thy joy.
'Tis o'er—the crowning thorns of pain
  By us, not her, are won—
Our tears, to her, are morning rain—
  Our night, her risen Sun.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

The Fifty-third Card.

What is more glorious on earth or in air than a sea-breeze? Earth, where Harold fought, and Claudia conquered, and Zelda died, not *au revoir*, but *à Dieu!*

Lord Lisburn tarried long enough on the weary shore to give his hand to his old friend, to ensure him the medical patronage of all the generation of Perrotts and Penroses—much forgiving when pardon is sued by an earl for his friend—and to congratulate him on his engagement to Claudia Brandt. Every doctor should be a married man to get on well with that class of patients, and who could make a better doctor's wife than she? But he was not the first to offer his congratulations. Carol was beforehand.

"Miss Brandt," he said to her one day, "you once made me a promise. I know you're going to be married to the man I made what he is, but that doesn't prevent my being head over ears in love with you all the same. You once told me that if something happened you would let me kiss your hand."

"Both, if you like," answered Claudia. Dr. Vaughan was not jealous, and Carol was satisfied, though still the poorest man in the world.

And then, at last, for the *Esmeralda*.

Lord Lisburn was not able so readily as Harold Vaughan—for to the latter the tender twilight between forgetting and remembering was made easy—to thrust from his heart the gipsy beggar girl whom he had loved more dearly than she ever knew or cared to know. It was he who, while he lived, kept her memory fresh and green. To have loved her strange caprices and mysterious ways as he had loved them meant to find no consolation thenceforth in common-place Janes or Lauras. I forget, though —the *Esmeralda* was the *Esmeralda* no longer. He must be the husband of no other than Pauline, in spite of all. He went back to his old craze, and sailed at last in the *Pauline* on that long-talked-of voyage, to find the North Pole. The sea is the home for sorry hearts, and Lord Lisburn felt the salt air sweep through him with a rush of rough welcome.

It is there that Zelda's Fortune began, and there it shall end. After all, this has been but the story of a box of gold, like ninety-nine life-stories out of every hundred. It is from the metal which is at once the noblest and the ignoblest of all metals from which the romance of the future must compile its largest volume, unless it wishes to lose the higher fidelity to human nature which belongs to the free air of romance alone, and of which the polished mirror of realism reflects only the outer and unessential accidents. Avarice is as real a passion as love itself, and has not every human passion its ideal and poetical side? Do crimes, virtues, heroisms, self-sacrifices, all the paraphernalia of romance as it is—not sentiments, but passions—spring from a forcing-house of rhyming words, or from a soil of gold? The money-box is no mere target for satire; it is an altar, round which the passions move in their discordant chorus. But the most awful part of the matter is, that while gold is a poetic reality it is no natural reality. There is a world in which it is false as well as a world in which it is true. Nor is this a mere truism. Zelda belonged to the ungolden world—her element was the golden age which was not of gold. Sylvia had been a natural woman—a savage, if you please—suddenly thrown into the midst of the gold-wired cage in which we dwell. Zelda was the same—a last dying protest of the old romance against the new. What becomes of the lark when imprisoned in a golden cage, and made to feed on unchosen food? He mostly breaks his heart, I believe. He is bewildered with his wires, and will not understand they are gold, even if the neighbouring parrots, content with their captivity, prate to him that they are pure gold all day long.

For the present, Mrs. Goldrick's money-chest, from which the soul was missing, and which had given so many people such a long and barren chase in such divergent directions and to such unconnected ends, was, so far as concerns all these things and more, the beginning, the middle, and the end.

Lord Lisburn did not nail the Union Jack to the top of the North Pole. He did not meet Egin. He did not discover the earthly Paradise. But one morning he, or rather the mate of the *Pauline* for him, found a

bottle, which contained a letter to a dead man. Lord Lisburn, at the first opportunity, sent it to Claudia Vaughan, the daughter of him to whom it was directed.

"Honoured Sir," it began, "this is to acquaint you, if it comes to hand, that the *Gustavus* of Stockholm, in which I am a passenger, cannot live till morning in this weather. Meant to write from New York, but mayn't have a chance after now. Only chance left is to make a clean breast of it—*may* stop the squall. If it does, I'll tear up this and write from New York when I have time." After telling, in unconnected and hurried sentences, how he had managed to get Mr. Brandt into serious complications while at Rotterdam, the writer went on: "Please tell mother I've got her gold and notes—all safe—only borrowed it out of her box to get here. If I get to New York, send back by degrees. Tell her to put in bank next time. Called off to the pumps. Really meant to write from New York and make all square, and will—on my honour. Must go. Yours, Sir, obediently, LUKE GOLDRICK.

"For A. Brandt, Esq., St. Bavons, England."

Thus there is an unseen player in every human game. If it had not been for a man whom we have never seen and of whom scarcely one of the rest had ever heard, all these lives would have differed as widely as if Marietta Romani herself had never been born. It is useless even to overlook our neighbours' hands. The game we have to play includes a FIFTY-THIRD CARD that needs must set all our most skilful reckoning wrong.

Poor Zelda! She would never have died and have been buried among the unseen weeds, without so much as a word of thanks for dying to make others happy or a tear of real love, had they whom it concerned known what alone the spirits of the depths of ocean knew—that Zelda's Fortune had from the very beginning been at the bottom of the sea.

Yet which of all these, from Claudia to Harold, from Harold to Zelda, from Zelda to the Cornflower, from the Cornflower to Aaron himself, had been faithless to the light that was his or hers? As the doggrel goes—

> Praise no man till he dies? Nay, even so
> Blame no man while he lives, in aught. For lo,
> The self-same thing these sin, those sinless, call—
> Each *may* be right; then why not each—and All?


H. Paterson

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Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAIR: THE JOURNEY: THE FIRE.



TWO months passed away. We are brought on to a day in February, on which was held the yearly statute or hiring fair in the town of Casterbridge.

At one end of the street stood from two to three hundred blithe and hearty labourers waiting upon Chance—all men of the stamp to whom labour suggests nothing worse than a wrestle with gravitation, and pleasure nothing better than a renunciation of the same. Among these, carters and waggoners were distinguished by having a piece of whip-cord twisted round their hats; thatchers wore a fragment of woven straw; shepherds held their sheep-crooks in their hands; and thus the situation required was known to the hirers at a glance.

In the crowd was an athletic young fellow of somewhat superior

appearance to the rest—in fact, his superiority was marked enough to lead several ruddy peasants standing by to speak to him inquiringly, as to a farmer, and to use "Sir" as a terminational word. His answer always was,—

"I am looking for a place myself—a bailiff's. Do you know of anybody who wants one?"

Gabriel was paler now. His eyes were more meditative, and his expression was more sad. He had passed through an ordeal of wretchedness which had given him more than it had taken away. He had lost all he possessed of worldly property. He had sunk from his modest elevation down to a lower ditch than that whence he had started; but there was left to him a dignified calm he had never before known, and that indifference to fate which, though it often makes a villain of a man, is the basis of his sublimity when it does not. And thus the abasement had been exaltation, and the loss gain.

In the morning a regiment of cavalry had left the town, and a sergeant and his party had been beating up for recruits through the four streets. As the end of the day drew on, and he found himself not hired, Gabriel almost wished that he had joined them, and gone off to serve his country. Weary of standing in the market-place, and not much minding the kind of work he turned his hand to, he decided to offer himself in some other capacity than that of bailiff.

All the farmers seemed to be wanting shepherds. Sheep-tending was Gabriel's speciality. Turning down an obscure street and entering an obscurer lane, he went up to a smith's shop.

"How long would it take you to make a shepherd's crook?"

"Twenty minutes."

"How much?"

"Two shillings."

He sat on a bench and the crook was made, a stem being given him into the bargain.

He then went to a ready-made clothes' shop, the owner of which had a large rural connection. As the crook had absorbed most of Gabriel's money, he attempted, and carried out, an exchange of his overcoat for a shepherd's regulation smock-frock.

This transaction having been completed, he again hurried off to the centre of the town, and stood on the kerb of the pavement, as a shepherd, crook in hand.

Now that Oak had turned himself into a shepherd, it seemed that bailiffs were most in demand. However, two or three farmers noticed him and drew near. Dialogues followed, more or less in the subjoined form:

"Where do you come from?"

"Norcombe."

"That's a long way."

"Twenty miles."

"Whose farm were you upon last?"

"My own."

This reply invariably operated like a rumour of cholera. The inquiring farmer would edge away and shake his head dubiously. Gabriel, like his dog, was too good to be trustworthy, and he never made any advance beyond this point.

It is better to accept any chance that offers itself, and then extemporise a procedure to fit it, than to get a good plan matured, and wait for a chance of using it. Gabriel wished he had not nailed up his colours as a shepherd, but had instead laid himself out for anything in the whole cycle of labour that was required in the fair. It grew dusk. Some merry men were whistling and singing by the corn-exchange. Gabriel's hand, which had lain for some time idle in his smock-frock pocket, touched his flute, which he carried there. Here was an opportunity for putting his dearly bought wisdom into practice.

He drew out his flute and began to play "Jockey to the Fair" in the style of a man who had never known a moment's sorrow. Oak could pipe with Arcadian sweetness, and the sound of the well-known notes cheered his own heart as well as those of the loungers. He played on with spirit, and in half an hour had earned in pence what was a small fortune to a destitute man.

By making inquiries he learnt that there was another fair at Shottsford the next day.

"Where is Shottsford?"

"Eight miles t'other side of Weatherbury."

Weatherbury! It was where Bathsheba had gone two months before. This information was like coming from night into noon.

"How far is it to Weatherbury?"

"Five or six miles."

Bathsheba had probably left Weatherbury long before this time, but the place had enough interest attaching to it to lead Oak to choose Shottsford fair as his next field of inquiry, because it lay in the Weatherbury quarter.* Moreover the Weatherbury folk were by no means uninteresting intrinsically. If report spoke truly they were as hardy, merry, thriving, wicked a set as any in the whole county. Oak resolved to sleep at Weatherbury that night on his way to Shottsford, and struck out at once into a footpath which had been recommended as a short cut to the village in question.

The path wended through water-meadows traversed by little brooks, whose quivering surfaces were braided along their centres, and folded into creases at the sides, or, where the flow was more rapid, the stream was pied with spots of white froth, which rode on in undisturbed serenity. On the high-road the dead and dry carcases of leaves tapped the ground as they bowled along helter-skelter upon the shoulders of the wind, and little birds in the hedges were rustling their feathers and tucking themselves in comfortably for the night, retaining their places if Oak kept moving, but flying away if he stopped to look at them. He passed

through a wood where the game-birds were rising to their roosts, and heard the crack-voiced cock-pheasants' "cu-uck, cuck," and the wheezy whistle of the hens.

By the time he had walked three or four miles, every shape on the landscape had assumed a uniform hue of blackness. He ascended a hill and could just discern ahead of him a waggon, drawn up under a great overhanging tree on the roadside.

On coming close, he found there were no horses attached to it, the spot being apparently quite deserted. The waggon, from its position, seemed to have been left there for the night, for beyond about half a truss of hay which was heaped in the bottom, it was quite empty. Gabriel sat down on the shafts of the vehicle and considered his position. He calculated that he had walked a very fair proportion of the journey; and having been on foot since daybreak, he felt tempted to lie down upon the hay in the waggon instead of pushing on to the village of Weatherbury, and having to pay for a lodging.

Eating his last slices of bread and ham, and drinking from the bottle of cider he had taken the precaution to bring with him, he got into the lonely waggon. Here he spread half of the hay as a bed, and, as well as he could in the darkness, pulled the other half over him by way of bedclothes, covering himself entirely, and feeling, physically, as comfortable as ever he had been in his life. Inward melancholy it was impossible for a man like Oak, introspective far beyond his neighbours, to banish quite, whilst conning the present untoward page of his history. So, thinking of his misfortunes, amorous and pastoral, he fell asleep, shepherds enjoying, in common with sailors, the privilege of being able to summon the god instead of having to wait for him.

On somewhat suddenly awaking, after a sleep of whose length he had no idea, Oak found that the waggon was in motion. He was being carried along the road at a rate rather considerable for a vehicle without springs, and under circumstances of physical uneasiness, his head being dandled up and down on the bed of the waggon like a kettledrum-stick. He then distinguished voices in conversation, coming from the forepart of the waggon. His concern at this dilemma (which would have been alarm, had he been a thriving man; but misfortune is a fine opiate to personal terror) led him to peer cautiously from the hay, and the first sight he beheld were the stars above him. Charles's Wain was getting towards a right angle with the Pole Star, and Gabriel concluded that it must be about nine o'clock—in other words, that he had slept two hours. This small astronomical calculation was made without any positive effort, and whilst he was stealthily turning to discover, if possible, into whose hands he had fallen.

Two figures were dimly visible in front, sitting with their legs outside the waggon, one of whom was driving. Gabriel soon found that this was the waggoner, and it appeared they had come from Casterbridge fair, like himself.

A conversation was in progress, which continued thus :—

"Be as 'twill, she's a fine handsome body as far's looks be concerned. But that's only the skin of the woman, and these dandy cattle be as proud as a lucifer in their insides."

"Ay—so 'a seem, Billy Smallbury—so 'a seem." This utterance was very shaky by nature, and more so by circumstance, the jolting of the waggon not being without its effect upon the speaker's larynx. It came from the man who held the reins.

"She's a very vain feymell—so 'tis said here and there."

"Ah, now. If so be 'tis like that, I can't look her in the face. Lord, no: not I—heh-heh-heh! Such a shy man as I be!"

"Yes—she's very vain. 'Tis said that every night at going to bed she looks in the glass to put on her nightcap properly."

"And not a married woman. Oh, the world!"

"And 'a can play the peanner, so 'tis said. Can play so clever that 'a can make a psalm tune sound as well as the merriest loose song a man can wish for."

"D'ye tell o't! A happy mercy for us, and I feel quite unspeakable! And how do she pay?"

"That I don't know, Master Poorgrass."

On hearing these and other similar remarks, a wild thought flashed into Gabriel's mind that they might be speaking of Bathsheba. There were, however, no grounds for retaining such a supposition, for the waggon, though going in the direction of Weatherbury, might be going beyond it, and the woman alluded to seemed to be the mistress of some estate. They were now apparently close upon Weatherbury, and not to alarm the speakers unnecessarily, Gabriel slipped out of the waggon unseen.

He turned to an opening in the hedge, which he found to be a stile, and mounting thereon, he sat meditating whether to seek a cheap lodging in the village, or to ensure a cheaper one by lying under some hay or corn-stack. The crunching jangle of the waggon died upon his ear. He was about to walk on, when he noticed on his left hand an unusual light—appearing about half a mile distant. Oak watched it, and the glow increased. Something was on fire.

Gabriel again mounted the stile, and, leaping down on the other side upon what he found to be ploughed soil, made across the field in the exact direction of the fire. The blaze, enlarging in a double ratio by his approach and its own increase, showed him as he drew nearer the outlines of ricks beside it, lighted up to great distinctness. A rickyard was the source of the fire. His weary face now began to be painted over with a rich orange glow, and the whole front of his smock-frock and gaiters was covered with a dancing shadow-pattern of thorn-twigs—the light reaching him through a leafless intervening hedge—and the metallic curve of his sheep-crook shone silver-bright in the same abounding rays. He came up to the boundary fence, and stood to regain breath. It seemed as if the spot was unoccupied by a living soul.

The fire was issuing from a long straw-stack, which was so far gone as to preclude a possibility of saving it. A rick burns differently from a house. As the wind blows the fire inwards, the portion in flames completely disappears like melting sugar, and the outline is lost to the eye. However, a hay or a wheat-rick, well put together, will resist combustion for a length of time, if it begins on the outside.

This before Gabriel's eyes was a rick of straw, loosely put together, and the flames darted into it with lightning swiftness. It glowed on the windward side, rising and falling in intensity, like the coal of a cigar. Then a superincumbent bundle rolled down, with a whisking noise, flames elongated, and bent themselves about, with a quiet roar, but no crackle. Banks of smoke went off horizontally at the back like passing clouds, and behind these burned hidden pyres, illuminating the semi-transparent sheet of smoke to a lustrous yellow uniformity. Individual straws in the foreground were consumed in a creeping movement of ruddy heat, as if they were knots of red worms, and above shone imaginary fiery faces, tongues hanging from lips, glaring eyes, and other impish forms, from which at intervals sparks flew in clusters like birds from a nest.

Oak suddenly ceased from being a mere spectator by discovering the case to be more serious than he had at first imagined. A scroll of smoke blew aside and revealed to him a wheat-rick in startling juxtaposition with the decaying one, and behind this a series of others, composing the main corn produce of the farm; so that instead of the straw-stack standing, as he had imagined, comparatively isolated, there was a regular connection between it and the remaining stacks of the group.

Gabriel leapt over the hedge, and saw that he was not alone. The first man he came to was running about in a great hurry, as if his thoughts were several yards in advance of his body, which they could never drag on fast enough.

"Oh, man—fire, fire! A good master and a bad servant is fire, fire!—I mane a bad servant and a good master. Oh, Mark Clark—come! And you, Billy Smallbury—and you, Maryann Money—and you, Joseph Poorgrass, and Matthew there, for his mercy endureth for ever!" Other figures now appeared behind this shouting man and among the smoke, and Gabriel found that, far from being alone, he was in a great company—whose shadows danced merrily up and down, timed by the jigging of the flames, and not at all by their owners' movements. The assemblage—belonging to that class of society which casts its thoughts into the form of feeling, and its feelings into the form of commotion—set to work with a remarkable confusion of purpose.

"Stop the draught under the wheat-rick!" cried Gabriel to those nearest to him. The corn stood on stone staddles, and between these, tongues of yellow hues from the burning straw licked and darted playfully. If the fire once got *under* this stack, all would be lost.

"Get a tarpaulin—quick!" said Gabriel.

A rick-cloth was brought, and they hung it like a curtain across the

channel. The flames immediately ceased to go under the bottom of the corn-stack, and stood up vertical.

"Stand here with a bucket of water and keep the cloth wet," said Gabriel again.

The flames, now driven upwards, began to attack the angles of the huge roof covering the wheat-stack.

"A ladder," cried Gabriel.

"The ladder was against the straw-rick and is burnt to a cinder," said a spectre-like form in the smoke.

Oak seized the cut ends of the sheaves, as if he were going to engage in the operation of "reed-drawing," and digging in his feet, and occasionally sticking in the stem of his sheep-crook, he clambered up the beetling face. He at once sat astride the very apex, and began with his crook to beat off the fiery fragments which had lodged thereon, shouting to the others to get him a bough and a ladder, and some water.

Billy Smallbury—one of the men who had been on the waggon—by this time had found a ladder, which Mark Clark ascended, holding on beside Oak upon the thatch. The smoke at this corner was stifling, and Clark, a nimble fellow, having been handed a bucket of water, bathed Oak's face and sprinkled him generally, whilst Gabriel, now with a long beech-bough in one hand, in addition to his crook in the other, kept sweeping the stack and dislodging all fiery particles.

On the ground the groups of villagers were still occupied in doing all they could to keep down the conflagration, which was not much. They were all tinged orange, and backed up by shadows as tall as fir-trees. Round the corner of the largest stack, out of the direct rays of the fire, stood a pony, bearing a young woman on its back. By her side was another female, on foot. These two seemed to keep at a distance from the fire, that the horse might not become restive.

"He's a shepherd," said the woman on foot. "Yes—he is. See how his crook shines as he beats the rick with it. And his smock-frock is burnt in two holes, I declare! A fine young shepherd he is too, ma'am."

"Whose shepherd is he?" said the equestrian in a clear voice.

"Don't know, ma'am."

"Don't any of the others know?"

"Nobody at all—I've asked 'em. Quite a stranger, they say."

The young woman on the pony rode out from the shade and looked anxiously around.

"Do you think the barn is safe?" she said.

"D'ye think the barn is safe, Jan Coggan?" said the second woman, passing on the question to the nearest man in that direction.

"Safe now—leastwise I think so. If this rick had gone the barn would have followed. 'Tis that bold shepherd up there that have done the most good—he sitting on the top o' rick, whizzing his great long arms about like a windmill."

"He does work hard," said the young woman on horseback, looking

up at Gabriel through her thick woollen veil. "I wish he was shepherd here. Don't any of you know his name?"

"Never heard the man's name in my life, or seed his form afore."

The fire began to get worsted, and Gabriel's elevated position being no longer required of him, he made as if to descend.

"Maryann," said the girl on horseback, "go to him as he comes down, and say that the farmer wishes to thank him for the great service he has done."

Maryann stalked off towards the rick and met Oak at the foot of the ladder. She delivered her message.

"Where is your master the farmer?" asked Gabriel, kindling with the idea of getting employment that seemed to strike him now.

"'Tisn't a master; 'tis a mistress, shepherd."

"A woman farmer?"

"Ay, 'a b'lieve, and a rich one too!" said a bystander. "Lately 'a come here from a distance. Took on her uncle's farm, who died suddenly. Used to measure his money in half-pint cups. They say now that she've business in every bank in Casterbridge, and thinks no more of playing pitch-and-toss-sovereign than you and I do pitch-halfpenny—not a bit in the world, shepherd."

"That's she back there upon the pony," said Maryann; "wi' her face a covered up in a cloth with holes in it."

Oak, his features black, grimy, and undiscoverable from the smoke and heat, his smock-frock burnt into holes, dripping with water, the ash-stem of his sheep-crook charred six inches shorter than it had been, advanced with the humility stern adversity had thrust upon him up to the slight female form in the saddle. He lifted his hat with respect, and not without gallantry: stepping close to her hanging feet, he said in a hesitating voice—

"Do you happen to want a shepherd, ma'am?"

She lifted the Shetland veil tied round her face, and looked all astonishment. Gabriel and his cold-hearted darling, Bathsheba Everdene, were face to face.

Bathsheba did not speak, and he mechanically repeated in an abashed and sad voice,

"Do you want a shepherd, ma'am?"

CHAPTER VII.

Recognition: a Timid Girl.

Bathsheba withdrew into the shade. She scarcely knew whether most to be amused at the singularity of the meeting, or to be concerned at its awkwardness. There was room for a little pity, also for a very little exultation; the former at his position, the latter at her own. Embarrassed

she was not, and she remembered Gabriel's declaration of love to her at Norcombe only to think she had nearly forgotten it.

"Yes," she murmured, putting on an air of dignity, and turning again to him with a little warmth of cheek, "I do want a shepherd. But——"

"He's the very man, ma'am," said one of the villagers, quietly.

Conviction breeds conviction. "Ay, that 'a is," said a second, decisively.

"The man, truly!" said a third, with heartiness.

"He's all there!" said number four, fervidly.

"Then will you tell him to speak to the bailiff," said Bathsheba.

All was practical again now. A summer eve and loneliness would have been necessary to give the meeting its proper fulness of romance.

The bailiff was pointed out to Gabriel, who, checking the palpitation within his breast at discovering that this Ashtereth of strange report was only a modification of Venus the well-known and admired, retired with him to talk over the necessary preliminaries of hiring.

The fire before them wasted away. "Men," said Bathsheba, "you shall take a little refreshment after this extra work. Will you come to the house?"

"We could knock in a bit and a drop a good deal freer, Miss, if so be ye'd send it to Warren's Malthouse," replied the spokesman.

Bathsheba then rode off into the darkness, and the men straggled on to the village in twos and threes—Oak and the bailiff being left by the rick alone.

"And now," said the bailiff, finally, "all is settled, I think, about yer coming, and I am going home-along. Good-night to ye, shepherd."

"Can you get me a lodging?" inquired Gabriel.

"That I can't, indeed," he said, moving past Oak as a Christian edges past an offertory-plate when he does not mean to contribute. "If you follow on the road till you come to Warren's Malthouse, where they are all gone to have their snap of victuals, I dare say some of 'em will tell you of a place. Good-night to ye, shepherd."

The bailiff, who showed this nervous dread of loving his neighbours as himself, went up the hill, and Oak walked on to the village, still astonished at the rencontre with Bathsheba, glad of his nearness to her, and perplexed at the rapidity with which the unpractised girl of Norcombe had developed into the supervising and cool woman here. But some women only require an emergency to make them fit for one.

Obliged, to some extent, to forego dreaming in order to find the way, he reached the churchyard, and passed round it under the wall where several old chestnuts grew. There was a wide margin of grass along here, and Gabriel's footsteps were deadened by its softness, even at this indurating period of the year. When abreast of a trunk which appeared to be the oldest of the old, he became aware that a figure was standing behind it on the other side. Gabriel did not pause in his walk, and in

another moment he accidentally kicked a loose stone. The noise was enough to disturb the motionless stranger, who started and assumed a careless position.

It was a slim girl, rather thinly clad.

"Good-night to you," said Gabriel, heartily.

"Good-night," said the girl to Gabriel.

The voice was unexpectedly attractive; it was the low and dulcet note suggestive of romance; common in descriptions, rare in experience.

"I'll thank you to tell me if I'm in the way for Warren's Malthouse?" Gabriel resumed, primarily to gain the information, indirectly to get more of the music.

"Quite right. It's at the bottom of the hill. And do you know——" The girl hesitated, and then went on again. "Do you know how late they keep open the 'Buck's Head Inn?'" She seemed to be won by Gabriel's heartiness, as Gabriel had been won by her modulations.

"I don't know where the 'Buck's Head' is, or anything about it. Do you think of going there to-night?"

"Yes——." The female again paused. There was no necessity for any continuance of speech, and the fact that she did add more seemed to proceed from an unconscious desire to show unconcern by making a remark, which is noticeable in the ingenuous when they are acting by stealth. "You are not a Weatherbury man?" she said, timorously.

"I am not. I am the new shepherd—just arrived."

"Only a shepherd—and you seem almost a farmer by your ways."

"Only a shepherd," Gabriel repeated, in a dull cadence of finality. His thoughts were directed to the past, his eyes to the feet of the girl, and for the first time he saw lying there a bundle of some sort. She may have perceived the direction of his face, for she said coaxingly:

"You won't say anything in the parish about having seen me here, will you—at least, not for a day or two?"

"I won't if you wish me not to," said Oak.

"Thank you, indeed," the other replied. "I am rather poor, and I don't want people to know anything about me." Then she was silent, and shivered.

"You ought to have a cloak on such a cold night," Gabriel observed. "I would advise you to get indoors."

"Oh, no! Would you mind going on and leaving me? I thank you much for what you have told me."

"I will go on," he said; adding hesitatingly—"Since you are not very well off, perhaps you would accept this trifle from me. It is only a shilling, but it is all I have to spare."

"Yes, I will take it," said the stranger, gratefully.

She extended her hand; Gabriel his. In feeling for each other's palms in the gloom before the money could be passed, a minute incident occurred which told much. Gabriel's fingers alighted on the young woman's wrist. It was beating with a throb of tragic intensity. He had

frequently felt the same quick, hard beat in the femoral artery of his lambs when overdriven. It suggested a consumption too great of a vitality which, to judge from her figure and stature, was already too little.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing."

"But there is?"

"No, no, no! Let your having seen me be a secret!"

"Very well; I will. Good-night, again."

"Good-night."

The young girl remained motionless by the tree and Gabriel descended into the village. He fancied that he had felt himself in the penumbra of a very deep sadness when touching that slight and fragile creature. But wisdom lies in moderating mere impressions, and Gabriel endeavoured to think little of this.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MALTHOUSE: THE CHAT: NEWS.

WARREN'S Malthouse was enclosed by an old wall inwrapped with ivy, and though not much of the exterior was visible at this hour, the character and purposes of the building were clearly enough shown by its outline upon the sky. From the walls an overhanging thatched roof sloped up to a point in the centre, upon which rose a small wooden lantern, fitted with louvre-boards on all the four sides, and from these openings a mist was dimly perceived to be escaping into the night air. There was no window in front; but a square hole in the door was glazed with a single pane, through which red comfortable rays now stretched out upon the ivied wall in front. Voices were to be heard inside.

Oak's hand skimmed the surface of the door with fingers extended to an Elymas-the-Sorcerer pattern, till he found a leathern strap, which he pulled. This lifted a wooden latch, and the door swung open.

The room inside was lighted only by the ruddy glow from the kiln mouth, which shone over the floor with the streaming horizontality of the setting sun, and threw upwards the shadows of all facial irregularities in those assembled around, with the effect of the footlights upon the features of her Majesty's servants when they approach too near the front. The stone-flag floor was worn into a path from the doorway to the kiln, and into undulations everywhere. A curved settle of unplaned oak stretched along one side, and in a remote corner was a small bed and bedstead, the owner and frequent occupier of which was the maltster.

This aged man was now sitting opposite the fire, his frosty white hair and beard overgrowing his gnarled figure like the grey moss and lichen upon a leafless apple-tree. He wore breeches and the laced-up shoes called ankle-jacks; he kept his eyes fixed upon the fire.

Gabriel's nose was greeted by an atmosphere laden with the sweet smell of new malt. The conversation (which seemed to have been concerning the origin of the fire) immediately ceased, and every one ocularly criticised him to the degree expressed by contracting the flesh of their foreheads and looking at him with narrowed eyelids, as if he had been a light too strong for their sight. Several exclaimed meditatively, after this operation had been completed:

"Oh, 'tis the new shepherd, a' b'lieve."

"We thought we heard a hand pawing about the door for the bobbin, but weren't sure 'twere not a dead leaf blowed across," said another. "Come in, shepherd; sure ye be welcome, though we don't know yer name."

"Gabriel Oak, that's my name neighbours."

The ancient maltster sitting in the midst turned at this—his turning being as the turning of a rusty crane.

"That's never Gable Oak's grandson over at Norcombe—never!" he said, as a formula expressive of surprise, which nobody was supposed for a moment to take literally.

"My father and my grandfather were old men of the name of Gabriel," said the shepherd, placidly.

"Thought I knowed the man's face as I seed him on the rick!—thought I did! And where be ye trading o't to now, shepherd?"

"I'm thinking of biding here," said Mr. Oak.

"Knowed yer grandfather for years and years!" continued the maltster, the words coming forth of their own accord as if the momentum previously imparted had been sufficient.

"Ah—and did you!"

"Knowed yer grandmother."

"And her too!"

"Likewise knowed yer father when he was a child. Why, my boy Jacob there and your father were sworn brothers—that they were sure—weren't ye, Jacob?"

"Ay, sure," said his son, a young man about sixty-five, with a semi-bald head and one tooth in the left centre of his upper jaw, which made much of itself by standing prominent, like a milestone in a bank. "But 'twas Joe had most to do with him. However, my son William must have knowed the very man afore us—didn't ye, Billy, afore ye left Norcombe?"

"No, 'twas Andrew," said Jacob's son Billy, a child of forty, or thereabouts, who manifested the peculiarity of possessing a cheerful soul in a gloomy body, and whose whiskers were assuming a chinchilla shade here and there.

"I remember Andrew," said Oak, "as being a man in the place when I was quite a child."

"Ay—the other day I and my youngest daughter Liddy were over at my grandson's christening," continued Billy. "We were talking about

this very family, and 'twas only last Purification Day in this very world, when the use-money is gied away to the second-best poor folk, you know, shepherd, and I can mind the day because they all had to traypse up to the Vestry—yes, this very man's family."

"Come, shepherd, and drink. 'Tis gape and swaller with us—a drap of sommit, but not of much account," said the maltster, removing from the fire his eyes, which were vermilion-red and bleared by gazing into it for so many years. "Take up the God-forgive-me, Jacob. See if 'tis warm, Jacob."

Jacob stooped to the God-forgive-me, which was a two-handled tall mug standing in the ashes, cracked and charred with heat, rather furred with extraneous matter about the outside, especially in the crevices of the handles, the innermost curves of which may not have seen daylight for several years by reason of this encrustation thereon—formed of ashes accidentally wetted with cider and baked hard; but to the mind of any sensible drinker the cup was no worse for that, being incontestably clean on the inside and about the rim. It may be observed that such a class of mug is called a God-forgive-me in Weatherbury and its vicinity for uncertain reasons; probably because its size makes any given toper feel ashamed of himself when he sees its bottom in drinking it empty: this idea is, however, a mere guess.

Jacob, on receiving the order to see if the liquor was warm enough, placidly dipped his forefinger into it by way of thermometer, and having pronounced it nearly of the proper degree, raised the cup and very civilly attempted to dust some of the ashes from the bottom with the skirt of his smock-frock, because Shepherd Oak was a stranger.

"A clane cup for the shepherd," said the maltster commandingly.

"No—not at all," said Gabriel, in a reproving tone of considerateness. "I never fuss about dirt in its natural state, and when I know what sort it is." Taking the mug he drank an inch or more from the depth of its contents, and duly passed it to the next man. "I wouldn't think of giving such trouble to neighbours in washing up when there's so much work to be done in the world already," continued Oak, in a moister tone, after recovering from the stoppage of breath ever occasioned by proper pulls at large mugs.

"A right sensible man," said Jacob.

"True, true, as the old woman said," observed a brisk young man—Mark Clark by name, a genial and pleasant gentleman, whom to meet anywhere in your travels was to know, to know was to drink with, and to drink with was, unfortunately, to pay for.

"And here's a mouthful of bread and bacon that mis'ess have sent, shepherd. The cider will go down better with a bit of victuals. Don't ye chaw quite close, shepherd, for I let the bacon fall in the road outside as I was bringing it along, and may be 'tis rather gritty. There, 'tis clane dirt; and we all know what that is, as you say, and you bain't a particular man we see, shepherd."

"True, true—not at all," said the friendly Oak.

"Don't let yer teeth quite meet, and you won't feel the sandiness at all. Ah! 'tis wonderful what can be done by contrivance!"

"My own mind exactly, neighbour."

"Ah, he's his grandfer's own grandson!—his grandfer were just such a nice unparticular man!" said the maltster.

"Drink, Henry Fray—drink," magnanimously said Jan Coggan, a person who held Saint-Simonian notions of share and share alike where liquor was concerned, as the vessel showed signs of approaching him in its gradual revolution among them.

Having at this moment reached the end of a wistful gaze into mid-air, Henry did not refuse. He was a man of more than middle age, with eyebrows high up in his forehead, who laid it down that the law of the world was bad, with a long-suffering look through his listeners at the world alluded to, as it presented itself to his imagination. He always signed his name "Henery"—strenuously insisting upon that spelling, and if any passing schoolmaster ventured to remark that the second "e" was superfluous and old-fashioned, he received the reply that "H-e-n-e-r-y" was the name he was christened and the name he would stick to—in the tone of one to whom orthographical differences were matters which had a great deal to do with personal character.

Mr. Jan Coggan, who had passed the cup to Henery, was a crimson man with a spacious countenance, and private glimmer in his eye, whose name had appeared on the marriage register of Weatherbury and neighbouring parishes as best man and chief witness in countless unions of the previous twenty years; he also very frequently filled the post of head god-father in baptisms of the subtly-jovial kind.

"Come, Mark Clark—come. Ther's plenty more in the barrel," said Jan.

"Ay—that I will, as the doctor said," replied Mr. Clark, who, twenty years younger than Jan Coggan, revolved in the same orbit. He secreted mirth on all occasions for special discharge at popular parties—his productions of this class being more noticeably advanced than Coggan's, inflicting a faint sense of reduplication and similitude upon the elder members of such companies.

"Why, Joseph Poorgrass, ye ha'n't had a drop!" said Mr. Coggan to a very shrinking man in the background, thrusting the cup towards him.

"Such a shy man as he is!" said Jacob Smallbury. "Why, ye've hardly had strength of eye enough to look in our young mis'ess's face, so I hear, Joseph?"

All looked at Joseph Poorgrass with pitying reproach.

"No—I've hardly looked at her at all," faltered Joseph, reducing his body smaller whilst talking, apparently from a meek sense of undue prominence. "And when I seed her, 'twas nothing but blushes with me!"

"Poor feller," said Mr. Clark.

"'Tis a curious nature for a man," said Jan Coggan.

"Yes," continued Joseph Poorgrass—his shyness, which was so painful as a defect, just beginning to fill him with a little complacency now that it was regarded in the light of an interesting study. "'Twere blush, blush, blush with me every minute of the time, when she was speaking to me."

"I believe ye, Joseph Poorgrass, for we all know ye to be a very bashful man."

"'Tis terrible bad for a man, poor soul," said the maltster. "And how long have ye suffered from it, Joseph?"

"Oh, ever since I was a boy. Yes—mother was concerned to her heart about it—yes. But 'twas all nought."

"Did ye ever take anything to try and stop it, Joseph Poorgrass?"

"Oh ay, tried all sorts. They took me to Greenhill Fair, and into a grate large jerry-go-nimble show, where there were women-folk riding round—standing upon horses, with hardly anything on but their smocks, but it didn't cure me a morsel—no, not a morsel. And then I was put errand-man at the Woman's Skittle Alley at the back of the 'Tailor's Arms' in Casterbridge. 'Twas a horrible gross situation, and altogether a very curious place for a good man. I had to stand and look wicked people in the face from morning till night; but 'twas no use—I was just as bad as ever after all. Blushes hev been in the family for generations. There, 'tis a happy providence that I be no worse, so to speak it—yes, a happy thing, and I feel my few poor gratitudes."

"True," said Jacob Smallbury, deepening his thoughts to a profounder view of the subject. "'Tis a thought to look at, that ye might have been worse, but even as you be, 'tis a very bad affliction for ye, Joseph. For ye see, shepherd, though 'tis very well for a woman, dang it all, 'tis awkward for a man like him, poor feller." He appealed to the shepherd by a heart-feeling glance.

"'Tis—'tis," said Gabriel, recovering from a meditation as to whether the saving to a man's soul in the run of a twelvemonth by saying "dang" instead of what it stood for, made it worth while to use the word. "Yes, very awkward for the man."

"Ay, and he's very timid, too," observed Jan Coggan. "Once he had been working late at Windleton, and had had a drap of drink, and lost his way as he was coming home-along through Yalbury Wood, didn't ye, Master Poorgrass?"

"No, no, no; not that story!" expostulated the modest man, forcing a laugh to bury his concern, and forcing out too much for the purpose—laughing over the greater part of his skin, round to his ears, and up among his hair, insomuch that Shepherd Oak, who was rather sensitive himself, was surfeited, and felt he would never adopt that plan for hiding trepidation any more.

"——And so 'a lost himself quite," continued Mr. Coggan, with an impassive face, implying that a true narrative, like time and tide, must run

its course and would wait for no man. "And as he was coming along in the middle of the night, much afeard, and not able to find his way out of the trees, nohow, 'a cried out, 'Man-a-lost! man-a-lost!' A owl in a tree happened to be crying 'Whoo-whoo-whoo!' as owls do you know, shepherd" (Gabriel nodded), "and Joseph, all in a tremble, said 'Joseph Poorgrass, of Weatherbury, sir!'"

"No, no, now—that's too much!" said the timid man, becoming a man of brazen courage all of a sudden. "I didn't say *sir*. I'll take my oath I didn't say 'Joseph Poorgrass o' Weatherbury, *sir*.' No, no; what's right is right, and I never said sir to the bird, knowing very well that no person of a gentleman's rank would be hollering there at that time o' night. 'Joseph Poorgrass of Weatherbury,'—that's every word I said, and I shouldn't ha' said that if 't hadn't been for Keeper Day's metheglin. . . . There, 'twas a merciful thing it ended where it did, as I may say," continued Joseph, swallowing his breath in content.

The question of which was right being tacitly waived by the company, Jan went on meditatively:

"And he's the fearfullest man, bain't ye, Joseph? Ay, another time ye were lost by Lambing-Down Gate, weren't ye, Joseph?"

"I was," replied Poorgrass, as if there were some matters too serious even for modesty to remember itself under, and this was one.

"Yes; that were the middle of the night, too. The gate would not open, try how he would, and knowing there was the Devil's hand in it, he kneeled down."

"Ay," said Joseph, acquiring confidence from the warmth of the fire, the cider, and a growing perception of the narrative capabilities of the experience alluded to. "My heart died within me, that time; but I kneeled down and said the Lord's Prayer, and then the Belief right through, and then the Ten Commandments, in earnest prayer. But no, the gate wouldn't open; and then I went on with Dearly Beloved Brethren, and, thinks I, this makes four, and 'tis all I know out of book, and if this don't do it nothing will, and I'm a lost man. Well, when I got to Saying After Me, I rose from my knees and found the gate would open—yes, neighbours, the gate opened the same as ever."

A meditation on the obvious inference was indulged in by all, and during its continuance each directed his vision into the ashpit, which glowed like a desert in the tropics under a vertical sun, shaping their eyes long and liny, partly because of the light, partly from the depth of the subject discussed—each man severally drawing upon the tablet of his imagination a clear and correct picture of Joseph Poorgrass under the remarkable conditions he had related, and surveying the position in all its bearings with critical exactness.

Gabriel broke the silence. "What sort of a place is this to live at, and what sort of a mis'ess is she to work under?" Gabriel's bosom thrilled gently as he thus slipped under the notice of the assembly the innermost subject of his heart.

"We d' know little of her—nothing. She only showed herself a few days ago. Her uncle was took bad, and the doctor was called with his world-wide skill; but he couldn't save the man. As I take it, she's going to keep on the farm."

"That's about the shape o't, 'a b'lieve," said Jan Coggan. "Ay, 'tis a very good family. I'd as soon be under 'em as under one here and there. Her uncle was a very fair sort of man. Did ye know en, shepherd—a bachelor-man?"

"Not at all."

The inquirer paused a moment, and then continued his relation, which, as did every remark he made, instead of being casual, seemed the result of a slow convergence of forces that had commenced their operation in times far remote.

"I used to go to his house a-courting my first wife, Charlotte, who was his dairymaid. Well, a very good-hearted man were Farmer Everdene, and I being a respectable young fellow was allowed to call and see her and drink as much ale as I liked, but not to carry away any—outside my skin I mane, of course."

"Ay, ay, Jan Coggan; we know yer maning."

"And so you see 'twas beautiful ale, and I wished to value his kindness as much as I could, and not to be so ill-mannered as to drink only a thimbleful, which would have been insulting the man's generosity——"

"True, Master Coggan, 'twould so," corroborated Mark Clark.

"——And so I used to eat a lot of salt afore going, and then by the time I got there I were as dry as a lime-basket—so thorough dry that that ale would slip down—ah, 'twould slip down sweet! Happy times! heavenly times! Ay, 'twere like drinking blessedness itself. Pints and pints! Such lovely drunks as I used to have at that house. You can mind, Jacob? You used to go wi' me sometimes."

"I can—I can," said Jacob. "That one, too, that we had at 'Buck's Head' on a White Monday was a pretty tipple—a very pretty tipple, indeed."

"'Twas. But for a drunk of really a noble class and on the highest principles, that brought you no nearer to the dark man than you were afore you begun, there was none like those in Farmer Everdene's kitchen. Not a single damn allowed; no, not a bare poor one, even at the most cheerful moment when all were blindest, though the good old word of sin thrown in here and there would have been a great relief to a merry soul."

"True," said the maltster. "Nature requires her swearing at the regular times, or she's not herself; and unholy exclamations is a necessity of life."

"But Charlotte," continued Coggan—"not a word of the sort would Charlotte allow, nor the smallest item of taking in vain. . . . Ay, poor Charlotte, I wonder if she had the good fortune to get into Heaven when

'a died! But 'a was never much in luck's way, and perhaps 'a went downwards after all, poor soul."

"And did any of you know Miss Everdene's father and mother?" inquired the shepherd, who found some difficulty in keeping the conversation in the desired channel.

"I knew them a little," said Jacob Smallbury; "but they were townsfolk, and didn't live here. They've been dead for years. Father, what sort of people were mis'ess' father and mother?"

"Well," said the maltster, "he wasn't much to look at; but she was a lovely woman. He was fond enough of her as his sweetheart."

"Used to kiss her in scores and long-hundreds, so 'twas said here and there," observed Coggan.

"He was very proud of her, too, when they were married, as I've been told," said the maltster.

"Ay," said Coggan. "He admired his wife so much, that he used to light the candle three times every night to look at her."

"Boundless love; I shouldn't have supposed it in the world's universe!" murmured Joseph Poorgrass, who habitually spoke on a large scale in his moral reflections.

"Well, to be sure," said Gabriel.

"Oh, 'tis true enough. I knowed the man and woman both well. Levi Everdene—that was the man's name, sure enough. 'Man,' saith I in my hurry, but he were of a higher circle of life than that—'a was a gentleman-tailor really, worth scores of pounds. And he became a very celebrated bankrupt two or three times."

"Oh, I thought he was quite a common man!" said Joseph.

"Oh no, no! That man failed for heaps of money; hundreds in gold and silver."

The maltster being rather short of breath, Mr. Coggan, after absently scrutinising a coal which had fallen among the ashes, took up the narrative, with a private twirl of his eye:

"Well, now, you'd hardly believe it, but that man—our Miss Everdene's father—was one of the ficklest husbands alive, after a while. Understand, 'a didn't want to be fickle, but he couldn't help it. The pore feller were faithful and true enough to her in his wish, but his heart would rove, do what he would. Ay, 'a spoke to me in real tribulation about it once. 'Coggan,' he said, 'I could never wish for a handsomer woman than I've got, but feeling she's ticketed as my lawful wife, I can't help my wicked heart wandering, do what I will.' But at last I believe he cured it by making her take off her wedding-ring and calling her by her maiden name as they sat together after the shop was shut, and so 'a would get to fancy she was only his sweetheart, and not married to him at all. And so as soon as he could thoroughly fancy he was doing wrong and committing the seventh, 'a got to like her as well as ever, and they lived on a perfect example of mutel love."

"Well, 'twas a most ungodly remedy," murmured Joseph Poorgrass,

"but we ought to feel deep cheerfulness, as I may say, that a happy providence kept it from being any worse. You see, he might have gone the bad road and given his eyes to unlawfulness entirely—yes, gross unlawfulness, so to say it."

"You see," said Billy Smallbury, with testimonial emphasis, "the man's will was to do right, sure enough, but his heart didn't chime in."

"He got so much better, that he was quite religious in his later years, wasn't he, Jan?" said Joseph Poorgrass. "He got himself confirmed over again in a more serious way, and took to saying 'Amen' almost as loud as a clerk, and he liked to copy comforting verses from the tombstones. He used, too, to hold the holy money-plate at Let Your Light so Shine, and stand godfather to poor little come-by-chance children that had no father at all in the eye of matrimony, and he kept a missionary-box upon his table to nab folks unawares when they called; yes, and he would box the charity-boys' ears, if they laughed in church, till they could hardly stand upright, and do other deeds of piety common to the saintly inclined."

"Ay, at that time he thought of nothing but righteousness," added Billy Smallbury. "One day Parson Thirdly met him and said, 'Good-morning, Mister Everdene; 'tis a fine day!' 'Amen,' said Everdene, quite absent-like, thinking only of religion when he seed a parson. Yes, he was a very Christian man."

"His second-cousin, John, was the most religious of the family, however," said the old maltster. "None of the others were so pious as he, for they never went past us church people in their Christianity, but John's feelings growed as strong as a Chapel member's. 'A was a watch and clock maker by trade and thought of nothing but godliness, poor man. 'I judge every clock according to his works,' he used to say when he were in his holy frame of mind. Ay, he likewise was a very Christian man."

"Their daughter was not at all a pretty chiel at that time," said Henery Fray. "Never should have thought she'd have growed up such a handsome body as she is."

"'Tis to be hoped her temper is as good as her face."

"Well, yes; but the baily will have most to do with the business and ourselves. Ah!" Henery shook his head, gazed into the ashpit, and smiled volumes of ironical knowledge.

"A queer Christian, as the D—— said of the owl," volunteered Mark Clark.

"He is," said Henery, with a manner implying that irony must necessarily cease at a certain point. "Between we two, man and man, I believe that man would as soon tell a lie Sundays as working-days, that I do so."

"Good faith, you do talk," said Gabriel, with apprehension.

"True enough," said the man of bitter moods, looking round upon the company, with the antithetic laughter that comes from a keener

appreciation of the untold miseries of life than ordinary men are capable of. "Ah, there's people of one sort, and people of another, but that man—bless your souls!"

The company suspended consideration of whether they wanted their souls blessed that moment, as the shortest way to the end of the story.

"I believe that if so be that Baily Pennyways' heart were put inside a nutshell, he'd rattle," continued Henery. "He'll strain for money as a salmon will strain for the river's head. 'Tis a thief and a robber, that's what 'tis."

Gabriel thought fit to change the subject. "You must be a very aged man, maltster, to have sons growed up so old and ancient," he remarked.

"Father's so old that 'a can't mind his age, can ye, father?" interposed Jacob. "And he's growed terrible crooked, too, lately," Jacob continued, surveying his father's figure, which was rather more bowed than his own. "Really, one may say that father there is three-double."

"Crooked folk will last a long while," said the maltster, grimly, and not in the best humour.

"Shepherd would like to hear the pedigree of yer life, father—wouldn't ye, shepherd?"

"Ay, that I should," said Gabriel, with the heartiness of a man who had longed to hear it for several months. "What may your age be, maltster?"

The maltster cleared his throat in an exaggerated form for emphasis, and elongating his gaze to the remotest point of the ashpit, said, in the slow speech justifiable when the importance of a subject is so generally felt that any mannerism must be tolerated in getting at it, "Well, I don't mind the year I were born in, but perhaps I can reckon up the places I've lived at, and so get it that way. I bode at Juddle Farm across there" (nodding to the north) "till I were eleven. I bode seven at Lower Twifford" (nodding to the east), "where I took to malting. I went therefrom to Norcombe, and malted there two-and-twenty years, and two-and-twenty years I was there turnip-hoeing and harvesting. Ah, I knowed that old place Norcombe years afore you were thought of, Master Oak" (Oak smiled a corroboration of the fact). "Then I malted at Snoodly-under-Drool four year, and four year turnip-hoeing; and I was fourteen times eleven months at Moreford St. Jude's" (nodding north-west-by-north). "Old Twills wouldn't hire me for more than eleven months at a time, to keep me from being chargeable to the parish if so be I was disabled. Then I was three year at Mellstock, and I've been here one-and-thirty year come Candlemas. How much is that?"

"Hundred and seventeen," chuckled another old gentleman, given to mental arithmetic and little conversation, who had hitherto sat unobserved in a corner.

"Well, then, that's my age," said the maltster, emphatically.

"Oh, no, father!" Jacob remonstrated. "Your turnip-hoeing were in

the summer and your malting in the winter of the same years, and ye don't ought to count both halves, father."

"Chok' it all! I lived through the summers, didn't I? That's my question. I suppose ye'll say next I be no age at all to speak of?"

"Sure we shan't," said Gabriel, soothingly.

"Ye be a very old aged person, maltster," attested Jan Coggan, also soothingly. "We all know that, and ye must have a wonderful talented constitution to be able to live so long, mustn't he, neighbours?"

"True, true; ye must, maltster, a wonderful talented constitution," said the meeting, unanimously.

The maltster, being now pacified, was even generous enough to voluntarily disparage in a slight degree the virtue of having lived a great many years, by mentioning that the cup they were drinking out of was three years older than he.

While the cup was being examined, the end of Gabriel Oak's flute became visible over his smock-frock pocket, and Henery Fray exclaimed, "Surely, shepherd, I seed you blowing into a grate flute by-now at Casterbridge?"

"You did," said Gabriel, blushing faintly. "I've been in great trouble, neighbours, and was driven to it. I used not to be so poor as I be now."

"Never mind, heart!" said Mark Clark. "You should take it careless-like, shepherd, and your time will come. But we could thank ye for a tune, if ye bain't too tired?"

"Neither drum nor trumpet have I heard this Christmas," said Jan Coggan. "Come, raise a tune, Master Oak!"

"Ay, that I will," said Gabriel readily, pulling out his flute and putting it together. "A poor tool, neighbours; an everyday chap; but such as I can do ye shall have and welcome."

Oak then struck up "Jockey to the Fair," and played that sparkling melody three times through, accenting the notes in the third round in a most artistic and lively manner by bending his body in small jerks and tapping with his foot to beat time.

"He can blow the flute very well—that 'a can," said a young married man, who having no individuality worth mentioning was known as "Susan Tall's husband." He continued admiringly. "I'd as lief as not be able to blow into a flute as well as that."

"He's a clever man, and 'tis a true comfort for us to have such a shepherd," murmured Joseph Poorgrass, in a soft and complacent cadence. "We ought to feel real thanksgiving that he's not a player of loose songs instead of these merry tunes; for 'twould have been just as easy for God to have made the shepherd a lewd low man—a man of iniquity, so to speak it—as what he is. Yes, for our wives' and daughters' sakes we should feel real thanksgiving."

"True, true, as the old woman said," dashed in Mark Clark conclusively, not feeling it to be of any consequence to his opinion that

he had only heard about a word and three-quarters of what Joseph had said.

"Yes," added Joseph, beginning to feel like a man in the Bible; "for evil does thrive so in these times that ye may be as much deceived in the clanest shaved and whitest shirted man as in the raggedest tramp upon the turnpike, if I may term it so."

"Ay, I can mind yer face now, shepherd," said Henery Fray, criticising Gabriel with misty eyes as he entered upon his second tune. "Yes—now I see ye blowing into the flute I know ye to be the same man I see play at Casterbridge, for yer mouth were scrimped up and yer eyes a-staring out like a strangled man's—just as they be now."

"'Tis a pity that playing the flute should make a man look such a scarecrow," observed Mr. Mark Clark, with additional criticism of Gabriel's countenance, the latter person jerking out unconcernedly, with the ghastly grimace required by the instrument, the chorus of "Dame Durden:"—

'Twas Moll' and Bet', and Doll 'and Kate
And Dor'-othy Drag'-gle Tail'.

"I hope you don't mind that young man Mark Clark's bad manners in naming your features?" whispered Joseph to Gabriel privately.

"Not at all," said Mr. Oak.

"For by nature ye be a very handsome man, shepherd," continued Joseph Poorgrass, with winning suavity.

"Ay, that ye be, shepherd," said the company.

"Thank you very much," said Oak, in the modest tone good manners demanded, privately thinking, however, that he would never let Bathsheba see him playing the flute; in this resolve showing a discretion equal to that related of its sagacious inventress, the divine Minerva herself.

"Ah, when I and my wife were married at Norcombe Church," said the old maltster, not pleased at finding himself left out of the subject, "we were called the handsomest couple in the neighbourhood—everybody said so."

"Danged if ye bain't altered now, maltster," said a voice, with the vigour natural to the enunciation of a remarkably evident truism. It came from the old man in the background, whose general offensiveness and spiteful ways were barely atoned for by the occasional chuckle he contributed to general laughs.

"Oh, no, no," said Gabriel.

"Don't ye play no more, shepherd," said Susan Tall's husband, the young married man who had spoken once before. "I must be moving, and when there's tunes going on I seem as if hung in wires. If I thought after I'd left that music was still playing and I not there, I should be quite melancholy-like."

"What's yer hurry then, Laban?" inquired Coggan. "You used to bide as late as the latest."

"Well, ye see, neighbours, I was lately married to a woman, and she's my vocation now, and so ye see . . ." The young man halted lamely.

"New lords new laws, as the saying is, I suppose," remarked Coggan, with a very compressed countenance; that the frigidity implied by this arrangement of facial muscles was not the true mood of his soul being only discernible from a private glimmer in the outer corner of one of his eyes—this eye being nearly closed, and the other only half open.

"Ay, 'a b'lieve—ha,ha!" said Susan Tall's husband, in a tone intended to imply his habitual reception of jokes without minding them at all. The young man then wished them good-night and withdrew.

Henery Fray was the first to follow. Then Gabriel arose and went off with Jan Coggan, who had offered him a lodging. A few minutes later, when the remaining ones were on their legs and about to depart, Fray came back again in a hurry. Flourishing his finger ominously he threw a gaze teeming with tidings just where his glance alighted by accident, which happened to be in Joseph Poorgrass's eye.

"Oh—what's the matter, what's the matter, Henery?" said Joseph, starting back.

"What's a-brewing, Henery?" asked Jacob and Mark Clark.

"Baily Pennyways—Baily Pennyways—I said so; yes, I said so."

"What, found out stealing anything?"

"Stealing it is. The news is, that after Miss Everdene got home she went out again to see all was safe, as she usually do, and coming in found Baily Pennyways creeping down the granary steps with half a bushel of barley. She flewed at him like a cat—never such a tom-boy as she is—of course I speak with closed doors?"

"You do—you do, Henery."

"She flewed at him, and, to cut a long story short, he owned to having carried off five sack altogether, upon her promising not to persecute him. Well, he's turned out neck and crop, and my question is, who's going to be baily now?"

The question was such a profound one that Henery was obliged to drink there and then from the large cup till the bottom was distinctly visible inside. Before he had replaced it on the table, in came the young man, Susan Tall's husband, in a still greater hurry.

"Have ye heard the news that's all over parish?"

"About Baily Pennyways?"

"Ah—but besides that?"

"No—not a morsel of it!" they all replied, looking into the very midst of Laban Tall, and as it were, advancing their intelligence to meet his words half way down his throat.

"What a night of horrors!" murmured Joseph Poorgrass, waving his hands spasmodically. "I've had the news-bell ringing in my left ear quite bad enough for a murder, and I've seed a magpie all alone!"

"Fanny Robin — Miss Everdene's youngest servant—can't be found. They've been wanting to lock up the door these two hours, but she isn't come in. And they don't know what to do about going to bed for fear of locking her out. They wouldn't be so concerned if she hadn't

been noticed in such low spirits these last few days, and Maryann d' think the beginning of a crowner's inquest has happened to the poor girl."

"Oh—'tis burned—'tis burned!" said Joseph Poorgrass with dry lips.

"No—'tis drowned!" said Tall.

"Or 'tis her father's razor!" suggested Billy Smallbury, with a vivid sense of detail.

"Well—Miss Everdene wants to speak to one or two of us before we go to bed. What with this trouble about the baily, and now about the girl, mis'ess is almost wild."

They all hastened up the rise to the farm-house, excepting the old maltster, whom neither news, fire, rain, nor thunder could draw from his hole. There, as the others' footsteps died away, he sat down again, and continued gazing as usual into the furnace with his red bleared eyes.

From the bedroom window above their heads Bathsheba's head and shoulders, robed in mystic white, were dimly seen extended into the air.

"Are any of my men among you?" she said anxiously.

"Yes, ma'am, several," said Susan Tall's husband.

"To-morrow morning I wish two or three of you to make inquiries in the villages round if they have seen such a person as Fanny Robin. Do it quietly; there is no reason for alarm as yet. She must have left whilst we were all at the fire."

"I beg yer pardon, but had she any young man courting her in the parish, ma'am?" asked Jacob Smallbury.

"I don't know," said Bathsheba.

"I've never heard of any such thing, ma'am," said two or three.

"It is hardly likely, either," continued Bathsheba. "For any lover of hers might have come to the house if he had been a respectable lad. The most mysterious matter connected with her absence—indeed, the only thing which gives me serious alarm—is that she was seen to go out of the house by Maryann with only her indoor working gown on—not even a bonnet."

"And you mean, ma'am, excusing my words, that a young woman would hardly go to see her young man without dressing up," said Jacob, turning his mental vision upon past experiences. "That's true—she would not, ma'am."

"She had, I think, a bundle, though I couldn't see very well," said a female voice from another window, which seemed to belong to Maryann. "But she had no young man about here. Hers lives in Casterbridge, and I believe he's a soldier."

"Do you know his name?" Bathsheba said.

"No, mistress; she was very close about it."

"Perhaps I might be able to find out if I went to Casterbridge barracks," said William Smallbury.

"Very well; if she doesn't return to-morrow, mind you go there and

try to discover which man it is, and see him. I feel more responsible than I should if she had had any friends or relations alive. I do hope she has come to no harm through a man of that kind. . . . And then there's this disgraceful affair of the bailiff—but I can't speak of him now."

Bathsheba had so many reasons for uneasiness that it seemed she did not think it worth while to dwell upon any particular one. "Do as I told you, then," she said in conclusion, closing the casement.

"Ay, ay, mistress; we will," they replied, and moved away.

That night at Coggan's, Gabriel Oak, beneath the screen of closed eyelids, was busy with fancies, and full of movement, like a river flowing rapidly under its ice. Night had always been the time at which he saw Bathsheba most vividly, and through the slow hours of shadow he tenderly regarded her image now. It is rarely that the pleasures of the imagination will compensate for the pain of sleeplessness, but they possibly did with Oak to-night, for the delight of merely seeing effaced for the time his perception of the great difference between seeing and possessing.

He also thought of plans for fetching his few utensils and books from Norcombe. *The Young Man's Best Companion*, *The Farrier's Sure Guide*, *The Veterinary Surgeon*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Ash's Dictionary*, and *Walkingame's Arithmetic*, constituted his library; and though a limited series, it was one from which he had acquired more sound information by diligent perusal than many a man of opportunities has done from a furlong of laden shelves.

The French Press.

III. THIRD PERIOD.

The Reign of Louis XVI.

In a previous notice on the Press of France, during the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV.,* it was stated that the accession of Louis XVI. inaugurated the third era in French journalism. During the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, newspapers had been engrossed by the disputes between Churchmen and Philosophers, and by the wrangles of the Philosophers with one another; at the death of Louis XV. the problems that began to engage and impassion men's minds were wholly political. This third era is by far the most important that has ever been passed through by the newspaper history of a people. At no time and in no country has journalism wielded such influence as in France during Louis XVI.'s reign; and the period merits close attention, as showing how a nation prepared itself for the greatest revolution which the world has seen, and also from what causes that revolution fell short of its main object.

Louis XVI. came to the throne in 1774, just a century ago, and his accession was hailed with the wildest outburst of national joy. Succeeding to a king who had brought France to the lowest point of degradation, and whose reign had been, in fact, in its latter years, an unbroken tale of corruption at home and disgrace abroad, he was exactly the prince to take a strong hold of popular affections. He was no more than twenty, and had none of the vices or even weaknesses of youth. Affable in manner, pure in his private life, fonder of lock-making than of court ceremonies, of reading than of sport, addicted to the companionship of learned and sensible men, he was known, moreover, to feel a deep sympathy for the miserable condition of the peasant classes, and to be resolved on doing his utmost to reduce taxation, alleviate pauperism, encourage trade, science, and education, and to reform abuses in Government. He began nobly by refusing the *don de joyeux avènement*, which was a gift of 5,000,000 francs made to kings on their accession; he abolished torture, suppressed the savage customs and feudal rights that still existed on the crown lands, issued a decree against press-gangs, recalled the Parliaments dissolved by Chancellor Maupeou in 1771: and—small matter as it may

* The French Press, First and Second Periods, *Cornhill Magazine*, June and October, 1873.

appear now, though it was a grim affair then—paid a visit to the main sewer of Paris, which had been steadily poisoning people for the last fifty years, and ordered it to be roofed in at his own expense. At the same time he exiled from court the late King's mistress, the Milliner-Marchioness du Barry, and dismissed Louis XV.'s last ministers, the ferocious and half-lunatic Duke d'Aiguillon, Chancellor Maupeou above-said, who had sold justice and judicial appointments till he had amassed a plethoric fortune, and the execrated finance-minister, l'Abbé Terray, who had compared the people to an orange which must be squeezed. At the head of his new cabinet he placed the aged Count de Maurepas, who was much liked from having written an epigram against Mdme. de Pompadour, in 1749, and having incurred a fine and twenty years' exile in consequence. This Count was a frivolous old Frenchman, who made bad puns at the council table, but the new King had no means of suspecting this infirmity, for when M. de Maurepas had held office in his younger days he had greatly distinguished himself. At the age of twenty-four he had been appointed Secretary of State for the Navy and for the Royal Household, which included the administration of the city of Paris, and during the twenty years that his tenure of place lasted, he had done more good than any minister since the time of Colbert. Thus he had embellished Paris, shut up gambling-hells, repaved and relighted the streets, tried to cope with the same sewer which afterwards depressed Louis XVI.; and out of the navy funds had equipped several valuable scientific and geographical expeditions, amongst others those of La Condamine, Sévin, and Jussieu. To these achievements the Count added a grace of demeanour and a dashing kind of personal generosity, which had made him the pet of society when he was young, and sat well on him even in his old age, so that he seemed eminently fitted for the premiership, which Louis XVI. too guilelessly conferred on him. The two most important offices in the cabinet were at this juncture the Foreign Affairs and Finance departments, and M. de Maurepas filled up both posts well. The Foreign seals he gave to Count de Vergennes, a middle-aged diplomatist of consummate ability, and those of the Finance office to Count d'Ormesson, a square-headed nobleman of shining virtue. Writing to this colleague, under the King's dictation, Maurepas said: "Your appointment is a tribute which his Majesty pays to your great piety. . ." but, when he reached this word, the incorrigible Premier could not resist being facetious: he looked up and cried: "Ah, sire, this letter would never do for a circular." Now Louis XVI., who was desperately in earnest about his new cabinet, seemed puzzled at this joke. He had tried that all the fresh ministers should be square-headed; indeed, this was the first cabinet on record that contained no member under forty—and he answered Maurepas with surprise. However, the virtuous Count d'Ormesson only kept the Exchequer long enough to wish himself well out of it. At the end of four weeks he handed over the embarrassed ledgers of the kingdom to Baron Turgot, a man as virtuous as himself, and renowned for his many works on political economy.

The newspapers of Paris read at this time like a chorus of hymns. It was so new to the French to have a king and ministers busying themselves about the people, from other motives than to saddle them with more taxes, that journalists appeared to gasp for superlatives enthusiastic enough to paint the state of their feelings. The terms "idolised monarch," "son of St. Louis," "father of the nation," were constantly cropping up, and the young sovereign was compared to those too few good beings whom antiquity and legendry have furnished, for it was a lettered age strong in its classics and mythology. The venerable Voltaire wrote from Ferney that Sesostris had come back to earth again; sulky J. J. Rousseau, lately returned to Paris from his foreign rambles, admitted that there was some hope of cure for diseased France under the altered state of things, and even at that stronghold of literary philistinism, the Café Procope, authors became loyal for a season. It had been the custom under Louis XV. for the frequenters of this café to use a slang dialect of their own for fear of police spies. Talking of religion, they would say *Javotte*, and of Government *Jeanneton* (from Jeanne du Barry); they also had a stock joke which consisted in sneezing when the King's name was pronounced, a way of implying that they could find nothing better to say of so worthy a prince. All these precautions and pleasantries ceased now, and young M. de Beaumarchais could chalk up boldly, as he did, over the stove of the café: "*No dogs or police-spies allowed here. The Ex-Minister Terray may be brought in led by a string.*"*

There were then twenty-eight well established journals in the capital, and it may help to give a better idea of the means which public opinion had for expressing itself, if we subjoin a list of them with their yearly subscription prices. It will be noticed that these prices are, for the most part, much lower than those of London papers at the same date, because of the absence of stamp duty. Stamps were imposed on English papers so early as the reign of Queen Anne, and in 1774, when the duty stood at one penny for every copy, the average price of a London journal was threepence. In 1775, Lord North raised the duty to three-halfpence, and in 1789 another halfpenny was added, which brought the ordinary price to fourpence. In 1797, a new addition of 1½d. occurred, and papers then attained what, to a French public, would have seemed the prohibitive cost of 6*d*. Newspapers in France were not taxed till the Consulate in 1799, and up to that time plenty of journals were started, and sold well at one sou the copy.

Those flourishing in 1774 were:—

Gazette de France, official, published twice a week, with occasional extra supplements, 12 frs. annually; *Journal des Savants*, non-political, 14

* It is fair to note that there were one or two dissentients, who refused to share the general exhilaration at the new king's coming. Louis XVI. did not like music, and being at the opera soon after his accession, had the hardihood to go out during a violin quartet. "*Ah, grand Dieu!*" cried one French fiddler turning to another, "*quel règne se prepare!*"

numbers a year, 16 frs.; *Mercure*, political and literary, fortnightly 24 frs.; *Petites Affiches*, a weekly journal of advertisements with a literary supplement, containing amongst other things mock advertisements of a satirical kind, 48 frs.; *Année Littéraire*, *Catalogue Hebdomadaire*, *Courrier d'Avignon*, *Journal de Politique et de Littérature*, *Journal Français*, *Journal de Lecture*, *Gazette Parisienne*, *Journal Historique*, *Courrier Général*, and *Gazette de Monsieur*, all weekly, political, and literary papers, ranging in price from 9 to 18 frs. a year;* *Nouvelles de Cour*, *Année Littéraire*, *Espagne Littéraire*, *Journal de Verdun*, political, polemical, and satirical, all four published twice a week, with frequent supplements, 18 or 20 frs. a year; *Causeur de Paris* and *Spectateur Français*, fortnightly reviews, which did not give news, 24 frs.; *Journal des Théâtres*, *Gazette des Tribunaux*, *Journal des Causes Célèbres*, *Journal des Dames*, *Journal de Santé*, *Journal de Médecine et de Physique*, *Journal Ecclésiastique*, *Journal des Beaux Arts*, scientific, professional, or artistic periodicals, published monthly at prices varying from 9 to 24 frs. The *Journal des Dames* was extremely frivolous, and even improper, but much bought. The medical papers were both excellent, and the two law papers began in 1774 to criticise, as well as report, the important decisions of judges, a thing which would have been punished as contempt of Court under Louis XV.

In addition to these journals, there were about twenty others published abroad for circulation in France. They mostly appeared twice a week for the yearly price of 48 frs., and being bolder than those of Paris, found a much larger sale. Louis XVI. decreed that they should have free access to the kingdom, and instead of being read in holes and corners they forthwith appeared in the cafés, on the Augustine's Quay, which was a book-mart and a place of airing for literary folk, and round the Innocents' Churchyard where ournalists congregated. As to the cafés, most of them made it their business to take in specially the papers published in one or other foreign country; and thus the now famous *Café Anglais* owed its name to the fact that the principal London periodicals were to be found there, and also a Parisian *Journal Anglais*, which gave garbled translations from the British press, and first taught the French to spell *my lord* with an i.

Here are some extracts which will give a key-note to the tone of the French press during the opening period of Louis XVI.'s reign. The first is from the *Mercure*, November, 1774:—

> Our well-beloved king refused the *don de joyeux avènement* which, God knows, would never have better deserved its name than if his Majesty had deigned to accept it; our Queen, whose generous heart reflects all the virtues of her Royal Consort,

* The weekly papers did not all appear on the same days. The favourite publishing day was Sunday, but a paper of some sort was issued every day of the week, so that Paris really boasted a daily press, though the first regular daily journal was only started in 1777.

has likewise declined to accept the customary gift called Queen's Girdle (*Ceinture de la Reine*). It was an old, reverent, and touching usage, that of offering girdle money to a new queen, but her Majesty, having learned that the custom (which took its rise some centuries ago in spontaneous contributions) had degenerated into a tax weighing on the poorest classes of the kingdom, her Majesty said : "I wish for no other girdle than the love of the king's subjects." Cornelia did not speak more nobly when she showed her children, and exclaimed, "Those are my jewels;" and M. le Comte de Coutourelle has appropriately expressed the national gratitude in the following lines, which he tendered to the Queen at Sunday's levee :

"Vous renoncez, charmante Souveraine,
Aux plus beaux revenus :
À quoi vous servirait la 'Ceinture de la Reine ?'
Vous avez celle de Vénus."

The *Journal des Dames* of a month later describes a visit paid by Marie Antoinette to the Mint. A medal is shown her with the Virgin's image on one side and her own portrait on the other :

"But there is no inscription!" remarked her Majesty to the Duke de Nivernais. "There was no need of one, Madame," answered the Duke; "People will naturally exclaim at seeing the Virgin, '*Ave Maria*,' and when they turn to your Majesty's likeness, '*gratiâ plena*.'"

In the *Gazette de France*, January, 1775, we have this tit-bit under the heading of Foreign Intelligence.

Lisbon, December.—King Joseph I. of Portugal has an equal regard for wit and for the maxims of absolute despotism, so that the former passion sometimes tempers the excesses of the latter. The other night the Marquis of Ponteleina was discussing with his Majesty the delicate question of Royal prerogative, and he contended that there should be limits to a king's power; his Majesty asserted that there should be none; "I only mean, sire, such limits as reason itself would suggest," protested the Marquis respectfully. "There should be no limits, and reason has nothing to do with it," replied the King; "if I were to order you to fling yourself into the sea you ought to do it instantly." The Marquis bowed, and turned to leave the room. "Where are you going?" asked the King, astonished. "I am going to take swimming lessons, Sire," rejoined M. de Ponteleina, which made the King laugh, and put an end to a debate which had its perils. This reminds one of Peter the Great visiting Frederick IV. of Denmark, and being led by him to the summit of the Round Tower at Copenhagen. "Shall I give you an example of my absolute authority," said Peter, and turning to a Cossack in his suite, he pointed to the abyss below the tower and cried "Jump." The Cossack saluted his master, and jumped without a word. "There," said the Czar quietly, "has your Majesty any subjects like that?" "Happily not," answered Frederick IV., with a shudder; and we can imagine a similar horror filling the breast of our own Louis XVI. at the recital of such abuses in power. Thrice blessed the people whose king enforces no other laws than those of sense and justice! Thrice blessed the monarch who knows that there is a King who sits above earthly kings and judges their acts!

The papers were much taken up at this time with details about reforms introduced at Court. Louis XVI. objected to dress and undress in the presence of a crowd of noblemen, and he thought there was no need of a duke to hand him his bedgown, or of an equally illustrious peer of France to tie the string of his nightcap. He ordered that the courtiers

should only be admitted to pay him their respects after he had left his dressing-room. Again, there was a body of pages, who were brought to Court young, and passed their lives in ante-chambers, and in the boudoirs of ladies-in-waiting, and maids-of-honour, where they picked up all the vices, and no qualities worth mentioning. To the disgust of these young gentlemen, the King directed that their education should be attended to, and that when not actually on duty they should be forbidden to hang about the palace apartments. What led to this distasteful measure was the following incident, drolly narrated in the *Journal de Verdun*:—

On New Year's Day (1775) the High Court of the Parliament of Paris proceeded to Versailles to pay their respects to his Majesty, and were shown into the Galerie des Glaces, where they sat down waiting till the King should enter. A page who stood behind M. le Premier President, thought the opportunity a good one for displaying his talents, so tied a string to the President's wig, the other end being fastened to a chandelier. On the entrance of his Majesty the Court rose, and the President stepped forward, but his wig remaining suspended in mid-air he stood revealed in all his baldness, to the amusement of her Majesty's ladies, who, despite the King's seriousness, could not refrain from smiling. When the Parliament had retired the King called up the page and commanded him to go and apologise to the President; but here began a new freak, for the page, instead of starting off on the spot, delayed the business till midnight. He arrived, galloping on horseback, and escorted by two other pages and by his servants to the street where the President lived, and the whole thoroughfare was startled out of sleep by the noise of the horses, and by the furious knocking at the door. When the President's servants hurried to answer the summons the page alighted, and said proudly "Special order of the King!" whereupon the President was roused from his bed, and dressed himself hastily in his robes of ceremony, wondering what could be the matter. He descended to his drawing-room, which the servants had meanwhile lighted as if for a festival, and found the small page, who said demurely, "Monsieur, I have come by his Majesty's orders to beg pardon for having strung up your wig." It was a good joke, but his Majesty's reflection on it was that his pages had too much spare time on their hands, and that is why they are for the future to be taught Latin and mathematics.

The King, in his honest zeal for improvements, tried to diminish the head-dresses of ladies, which, under the Queen's auspices, had began towering to a fabulous height. At the first Carnival ball of 1775 Marie Antoinette's hair was piled up in a fabric two feet high; but nothing could be more chivalrous than Louis XVI.'s rebuke of the extravagance. On the morrow he sent his wife a splendid egret of diamonds, telling her it would please him better to see her wear "this simple adornment, though if she but could see herself as others saw her she would recognise that art was not needed to make her beautiful." The papers were mightily pleased at this, for they had been attacking the fashionable headdresses, with some warmth; but it is scarcely necessary to observe that the King only succeeded in checking the upward growth of ladies' hair for three months or so. Marie Antoinette accepted the egret, but she added it to the high fabric which it had been intended to suppress, and so the fashion was rendered doubly expensive. Louis XVI. was more successful in battling with one of those snug little abuses which one must always remember

lovingly in thinking of the good old times. Let us listen to what *Mercure* says, February, 1775 :—

M. de Turgot, the Controller of Finances, came three weeks ago to the King and said he had discovered in the household expenses an item of 40.000fr. (1,600*l.*) annually for the Clerk of the Red Room Bottle. He said no one could explain to him on what pretext this money was drawn. Inquiries were set afoot, and it was discovered that in 1677 Louis XIV. had assigned the Red Room on the third storey, at the angle of the Cour de Neptune at Versailles, to the officer of the guard on duty, and directed that a bottle of wine should be placed there every evening to refresh him. The king had said one bottle—the groom of the cellar put down two in his accounts, and entered the charge at 10fr. a day. Presently up rose a clerk, who contended that as this item was not set down in the ordinary columns of the Civil List it must be registered with a special fee. He and the groom managed it between them ; down went four bottles a day, and the clerk and his friend each continued to draw their 3,650fr. a year very regularly till they grew old and sold their places for the capital value of the income. By this time new arrangements had been made for the officers of the guard, and the Red Room was given up to a bed-chamber lady, who drank no wine. Nevertheless, the bottle, which was no longer supplied, got to be charged 30,000fr. annually, for the prices of commodities were rising. Cardinal Dubois, who was ever of an economic turn of mind, investigated this abuse and wisely suppressed one of the recipients of the bottle-money, but as the other recipient was loyal to him, he raised his salary to 20,000fr. Forty years later the Abbé Terray followed in the same wake, and appointed Count de Kerday Clerk of the Red Room Bottle at a fixed salary of 2,000 louis. Now M. de Kerday is twenty-five years old, and Colonel of the Regiment Royal Lorraine. He has receipts to prove that he paid Controller Terray 500,000fr. for the post ; but it is hoped that in consideration of his having drawn his 40,000fr. for now four years he may be induced to resign on repayment of the 500,000fr., with another 100,000 thrown in for good luck. The King's Secretary has written to him about it.

In the same number, which shows up this little affair, we have it announced that the king desires to reform the management of prisons. Prisoners are to have their straw changed at least once a week, and are to be classed as much as possible according to their offences, murderers being kept aloof from apprentices who have simply broken a street lamp, and women of evil reputation from little girls who have been arrested because they have no homes. Then follows advice from the Lieutenant of Police cautioning newspaper vendors against going into the pits of play-houses to hawk their journals, "not that the King would throw any impediments in the way of newspaper sale, but because the hawkers too often forget the respect they owe to the spectators, and fight with one another." To this the *Mercure's* editor adds, pathetically, "One of our hawkers got his head punched at the Comédie Française the other night by a crier of the *Journal de Verdun*. If the man wanted a heavy weapon he would have done better to ply a copy of the paper he was endeavouring so ineffectually to sell; but does the *Journal de Verdun* want to persuade us that its literature is strong because its criers are hard-fisted? If so it should advertise: 'Articles, puns, and pleasantries by the man with the flat nose—the same who assaults the *Mercure's* servants and gets kicked now and then for a change.'" The number winds up with a squib, which

well sums up the contentment of a time when the confidence in the new king was universal, and when no graver matter disturbed the public peace than the budding quarrel between the partizans of the composer Gluck and those of his rival Piccini:—

Somebody was twitting the Curé of the Church of St. Géneviève, who during the late King's illness had offered up noisy prayers on his behalf. "What do you mean by calling the prayers useless?" asked this holy man. "Didn't the King die?"

II.

All this was very well for a beginning, but the hey-day did not last long. One's object in dwelling on the early portion of Louis XVI.'s reign is to record the strange contrast between that period and the events which followed. No king ever commenced better than Louis XVI., but a sterner man than he was needed to face the difficulties that were looming ahead in serried numbers. First and foremost was the financial difficulty. The King had said, on calling Turgot to office, "We must see how we can possibly reduce our debts;" to which Turgot had pithily replied, "The present question is not how we may reduce the national debt, sire, but how we may increase it," and this was just true, for there was a dead lock in money matters. On one side were the trading and working classes, who were overtaxed, and on the other the nobility and clergy, who possessed two-thirds of the land in France, and yet were not taxed at all. Turgot proposed several small measures to stave off pressing wants, and then applied himself to the elaboration of a complete scheme of financial reform. But priests and nobles got wind of his intentions, and it may be said that from that moment the train of the Revolution was laid, for they resolved to oppose him at every step, to harass, discredit, and overthrow him. After all they were but acting as privileged classes ever will when they have not an iron hand to deal with them. Turgot was honest, able, and resolute, but he was weak, for he worked under the orders of a Prime Minister, who had no notion of tilting against the whole nobility, and under a king who had not nerve enough to dismiss Maurepas and back up Turgot, as Louis XIV. had backed up Colbert and Louis XIII. Richelieu. If Turgot had been as unscrupulous as he was clever, he might have got rid of Maurepas by intrigue, and rendered glorious service to both king and country. But he ignored the tricks of statecraft—tricks so useful at times—and instead of overawing or finessing with the obstructive prelates and peers, he was simple enough to appeal to their patriotism and their good sense, so that they laughed in his face, and what is more, took heart to resist him without flinching. The Red Room Bottle Man was but one of a class whose name was legion, and all his brother sinecurists had quaked when his particular case was being examined. There was jobbery, corruption, and extortion high and low on all branches of the administrative tree. Every office in the state had been sold under the late reign, and the titulants naturally tried to re-coup themselves for their outlay by

systematic plunder. The commonest formalities of civilised life, commercial exchanges, sales, the hiring of a shop, the purchase of a field, the inheriting of a legacy, were each and all fenced in with fees and restrictions so formidable, that Beaumarchais remarked that he doubted whether he could stand on his head in the middle of a road without having to bribe the Provost of Paris, fee the police, corrupt the parish beadle, and then enter into a compromise with three or four of the bystanders in order to avoid a law-suit. To crown all, the taxes, customs, excise, and post-office were farmed out to shameless gangs of speculators, who blocked up every avenue to progress, and were constantly wresting new monopolies from the embarrassed Government, or rather from the dozen or so of loose women who virtually ruled the land. The state of things was such that towards the close of his reign Louis XV. had been utterly unable to dispose of a single salaried appointment. Hearing one day that one of the sub-masters of the Royal hounds was making it a practice to remove the best head of deer from the Crown chases to stock his own forests, he asked his favourite huntsman to pick up irrefutable evidence of the fact, in order that the sub-master might be disgraced. The huntsman answered bluffly that if he did this he should lose his place. "Oh, but I will see to that," answered the King, nettled, and the unlucky man, rather out of obedience than from confidence in the royal word, denounced the sub-master and was dismissed from his place the same day. "I did not know the man was so strong, my poor fellow," said Louis XV. shyly to the huntsman, "but it seems there will be no money whatsoever for our hunting if he is displeased. His people farm all my woods and rivers, and he has half-a-dozen duchesses behind him." The huntsman submitted that it was sad to be beggared for doing his duty, and the King assenting, signed him an appointment to a place in the Customs, but three weeks later the man returned again, saying his commission was worth so much waste paper. "I'll tell you how to manage," exclaimed the King, impatiently, and doing violence for once to his natural stinginess, he unlocked a drawer and drew out a roll of fifty louis. "You make a present of this to Madame Desparbés's maid. Madame Desparbés is the mistress of the chief clerk in the Customs, and if you bribe the maid, the mistress will see that the clerk obeys my orders." This roundabout method of exerting the royal prerogative succeeded.

Now when affairs have lapsed into this condition the accession of a new king, however well-intentioned, does not put them straightway to rights. At first the sinecurists, monopolists, hectoring clerks and others hid their heads like frightened rats; but as soon as the first gust of change had blown by they came out of their holes, and Turgot found them swarm up everywhere as triumphant as ever to his hindrance and confusion. He could make no way because of them; whichever side he turned he saw his passage barred by a cluster of vested interests. The Court being at Fontainebleau in 1775 the Prince de Ligne asked Marie Antoinette, one night, if she would play at cards. "I have only six

louis," answered the queen, "and shall have no more till the end of the week, so I must economise." The next day the prince accosted Marie Antoinette joyfully and said he supposed she had procured money sooner than she expected, for he had just seen a van marked *Queen's Treasury* start for Paris with four horses, two postilions, six outriders, a troop of cavalry, and two clerks, all of which would have been superfluous for the conveyance of 120 francs. "Yet there was no more in the van," replied Marie Antoinette, ruefully. "The Queen's Treasury always travels so since the time of Marie Leczinska and you know what storms the least talk of retrenchment excites." Honest Turgot was present when this answer was made, and he took the occasion of drawing aside the Prince of Rohan Guemenée—the same who in 1783 became bankrupt for the trifle of 33,000,000 francs—and said: "It will cost about five thousand francs to convey those six *louis* to Paris. I ask you, my lord, what will become of France if you and your brother-landowners do not help me to extricate us from this mess?" "Tut, tut," chirrupped the prince, filipping some snuff off his frill. "Crack your head with figures if you like, my dear Baron, but don't interfere with us or the clergy. We're all poor as mice; my estates are morgaged a foot thick, and I don't know of a bishop who hasn't put his crozier in pawn. The only people who can afford taxes are the trade-folk and labourers;" and perceiving that Turgot still persisted in wishing to haul his country out of the pit, this Prince de Guemenée and others mocked at him, and instructed their salaried newspapers to mock him as a visionary and a simpleton. The nobility and clergy had of course many ways of raising a press-outcry against an objectionable politician. Not counting the journals which were actually their own, there were plenty of others ever ready to sell themselves for pecuniary or social favours; and behind these came the ruck of papers whose conductors were too ignorant to understand a man of Turgot's stamp. Turgot was no charlatan, and hated clap-trap. If he had begun at once with sensational measures and made a great noise about them he might have been comprehended of the people; but as his plans were deep, steady, searching reforms, which would have operated slowly, though surely, his enemies had no difficulty in persuading the masses that he had no ideas of reform at all. After two years of ceaseless, struggling disappointment and humiliation Turgot resigned in 1776, and his place was taken by the Swiss banker and economist Necker.

Then it was that matters first began to assume a serious aspect. The people were glad to see Turgot fall, but they were not so blind as to ignore that the nobility had banded together to oppose all innovations whatever; and perhaps one of their reasons for despising Turgot was that he had not had the spirit to override the nobles and put his measures, if he had any, forcibly to the test. Necker was a popular man, and the public showed unmistakeable signs that they expected firmness of him. Insensibly one can note a diminution in the respect of newspapers towards constituted authorities from this time. The papers do not attack the king

and queen, but they adopt a free tone as regards the farmers-general of taxes, the judges and bishops, and they speak in very plain terms about the bigger abuses of government. One must not look for exhaustive leading articles, but the papers are full of those short, crisp paragraphs which Frenchmen pen so well, and which turn disagreeable things and persons into ridicule. Day after day the press teemed with column upon column of these pithy epigrams, and anecdotes, many of them untrue no doubt, but all funny, and spiteful enough to make the most thick-skinned victims wince. It was like a fine spray of salt water splashed at people in power, and when the spray had drenched minor placemen it began to wet the courtiers and ministers, and principally M. de Maurepas. That venerable premier was surprised at this. He had been punning serenely all this time, and could not understand the altered spirit that had come over the country. Much like an English Whig in feeling, M. de Maurepas meant well, but thought the nation had all it needed, once he was in office. Those twenty years he had passed successfully as a minister in the prime of life had been the spoiling of him. If a minister rules well from twenty to forty it seems to be admitted that he can begin again as if he were the same man and as if the world were the same five and twenty years afterwards; and M. de Maurepas was not the first, nor has he been the last, politician who fancied that age had wrought no difference in him nor in the rest of mankind. When the Press assailed him he concluded that journalism was being stricken with a passing madness, and he resolved to doctor it with the specifics familiar to him in his youth. He submitted to the king a decree for the appointment of seventy censors, who were to revise all books and periodicals before they were published; and to lay an embargo on foreign journals when they exceeded the liberty allowed to native prints.

Louis XVI. signed this decree without reluctance. He, too, having blown off his first whiff of reform zeal and being anxious for some rest, felt uneasy and shocked by the clamour of the newspapers. He was much in the mood of a man who exclaims: "I gave that beggar a penny two years ago, and he is not yet satisfied!" It seemed to him unreasonable that men should be so eager to move on whilst he desired to sit still a while; and his courtiers were repeating to him so profusely that he had done more for his people than any king before him, that he believed this to be true, not being able to remember a historical precedent to the contrary. So the press decree was launched to kennel journalists, as it were, until the time should come when they might with more propriety give tongue again; but never was decree so ill-obeyed nor so derisively greeted. It excited an Homeric laugh from one end of Paris to the other, and the circumstance should have warned the Court that it was no longer a tame multitude that peopled the capital. To begin with, ministers found it impossible to get seventy presentable censors. There had been censors under Louis XV., but the press was inclined to be obedient then; in the new temper of the public mind the office was

thought to be ignominious, and the "Six Dozen minus Two," as the board got to be called, were poor literary hacks on whom newspaper editors proceeded forthwith to play every variety of practical jokes. The *Journal de Verdun* and three other periodicals, which were allotted one censor between them, made him disgracefully drunk on the first day of his functions and constrained him to sign a solemn statement that he was a fool—which declaration was printed in conspicuous type on the front page of all four papers. The *Mercure* got a censor who stammered, and reports of his conversations were faithfully given from week to week as pronounced; but at the end of the month he effected an exchange and became censor to the two medical papers, "the which," remarked the *Mercure*, "will thus have an opportunity of combining benevolence with amusement, by first listening to the poor devil and then curing him." These pleasantries were not all allowed to pass off unpunished; but another ominous symptom of the times was that the Parliament of Paris refused to inflict any heavier penalty than fines upon press delinquents. M. de Maurepas had recourse to the Bastile in a few instances; but the insubordination was growing too general and too defiant for this to be of much avail. The quarrel between the Gluckists and the Piccinists added much to the perplexities of government. Under pretence of praising Piccini's music, journalists of the popular party made furious onslaughts on all the admirers of Gluck, who was the Court favourite; and, however transparent the allusions might be, it was difficult to punish such squibs as the following, which appeared in the *Journal Politique* for May 1776:—

> Very dull music Monsieur Gluck's, perhaps dangerous music too. They say good music inspires noble resolutions; bad music, then, may do the contrary. Supposing a Farmer-General after listening to an act of *Zenobia* (by Piccini) were to find tears in his eyes, stand up in his box and shout to a delighted pit: "I am a rogue, but I'll make restitution?" The supposition is preposterous we know, but this is spring time and we can afford to be imaginative. Supposing then a robber—we beg pardon, a Farmer-General—did this, who would doubt the power of harmony? But Farmers-General prefer Gluck. They listen to *Iphigénie en Aulide*, and dream of new taxes. The screeching and squalling of those German notes reminds them pleasurably of some unfortunate family of peasants yelling and tearing their hair whilst the collector is walking off with their last cow. No music could be sweeter to a Farmer-General, but why is M. de Maurepas so fond of Gluck?

Marie Antoinette was fond of Gluck too; but the papers continued to respect her, it being apparently their object to dissociate the Royal Family from the Court nobility, and to make the nation believe that the King was being prevented by his advisers from doing all the good he wished. In one or two of the foreign papers, however, some ill-natured comments might be read on the Queen's extravagance and the King's vacillating disposition, and this gave the "Six Dozen minus Two" an occasional opportunity of retrieving their character with the native press. The Parisian papers bore no love towards the more outspoken French journals, published abroad for home circulation, for these prints interfered considerably with

their profits, and the only fault found with the Censors was that they frequently gave their visa to foreign matter, more subversive than would have been sanctioned at home. The journalist * Mercier explained this by saying that Censors could only read Paris print.

We now reach the middle of the year 1776, when two highly important events occurred, which had a strong indirect influence in preparing the Revolution. The one was the establishment of the *Courrier de l'Europe* in London; the other a violent collision between the Ministry and the most distinguished journalist of the day, Simon Nicolas Linguet.

III.

Nicolas Linguet, as he was commonly called, was born in 1736. He was a man of energetic character, bold, clever, but without a particle of conscience. His inward vocation prompted him towards literature even when he was a schoolboy; but finding how shabbily paid were most votaries of the pen, he entered the Bar, for, as he said to the Prince of Beauvau, who took an interest in him: "The great point is to become rich, my lord; I don't see any other object in life, and I don't suppose you do." His forensic success was rapid and most startling, for instead of employing the stilted and pompous forms of oratory then in vogue, he spoke as men do now-a-days, but with a fiery, brazen eloquence all his own. As the inaugurator of the modern style of French rhetoric, he was the actual precursor of Mirabeau; and other barristers were soon obliged to copy his language, though the old ones protested in disgust, and even sought to check him at first, urging that his colloquial phraseology was not decent. Linguet had not his equal for "getting up" a case, and surrounding it with such dramatic accessories as were most likely to tell on the minds of French judges. A beautiful lady, Madame de Bethune, having brought an action about some land against the Marshal Duke de Broglie (great grandfather of the present Duke), Linguet was retained for the plaintiff. But on seeing his client, he said: "You are so lovely, Madame, that your face is worth a speech in itself. What I'll do is this: I will write you a speech, and you shall learn it by heart, and rehearse it to me, dressed in a light-blue silk gown, the colour best suited to your style of beauty. If you deliver it correctly, as I direct you, I defy any bench of Frenchmen to find for the defendant."

This was accordingly done. Madame de Bethune's speech took seven hours in delivery, and caused a most theatrical sensation. The lady had an excellent memory. She had learned her part well, and her demeanour, voice, and gestures were all such as a first-rate actress might have envied. It was so evident that she had won the hearts of the judges, that when the court adjourned for dinner, midway in the speech, the irascible Marshal

* The term "journalist" must now be understood to mean any writer employed on the press. The term "gazetteer" fell out of use in Louis XVI.'s reign, for the old *journals*, which had been forbidden to treat of politics under Louis XV., became political with the new reign, and stood on the same footing as the *gazettes*.

de Broglie sought out Linguet in the Pleaders' Hall, and, shaking a cane in his face, said: "Just you make your client speak her own words, and not yours, Master Linguet, or it will be the worse for you—do you hear?"

Linguet's reply was at once the most delicate compliment to his opponent's renowned valour and the proudest personal retort. He made a low bow, and answered: "My lord, you have taught Frenchmen never to fear their enemies; and I mean to remember the lesson."

So long as Linguet confined himself to exploits of this sort, he had only to contend against the professional jealousies which beset every man who shoots ahead of his colleagues. But he was a person who could not be happy unless he was up to his neck in quarrels. He ferretted out a number of abuses at the Bar, and began to expose them; not because he disliked abuses, but because it pleased him to wreak his malice on some of the big-wigs who had affronted him at starting. The results of this bit of bravado were deplorable. In no time Linguet found all his brother barristers arrayed against him. He had no friends, for, looking at the Bar as a mere stepping stone to higher honours, he adopted an insufferably arrogant line with all his gowned brethren, and missed no occasion of expressing his contempt for them. He was an exquisite, who wore silk breeches, cambric ruffles, and diamond buckles to his shoes; and it was well known that numerous noble ladies whom he had served professionally protected and petted him. Linguet was cautioned that if he did not keep a watch over his tongue, he would be sent to Coventry. He shrugged his shoulders, broke out into denunciations more violent than before, and was disbarred.

Then his name filled everybody's mouth, for it was justly felt that the Bar had lost its most brilliant member. The French for disbarred is *rayé*, which also as applied to stuffs means *striped;* and all the shop windows blossomed out with *rayé* goods, handkerchiefs, shawls, coats, head-dresses, &c., *à la Linguet*. The *furore* which Henri Rochefort excited in France five years ago, recalls the Linguet mania, and indeed there are many points of resemblance between Linguet's career and Rochefort's. The publisher, Panckoucke, who was trying to secure a newspaper monopoly by buying up all the journals with a good circulation, instantly enlisted the disbarred advocate, and seeing that Linguet would not consent to write under editorial supervision, founded a special paper for him—the *Journal de Bruxelles*—which, according to the prevalent custom, was supposed to be published abroad. Linguet was disbarred in 1774; the *Journal de Bruxelles* was launched in January, 1775, and for eighteen months it was by far the most popular paper in Paris, but a wild, spiteful, inconsistent paper. Linguet was no liberal. He preached what Grimm called "Asiatic despotism," and covered the King and Queen—especially the Queen—with flowery compliments, which sometimes broke out in rhyme. On the other hand, starting from the notion that abuses in Government reflect discredit on the Sovereign, and are consequently proofs of disloyalty

and treason in those who commit them, he assailed, in the King's name, every placeman and institution in the State. This it was that made the success of his paper. The people could not follow him in its abstruse political theories, but they relished his hard-hitting, and cheered him joyfully whenever he appeared in public. Linguet was foremost among those who reviled Turgot for an incapable dunce, and there was no end to the irony which he lavished upon the crowd of political quacks who started up every day with plans for universal reform. "I know but of one plan of universal reform," he wrote in November, 1775, "and that would consist in braining twenty monopolists, unfrocking two cart-loads of bishops, and hanging all the Farmers-General with their heads downwards round the Place de Grêve. When I had done that, I would take the forty members of the Academy, reduce their servile writings to pulp, and make them swallow the trash with a spoon." Now this style of writing was not calculated to make Linguet beloved in respectable quarters. His blow at the Academy was owing to the fact that he had petitioned to enter that body, but had been rejected in favour of La Harpe, whom, as a representative of humdrum literature—"that tasteless prose which sticks in the mouth like paste"—he peculiarly abhorred. Panckoucke, Linguet's proprietor, entreated him to spare the Academy because he (Panckoucke) was much beholden to divers of its members, and Marie Antoinette, who secretly enjoyed the paper which spoke so kindly of herself, sent privately to beg the bubbling editor not to get into scrapes from which it would be impossible to extricate him. But Linguet, though flattered by the Queen's solicitude, paid no heed to it, and as to Panckoucke, he disposed of him in these terms:—"I am not your servant, Monsieur Panckoucke, and if you happen to forget the fact, I'll settle my account with you in the Bois de Boulogne." The publisher was no craven, but his *Journal de Bruxelles* was selling remarkably well, and business profits were of course a consideration. However, in July, 1776, Linguet poured out such a very flood of vitriolic invective over La Harpe, the Academy and all authors, journalists, and men generally who had any respect for that body, that the Academicians appealed in a body to the High Chancellor, Miromesnil, for justice. The Chancellor was only too glad of a pretext for extinguishing Linguet on a seemingly non-political offence. The Queen pleaded for the intemperate journalist, and had half-disposed the King to be merciful, but Miromesnil came and remonstrated, exclaiming, "He has distributed his kicks among us all like a wild jackass let loose"; and Louis XVI. on reading the incriminated article declared that it was an outrage on truth and honesty. So the measure of Linguet's iniquities was full; and Panckoucke was ordered to dismiss him, and Linguet, to avoid the Bastile, fled to London. It was generally considered a graceless act on Panckoucke's part that he should have handed over the vacant editorship of Linguet's paper to La Harpe, who had been the cause of all this hubbub, and was Linguet's worst enemy.

It was a blunder on the part of Government to banish Linguet. He

was so irrational and unscrupulous a writer that his popularity must have quickly worn itself out, had he been suffered to live unmolested. Persecution set him on a pedestal, and when he began to issue from his London lodging, in the Strand, a weekly pamphlet called *Annales*, not all the watchfulness of the Customs' officers could prevent it from finding its way to Paris and being ravenously devoured there. It is not necessary to follow Linguet's career step by step from this time, for the adventures of political victims are alike in all countries, and form an old story. Wiled back to France by a false friend, who was paid by Government to betray him, he was thrown into the Bastile, and remained there two years, employing his angry leisure in preparing materials for those famous *Memoires de la Bastile*, which came as the first blow of the pickaxe on the old state prison. On his release, in 1780, Linguet went abroad again, and once more plunged into newspaper war. Storm clouds were gathering ominously then, and every shot fired by the spleenful writer against the tottering upholders of misrule told heavily. For all this, when the Revolution actually broke out, Linguet declared himself against it, and returning to France was guillotined for his royalist zeal in 1794. There was something incongruous and almost grotesque in this climax; for it was Linguet's pen that had put the people's grievances into words; and when the Revolutionary Committee sentenced him to death they did so quoting one of his own writings: "L'ami des Tyrans est l'ennemi du genre humain."

IV.

At the time of Linguet's first exile from France, the *Courrier de l'Europe*, already mentioned, was being founded in London under curiously humble circumstances, considering the great part which it was destined to play in French journalism. A Gascon, named Serre de Latour, who, as a married man with children, had thought it good to elope with a friend's wife, had taken refuge in London, where, money failing him, he entered into relations with one Swinton, and proposed to start a paper of a new sort. The American War of Independence had just broken out, and Frenchmen were much interested in the struggle of the British colonies for freedom; they also took a lively interest in things British generally, for animosity was strong between the two countries, which were for ever coming to loggerheads. Latour suggested that a great service might be rendered to the French Government and people by laying bare before them the weaknesses of Great Britain—her parliamentary wrangles, administrative corruption, the defects in her army, and so forth, all of which things would be novel, and might, by dint of racy style and anecdotes, be made entertaining. Swinton, though an Englishman, approved the scheme. This rascal could have hunted in couples with that Duke of Lauderdale, who, being taunted with having sold his country, said he thanked God he had a country to sell, or with that Dutchman, who, being reviled for having sold gunpowder to the French who were besieging his

city, replied feelingly that he would have sold the city itself to the devil if suitable terms had been offered. Swinton provided the capital, and Latour the talent, and between them both they launched the *Courrier de l'Europe*, having previously taken care to address a prospectus to the Foreign Minister, Count de Vergennes, who answered that if the *Courrier* were loyally conducted he should favour its sale to the best of his power.

But Count de Vergennes never suspected that a paper designed for the purpose of spying on England, and turning its institutions into ridicule, would redound to the glorification of that country; and yet this is what happened. Latour was relatively an honest writer; that is, he stated facts as they were, without seeking to exaggerate them. He never lost sight of his purpose, which was to depict England faithfully to French eyes; but in pursuance of this object he showed up the good side of British customs along with the bad. Now, when everything had been said against England, that kingdom towered hundreds of cubits above France. There was no Bastile in London, no *lettres de cachet*, and no Farmers-General. The disputes in Parliament might be paltry, but it was a great point to have a Parliament at all; and then there was Trial by Jury, a comparatively free press—*e.g.* the *Junius Letters* still fresh in men's thoughts—and free municipalities. All these things seemed good and grand to the French, and thoughtful men began to brood about them. Count de Vergennes and his brother ministers were too far removed from the people to think in harmony with the public mind; and they saw only the anti-English form of the *Courrier de l'Europe's* articles, without calculating the hidden moral they bore. To them this foreign sheet really brought news. French politicians are fairly ignorant now, but they were hopelessly so then; and England, in its home-life—*en deshabille*, to use the native term—was as much an unknown land to them as that barbarously named Massachussets, where a certain George Washington was beginning to distinguish himself. There can be no doubt either that the *Courrier de l'Europe* did do England a great deal of harm, by emboldening the French Government to send help to the American rebels. The young Marquis de Lafayette, driven thereto by his mistress, Madame de Simiane, sailed across the Atlantic with a troop of Knight-errants. The *Courrier* continued to repeat that all was distraction and disorganisation in the English army, and eventually the French gathered pluck, declared war, and shipped to America those six thousand men which turned the scale of the war against us. It is a great pity that the state of our law did not admit of Lord North's Government seizing the man Swinton and wringing his neck a little; for assuredly men have swung at Tyburn and Newgate for villanies less than his. But Lord Mansfield, who was consulted about this French paper, declared that there was no weapon in our arsenal of Parliament Acts which could reach a man who published treason in a foreign tongue; and it was not till 1782 that the happy device was hit upon of confiscating the *Courrier* at the British Customs as "goods liable to duty." As the duty which the

Customs proposed to levy was on the same scale as if each copy of the paper were a folio volume, this obliged Swinton to get the *Courrier* printed in Boulogne. At the same time, having quarrelled with Latour, he chose a new editor, in the person of J. Pierre Brissot, the future Girondist. The change in the printing locality did not abate the anti-British speech of the *Courrier*; but had it done so, it would have been too late, for in 1783 the Independence of the United States had been definitely won.

And now, between the excitement of the American War on the one hand, the articles of the *Courrier*, those of Linguet, and the increasing confusion of home finances on the other, matters were speeding towards a crisis; and the Press of Paris reflected the universal thirst for reform at any cost. The newspapers could no longer be kept in bounds; fresh ones exploded every day; and if a journalist was marched off to the Bastile, twenty others seemed to spring up from under ground to take his place, and shout for his release. Necker, after trying to put money matters into shape, had been sacrificed by the nobility, as Turgot had been before him; and a succession of aristocratic and blundering financiers followed—Joly de Fleury, Calonne, Brienne—all three of whom undid what little good their predecessors had been able to effect. Then it was found necessary to call Necker back again. This was in 1788; and meanwhile the miserable scandal * of the Necklace had compromised Marie Antoinette in the eyes of the malicious Parisian populace, and turned the clamour for reform into a roaring, not only against the Court, but against the Royal Family. The days were past when the papers only spoke with reverence of the Queen; journalists of the popular party now seemed to vie with each other in launching the most vicious invectives. When it was at last decided in Cabinet Council that nothing could save the country but the Convocation of the States General, Louis XVI. asked despondingly of the Duke de Nivernais: "How about the Press—the audacity of newspapers is surpassing belief?" "*Laissons les brailler, Sire*," answered the Duke. "*Nous pourrons les museler quand les bavards auront fini leur besogne.*" By the "chatterboxes" the Duke meant the deputies of the States General; but how their "*besogne*" ended, and what part the press played in their labours, form a new period of the French Press, the treatment of which must be reserved for another paper.

* Cardinal Louis de Rohan being enamoured of the Queen, was hoaxed by an adventuress (Mdlle. La Mothe), who bore some likeness to Marie Antoinette, and who cajoled the Cardinal into sending her a necklace worth 60,000*l.*, under the impression that he was giving it to the Queen. As the Cardinal was in embarrassed circumstances, he had bought the necklace on credit; but the jewellers, unable to get their money, complained to the King, and the whole trickery was exposed. Louis XVI., instead of hushing up the matter, unwisely had the adventuress tried by the Parliament of Paris, and publicly disgraced the Cardinal.

Missives in Masquerade.

"If," says some old satirist, "we passed through life with masks, what a vast number of tears and smiles we might save." But tears and smiles themselves have been found by experience to be an easy and convenient mask to counterfeit emotion and *totus mundus agit histrionem*. So language is a mask for thought, and cryptograms, if the word be licensed, are a mask for written language. That which is secret and mysterious has always had a magnetic force for the human mind. But mystery, like Proteus, in fear of continual detection, must continually change itself. Like women and *materia prima*, it ever seeks new forms. The number of dominoes in the property-room of cryptography is therefore legion. We content ourselves in this article with wiping off the dust from a few of these, in order to prepare them for public inspection. Most of them are old enough, it may be, to be new to the present age, worn and faded servants of the mirth and hostility, the loves and the secrets of bygone years. Some masks we have added of our own manufacture, but not many, knowing well that the web woven out of its own body by the spider is not more prized than the honey gathered by the wandering bee from every opening flower.

Cryptography, or the art of secret writing, has been in use from the institution of the Egyptian hieroglyphics to the latest system of shorthand. Its students have been priests, princes, and lovers. Hermes Trismegistus and the lowest juggler on the turf, or advertiser, whose works seem like the dreams of a sick man, in to-day's *Times*, Charlemagne and Charles the Martyr, Ovid and Don Juan, alike availed themselves of its assistance. It is called also steganography or polygraphy; sometimes cipher writing, from the use of the Arabic numerals; but this, as will be seen, is only one among many methods of cryptography. Such great authorities as Vieta the mathematician of the first Francis, Lord Bacon, and Bishop Wilkins, have considered it as a part of grammar, inasmuch as it is a mode of expression of thought; and, so far as that portion of cryptography is concerned which expresses words or ideas by single characters, it is probably the earliest mode of thought expression. The system of letters looks towards a later and less unrefined age. We know not whether the reader remembers the story of the Savage and the Figs. A barbarian had been entrusted with certain figs, to be taken to a friend of his master's, with a letter enclosed in the basket containing them. The barbarian, experiencing the pangs of hunger on the

way, opened the basket and partook of the figs, seeing they were many, and supposing that a few would not be missed by the donee. But he, on their arrival, reading the letter, which contained an invoice of the fruit, found that seven were deficient. On this he straightway charged the messenger with embezzlement, who was confounded, and confessed, looking on the letter in the light of an evil demon inimical to his interests. He to whom the figs had been remitted sent back sorbs, with a letter, in the same basket and by the same bearer, who thinking, with the Spaniard, that "there is no bread bad to hunger," devoured several of the sorbs; but before doing so carefully hid the letter under a large stone, thus frustrating, as he supposed, evil speculation. The story ends with the extreme astonishment of the savage when again detected, more especially after he had been allowed to examine the letter, and holding it to his ear for a long time, had not heard the faintest sound. It is added, though perhaps on insufficient authority, that, losing all respect for his own divinities, he subsequently became a convert to the Christian creed.

Probably the hieroglyphs of Egypt and China, as the Scandinavian Runes, preceded their alphabet, and were afterwards revived by the priests for the preservation of their secrets. Letters, like words, succeed one another as the leaves of trees, and it was not till the old leaves lay fallen on the ground that the priests consecrated them for their own advantage. So the Roman Church still retains a Latin liturgy, and would as little like a service generally understood as Cotytto the celebration of the mysteries of Bona Dea in the open sunlight, or a Vestal Virgin a dance in the Forum of Rome.

An argument has been urged against any revelations of steganography, on the ground that such may be applied to evil. But, alas! this objection may be urged against all revelation, and besides, steganography is a double-edged sword, teaching deceit and how to discover deceit. It would seem absurd to cut out the tongue because it is a world of iniquity, full of deadly poison and set on fire of hell, or to curse Cadmus, the inventor of letters, because they have too often seemed to be, what he is said to have sown, the teeth of serpents.

A different language from their own is, of course, a kind of secret writing to many, for the universal tongue which prevails in the signs of most of the arts and sciences, as in chemistry, music, astronomy, mathematics, has not yet led to an universal harmonious language, that large hope of the learned Bishop of Chester.

Extremes meet. The earliest kind of secret communication—we will say a few words first of that unwritten—as well as the latest, seems to be the wink. This voiceless voice of the eyelid, succeeded by other facial manœuvres and distortions, gave place to the language of the fingers, more or less modified, learnedly known as dactylology or cheirology, to the venerable Bede as indigitation, and to the people as the deaf and dumb alphabet. Of course the signs were not the same as those in our present scheme, but it was the same method of communicating the

thing signified. The Romans had an ingenious way of expressing all numbers up to 100 on their left hand, proceeding to the right for higher figures; and so Juvenal, speaking of Nestor, ironically complimenting him on his crow-like senility, says he must tell his age on his right hand. The commentators affirm that by this art any numbers could be expressed up to 900,000, but the device, owing to the extreme difficulty, and wonderful variety of its inflexions, has long grown obsolete. The peculiar significative use of the fingers applied only to numbers among the ancients, with a few exceptions, alluded to by Ovid, and never apparently reduced into any system, in which the fingers were used for amatory signals.

A species, however, of deaf and dumb alphabet was in use among the Romans, which consisted in declaring a letter by touching that part of the body of which the name in spelling was commenced by the letter required, as, for instance, if I touch my beard, "B" is signified; if my forehead, "F," and so on.

But the moderns have constructed an alphabet in which A is expressed by the little finger of the left hand held erect, B by the second, and so through both hands till L, which is expressed by the thumb of the right. Trying this alphabet in the privacy of our chamber, with the doors closed about us, we failed in the matter of the letter B—which refused pertinaciously to remain erect unless accompanied by C. The succeeding letters after L are indicated by the thumb and smallest finger of the left held up together, so M is shown by the thumb and two last fingers of the left, and so on; but of course this alphabet might be varied to almost any extent without any difficulty. An old Nurembergian who invented one of these alphabets, a needlessly complicated one, added in a scholium to his work this caution, that lest the company should be led to imagine that the fingers were with any set design contracted (for various contractions occur in his system) and extended, they should appear as if so formed in readiness to rub the head, beard, or face, or to scratch some other part of the body, or as if they were thus disposed from distraction of mind, or gesticulatory impatience, or other causes.

The scorner alluded to by the wise man, who talked with his fingers as well as winked with his eyes, and spoke with his feet, was one who had evidently entered deeply into the study of arthrology, and may be compared in excellence with the learned Dr. Gabriel Neal, who is said to have been able to understand any word without its utterance by the mere motion of the lips which formed it.

The giving of intelligence by nightly watchfires is confidently affirmed to have been at least as early as the taking of windy Troy. We know that Æschylus at all events makes them used with reference to Clytemnestra by Agamemnon.

There is a pretty method of private communion which Hero perhaps adopted or invented with Leander. It is described at length by Polybius.

The letters of the alphabet are arranged in the following or some similar manner :—

	1	2	3	4
1	a	f	m	r
2	b	g	n	s
3	c	h	o	t
4	d	i	p	u
5	e	l	q	z

and the intercommunicating parties are each provided with nine torches. To signify A one torch is held in the right hand one in the left, to signify S four torches are held in the right and two in the left, and so on.

Suppose a Roman lady wished to warn her lover, separated from her by night, barred doors, long distance, and a rain-swollen river, which, may be, runs between them, that he had better remain at home. She stands alone on her house top and waves four torches in her right hand and four in her left, then two in her right and four in her left, then four and one, a pause, and again one and one, one and four, one and five, four and two, and lastly four and three. The lover remains at home, and the dole which might have prevailed in that lady's domicile is prevented.

The scheme or table which we have here presented may of course be varied infinitely, or as near infinitely, if proximity may so be predicated of anything finite, as serves our purpose. And to save the somewhat cumbrous machinery of nine torches, fewer, say five, may be used in this way. One torch erect to signify A, depressed B, declined to the right C, to the left D, two torches erect E, and so on. To ensure rapidity of communication, however, we would be obliged to practice with these torches as at the schools for telegraphy without the like conveniences.

As communication is here held with the eye by means of torches it might as easily, of course after a similar manner, be held with the ear by means of the thunder of artillery or the jangling bells of a parish church. Indeed, once upon a time a gentleman is said to have told his love to a lady by tuning her pianoforte with proper pauses. We can only allude to other methods of expressing our written thought secretly, as for instance, by bouquets of various flowers, a method which has been developed into a Flower Language, by papers of diverse hues, by bracelets or other ornaments containing different jewels. A ring we once saw contained the word "remember," hidden in the following stones: Ruby, Emerald, Malachite, Emerald, Malachite, Beryl, Emerald, Ruby.

Coming now to written declarations in domino, it is obvious that they may be made in many ways. First our meaning may be masked by changing the letters of our alphabet into corresponding arbitrary marks

or ciphers, a device frequently practised in the Middle Ages, and which nearly cost the learned Trithemius his life. This able Benedictine—the father of modern polygraphy, as Sancho was the father of proverbs—formed a series of devout sentences through which mundane information might by and to the initiated be secretly conveyed, but unfortunately added to these certain cabalistic uncouth characters, which seemed so singular to the vulgar that they took them for talismans and prosecuted him for magic. He escaped by the skin of his teeth. His devout sentences, occupying many folios, still remain monuments of misapplied industry. This unhappy Trithemius had also the misfortune to be much abused by Jerome Cardan, who conceiving himself the inventor of a very superior kind of secret writing, which was perhaps as idle and cumbrous as any ever yet discovered, calls the luckless abbot "a bigger liar than Agrippa, more empty than Raymond Lully, who filled a mighty volume with dreams, an impudent sycophant if man ever was one."

Secondly, the letters may not be changed, but their significations or simply their order. This transposition has given rise to those very best specimens of secret writing, which will be described afterwards. Or lastly, the letters remaining the same, and their order, the purport of the communication may be concealed by the nature of the fluid used to describe the characters or some extraordinary position of the communication itself.

It is impossible in a short treatise to do more than name some of the most remarkable of the ancient marks and signs which are comprised, partly under our first, and partly under our second category.

In India  was the Vatsa, or sacred curl of hair on the breast of Vishnu. ת the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet, was the mark which the man clothed in linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side, was told, according to Ezekiel, to set upon the foreheads of those who lamented the abominations of Jerusalem. If this letter was, as Gesenius asserts it was, anciently written in the form of a cross, a curious coincidence would rise out of this passage with the subsequent doctrine of the orthodox Christian Church.

※ was used by the ancient grammarians to denote a particularly fine passage. It is doubtless the origin of our asterisk.

÷ or the dotted spit denoted superfluity.

☧ which originally denoted "good," was used later for its human personification.

⊖ called the "dark Theta" was the mark on ballots for death and the gravestones of Rome.

The letters S. V. B. E. E. Q. V., the well-known Roman salutation, and others like them, were called *sigla* or little signs, one letter standing for a whole word. Creeping into law they added even to legal chicanery, giving rise to every sort of evasion, and were in consequence, much to the chagrin of the lawyers, forbidden as antinomies by an edict of Justinian. It is said they were originally invented by one Tiro, a freed-

man of Cicero, and so called Tironian characters. The elder Seneca increased them to a large number, and they were added to by Cyprian for Christian use; but, owing to Justinian's edict, they became so little known and obsolete, that Trithemius, a learned abbot to whom reference has been already made, going one day to Strasburg in the execution of his office, found there in the library of the cathedral a psalter written in this old cipher, which bore for its superscription "A rare Treatise in the Armenian Tongue." *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

It is a merciful thing for the students of civil law that these *sigla* were abolished, for if Tribonianus found them perplexing, as he is reported to have done, in the green tree, what would our law students, diligent and persevering as they are, have done in the dry? The *sigla* were divided into letters and arbitrary signs, as the well-known C for Caius, ϙ for Caia, K for condemnation, &c. The arbitrary signs were some 5,000 in number. For the particle *ex* alone there were, it is affirmed, 70 different marks, all of them more difficult than the original word. They were called "puncta," pricks, or points. Prudentius, in his treatise "Concerning Crowns," tells an interesting story of Cassian, a Christian martyr, who used to teach these pricks to boys at his school. "He presided over their studies, and, as a master of letters, sat surrounded by his mighty herd. He was skilled in the comprehension of all words by certain marks, and he could follow spoken words with his headlong shorthand." After he had fallen into trouble, the poet thus introduces his scholars laughing him to scorn. "Behold, we return to you those many thousand pricks which we once received from you standing and in tears. Be of good cheer! we write but what you bade us write; you urged on us that our right hand should never be unoccupied. Not again must we beg of you for holidays, O wretch of a master! so often denied. Here, over your hated flesh, we may rove at will, weaving comma with semicolon, and marking your carcase with every variety of curve!" Thus the unfortunate man died. It is not unlikely that the weird words of the Basilidians as well as the Abracadabra and other expressions, big, according to Cornelius Agrippa, with the secrets of the future, might be solved by some of those dead *sigla*, to whose grandchildren we probably owe those mystical forms of speech *Barbara Celarent Darii, &c.*, to which the memory of our university youth clings with a greater pertinacity than to the Articles of its holy Faith.

Other examples than those given of this species of our first class of cryptography are scarcely required. Any one may form arbitrary characters of his own. They present no more difficulty to the decipherer, however ugly and uncongenial their form, than our own letters without their usual signification. They remind us of the strategics of the Chinese, who were for frightening their enemies with the faces of demons. They are masks, and masks only, performing no promises worthy of such wide gaping: and yet this was the kind of cipher in which Pharamond and Charlemagne and the courts of Europe principally trusted till the end of the tenth

century. Such a fact shows, says a great authority, how little men addicted themselves to this subject as a science, while they felt an indispensable necessity for having recourse to it as an art.

A curious and early method of cipher which we place here, though not strictly coming under any of our three categories, was the cipher of knots and stains. Each communicating party was provided with a long strip of wood on which the letters of the alphabet were arranged at unequal distances; a string was stretched over this, and marked with successive numerals where the letters came required in the message. The string was removed and sent to the confederate, who applied it to his own strip, and read off the communication.

By the method which is usually known as "Mirabeau's" the alphabet is divided into five rows, marked from 1 to 5, and each letter of these rows is again similarly marked. Thus the first row is marked $\overset{1}{a}\ b\ c\ d\ \underset{1}{e}$, and so to the end. It is almost needless to say that though in our examples we have usually arranged the letters alphabetically, there is no necessity for doing so; such an arrangement, on the contrary, is far better avoided, as being less difficult for the decipherer than an arbitrary one which should be previously agreed on between the recipient and the remitter. The numbers from 6 to 0 are used as non-significant, a device which adds to the labour of solution. In the secret writing the number of the row containing the letter required is written in the place of the numerator, the number which denotes its order in that row is written in the denominator, and non-significants added at discretion. From the shape this cryptography assumes, it is frequently called the Bridge or Fractional method. By this method

$$\frac{04}{74}\ \frac{73}{74}\ \frac{39}{3}\ \frac{2}{50}\ \frac{2}{4}\ \frac{3}{3}\ \frac{49}{83}$$

would signify the patronymic "Tomkins." It is of course immaterial whether these numbers be written with or without a break, so long as there is a proper correspondence between the upper and lower significant numerals.

The various kinds of ancient Irish or Ogum cipher made up of strokes deriving their power from their various positions relative to one horizontal line, were probably the origin of an invention generally ascribed to the ingenious Marquis of Worcester, which consisted in writing lines in the directions of the long hand of a clock, supposed to revolve continually backwards. This alphabet commences at C, which is represented by a short perpendicular line; D by a line inclined at an angle of 45° to C; E by a line at right angles with C; F by a line at 135°; G by a line in an opposite direction to C, and so on, all these lines being of the same length. At L the line representing C recurs, and is to be made a little longer, and the same order to be observed till T, when the same line, again recurring, is again to be increased in length. In writing by this alphabet, all letters needless and otiose as far as pronunciation is concerned, are to be omitted, as in writing shorthand. It would be better, indeed, to

observe this rule in all secret writing, as it renders the deciphering more difficult, and is besides good husbandry of time, and paper, and toil.

Two persons have the same edition of a book—a dictionary is the most simple and easy—and correspond, by writing for the words they wish to send, the numbers of the page, line, and word in the book where such words occur. This plan is intolerably tedious, and is deficient in ingenuity, but of course undiscoverable without the aid of the key.

A clever method was once proposed of writing by means of musical notes, by which, said the able contriver, a music-master may instruct his female pupil not only how to play the harpsichord, but also how to play the fool, and teach her a lesson she may repent learning as long as she lives. His whole alphabet was composed of crochets and minims; signatures of flats, sharps, and appoggiaturas, &c., were interspersed here and there by way of grace to the composition, signifying nothing. Subtleties were also added in the bass clef, but in such a way as to make us fear, with the author, that a musician might think the whole a "very odd, as well as indifferent composition."

An objection might be raised to the drawing-master on similar grounds, and we think all mistresses of seminaries and establishments, as well as those ladies calling themselves (perhaps somewhat prematurely) finishing governesses, should thank us for the hint. Tender passages may be conveyed by points and *poulets* written by variations in a line. Nay, is there not the already well-recognised symbol of a skewered and dripping heart, reminding us very nearly of the neighbouring butcher's shop! but, *longo intervallo* of that Temple of Minerva in Egypt, on which was written, or drawn, an infant, an old man, a hawk, a fish, and a sea-horse, which being interpreted is, "O, ye that are born to die, know that God hateth impudence."

Who does not remember those ironical gifts presented by the Scythians to the Persians under Darius, consisting of a bird, mouse, frog, and arrow! Is it necessary to add the explanation, that unless their enemies could fly as birds, or hide underground as mice, or swim through the water as frogs, it were vain for them to hope to escape destruction.

The three essential properties, says my Lord Bacon, of a cipher are: 1. Facility in execution. 2. Extreme difficulty in solution. 3. Clearness from suspicion. Unfortunately these first two rules are apt to clash. It is generally the case that the easier the execution or writing of the cipher the easier also is its discovery. It is not like that easy writing which, according to Rogers, is, we will say, "very" hard reading. This, we think, will be shown by the specimens of secret writing which fall under our second category, into which the צירוף of the Hebrews shall be our august introducer.

צירוף was the name given by the Cabbalists to the conflation of a new word by a conversion of the letters of an old one. This was done by means of various changes in the alphabet, of which the two chief will be mentioned hereafter.

The book יצירה, that is, concerning the creation, chiefly treats of this kind of secret writing. From this book the Jews derived an acroamatic or esoteric doctrine, by them denominated jewel-lustre, very distant from that which is usually called Scriptural, called by them candlelight. And from this portion of the Kabbala (which literally means "traditionally received"), which is comprehended in יצירה, our term cabbalistical arose, to signify that which is mysterious or uncanny. The speculative, or עיוני, part of the Kabbala, was divided into נמטריא, from γεωμετρία, נוטריקון, from *notarius*, and תמורה, change. By the first a word being resolved into the figures for which its letters stood, and these added up, was held equivalent to another word of equal numerical value, though of different letters. So the Rabbin say, "till Shiloh come" was written for "till the Messiah come;" the Hebrew words for Shiloh and Messiah both having the same numerical value, *i.e.* 358; and thus, according to them, "The whole earth was of one language," means "of the holy language," *i.e.* the Hebrew. The second method made one letter stand for a word, as the Roman *sigla* already in this article described. The third simply denoted change or transposition of letters.

Under this third subdivision are included the famous אתבש and אלבם. By אתבש, for the first letter of the alphabet was written the last, for the second the last but one, and so on. After this device the Cabbalists say Jeremiah wrote Sheshach for Babylon, since the prudent prophet feared openly to excite the anger of those then besieging his city.

So in Jer. li. 1, "in the midst of them that rise up against me" is interpreted "Chaldeans;" the letters of the Hebrew words exactly corresponding according to אתבש. This interpretation is remarkable as having the support of both the Targum and the Septuagint.

By the second, אלבם, the alphabet being divided into two parts, the first letter of the first part was written for the first letter of the second, or *vice versâ*. By this method the mysterious "Jabeal" is explained to mean Remaliah, the letters of these words corresponding according to אלבם. The explanation is at least worth as much as the natural silence of the commentators or the sententious remark of Calmet, "We have no knowledge of this man."

We may add here, though introducing a method of cryptography of our first order, that we are indebted to the most ancient Rabbinical lore for the following familiar diagram, now filled with our own characters, arranged in that unfamiliar order which is sanctioned by the Kabbala:—

u l c	t k b	s g a
x o f	w n e	v m d
r i	x q h	y p g

It is scarcely necessary to explain that, according to this method of

writing ⊏⊐⊐⊐ ⊔⊏⊐⊏ ⊍⊍⊔⊔⊓ ⊔⊓⊔⊍⊍⊐⊔, would signify "Minx! said Bessy Squeers." The figure, of course, may be in many ways varied.

A device of Cæsar's, according to Suetonius, was to change the position of the letters of the alphabet by four places, both inclusive; thus he wrote D for A, E for B, and so on. Such was Cæsar's method of rendering his writing obscure. But so easy an imposture may well be named by others than Scaliger "a pure absurdity."

The scytale was a black wooden roller of about three or four cubits in length, by means of which, the Lacedæmonians conveyed private intelligence. A narrow strip of white parchment or leather—from the Greek word from which the name of scytale is derived—was wrapped slantwise round the roller, and the message then written on it lengthwise; afterwards, this was removed, and of course presented words and sentences distorted, mutilated, and unintelligible; but the person who received it, wrapping the document round another roller, in all respects similar to the one on which it was originally written, solved the mystery of disorder and obtained the sense. This deceit, likewise, is derided by Scaliger, who says there was no necessity for another roller, and that none but a fool would now trust his secret to such a device.

In a season when infants suck in subtlety with their mothers' or their nurses' milk, and show the first fruits of fraud in their cradle, such specimens of cryptography as we have described, though sufficient to hoodwink a more simple age, will be thought idle and ridiculous. Known as they must be to all the blear-eyed and barbers in the town, they would not have been alluded to in this article had not its nature seemed in some sort to ask this at our hands. But there are other knots which, to quote good Bishop Wilkins, in his Mercury, "it were madness for a man to think he could unravel." And his censure of Scaliger, who pretended he could decipher any secret writing—words which rather show that critic's courage than his capacity—seems just, when he says it was too inconsiderate and magisterial a sentence of him to conclude all this kind of learning to be therefore vain.

One of the knots of Wilkins may have bred the somewhat rare method of cryptography known as that with the numerical key. Say the key is 2 3 1 (any number would of course answer, if known by the confederates), the message is written thus:—

2312 3123
Fake away;

then observing what figure stands over the first letter of the writing, count that number of letters forward from F, and write down result H; continue this, and the message will assume this appearance:—

Hdlgdxcb,

which of course should be written without any space. This method, after all, is but a refinement, though a very considerable one, on the method

of Cæsar, which was afterwards, by the way, imitated by Augustus. For to decipher this, one should first know the language of the original message—an important point; then whether or no it is a cipher with a numerical key; then, of how many figures this key consists; then, what is their order; and, lastly, whether the calculation should be made backwards or forwards. With regard to all which circumstances, as Forcellini says in the preface to his Lexicon of the whole Latinity, "Expertus discis quam gravis iste labor."

Of that writing which is simply obscured by the transposition of its component letters, the following is an ingenious example:—

t t n e t t a e
h w e r l i
r i a d l s
h i o a h f n c.

To decipher this, first take the first letter of first line, then first letter of last line, then last letter of first line, then last letter of last line, then first letter of second line, and so on with second and third lines, as with the first and last. The riddle being resolved, will give that favourite and familiar, yet remarkable and refulgent sentence of *Henry's First Latin Book*, "The Christian will not fear death."

This sentence may also be expressed in language worthy of an Œdipus by putting the significant letters in the beginning, middle, and end of groups of other letters chosen at discretion. The more repulsive the result can be made to look the better; thus—

Txhie Cyohlmr Ist Isoalgn
Wjoigzl Luoptnpxgro Tfe Asrtd Exzafgt h.

In neither of these examples is there that frequent recurrence of certain groups of letters which is generally fatal to the success of a steganogram.

A species of this writing is exhibited in the common acrostic, where the significant letters are always placed at the beginning of the line. An example in which the significant letter was placed at the beginning of each word of a passage far removed from the real purport of a lady's letter, which was to caution her lover against her brother, is given by an Italian author: "Carmina autem Vergilii erunt a Francisco recitata ante tuum regem Eusebium."

When Judas fought against Antiochus, his watchword was that sentence from Exodus, "Who is like unto Thee among the Gods, O Lord?" In the Hebrew the first letters of these words make up the name by which after the victory he was known—"Maccabæus."

The Rabbin delight in these mysteries. From the sentence "Many rise up against me," taking the letters composing the Hebrew word for "many," they find in them the initials of the Romans, Babylonians, Ionians (Greeks) and Medes. It is a pity they do not fall into better chronological order. In the word for "create," they find the doctrine

of the Trinity—an argument having more weight with them than any Christian logic. It is obvious that an ingenious fancy might find anything at will by this lax system of exegetics. It accordingly fell under the rebuke of Irenæus, who says that from such idle follies many heresies began, especially those of the Valentinians and Gnostics.

The device of the plate like that for stencilling, with small loopholes, is called by the French *le chassis* or *la grille*, and by the Germans *netz* or *gitter*. It is placed on paper, and the important words or parts of words written in the windows; the plate is then taken away, and the covered parts filled in with otiose letters to make up a sense.

In the following sentence the letters written in italics are those written through the windows of the plate, with a fac-simile of which your correspondent is of course furnished, and constitute the essence of the communication — "*Return to* your afflicted p*arent* *H*arry."

Bacon's cipher which, with the modesty which always characterized that wisest and greatest of mankind, he calls "a cypher of our own which has the highest perfection of a cypher, that of signifying *omnia par omnia* anything by everything," consisted in resolving all the letters of the alphabet into two only. These two, *a* and *b*, by means of repetition and transposition in five places, may be made to assume thirty-two differences. He then, by their aid, resolves the word "Fly" into *aabab—ababa—babba*. He next takes some phrase of little moment (which he calls an external writing) such as "stay, for I am alive," having the same number of letters with the internal writing "Fly" when resolved, and writes those letters which correspond with the *a's* in one kind of character, and those which correspond with the *b's* in another. This little difference in the handwriting would probably remain undetected by any but an accomplice. Were the communication printed, say for instance in Italic and Roman letters, it would at once lead to suspicion, and thus sin against the third rule enunciated by its learned author.

The great inconvenience in this plan is that it requires five times as much labour as ordinary writing. It does not, therefore, accord with Bacon's first rule. Like Cuvier's crab, it seems good in other respects, but another plan of a similar and perhaps better nature will be shown further on.

An example is given by Trithemius which the number of superfluous or non-significant letters alone would suffice to make objectionable, were it not so on the score of its easy detection.

Baldach abasar lemai elamech abrach misach abrai disarai athanas,

signifies *Abel bibit*. The second letter of each word is alone significant. The magical incantation-like appearance of the words, which are mostly taken from the Hebrew, is due to the learned abbot himself, who invented some six score of them.

The following riddle, which attempts to conceal a passage taken from Tacitus de M. G. VII., has the same defects as, or rather greater than, the last :—

Lampsi deso salcu eregesu sexa anobio nous father clitates uducest text sirtutey ai ma tsumunta, onect gregio abuso, &c.

Here in the first line the first three words and the last are non-significant; in each following line the first and last words are non-significant; and in each of the remaining words the first and last letter are non-significant. Clearing then of non-significants, we have "Reges ex nobilitate duces ex virtute sumunt, nec regibus," &c.

There is an old device which we will now bring out of its congenial shadow into the sunlight.

Here is a repulsive-looking writing written after its directions :—

naa	uhh	hsn
epd	rtl	grr
ihi	ars	son

The key is shown by the following combinations :—CBA—BCA—ACB. The letters are written in rows, according to the positions of these capitals. The first letter is therefore "h," the second "u," the third "n," the fourth "g," the fifth "e," &c. In the last word the letter "e" has been left out.

Another equally ugly :—

Trray. yal. sbare. ra. stanerth. btv. feia. obco. ed.

Here the stops are put in simply to mislead the decipherer, should there be any so daring. The message was originally written in a square of six letters in breadth, and afterwards written as it now stands, diagonally, "T" being the first letter at the extreme left-hand corner of the square.

The figure may be changed to any other. For instance, to an oblong of, we will say, seven letters long and five broad, each vertical row being marked by a cipher in its natural order. This order is then changed after a manner agreed on, and the message written by taking the letters in the vertical lines in that order. Thus,

Oilonewiyosrsulouweannlueaydwrroohe,

signifies, "A rose on your window sill when you're alone."

The following diagram may make the matter more simple :—

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	a	r	o	s	e	o	n
2	y	o	u	r	w	i	n
3	d	o	w	s	i	l	l
4	w	h	e	n	y	o	u
5	r	e	a	l	o	n	e

The order agreed on was 6, 5, 4, 3, 7, 1, 2. Instead of the horizontal the perpendicular numbers might obviously have been chosen.

Old books which treat on this subject are full of arbitrary uncouth signs which, though they present a terrible appearance, add not a jot, as we have already said, to the real difficulty of the solution. Enough may be done, and has been done, with our common letters to render all hope of solution vain. As in the following case, where the letters in the table are arranged alphabetically, but may of course be ordered after the caprice of the writer:—

	AA	BB	CC	AB	AC	BC	CB
A	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
B	h	i	k	l	m	n	o
C	p	q	r	s	t	v	x

In this table, as before, the letters usually wanted alone are written down.

The subject to be treated is that pregnant truth: "Balbus is not a Christian." B is expressed by ABB, "a" by AAA, "l" by BAB, and so on, in each case taking the lateral large letter first. The result, which may be broken where you will, will have this appearance.

ABBAA—ABABA—BBCB—CC—ABBBBCAB, &c., which, perhaps, might be safely trusted with the most inquisitive, nay, even a second Scaliger.

Suppose a table made after the following fashion:—

A B	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m
	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	v	x	y	z
C D	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m
	z	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	v	x	y
E F	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m
	y	z	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	v	x

and so on in a corresponding series for the whole alphabet, the upper line of small letters remaining in the same position while those below are varied by one place, as in the table. Now, if we want to write steganographically "Watch this frame," we take a short sentence, say "Time flies," which is called the key, and arrange our letters thus:—

w a t c h t h i s f r a m e
t i m e f l i e s t i m e f

If we look for T in our table, which we will suppose completed, above w (or v) we shall find e; this, then, will be the first letter of our converted sentence. Looking for I with a above it, we shall find v,—v therefore, is the second letter—looking for M the letter above t in its line will be

a—looking for E the letter under c in its line will be n, and so on. The whole sentence will be

evansdqtcxitxp,

which presents the appearance of a word in Mexican added on to a familiar English sirname, or surname, whichever the reader pleases.

Coming now to our third and last category, where the secrecy lies in the method of sending rather than in the thing sent, no bad plan was that adopted by Hasdrubal, or some other Carthaginian general, who engraved his communication on the wood of his tablets before they had been coated with wax, and then sent them with their usual coating, as new tablets, for a present to his accomplice.

This piece of ingenuity is ascribed by Herodotus to Demaratus; but in his case there was no accomplice, and the mystery would have remained unsolved had not Gorgo, the daughter of Cleomenes, to whom the tablets were sent, urged by a woman's curiosity, insatiable for that which is concealed, laid open the matter.

But perhaps one of the most extraordinary deceits ever known in cryptography was adopted by Histiæus in his message to Aristagoras, advising him to revolt. This Histiæus, then, chose one of his most faithful slaves, and having shaved his head, tattooed it with his advices, and after keeping him till his hair had grown again, despatched him to Aristagoras with this message only, "Shave my head and look thereon." Two objections might be urged against this method: first, if the communication was of an urgent nature (which indeed it was) the growing of the hair involved some little delay; and secondly, it is difficult to see why, if his slave was most faithful, Histiæus did not entrust his message to the slave's mind instead of his skull, especially as the slave must have known, from the pain of the operation, that some mystery lay there, and, in his time of trial by threats and promises, would probably have said so. The account we have given is that offered by Herodotus, who has been irreverently called "the father of lies." The story is better told by Aulus Gellius, who says Histiæus chose for his purpose a slave who had an infirmity in his eyes, and shaved his hair under pretence of healing his diseased vision, and after, when his hair was grown, sent him to Aristagoras, bidding the slave tell that ruler to repeat the operation. By this version the slave's suspicion was less likely to be aroused, but the difficulty of the delay still remains. Aulus Gellius denominates the whole undertaking as "an unexpected and profound wile excogitated by barbaric craft."

Most people have tried their hand at that so-called secret writing which is effected by various vegetable juices, and brought to light by fire or water—here the use of sal ammoniac and juice of onions, of solution of galls, and of copperas is well known. From the time of Ovid, who advises a young lady in his *Art of Love*—as if, forsooth, young ladies required instruction, at least on that subject—to deceive all prying eyes by a letter written with raw milk. Till the present day receipts have been prescribed

of various values to this end. One of the most curious is that which recommends an ink to be used made under certain conditions with the ichor of glow-worms. The writing, says the author, may be well read in light of moon or star. This is a sure recipe.

It was by the use of such strange terms as nemilua, cala, raphoca, lapolce, and others, which Trithemius used when treating on this branch of his subject, that he introduced his book to the flames, and yet the said uncouth terms were but distortions of the Latin expressions for alum, milk, camphor, and onions.

The story of Histiæus may be compared with that of Harpagus, who sent a letter to Cyrus in a hare; or with that of a certain surgeon, who, wishing to disclose a matter of great importance to a brother of his craft, sent him a live bulldog to be dissected, to whom he had previously administered a bolus containing the letter he wished kept secret. So his friend was guided by that dumb dead dissected beast, as the wise men were guided by a star. Another applied a MS. to a sore leg instead of, or under, the bandage. The sewing of the letter in a shoe is recommended by Ovid, and rolling thin leaves of metal containing the secret into earrings by another ancient author; a third directs the communication to be written on a blown bladder, the bladder to be afterwards placed in a flask and filled with wine. Letters may be also written on the inside of the sheath of a sword, on an arrow, on a bullet, in an egg, or rolled up in a hollow stick; which last proceeding calls to mind the story of that unfaithful depositary, who hid the trust-money in this manner, and when called before the judge for breach of trust by the depositor, asking the plaintiff to hold his stick while he kissed the Bible with fervent devotion, swore he had returned the money, and it was at that very time in the plaintiff's possession. Another method, explained at large by a learned Dutchman, which consisted in first writing the letter in lilliputian character and enclosing it in a hazel nut, cannot, for other reasons than want of space, be more than alluded to here. Among a hundred other devices suggested by affection or by fear, letters were hidden in women's hair, which would now, we suppose, be represented by their chignons. But we cannot refrain from adding one more method which has been proposed for secret transmission of sound. Let a man, says the ingenious author, breathe his words slowly in a long hollow cane hermetically sealed at the farthest end, then let him suddenly and closely seal the end into which he breathed. The voice will continue in the tube till it has some vent. When the seal is removed at the end which was first sealed, the words will come out distinctly and in order, but if the seal at the other end be removed their inverted series will create confusion. This happy conception, which seems to have been proposed in all good faith by its author, reminds us of that famous one of bottled sentences, and may be compared with Joseph's grunt, to which he gave vent in the execution of his trade, and which is preserved, it is said, in crystal among other equally valuable and sacred relics in a celebrated church in Madrid.

But our reader has long ago, it may be, yearned to reach the shore. Our sails are to be furled. It is as impossible to enumerate all the many methods of secret writing as to gather olive berries from a fig tree. We have, we hope, selected the strangest and best. It only remains now to give a few general rules which have already been hinted at concerning secret messages, to say a word or two about deciphering and then *valete et plaudite*, or, speaking more modestly, with the proudest people under the sun, *pedir humilde perdon de las faltas nuestras*.

First, then, a secret message ought, like a telegram, to be composed in as few words as possible, nay, in as few letters, like shorthand, since this will save trouble to the writer and to the reader, and will moreover render less likely the danger of detection. For the more of a secret writing that a decipherer obtains the greater is his chance of deciphering it. But in a very short message, where letters do not recur, it is of little moment what method of secret writing we use, since the first and most important rule of deciphering, "observe repetitions," is here of none avail. Without this, their polar star, such men even as Wallis and Vieta would wander through the sea of doubt in vain. Secondly, all spaces or breaks between words should be carefully avoided, or if used, used to mislead; and if it is desired to render a writing particularly difficult at the cost of greater trouble, let the secret writing be expressed in another, like a wheel within a wheel, or the skins of an onion. Any one interpreting such doubly-masked letters might well be accused, like poor Trithemius, of profiting by the assistance of the devil, or his dull representative at the present day, a spiritual medium. Thirdly, non-significants should be used often, and our alphabets always arbitrarily arranged. Lastly, the difficulty of a secret writing may also be much increased by writing in the Oriental fashion from right to left, or better still from right to left and left to right alternately, ploughing letters after the fashion of the Japanese, or as the Greeks in that order called *βουστροφηδόν*.

It is possible that Daniel—we speak with reverence—first introduced the art of deciphering when he explained to the King of Babylon that sad and mystic writing on the wall. That scripture may have been explained by the Cabbalistic method of אתבש to which we have before alluded, and which in all probability Jeremiah learnt from Daniel as his contemporary and friend. Indeed the art of deciphering must have been very feeble formerly, or the Lacedæmonian scytale could scarcely have remained a difficulty; and yet it may have been as good for their age, as it is bad for ours. Gorgo's advice was more a piece of feminine cunning than artistic skill.

A good decipherer must be a man of many parts. Such a Mercury is not made out of every wood. He must be of lively imagination, good judgment, and retentive memory: he should be well acquainted with many languages; for though the strange assertion is true that a man skilled in deciphering, and not knowing German or Spanish, may yet explain a mystic writing in those tongues; though this is true, it is never-

theless of great assistance to the explorer to be well versed in them. The necessity of patient perseverance it is needless to insist on. Bruce and the spider should be continually before his mind's eye. Practice alone here, as elsewhere, leads to perfection.

The decipherer should first aid himself as much as possible by collateral evidence as to the remitter and receiver, and the date and subject of the missive. He should then consider it under the light of certain linguistic criteria, in which he should be well skilled, in order to determine the language in which it is written. He should observe, if possible, monosyllables, bigrams, trigrams, &c., always beginning his investigation with the shortest words. He should set down on a table the order of recurrences of each sign or letter. Those most frequent are probably vowels; where there are only two letters, one is necessarily a vowel. He should know the comparative frequency of recurrence of all letters in all languages in which the missive may be written. For instance, that "e" is the most frequently repeated letter in French, English, and German—"o" in Italian and Spanish. That in the latter "o" is frequently followed by "s," and "u" by "c." That the English tongue abounds in monosyllables. That the only monogram in German is "o," and monosyllables very rare. The presence of such combinations as "sch," "ich" should, of course, be looked for here. In our own language "i" and "a" are the sole monograms. Many other lights of this kind, the attentive decipherer will soon kindle for himself. We have already said that for deciphering patience and sagacity are both desirable; but patience is yet more desirable than sagacity.

Writers on this subject are at issue as to whether there can be an undecipherable cipher. On the whole it seems there are some ciphers which may safely defy all human ingenuity, though a great many apparently difficult present no stumbling-block to the experienced artist. It is from the undue estimation in which these riddles have been held, that the idea has arisen of there being none which may not be discovered. The practice above referred to of using two copies of the same edition of a book must be, considering the vast number of books published, as nearly inscrutable as anything not divine. And of a like nature must be that in which single characters stand for whole words, and those in which the cryptogram is itself the result of a cryptogram, and many others. Where single characters stand for whole words, obviously many misapplications will arise, as his who rendered S P Q R *Sono poltroni questi Romani*, or that of the slave who, hearing his master explain them with reference to certain half-emptied wine flagons, at dinner time, after this fashion, "*Servabis puer quod restat*," became afterwards confused in mind, in which state these letters recalled to him his master's admonition thus metamorphosed, "*Serve! potabis quod restat*," which command he unhesitatingly obeyed. The three explanations given by Æsop to Xanthus of the Greek letters found on the broken column, Α Β Γ Ο Ε Θ Χ, may be here added. Æsop's first interpretation was, "Dig at four places, and you will find a golden treasure;"

then, when the treasure was found, "Immediately divide equally the treasure found;" but as Xanthus did not take the hint, came Æsop's last interpretation, "Immediately restore the golden treasure to King Dionysus."

Those who maintain all ciphers to be decipherable usually choose examples of the easiest; examples, moreover, which they have themselves framed, and of which therefore they knew the key beforehand.

A German writer gives us the following, without the solution:—

64MF4KM134KC4O4KN943E4PM24O4KQ25293EDK6N4KKM3B1
3ABFFPMBM2K6M913PQ25DK6N4KKMAB4MPC21354N4M4K2MPM
B2MP4MFD434DK69EO42R54N4M4K.

The real difficulty here is that presented by its non-division. It indeed possesses none other. We find by computation that 4 is the most frequently recurring cipher, and after this there is most frequently K. These characters stand probably therefore for EN. The characters 13 stand four times in succession; they are probably CH. DK6 is found thrice. As we have supposed K the equivalent of N, this word is probably *und*. Setting these supposed values over those groups which contain the most of them in the secret writing, we have $\overset{enn}{\text{N4KKM}}$. N therefore will represent (the probabilities increase as we continue) W, for 6 is our representative for D.

We have twice the group of characters $\overset{ewe\ \ en}{\text{54N4M4K}}$. 5 and M are therefore obviously equivalent to G and S.

In the word $\overset{enschen}{\text{F4KM134K}}$ F is equally plainly M. We need scarcely continue the investigation. The meaning is, "*Des Menschen Leben währet siebenzig Jahr, and wenn's hoch kommt, so sind's achtzig, und wenn's köstlich gewesen ist, so ist es Mühe und Arbeit gewesen.*"

Mrs. Gaskell and her Novels.

Between Aphra Behn and Mrs. Gaskell there is a great gulf fixed: indeed the two names are only mentioned in juxtaposition for the purpose of illustrating the very remarkable point that in the inception and culmination of the modern novel, woman has borne even a more prominent part than man. Objectionable as are the pictures of life which the first-mentioned author has left us, it is significant that her writing stands out sharp and clear from the mass of contemporary compositions. That peculiar truthfulness, or *vraisemblableness*, which the female intellect seems to be most successful in producing, belonged to her. And though her novels and those of her immediate successor and imitator are largely of that class in which "the male characters are in the highest degree licentious, and the females as impassioned as the Saracen princesses in the Spanish romances of chivalry," there is still sufficient individuality about them to earn for Mrs. Behn the position of the first writer of modern fiction of any note. From her age to the present the tide of imaginative writing has rapidly progressed, gathering strength with all the movements of practical science, which have not been without influence or moulding power upon it. It would form a curious, if almost impossible, speculation whether on the whole the rapid growth of the novel has been to the service or to the detriment of humanity. Undoubtedly, that liberty of unlicensed printing, for which Milton earnestly wrought, has been of essential benefit when looked at in its broadest effects; but when we come to consider the rills of impurity which have flowed from the mighty stream, we see that the blessing has been far from unalloyed. How much there has been, nay, is there now, in this nineteenth century, which might well be spared! Fortunately, Lethe is a good deep river, and we can drink in its waters forgetfulness and oblivion to all that is unworthy in literature, if we cannot entirely blot it out of existence for the benefit of succeeding generations.

It may be assumed as a position from which none will desire to force us, that the novel will always retain its place, and that one of considerable importance, as long as literature itself lasts. The newspaper may eventually prove a formidable competitor with it amongst certain classes of the community, if changes which have apparently been impending in its construction recently are matured, but it can never entirely supersede the charm of fiction. The novel, having for its basis allegorical representation, which has from the earliest ages been the greatest teacher in the universe, will have assured to it an influence beyond the possibility

of decay. Subject to modification in accordance with the taste and demands of successive epochs, we may expect it to be; it might even merge again into some form of the drama, from which it originally sprang; but, as a fact, it will remain, and one to be considered in any estimate and acknowledgment of the intellectual and moral forces of the time. At the present day the novel stands higher in purity than it ever did; as regards quality, too, the most illustrious names which are to be found in its annals are those which have shed splendour over the past fifty years. Ease of reproduction, of course, has let in aspirants whose work is of inferior mark; but with the greater good in this matter, as in all others, we must be content to endure the lesser evil. And here arises the value of the critic—viz. in the development of the faculty of eclecticism, which he is called upon to exercise, by virtue of his office, for the benefit of mankind. With the spread of a healthier and sounder criticism we may expect a substantial improvement in the manifestation of the art of fiction.

The career of Mrs. Gaskell, whose works, in the course of their issue, probably delighted as numerous a body of readers as have fallen to the lot of any modern author (with one or two well-known exceptions), was diversified by little incident of a striking character. Indeed, were it not for a few facts which we are privileged to make known, her biography in all its essential features could be written in a few sentences. Her life was one of those which furnish the best evidence that woman is frequently fitted to accomplish greater work than that which is usually assigned to her sex; whilst at the same time Mrs. Gaskell lacked none of those virtues which make home "the earthly paradise." We have had several illustrious examples of women who never allowed their literary work to trench upon their domestic duties, conspicuous amongst these being the late Mrs. Somerville, and to the number must be added Mrs. Gaskell. No matter how eager she was to complete ventures which she had in hand, and which, as literary offspring always are, were exceedingly dear to her, it is interesting to know that she was much prouder of ruling her household well, which she did in the most admirable manner, than of all that she did in those writings which have made her name so justly popular. It is said that she had a peculiar tact in training her servants—a matter which baffles too many of our directors of households, and in which the practical advice of such a woman would have been of the most eminent service. But even a cursory perusal of her works will show that Mrs. Gaskell must have deeply studied most of the questions affecting her sex, that of female labour being perhaps the most paramount. Her sympathies were quick and ready; and from the peculiar position in which she was placed and the persons amongst whom she moved, she had every opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with the toiling, suffering operatives of the North of England. Scene after scene in her novels demonstrate that it was no superficial knowledge she gained, or was content to make use of, in her study of operative and other life. The

keenest anguish such a nature as hers could feel would arise from the fact that she could do so little in the way of actual amelioration of the condition of the factory girls she saw dying around her. Except by the aid of personal observation, no adequate idea could be formed of the disastrous nature of the daily life of what are called "mill hands" in the North of England, at the commencement of the present century, and through many of its earlier years. It is, of course, quite possible to believe that men are far from having done all that lies in their power yet to make the condition of the operatives what it should be; but it cannot be doubted that, owing to the earnest efforts of Mrs. Gaskell and others imbued with the same spirit, a very great and praiseworthy reform has been accomplished. In addition, also, to this physical improvement, which after all is only one branch of a great question, there has been a greater *rapprochement* between employers and employed than was formerly the case. To this end the mental labours of the author of *Mary Barton* must have largely conduced in an indirect manner. She was able to write somewhat authoritatively from the conviction that she had conscientiously studied both sides of the question. The sorrows of the poor workpeople she knew; the too often arrogant bearing of the masters she had ample opportunities for studying; and the knowledge acquired in both ways she was most successful in turning to account. If, occasionally, her sympathies seem to lean to one side, we can on the other hand never charge her with unfairness in omitting to state the arguments on the other. While alive with sympathy, her books are at the same time models of candour and judgment.

Mrs. Gaskell was born in 1822, and died in 1865, having in her short life accomplished a great amount of work, most of which is calculated to stand successfully the test of time. Her father was Mr. William Stevenson, who is spoken of in the *Annual Biography and Obituary* for 1830 as "a man remarkable for the stores of knowledge which he possessed, and for the modesty and simplicity by which his rare attainments were concealed." These excellent qualities descended, in a very marked degree, to his daughter. But it was not alone on the father's side that intellect was exhibited, for Mrs. Gaskell's mother was a Miss Holland, of Sandlebridge, Cheshire — an aunt of the late Sir Henry Holland. Amongst other characteristics of the novelist was this, that she was remarkably sensitive to blame, caring comparatively little for praise. She generally went abroad when a new work of hers was about to appear, in order that she might be out of the way of the criticisms which should be passed upon it. Her first appearance as an author was in William Howitt's *Visits to Remarkable Places*. It appears that on seeing an announcement of the original production of that work, she wrote an account of Clopton Hall, which immediately attracted considerable attention, and was spoken of as a graphic paper, exhibiting great powers of description; the reception this article met with gave an impetus to her desire for literary work, and from that time forward her pen was never idle. The beautiful lines written by

Walter Savage Landor, "To the Author of *Mary Barton*," will not be forgotten. They appear in his *Last Fruit off an Old Tree*, and are a genuine tribute from one worker in literature to another. Mrs. Gaskell was married to a kindred and sympathetic spirit, a Unitarian minister, of literary attainments, still resident in the great centre of business activity in which she spent so many years of her life.

In attempting to form a judgment upon the works of Mrs. Gaskell, it will be only just to her powers to take up those novels which mark off certain epochs in her literary career—no author having yet written whose work did not exhibit at various stages the influence of personal experience. As years pass by, those things which seemed of moment to a writer when in the flush of youth fall into comparative insignificance, whilst those for which a carelessness, or even mild contempt, was cherished come to the front, and are seen to be invested with an importance which at one time would have been inconceivable. Take the work of any man of first-rate genius. That of the early stage will be remarkable for redundancy of colour, that is, the flower of talent; look at the later, and whilst it shall not have lost the old fire and passion, it will be powerfully quiet. Genius will have matured, and its culminating beauty will be perceived in rich ripe fruit. It is interesting to watch such growth and such fruition, and we are not of those who are discontented with the first stage when we have reached the second. With infinite tenderness we can sometimes turn back to the early wealth of genius which we have admired, and can find more satisfaction in the comparison and enjoyment of the two styles than we should ever have enjoyed had there been the same level field of excellence always offered to us. The charge of crudity we can condone when the gifts of the writer are undoubted. We know that when he has time to mature, he will emerge from the defective condition in which he lies; his wings will become stronger gradually, and we shall not be disappointed in the expectations which we have cherished. Sad, indeed, should we be to lose the first works of those brilliant authors whose genius has illumined again and again the dark periods of our national literature.

The several stages of our author's career may be said to be marked by three of her works, though the lines of demarcation in her case are not so apparent as in most writers; for she appears in her first widely-known work to have attained a power of expression very rarely witnessed in the maturest efforts of those of her order. Still, were we expected to define clearly the various stages of progress which she has attained—or rather to note the influence of time in ripening her gifts—we should direct attention to the first, the middle, and the final stage of her genius—into each of which divisions we should be able, we imagine, to classify her work. The novel which first fixed public attention, and which belongs to the first stage, was *Mary Barton*; that which marks the second is *Sylvia's Lovers*; and that illustrative of the third is *Wives and Daughters*. Each of these works presents considerable points of difference, while they

are all at the same time stamped by the genuine impress of genius. Several others could be cited, which for particular qualities may even be superior to those named; but they do not so decisively show Mrs. Gaskell at her best, or her pen animated by the varied charms which these books individually and indisputably discover. The charge has been made that Mrs. Gaskell was but a member of "that school of novelists which her friend Charlotte Brontë inaugurated;" but after a careful study, and possessing a somewhat intimate acquaintance with all that the two have accomplished, we are bound to say that the charge appears to us to have no foundation. In fact, there is a considerable difference in method, as there was a considerable difference in gifts, between the two. The only grounds for the comparison which has been made are these—that the two have successfully dealt with certain phases of Northern English life, and that both, perhaps, have been most successful in their delineation of female character. These are the ostensible grounds assigned. But note the differences. Charlotte Brontë, while possessing, undoubtedly we think, the greater genius, exhibited a much narrower range than Mrs. Gaskell. Such characters as have established the fame of the former are but few in number, though they stand out from the canvas with a Rembrandt-like effect, compelling one to own that we are conversing with real flesh and blood —heroes and heroines drawn because of the circulation of their own blood, and not for the "circulation" of the libraries alone. This is the quality which made the slight, pale country girl famous almost against her will. Again: her men are as powerful as her women—at least in most cases this is so; so that it is not just to assert that she is principally distinguished for her portraiture of her own sex. But that quality which chiefly marks her off from Mrs. Gaskell is her intensity, and any one reading her various enthralling books will acknowledge that this is unmistakeable. Mrs. Gaskell, too, is realistic and intense to a great degree; but this quality, which seems reserved for almost the very highest kinds of genius in its fullest manifestation, is veiled in her by a general excellence which the other did not possess. The modes of life pursued by the two may have had some influence on the development of their talent. The author of *Jane Eyre*, far away on those melancholy Yorkshire moors, asked for nothing but solitude, save that dozen or score of characters with whom she acquired close fellowship, and whom she has rendered immortal. She individualized even the very stones and the trees about her. Mrs. Gaskell, on the other hand, possessed a much wider vision. Having, indubitably, by nature, a great faculty of reading human character, her canvas was necessarily more crowded than that of her friend, and frequently she was unable to arrest herself and complete her individual sketches with the same minuteness. In individualization, she was confessedly Charlotte Brontë's inferior, as she also was George Eliot's, and for that reason a higher position must be accorded to those writers; but in grouping she was inferior to neither, and there are sketches of life in her books which for fulness and variety of detail are almost unrivalled.

Turning to the works themselves, let us take up for a little while *Mary Barton*, the volume by which our author first became distinguished. It is a picture of Manchester life, as its title-page states, and never, in the whole range of novels founded so closely upon fact as this, has the story been made more realizable to the reader. One would think that it was well nigh impossible for the grinders of the poor to read the opening chapters of this story, and still go on heaping up their gains, while they cared little whether those who were instrumental in their accumulation perished by the roadside. The workman's side of the labour question was never more forcibly depicted than in the following passages, which during the last fifty years have now and again been the inarticulate cry of thousands who lacked the power of uttering definite and appropriate language: "At all times it is a bewildering thing to the poor weaver to see his employer removing from house to house, each one grander than the last, till he ends in building one more magnificent than all, or withdrawing his money from the concern, or sell his mill, to buy an estate in the country, while all the time the weaver, who thinks he and his fellows are the real makers of this wealth, are struggling on for bread for his children, through the vicissitudes of lowered wages, short hours, fewer hands employed, &c. And when he knows trade is bad, and could understand (at least partially) that there are not buyers enough in the market to purchase the goods already made, and consequently that there is no demand for more; when he would bear and endure much without complaining, could he also see that his employers were bearing their share; he is, I say, bewildered, and (to use his own word), aggravated, to see that all goes on just as usual with the mill-owners. Large houses are still occupied, while spinners' and weavers' cottages stand empty, because the families which once filled them are obliged to live in rooms or cellars. Carriages still roll along the streets, concerts are still crowded by subscribers, the shops for expensive luxuries still find daily customers, while the workman loiters away his unemployed time in watching these things, and thinking of the pale, uncomplaining wife at home, and the wailing children asking in vain for enough of food—of the sinking health, of the dying life of those near and dear to him. The contrast is too great." Of course, while there is much truth in this presentment of the case of the workman, Mrs. Gaskell is too conscientious to hide the fact that the other side might be somewhat less harshly stated. But the arguments she employed were those felt by John Barton; and can we wonder at his querulousness when we follow the story, and learn that his mother died from absolute want of the necessaries of life, and that his only son, the apple of his eye, who could only be kept alive by the very best nourishment, also became a corpse through starvation? It is the position of Barton, and such as he, towards the upper classes, their employers, which Mrs. Gaskell set herself to place before the world in this story to which we are referring. Every page teems with evidence of the close knowledge the author had acquired of

her topic; and the tragic history related is almost sufficient to blind us to the merit of the book, when regarded as a purely literary effort. From page to page of the narrative we are hurried on, now getting glimpses of a poverty-stricken hovel, and now being introduced to the mansions of the millionaires; again being treated to a glowing description of a mill on fire. The story is too sad a one to write, except by a noble, large-hearted woman—one in whom the fire of benevolence has been kindled by the Divine. Such a being it is who has penned it, and thereby testified for ever her love for suffering, toiling humanity. And after all that she must have seen of the degradation and loathsomeness attaching to many of those whose life-stories she must have probed, it is cheering to hear her say as she does of those who are frequently termed the "dregs" of society:—"There was faith such as the rich can never imagine on earth; there was love strong as death; and self-denial among rude, coarse men, akin to that of Sir Philip Sidney's most glorious deed. The vices of the poor sometimes astound us here; but when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, their virtues will astound us in far greater degree." We should not be loth to dwell long amid the lights (of which, however, there are few) and the shadows of this book, which was fraught with an interest rarely paralleled in fiction. The poor have here their interpreter. She stands and pours forth the tale of their sufferings into the ear of the rich. That ear, which had hitherto been almost closed to the story, must perforce open now when one appeals to it who has power to deliver the message with which she is charged. It may be painful to read the record, but it should be done. We must follow John Barton in all his wanderings. How graphically are his experiences in London told, and what a genuine piece of art that is where the author describes him as calling at a cottage with his baby, asking for food, as it is nearly "clemmed," and being afraid that his request will be refused! But the woman was tender, and as she hung down her head and unlocked a drawer in the dresser Barton had evidence why she could not fail to be kind to the child. "I were sorry to be prying," he says, "but I could na' help seeing in that drawer some little child's clothes all strewed wi' lavender, and lying by 'em a little whip an' a broken rattle. I began to have an insight into that woman's heart then." The character of Mary Barton is well drawn. She is never insipid, sometimes wayward and impulsive, but always loveable, even when she is half drawn away by Mr. Carson, while another is loving her deeply and tenderly. The manufacturer, too, is typical, in his semi-gentility and coldness. Passion, except as regards the feeling he appears to cherish for Mary Barton, is foreign to his nature. Things went from bad to worse with Barton, till he became a Chartist, a Communist, "and all that is commonly called wild and visionary." Then arose combination on both sides—masters and men—and each began to take measures of their own, instead of trying to approximate their views to those of their opponents, thereby having some chance of an amicable arrangement of their differences. The book

deals with exactly similar circumstances to those which we have again and again seen reported recently in connection with various trade strikes. The result, however, in this case was one the like of which we trust to see no repetition, even as we would labour to banish the differences between masters and men altogether from our shores. For what is it but a reflection on human nature when commercial matters are allowed to breed strife, and finally—though very rarely we are glad to think—bloodshed? Surely the intelligence of which we boast should be sufficient to adjust relations, whenever they become strained, between various classes of men.

In the instance which Mrs. Gaskell has recorded, no understanding could be arrived at, and the consequence was, the commission of a crime which, together with its surroundings and concomitant incidents, gives to the narrative its thrilling character. The men bound themselves by a terrible oath; a number of pieces of paper, one of which was marked, was put into a hat and shuffled together. The gas was extinguished, and each drew out a paper. The one which John Barton drew committed him to the lot of the assassin! Those who have read the story will never forget the impression produced by the chapters devoted to this tragedy; and those who have not read it should do so at once. We get here some insight also into the sufferings of the rich, when we behold old Mr. Carson standing over the murdered remains of his only son. We gather, too, what the strength of revenge is when the manufacturer, reminding the officer of justice that he is very rich, says, "Well, sir, half, nay, if necessary, the whole of my fortune, I will give to have the murderer brought to the gallows." He will know no rest while the assassin lives. Truly, the story seems surcharged with misery, and the mind is agonized during its perusal to its utmost tension. There is little in English novels surpassing in force the trial scene of Mary Barton's lover for the murder of which he was innocent. The author here has risen to the true dramatic height in her delineation. We are made to feel almost as though we were actual spectators of the trial, and witnesses of the anguish of Mary as she comes forward to give evidence; and of whom it is said, "that her look, and indeed her whole face, was more like the well-known engraving from Guido's picture of 'Beatrice Cenci' than anything else" which could be given for a comparison. One who saw it says, "that her countenance haunted him, like the remembrance of some wild sad melody heard in childhood; that it would perpetually recur with its mute imploring agony." The whole picture seems to us superior in its realism to that wherein another gifted female novelist has narrated the trial of Hetty Sorrel for the murder of her child. What a grand character does this poor country girl become after her baptism of fire! Compare the vapid sentimentalities which are flung about the lives of heroines in the generality of novels with the career of this long-tried Mary Barton, and note how they miserably fail as representations of human nature, with all its heritage of passion and suffering. But, besides the character of Mary, there are several psychological studies of the deepest interest in

the volume; notably, that of Mr. Carson, senior, whom we have seen thirsting for the blood of his son's murderer. Mrs. Gaskell has here wielded a masterly pencil, and we follow the mill-owner's career in most artistic gradations till we see him, not only ultimately saved from his intense anger, but recovered to be of great service to the classes whom he had before oppressed. It is a little singular that there is scarcely any joyousness in the book till we come to the last chapter; and as the story opens with children at its very commencement, so it introduces us to them at its very close. In the one case, however, they are in the gloom of adversity, whilst in the other we obtain the last glimpse of Mary as an emigrant living in the American forests with her husband and son. The sublimation of her spirit had been a long task—at one time it appeared as though it could never be attained; but it is the Almighty who says that light shall succeed to darkness, and it is He alone who has the power to accomplish the change.

Such is the novel by which Mrs. Gaskell first largely gained the public ear; and whilst from the barest outline of the plot we have no difficulty in apprehending why it should have secured general popularity, so, on a study of the book itself, we shall not be astonished that it has almost passed into a classic. In regarding it as an example of Mrs. Gaskell's first stage, we should say that it exhibits, first, force; secondly, truthfulness; and thirdly, concentrativeness. Yet let it not be understood that these qualities are absent from any other work of the author; the fact being simply that, though they may not be so apparent individually in the later novels, it is because they are attended by other graces of composition. The examples we have already cited from *Mary Barton* will demonstrate the first quality, that of force or power; as regards the second, in her construction of the work the author has not suffered herself to be bound by the canons then in vogue as to the writing of novels. She has dared to throw off the trammels, and challenged the reading world with a story which in the hands of a tyro would have been blurred in many of its incidents, tampered with in some of its characters, and probably made altogether to result in a complete fiasco. Perfection is found neither with the rich or the poor to the exclusion of the other; but wrong is never suffered to appear under false colours. About its true designation, aspect, and final arraignment we are allowed to make no mistake. The way of the world in conniving so that "offence's gilded hand may shove by justice" meets with no approval from her; nor, on the other hand, are the poor allowed to suppose that their poverty or wrongs are to absolve them from the exhibition of those virtues which should be common to humanity. Yet, rigid moralist as she is, the woman's heart of sympathy for aught that is unfortunate or miserable throbs through all the words she has penned. And probably this is another reason why the book cannot be easily laid aside by any who are interested in the psychological dissection of their species. The quality of concentrativeness we have mentioned, though apparently trenching on that of force, is really a

different quality altogether when speaking of Mrs. Gaskell as a writer. The force refers more to the qualities of the author herself in the expression of her thoughts; the concentrativeness refers to the absolute imprisonment of emotion in a few pages. In very few writers is there less diffusiveness in this respect than in the author of *Mary Barton*. We read page after page, come upon scene after scene, which excites the emotional nature to a very high degree. What appears to be a laborious effort with many in regard to the enlistment of feeling is a work of comparative ease with her.

But to pass from a consideration of these points for the time being, let us devote a few words to another matter. It was said by some critics in effect—"Yes, undoubtedly a new writer has arisen who is worth listening to. We admit her talent, but—" (and there is always supposed to be great virtue in a *but*) "there is something lacking. She has no *humour*." At one time, of course, there seemed to be some ground for the charge. But even the shallow critic should have remembered that Mrs. Gaskell might have had good grounds for not relieving the sombre gloom of her tale of Manchester life by too many flashes of humour. It was strictly a serious aspect of human nature which she had to present; and that under special circumstances, and with special intentions on the part of the writer. It had not been designed that she should write a novel simply with the view of giving phases of life alone, though in that respect her representations were true to the letter; a second purpose ran through the story, at which we have already hinted, and to be true to her object of endeavouring to aid in procuring an agreement between two great classes of society hitherto antagonistic, was what she chiefly desired. Opportunity, however, was afforded by subsequent labours to any critic who was desirous of being further convinced as to her possession of the faculty of humour. Let any one take up *Cranford*, and see whether he does not find as rich and charming a vein of humour running through it as he will in the writings of any novelist. It is delicious. The style is calm and yet flowing; ease and humour—a humour worthy of the best of our female writers—are the distinguishing characteristics of the book. From the very first page, where we find the village of Cranford in the possession of the Amazons, to the last, all is delightful.

The novel teems with excellent touches of character. There is Mr. Hoggins, the village doctor, whose name, as might be expected, was voted coarse by the ladies of Cranford; but he defied their scrupulosity, and after all, as Miss Jenkyns said, "if he changed it to Piggins it would not be much better." They had "hoped to discover a relationship between him and that Marchioness of Exeter whose name was Molly Hoggins; but the man, careless of his own interests, utterly ignored and denied any such relationship." Then, too, there is Mrs. Forrester, who was one of those Cranfordians continually put to all kinds of shifts to conceal their poverty. When she gave "a party in her baby-house of a dwelling, and the little maiden disturbed the ladies on the sofa by a request that she might get

the tea-tray out from underneath, every one took this novel proceeding as the most natural thing in the world; and talked on about household forms and ceremonies, as if we all believed that our hostess had a regular servants' hall, second table, with housekeeper and steward, instead of the one little charity-school maiden, whose short ruddy arms could never have been strong enough to carry the tray upstairs, if she had not been assisted in private by her mistress, who now sate in state, pretending not to know what cakes were sent up, though she knew, and we knew, and she knew that we knew, and we knew that she knew that we knew, she had been busy all the morning making tea-bread and sponge-cakes." And so on—the whole novel being relieved by such touches of geniality. Every one will remember the disastrous failure of Captain Brown to introduce Mr. Dickens's works into Cranford. Having purchased *The Pickwick Papers*, which were then publishing in parts, the Captain read aloud to a party of ladies the account of the "swarry" which Sam Weller gave at Bath. Miss Jenkyns, who had a mania for Dr. Johnson, capped this by reading pompously a portion of *Rasselas*. She considered it vulgar and degrading to literature to publish a work in parts (blissfully ignorant of the method in which *The Rambler* was given to the world), and turning to the Captain said—"Dr. Johnson's style is a model for young beginners. My father recommended it to me when I began to write letters,—I have formed my own style upon it; I recommend it to your favourite." On behalf of Dickens, Captain Brown depreciated old Sam Johnson; but, being goaded still further by Miss Jenkyns, he transgressed propriety, and vented an oath on the great lexicographer. Yet *Cranford* is not altogether given up to this lighter element. There are passages of pathos in it which will fully sustain comparison with most others of the author; whilst some of the dear old antediluvian Cranfordians themselves are brimming over with the milk of human kindness. Whenever a good deed requires to be done they hasten to do it, and the spirit of a heroic self-sacrifice exists amongst them in a very eminent degree. The sketch is a true picture; and if the ladies are crotchety, we pardon them everything for the real nobleness of their hearts.

Amongst the somewhat voluminous works of the author there is one which deserves singling out, for merits which it possesses in a more striking degree than the rest. The memory of the pleasure we received on first reading it is upon us while we write, and cannot be obliterated. It remains as a pleasant dream, or as a sweet-smelling odour. *Cousin Phillis*, the story in question, is an idyll in prose. There is as much poetry in its descriptions of persons and scenery as in any book of its length that we remember. The farm life of England was never drawn in sweeter, clearer colours. We can almost scent the hay-fields, and see the sun shedding its golden light upon their broad bosom, and upon the gardens and hedges. As we read, the melody of the birds passes almost from a description into a reality, whilst the spirit which breathes through

everything takes the willing senses captive, and fills them with an answering delight.

For a representation which is almost perfect of pastoral beauty we can refer the reader to a scene in the harvest-field, where Mr. Holman gives out a hymn at the close of the day, and his daughter and the labourers join in the tune. The spectator of it, describing the circumstance, says—"There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene." Very regretfully we tear ourselves away from such attractive and soothing incidents as these; but we must reluctantly say good-bye to *Cousin Phillis*, and turn to material of a sterner character. What a revulsion of feeling we endure when we come to the book called *A Dark Night's Work*, a piece of as sterling realism as has ever been attempted, and told with striking power. Unmeasured misery and woe are made to turn upon the commission of one dreadful deed; but beyond the thrilling character of the narrative, which holds one as if in chains until it is finished, there is little in the novel to recommend it. The style is inferior, and lacks the grace of most of Mrs. Gaskell's writing. The book is, in fact, neither better nor worse than many which Miss Braddon is in the habit of issuing, except for that one single thread of sincerity which runs through it. The author, even with an unpleasant subject, is always the conscientious, painstaking artist, and never writes for the simple purpose of sensation. It is unnecessary to refer at length to the various short stories which Mrs. Gaskell has written, in order to obtain an estimate of her genius. They are all imbued with the same spirit; but there is one fact noticeable about them, and that is, how nearly all are given up to the presentation of painful episodes in human life. There is scarcely one which we remember which is not deeply tinged with sadness and suffering. It is the peculiarity of this writer, indeed, that such subjects attract her far more than joyous ones. Even her long stories have as much of misery in them as happiness, if not more. The sad aspects of humanity are drawn again and again, till occasionally our cry is for light in the midst of great and oppressive darkness. Hers must have been a brooding nature; one which often reviewed the moral mysteries of the universe; and which, on stepping forth into the world, was of a most impressionable character, mirroring upon itself the sorrows of those with whom she came into contact.

Ruth, a story which has generally been one of the chief favourites with readers, is remarkable for the manner in which it deals with a question that requires the utmost delicacy of treatment. We have seen the subject repeatedly treated in the most objectionable and unsatisfactory manner, notably by a popular writer just recently. In enlisting the

sympathy of the public with the unfortunate heroine of his story, he purposely threw a false halo round her character. The one who had sinned was not only made to triumph over others who had not fallen, but she was held up to admiration, whilst others whose characters were spotless were made subject only to contempt. Let it be remembered, also, that she who had sinned had not so far repented of her sin as to confess it amply and strive after a high morality, for we find her practising the vice of hypocrisy, and taking a position to which she was not entitled by assuming a false character. Such is the method in which morals are sometimes dealt with; and we mention this instance particularly with a view of correcting what is too common an error. Vice is continually represented by certain novelists in the most glowing colours; or, rather, if the vice itself is not always absolutely so treated, the utmost attractiveness is accorded to the vicious. Their errors are mentioned in a half-apologetic way, and the writers hurry on to enlist the sympathy of the reader for their Anonymas and their Lotharios, who are generally described as the handsomest of God's creatures, whilst those in whom virtue is predominant are supposed to be weak, silly, or ugly. It is astonishing that such a treatment of things should be persisted in; but we put it to our readers themselves to vouch for the truth of this remark. In too many cases, it is to be feared, it is the insidious spice of wrong which gives a fillip to the circulation of the books to which we have referred. If it were possible to get these writers of fiction to study works of a high moral character with a view to profiting thereby, we might recommend them a course of the greatest masters in their art. As our lady writers are mostly the prominent offenders in this respect, we have all the more confidence in commending to their attention this novel of *Ruth* by one of their own sex, as an example of what true and yet fearless handling can accomplish with a delicate subject. Ruth Hilton is drawn so beautifully and tenderly, that we are left no option but to admire her greatly, and unfeignedly sympathize with her; but the artist who has given us the portrait has not scrupled to put in the shadows boldly when required. Pure in her inmost soul as she is, Ruth is not allowed to conquer that social ostracism which is the ban of all who sin. Mrs. Gaskell has drawn a *good* character who has sinned, and even the wretched being herself feels that humility and obscurity are the only lot in future for her. There is none of the brazen flaunting before the world which inferior artists frequently assign to similar characters, and which demonstrates that there is a deeper depth even than the one great sin which they have committed. Wherever she went Ruth Hilton was deeply beloved in spite of herself, but in all the stages of her existence the shadow was upon her. She had been stricken, and drooped like the flower withered by the blast. The story of the poor dressmaker is well known. It opens in a city in the Eastern counties. Ruth is working those long hours day by day which are even yet in some of our fashionable quarters in London a disgrace to all concerned. There is little light in

her life; a word of kindness from some who are like slaves with herself, and a short walk into the beautiful country on a Sunday, and that is about all. By-and-by the great circumstance of life comes—she loves; and like all women under the influence of love, she cannot reason, she can only idolize. The end of it all is known; the poor girl becomes an outcast, but the betrayer, as usual, goes on his way safely—rich, and not lacking the esteem of the world. He is not altogether dead to feeling, however, till his mother steps in and teaches him how to become a fiend. Then come the wanderings of Ruth, and her reception into that little home in North Wales, where we make the acquaintance of as noble a hero as breathes in literature in the person of Thurstan Benson. The book deserves to live if for this character alone. But there are others in whom the light of the Divinity burns brightly. Good Faith Benson, Thurstan's sister, is for the moment sorely tried, because her brother, who is a minister, jeopardises his character by taking into his house an outcast, whose touch would be considered contamination by the world. Yet his pure and childlike nature conquers her; and search where men will, it would be difficult to find acts which breathe the truest spirit of benevolence more than do these of the unsophisticated Welsh couple. The story progresses, till suddenly in the midst of its burden of sorrow we come upon a piece of writing which might have been penned by Dickens, and seems in its way as admirable a touch of comedy as need be. It is where Sally, the brawny, buxom servant at Mr. Benson's, tells the story of her sweethearts. She shall rehearse part of it here. It concerns one Dixon, a Methodist, who called upon her unexpectedly one day while she was cleaning her kitchen. She squatted down to her work, thinking, with regard to the amorous Dixon, "I shall be on my knees all ready if he puts up a prayer, for I knew he was a Methodee by bringing up, and had only lately turned to master's way of thinking; and them Methodees are terrible hands at unexpected prayers when one least looks for 'em." Dixon's prayer was of another kind, however. Sally *loquitur*:—

> At last he says, says he, "Sally, will you oblige me with your hand?" So I thought it were, maybe, Methodee fashion to pray hand-in-hand; and I'll not deny but I wished I'd washed it better after blackleading the kitchen fire. I thought I'd better tell him it were not so clean as I could wish, so says I, "Master Dixon, you shall have it and welcome, if I may just go and wash 'em first." "But," says he, "my dear Sally, dirty or clean, it's all the same to me, seeing I'm only speaking in a figuring way. What I'm asking on my bended knees is, that you'd please to be so kind as to be my wedded wife; week after next will suit me if it's agreeable to you." My word, I were up on my feet in an instant!—"Master Dixon, I'm obleeged to you for the compliment, and thank ye all the same, but I think I'd prefer a single life." . . . Says he, "Think again, my dear Sally. I have a four-roomed house and furniture conformable, and eighty pound a year. You may never have such a chance again." . . . "As for that, neither you nor I can tell, Master Dixon. You're not the first chap as I've had down on his knees afore me, axing me to marry him, and maybe you'll not be the last. Anyhow, I've no wish to change my condition just now." "I'll wait till Christmas," says he. "I've a pig as will be ready for killing then, so

I must get married before that." Well, now, would you believe it? the pig were a temptation. I'd a receipt for curing hams, as Miss Faith would never let me try, saying the old way were good enough. However, I resisted. Says I, very stern, because I felt I'd been wavering, "Master Dixon, once for all, pig or no pig, I'll not marry you. And if you'll take my advice, you'll get up off your knees. The flags is but damp as yet, and it would be an awkward thing to have rheumatiz just before winter."

The notion of matrimony being a temptation because it would afford scope for trying a new plan of curing hams, is very charming, but it is evidently a touch of nature. The character of this servant altogether is a very admirable piece of work from the novelist's point of view. The least shade of her identity is never once lost during the whole of the story. Some of the other characters are not sufficiently individualized to make the entire book remarkable as a study of human nature; but the emotional element of the novel is very strong. Before we part with it, let us beg the reader to notice that scene where Ruth has an interview with her son, and for the first time breaks to him the news of her humiliation and her sorrow. The most obdurate must be penetrated by its simple but terrible pathos. It is almost unique for its pathetic force. Who cannot realize the grief of that woman's heart as her relation culminates with the passionate exclamation, "Would to God I had died!" And then, turning from herself, to give her last thoughts to her son, she says—"Remember that, when the time of trial comes—and it seems a hard and cruel thing that you should be called reproachful names by men, and all for what was no fault of yours—remember God's pity and God's justice; and though my sin shall have made you an outcast in the world—oh, my child, my child!—remember, darling of my heart, it is only your own sin that can make you an outcast from God." Soon afterwards the end approaches, for the devoted being contracts a mortal malady, in nursing the man who has brought her misery; the gloom is dispelled, and she passes away with sweet song. Thus out of tribulation the noblest ends are wrought.

The question of the unequal distribution of pain and pleasure—a question which has agitated every thinking mind at some period of its history since Time began—is dealt with in *Sylvia's Lovers*. But to all questioning and deep searching we are left at the close to say with Tennyson, "Behind the veil, behind the veil!" The confession is once more forced, that none ever meet exactly with their due share of either joy or sorrow. The lots are changed, and the deserving are very frequently apportioned the "severer discipline." Mrs. Gaskell, however, be her beliefs right or wrong, has this advantage, that she is unwavering in her inculcation of the highest principles. Yet again she almost overweights her work with the tragic element. Look at the life of Sylvia Robson, and see what is set against the one great charm of personal beauty which she possesses. Her heart is incessantly probed to its very depths by trouble, and when at last she is represented as almost purified from the

dross of mortality, it is only by the loss of all which she had at one period imagined to be necessary for her happiness. Hope springs out of the death of the lower pleasures, the pleasures which delight, but do not really touch the depth of the soul's need. A remarkable contrast is witnessed in this respect between Mrs. Gaskell's treatment of the deepest moral and spiritual questions and that of many other writers. One would think, to read scores of works of fiction which issue from the press, that to eat, drink, and be well clothed and housed were the chief and almost only ends of existence. We generally find, at least, that material riches and a coarse kind of happiness are heaped upon the heroes and heroines who are presented to us. And thus, for the most part, in being robbed of their truth to mortal destiny, these lives present no points of sympathy wherein we can be at one. The only result of the novels themselves is to please the fancy, and give a spice of enjoyment to what is by no means the higher part of our nature. In *Sylvia's Lovers* Mrs. Gaskell has been true to humanity as it has been brought before her. She is perfectly just. Sylvia is no imaginary portrait. How vividly her life realizes the anguish which rends the heart behind many an exterior which seems to be fair! Her character is beautiful, but it is not perfect—we had almost said it was so beautiful because it was *not* perfect. The idea is that it is not impossible; the touches of human weakness at once make Sylvia a part and parcel of that common race to which we all belong. She is not exalted by a fancied perfection up to a sphere into which so many heroines are translated, but which none of the living women ever attain. Philip, too, her husband, has had his imperfections; and when, after far journeyings, he returns home at last, it is to die. The two, in their moment of understanding each other, are separated by the icy hand of Death. To the question, "What hope of answer or redress?" there is only, we once more remark, the answer of the Poet Laureate.

We mentioned this story as illustrative of the second stage of Mrs. Gaskell's literary career; and for this reason, that it indicates a superior finish to many of her previous novels. It is evident that the author's powers were maturing. There is a greater grasp not only of character but of actual expression, though, as we have said, all her writings are singular for their strength. Life on the North-eastern coast is delineated with perfect skill, the separate studies of Monkshaven fishermen and others being marked with great *verve* and completeness. The story of the press-gang, that institution flourishing in good King George's time, by which his Majesty's subjects were liable to be seized and carried away to the wars by main force, is graphically told, and the horrors which attend it, if history and recollection are to be relied upon, are drawn without the slightest exaggeration. For touches of pathos, the account of the sailor's funeral, and the proceedings subsequent to the arrest of Sylvia's father, Daniel Robson, for the attack on the King's representatives, leave nothing to be desired, whilst the whole scene between the dying Philip and Sylvia is strikingly emotional. Then there is the disappointment of

Hester, who loves Philip Hepburn with an intensity rarely witnessed in women, whilst he, on the contrary, is devoted heart and soul to Sylvia, whose affections have long been centred on the handsome Kinraid, a character which is likewise finished in the author's best style.

Another novel which attained considerable popularity at the time of its issue in a serial form was *North and South*. It seems to be more unequal in merit than most of Mrs. Gaskell's stories, the latter part especially bearing some traces of hasty composition. The author partly explains this herself by stating that she was obliged to conform to the conditions imposed by the requirements of a weekly publication, and likewise to confine the story within certain advertised limits. There can be little doubt that under some circumstances this would greatly interfere with a writer, who should be perfectly unchecked, and left to suspend or resume work at pleasure, halting here and pushing ahead there. But if any one wishes to test Mrs. Gaskell's power of drawing life, let him turn to this novel and study the characters of Margaret Hale and her father, the poor country clergyman. Touches of infinite sympathy reveal how clearly and how completely the author had apprehended her *dramatis personæ*. Margaret is one of the most charming personages in fiction, and when she was carried off by Mr. Thornton, the mill-owner and manufacturer, we were not quite satisfied. A feeling of disappointment affected us; we did not think him good enough—and yet he is anything but a contemptible character, only we wanted goods marked "extra-superfine" in this case. The story is less sad than the previous ones, though there are several occasions on which the heart-strings are touched. Poor Bessy Higgins and her dying conversations with Margaret form a melancholy narrative. The mills at Milton had been too much for her. She had worked in a carding-room and contracted consumption there by taking in upon her lungs the "uff," or fine white bits, as they flew off the cotton in process of carding. As Bessy said, and we will note the "humanity" prevalent at that period in the North, "There's many a one as works in a carding-room that falls into a waste (consumption), coughing and spitting blood, because they're just poisoned by the fluff. Some folk have a great wheel at one end o' their carding-rooms to make a draught, and carry off the dust; but that wheel costs a deal o' money—five or six hundred pounds, maybe, and brings in no profit—so it's but a few o' the masters as will put 'em up." And so the poor factory hands went on dying. Some of these iniquities have been altered since. Margaret Hale gave her life to Mr. Thornton, and from the conversations she had frequently with him before that event, one can see that she was to have a mighty influence upon her husband for good in the matter of the treatment of his workpeople. She is cast in a truly heroic mould; sweetness, without too much sentimentality; strength, without losing any of her femininity, being her prominent characteristics. It is such women as she who make the race great; their influence, while apparently of the gentlest, is yet of the most permanent kind. They make plastic the

wills of those who are brought into contact with them, just as the sun's beams operate undemonstratively upon nature. Yet she could exhibit a rapidity of action when necessary—as on the occasion when Mr. Thornton was in danger from his exasperated workpeople, and the brave girl flung her arms round him to shield him from their wrath, at the risk of her own life. Thornton himself, though doubtless well drawn, does not arouse any special admiration on our part, and the same may be said of his weak-minded mother. The mill-owner was too cold and self-sustained to be worthy of the love of such a woman as Margaret, though probably she was able to see beneath the exterior, and recognize the rugged worth that was dormant there, and afterwards developed. The love scene with which the book closes is natural and admirable, rather a rarity in novels, for there are few of such scenes which do not strike one on reading them as strained and unnatural. The thought crossed the two together that their choice would be disapproved by both their parents, neither of whom could understand the other's child. Margaret wonders what her Aunt Shaw will say when she learns of her engagement. "I can guess," said Thornton; "her first exclamation will be, 'That man!'" "Hush!" said Margaret, "or I shall try and show you your mother's indignant tones, as she says, 'That woman!'" It is impossible, however, to dwell longer on this delightful story, and there is probably no reason to elucidate it, as it is doubtless perfectly well known to most readers of fiction.

There only remains now one work of this gifted and lamented author upon which to offer some observations. And this is in all respects the completest as a work of fiction (as it is the best) which has proceeded from her pen. *Wives and Daughters* exhibits the rich genius of Mrs. Gaskell in its last stage, when perfection had been attained, or at least a perfection as near as can be pointed to in any author. Unfinished as she left it, it still remains for us the best of all her novels, and one which can be recommended to all of her order as a specimen of purity, strength, and sweetness. It has not the quicksilver vivacity of Dickens, the poetic glow of Bulwer, or the wonderful dissection and penetration of Thackeray; but, in addition to a moderate development of the qualities for which these masters were famous, there is a radiating human affection beaming through all its pages. We are robbed of one scene, which in the hands of the author would have been inimitable, viz. the confession of Roger Hamley's love to Molly after his return, and the manner in which the confession would have been received by that charming heroine. There was much to tell in one chapter, we are informed, had the author but lived to tell it. The two persons who have all along been favourites with the reader are of course to be married; and one little anecdote which Mrs. Gaskell intended to relate of Cynthia Kirkpatrick is very characteristic. After her brother-in-law had become a celebrated traveller, his name was mentioned in certain circles which Cynthia frequented, with surprise, as being connected with her family: but it had never oc-

curred to her to mention the little fact. The reticence of some people is almost as remarkable a phenomenon as the silence of others. We think that, had Mrs. Gaskell lived, she would have given to the world a series of novels scarcely inferior to any which we have received from our best known writers of fiction. *Wives and Daughters* abundantly proves this. Regarded either as a piece of writing, or as a reproduction of character, it will stand a severe scrutiny. The only possible fault which might have a basis or foundation in fact is, that the style is never strong to overwhelming. It does not crush one by its force. The book is told rather with quietness than demonstration of power; but when the pathos comes it is natural and unstrained. It reflects the purity of the author's own mind: we see her lifted away from the grosser pursuits of earth, and beckoning those for whom she is writing to come away also into the purer air. Of course we do not escape the narration of trouble, misunderstanding, and regret; that would be for the writer to miss the highest part of her vocation, which is to teach through the ordinary media of all novelists. The plot of this book is of the most meagre description; it makes no demand on our faculties of wonder; it touches at times the springs of humour, and passes away again to call into action those of emotion. The simplest of human lives, with the most ordinary and peaceful of careers, in the majority of cases, are the groundwork of the narrative. But now see what the author has made of her materials. Where shall we find characters more carefully drawn than those of the two brothers Osborne and Roger Hamley, and Cynthia Kirkpatrick? In her way, the last-named is equal to Maggie Tulliver. It is perfect in finish—there is nothing to be desired, and no flaw to be found in the delineation. The same may be said of Osborne Hamley, a most difficult character to draw, and one which requires the negative power of repression in an author as well as the positive power of protrusion. We see less of this personage than of any other through the novel, and yet, on closing it, the figure of Osborne Hamley is one of the most abiding impressions left upon the memory. But a few touches here and there have given us an insight into the mind of the Squire's heir, and the fuller details we obtain of his brother do not suffice to hide him from the view. The same remark also applies to Cynthia. Although early impregnated with a feeling for her half pity, half abhorrence, there is no person whose fortunes kindle the kind of interest we feel in her to such a pitch, or in whose development and final goal we feel more concerned. At the moment she arrives at Mr. Gibson's from France we discover her disposition, and the full manifestation is only a question of time. The few glimpses of aristocratic life obtained are also true, and the aristocrats themselves are human beings, and not mere eccentricities or monstrosities, as is too often the case with sketches and portraits of beings of the upper classes. The amusing element in the story is supplied mostly through the aid of Mrs. Kirkpatrick (afterwards Gibson), whose character, however, is more contemptible than humorous in itself. Still, it is often

individuals of this description who are provocative of considerable mirth in others. Her determined angling for Mr. Gibson as her second husband causes some amusement, not unmingled with a disgust akin to that the unfortunate man himself must have felt when he discovered that he had requested a scheming widow to become his wife, and that the chances of the union had been patronizingly discussed beforehand by Lord and Lady Cumnor. But it is a relief to get away from these people into the company of Molly, Mr. Gibson's daughter, and a most bewitching heroine, though withal as sensible and staid a young lady as any whose acquaintance we make in our rambles through novels. For a time it seems as though misfortune and scheming were in combination to keep her out of the only position we can conceive possible for her—that of Roger Hamley's wife. Blindly and stupidly, perhaps, this youth is attracted by the superior brilliancy of Cynthia, and the exposed surface of her character. He never troubles himself to ask whether there is anything really worthy beneath the showy exterior, and it is when adversity alone demonstrates as usual the true metal of the real heroine that he awakes to the knowledge of the vast superiority of Molly over her attractive sister. It is only when trouble falls upon others that she appears to the best advantage. Then her woman's nature exhibits itself, and she pours forth the stream of long pent-up tenderness. Stay—one person had all along known her heart—Mr. Gibson could testify that it was as free of guile as it was eager to do good for others. Of all characters which seem to bear upon them the stamp of earthly perfection, this is one of the best. It seems to need no purifying, for there is no period when it appears to be mingled with dross. It is the veritable gold of human nature.

In her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*—which, by-the-bye, is another specimen of Mrs. Gaskell's excellent English, as well as a tribute to her sympathetic heart—she quotes some sentences which seem peculiarly applicable to herself and her novels. One who knew Charlotte Brontë intimately said of her—"She thought much of her duty, and had loftier and clearer notions of it than most people, and held fast to them with more success. It was done, it seems to me, with much more difficulty than people have of stronger nerves and better fortunes. All her life was but labour and pain; and she never threw down the burden for the sake of present pleasure. I don't know what use you can make of all I have said. I have written it with the strong desire to obtain appreciation for her. Yet, what does it matter? She herself appealed to the world's judgment for her use of some of the faculties she had—not the best—but still the only ones she could turn to strangers' benefit. They heartily, greedily, enjoyed the fruits of her labours, and then found out she was much to be blamed for possessing such faculties. Why ask for a judgment on her from such a world?" While it is quite true that these words taken literally have not such a direct reference to Mrs. Gaskell as they have to her much misrepresented and maligned friend, yet the spirit of them is so *àpropos* to her own—that in which her work was always undertaken—

that we have ventured to quote them. Always perfectly conscientious, her first aim in the production of her novels was to be true to herself, and to the society which she professed to depict. There is, perhaps, less of absolute exaggeration in the characters she has drawn than in the works of most authors of fiction. The person who stands clearest in this respect compared with others is the author of *The Newcomes*, whom she and her friend, the writer of *Jane Eyre*, concurred in regarding as the master-spirit of fiction. Those who study her intimately will easily condone the few unimportant faults she may possess in consideration of the many and great merits which completely overshadow them. It is impossible to read any author without some degree of difference arising between our own mind and his. If we agree with his method we despise his power to draw character; or, if we are enchanted with his power of individuality, we are, perchance, annoyed by his defective finish. In Mrs. Gaskell's case we shall find a large call upon our admiration in both respects.

The taunt was once thrown out against the novelist of Haworth, that she was an excellent artist as far as concerned the depicting of "governesses," a class of beings with whom she was supposed to be most in unison, as she was intimately acquainted with their position and trials, &c. The taunt, however, has now completely lost its force, and the genius which conceived *Shirley* and *Jane Eyre* has been almost universally acknowledged, certainly in every quarter where her work has been fairly read and tested by all who are capable of forming an intelligent opinion thereupon. We can well afford, therefore, to leave the charge that Mrs. Gaskell is a tolerable artist so far as local colour is concerned, to work itself out, as it most assuredly will. What novelist is not a local artist in one sense? Whether he depicts life as he sees it in Whitechapel or in Manchester, his colouring must be local; the question is, is it true? Landseer was a great artist, though his vocation, his *spécialité*, was of the narrowest description. Yet where are the pictures besides his own, which represent dogs with brains, and thus reproduce them with the fidelity of nature? The question is not so much to consider, in speaking of the novelist, whether he gives us all classes of life, as is he exact in those particular instances which he professes to delineate? The humblest animal, faithfully represented, is a better work of art than any caricature of humanity. This principle, which is indubitable, is fast becoming more generally recognized, though in the matter of the novel it has been somewhat slow of acceptation. Let it be strictly applied to Mrs. Gaskell's writings, and we fearlessly assert that the result will be in placing her in a very high position amongst our writers of fiction. She never cared to pander to popularity by the production of stories which it is considered are eminently fitted to adorn the numerous libraries. She wrote first for the sake of truth, and secondly for posterity. The first object has been, it is generally conceded, strictly accomplished; the second we can well afford to leave in the hands of those to whom she appealed.

Finally, in stating the qualities for which, as a novelist, Mrs. Gaskell

is most conspicuous, we should enumerate them in the following order:—individuality, force, truthfulness, and purity. As regards the first-named quality no one would be inclined to dispute her possession of it after reading *Mary Barton*, *Ruth*, or *Wives and Daughters*. The power of detaching a human unit, with all its special thoughts, griefs, hopes, and fears, from the rest of its kind, is in full force in all the works we have named. Indeed, there is scarcely any contemporary author who has excelled her in this respect. But upon that quality, and also upon her force or power, we have sufficiently enlarged already. Concerning the truthfulness of Mrs. Gaskell there is room for genuine approval. Into whatever sphere of life she conveys her readers, they are conscious that there is no exaggeration, no undue exaltation of this person, and no undue depression of the other. Upon this estimable quality we should be inclined to build most fearlessly for her assurance of immortality. Yet while there is no quality which should singly so well ensure it, if any work is to live and have a constant impression upon successive generations it must be combined with qualities which may seem humbler, but which in reality have more vitality in them from the fact that however the world changes their special power remains the same. Let Mrs. Gaskell's novels be read after the lapse of a hundred years, and one feels that the verdict delivered then would be that they were penned by the hand of a true observer—one who not only studied human nature with a desire, but a capacity, to comprehend it. This is one of the great motive powers which will ever keep the name of the author green in the public remembrance. The other principal quality to assist this consummation is purity. We were struck in reading her various volumes with this fact—that there is really less in them than there is in most other authors which she herself could wish to be altered. In fact, there is no purer author in modern times. And what has she lost by being pure? Has she failed to give a fair representation of any class of human beings whom she professes to depict? Not one; and her work stands now as an excellent model for those who would avoid the tendencies of the sensuous school, and would seek another basis upon which to acquire a reputation which should have some chances of durability. The author of *Wives and Daughters* will never cease to hold a high place in our regard. Could she do so we should despair for the future of fiction in England. Hers was one of those spirits which led the way to a purer day. The darkness out of which she assisted to bring us with her healthful work is passing away; and it is well to remember, in the splendour of a superior light, our indebtedness to those luminaries—conspicuous amongst whom is the writer whose works have been passed in review—who first lifted the veil of the Cimmerian darkness which at one period threatened to envelop our imaginative literature.

G. B. S.

Cruelty to Animals.

THERE is always something repulsive about the analysis of mean forms of crime. Great sins have, at all events, an intellectual interest, and a study of the causes which lead men to the commission of them may be as attractive as a tragedy. If the subject of the present essay were of this number, there would be no need to apologise for beginning it with an enumeration of the shapes which it takes or of the causes to which it is attributable. Cruelty, whether to men or animals, has no similar charm. If Othello had stuck pins into Desdemona instead of killing her, even Shakespeare could hardly have made the theme a fit one for the dramatist's purpose, and it is only the knowledge that the cruel intention is assumed, not real, that makes *The Taming of the Shrew* endurable. The one ground that justifies an analysis of cruelty to animals is that it may help us to repress it more effectually. Before coming to this, however, it may be well to consider the grounds on which repression is justifiable. There is often an obvious uncertainty upon this point in the minds of the magistrates who have to administer the law. They know that certain forms of cruelty are forbidden by Act of Parliament, and they have usually, though not invariably, sufficient respect for this authority not to dismiss a case in which the cruelty has been unmistakeably proved. But their unwillingness to apply the law to analogous, or even to cognate, cases shows that they are acting on precedent rather than on principle, and that in their hearts they think the Act a mistake. Happily, the continued application of the law must in time have an educating influence even on magistrates, and so long as cruelty to animals is forbidden it is a matter of secondary moment on what theory it is forbidden. For example, the argument that cruelty to animals leads to cruelty to men, though not the ground on which we should be most disposed to rest the case, is perfectly valid so far as it goes. The training which allows men to find pleasure in watching the suffering of animals, or at all events to ill-treat them without any thought of the pain which they inflict, is not calculated to make them keenly alive to the pain which they inflict upon one another. The Italian peasant who showers blows upon his prostrate horse has a knife ready for any one who ventures to remonstrate with him. In England the passage from cruelty to assassination is not quite so short, but the records of the police courts show that even here there is too much similarity between the treatment of animals and the treatment of women and children. Free indulgence in the abuse of dumb helplessness is not calculated to quicken sensibility towards helplessness which is often all the more irritating because it is not dumb. Again, a large part of the police regulations under which we live are framed

for the express purpose of saving us from needless annoyance, and to humane persons there can be no greater annoyance than to see animals ill-treated. The worst thing about the snowstorm which annually puts the administration of London out of gear for a week is the avoidable and unavoidable suffering which horses undergo in consequence of it. It is not pleasant to have to walk up to your ankles in half-frozen brown mud, and to reflect how easily it might have been swept off the pavement, but it is worse to see an overloaded horse quivering under the carter's whip in sheer inability to overcome the combination of slippery streets and clogged wheels. In London in such a case as this there is the possibility, at all events, of finding a policeman; but in the country the spectator, unless he were possessed of exceptional physical strength, would be obliged, in the absence of a law, to content himself with unavailing remonstrances or equally unavailing threats. We have just as much right to ask the Government to protect us from spectacles of cruelty as we have to make a similar request in respect of violations of decency. If it is admitted that nothing should be permitted in public which can offend a reasonably modest woman, there is fully as much ground for prohibiting anything that can offend a reasonably humane man. Nor is it only that cruelty gives pain to those who witness it; it has the further demerit of depriving those who practise it of a greal deal of intelligent pleasure. A humane people will ordinarily be fond of animals; and considering how universal the possession of animals is, and how many are the occupations which bring men into contact with animals, anything which makes the love of them general tends by a direct and natural process to add to the happiness of those who have them or are concerned with them. If it is an argument in favour of popular education that, by enabling men to read, it gives them the means of obtaining a great deal of enjoyment from which they would otherwise be shut out, the same reasoning will apply to anything which teaches men not to deprive themselves of the enjoyment which is derived from association with animals. There is not so much happiness in the world that any means of increasing the amount can be allowed to go unimproved.

The best ground, however, on which the prevention of cruelty to animals can be rested is that stated by Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy*. "The reasons," he says, "for legal intervention in favour of children apply not less strongly to the case of those unfortunate slaves and victims of the most brutal part of mankind—the lower animals. It is by the grossest misunderstanding of the principles of liberty that the infliction of exemplary punishment on ruffianism practised towards these defenceless creatures has been treated as a meddling by government with things beyond its province; an interference with domestic life. The domestic life of domestic tyrants is one of the things which it is the most imperative on the law to interfere with. What it would be the duty of a human being possessed of the requisite physical strength, to prevent by force if attempted in his presence, it cannot be less incumbent on

society generally to repress. The existing laws of England on the subject are chiefly defective in the trifling, often almost normal, maximum to which the penalty, even in the worse cases, is limited." The truth is, that the burden of proof does not rest with those who defend the law, but with those who impugn it. *Primâ facie*, it is the business of governments to prevent the infliction of needless pain within the limits of their jurisdiction, and they who assert their right to inflict it on the lower animals are bound to adduce reasons why they should be taken out of the category of protected beings. It is not enough to say that they have no souls, or that they are not Christians. If this argument has any meaning, it must imply that only those who deserve to live happily in a future life have any claim upon the State in this life—a highly dangerous argument for us all in a sceptical age, and for brutal and cruel persons in any age. The question is not whether animals understand that they are suffering, or whether their sufferings are soothed by religious hopes, but whether they feel suffering. If they do, no defence can be constructed for the man who makes them undergo suffering causelessly which might not be extended to some classes of human beings. The Spaniard who pleased himself with the spectacle of a Jew or a Moor burning at the stake might, and probably did, say, "They are not Christians." The planter who occasionally flogged a negro to death would rarely admit that his victim had a soul. If animals do not share the reasoning faculties of men, they share their sensitive faculties; and where cruelty is concerned, it is more to the purpose to say that the sufferer feels, than that he thinks. It will be a bad day for our human dependants if we ever allow ourselves to be reasoned out of protecting our animal dependants.

In what follows, therefore, it will be taken for granted that cruelty to animals is an offence which deserves no sympathy. The only point which will be held to admit of argument is, whether particular modes of treating animals comes under the head of cruelty. If they do, they will usually be found to fall into one of three classes — cruelty to animals employed for use; cruelty to animals employed for pleasure; cruelty to animals employed for scientific purposes. The two chief uses to which animals are put are draught and food. Cruelty to animals employed for draught is inflicted either by using them when in an unfit state, or by ill-treating them when in use. The positive ill treatment of animals ought to be punished in every case; but as regards the employment of them in an unfit condition, it is necessary to take into account the circumstances of the person who employs them. It often happens that the owner of a lame or worn-out horse is quite rich enough to replace it, and abstains from doing so either from carelessness or from calculation. So long as his work gets done he does not trouble himself about the suffering caused to the animal; or he may even buy worthless horses of set purpose because he reckons that, by disregarding all considerations of humanity, he gets his work done more cheaply.

Wherever, therefore, a man in a fair way of business is found sending out horses that are either too weak or too lame to do any work, or to do the heavy work assigned to them, a case of inexcusable cruelty is at once established. The master is responsible, not only for the cruelty displayed in working the horse at all, but for the secondary cruelty which his servants are in a measure forced to commit in consequence. It is very probable that this latter cruelty is really useless for its own purpose, and that no amount of ill-usage will get any more work out of the animal than it is willing to do without ill-usage. But unless the servant is an unusually humane man, he is not likely to realise this. There are some drivers, no doubt, who would ill-treat their horses under any circumstances, but it may be assumed that the majority are led to do so in the first instance by more being demanded of them than it is possible for them to perform with such animals as those of which they have the charge. It is necessary that any instance of ill-usage under these circumstances should be punished, but it should never be punished without equal or greater punishment being meted out to the master who has tempted his servant to cruelty by making it apparently impossible for him to obey orders without resorting to it. There is another class of cases, however, in which the owner, who will then be usually the driver also, is a very poor man. His horse, no doubt, has long got beyond the stage in which it can work without pain, but then its master may have long got beyond that stage in his own person. As you pass the pair in the street, you notice that the horse looks hardly fit for anything but the knacker's yard; but a second look shows you that, if Western civilisation recognised euthanasia as a proper ending for worn-out human beings, the owner would speedily follow his horse. Under such circumstances, the employment of worn-out animals seems to be only a part of the universal curse. So long as there is poverty and suffering among men there will be poverty and suffering among the animals belonging to them. Thousands have to work when their bones are racked by rheumatism, or stiffened by age, or weakened by hunger, and we cannot claim for the poor man's horse a better lot than has been apportioned to his master. There is a limit of course to the application of this plea, because no degree of poverty can excuse working an animal in a state in which every movement is a cause of acute pain, and the plea is wholly irrelevant in cases of ill-usage. Community of suffering ought rather to produce a fellow-feeling for those who have to suffer with you.

Cruelty to animals used for food has been brought pre-eminently forward of late years by reason of the increase in the demand for cattle for the London meat market. This demand has given great importance to the question of transit. The carriage of beasts, either by railway or steamship, affords room for combining in the treatment of them almost every known form of ill-usage. They are cruelly beaten to get them into the truck or over the gangway; they are crammed into spaces too small for them; they are kept without any sufficient supply of food or water during the journey. If it is made by sea they have no air

to breathe; if it is made by land they are bruised by the endless jolts to which carriages unprovided with springs or buffers are unavoidably exposed. When they reach their journey's end they are often hardly able to move, and beating or tail-twisting is usually the only means which suggests itself to the drover of getting over their inability. Not very long since this description was universally true; but within the last few years considerable improvements have been effected in the treatment of cattle during a journey, under the orders of the Privy Council. Besides cruelties during transit there are the various cruelties incident to careless or unskilful slaughtering, or to vicious modes of slaughtering resorted to for the supposed object of improving the quality of the animals as articles of food.

The second kind of cruelty is inflicted for the purposes of pleasure, and here we come across some of the most difficult problems connected with the subject. This class of cruelty may affect either the animals who are themselves the instruments of sport, as horses in hunting or racing; or the animals who are the objects of sport, as foxes or game; or the animals which have to be destroyed lest they should injure sport, as vermin and birds of prey. As regards the first class, no difficulty can arise. There can, as a rule, be no excuse for cruel usage of a hunter or racer, because with proper care, and under proper treatment, the animal's own instincts will ordinarily teach him to do all that his rider wishes. As regards the third class, again, the difficulty is one of detail, not of principle. No one denies that vermin may be killed in order to prevent them from killing more useful animals, and few will deny that they ought to be killed in such a way as not to subject them to needless torture. But, in connection with the second class, animals considered as objects of sport, the question presents itself whether sport as such is not cruel, and, if so, whether it ought not to be abstained from by good men now, and prohibited by law as soon as public opinion can be educated up to the necessary sacrifice. Those who say yes to these enquiries forget that, though animals ought to be protected against needless suffering, the measure of what constitutes necessary suffering is to be found in the legitimate wants of mankind. The moral lawfulness of sports which inflict suffering on animals must be decided by the consideration whether they answer any of these legitimate wants. As regards the three principal classes of field sports, hunting, shooting, and fishing, the defence to the charge of inflicting needless suffering seems to be complete. The physical, moral, and, when confined within reasonable limits, social advantages of each are conspicuous. Those who dispute them do so for the most part on some side issue. They say that a gallop across country can be enjoyed without a fox in front, or they denounce battue shooting, and its concomitant excessive preserving. It may be admitted that if all the enjoyment of fox-hunting could be had with the part of the fox cut out, the fox might fairly plead that he is needlessly made a victim. This, however, is a question of fact. To say that men

ought to like a gallop without a purpose as well as a gallop with a purpose is not the same thing as proving that they do like it as well. A young man living in London may walk to Hampstead and back every day to keep himself in health, but no amount of doctor's certificates will convince him that he derives the same pleasure from the exercise as if he were taking a walking tour. So, as regards shooting, there are forms of the sport which seem carefully designed to exclude the fatigue, the exposure, the uncertainty, which give it genuine excitement, and to substitute an excitement which, as being chiefly sustained by the quantity of game killed, seems to belong rather to the poulterer than to the sportsman. There is no inconsistency, therefore, in saying that pigeon-shooting is cruel, and that deer-stalking and partridge-shooting are not cruel. The pigeon suffers no more than the partridge, but he suffers without any man being the better for it. The one sport is a source of health and pleasant excitement; the other gives just so much health as can be imparted by a drive from London to Fulham, and so much excitement as might be obtained on a croquet lawn, provided that the balls could feel pain. Everything that tends to make sport physically easy tends in the same proportion to make it morally hurtful. The line between the sportsman and the man who loves cruelty for cruelty's sake, would soon be effaced if the ideas of exertion, of self-denial, of endurance, of labour, of submission to privation, were altogether dissociated from field sports.

Cruelty to animals for the real or supposed furtherance of scientific research has to a great extent escaped notice, partly from the secresy with which the experiments are usually conducted, and partly from the fact that, by the existing law in this country, cruelty is only illegal when practised on domestic animals. The conditions under which the dissection of living animals ought to be permitted may be easily stated; the difficulty lies in determining how far they have been complied with in particular cases. The doctrine that pain inflicted on animals is not cruelty when it satisfies a legitimate want of man obviously covers all cases in which vivisection leads to the alleviation of human suffering. It does not cover cases in which the only possible object of the operation is the gratification of a purely intellectual curiosity. However praiseworthy such curiosity may be in itself, it has no merit when it is indulged in without regard to the pain it causes to other creatures. It so happens, however, that many of the most valuable improvements in practical medicine have indirectly resulted from experiments undertaken without any conscious reference on the part of the operator to the end actually attained. Thus we are met by the dilemma that if vivisection is allowed in consideration of its accidental benefits it is difficult to place any check upon mere curiosity, while if it is restricted to cases in which the object is the solution of some special medical problem these accidental benefits may be lost. A distinction may perhaps be drawn between operations which can be performed while the animal is under the influence of anæsthetics, and experiments directed to ascertain the effects of pain. To the former

class, provided that the animal is killed as soon as the operation is over, no objection need be raised; but in the latter case, where the suffering inflicted is indisputable and irremediable, something more ought to be insisted on than evidence of a mere general possibility that medical science may be promoted by the experiment. Rhetorical appeals to an imaginary incompatibility between scientific eminence and cruelty must be set aside as irrelevant. No intellectual eminence implies the possession of moral virtues. A man is not necessarily a good father because he is an eminent geologist, or a faithful friend because he has made some valuable discoveries in chemistry; and there is no more reason why he should have a special tenderness for animals because he is a great physiologist. The ardent pursuit of science may have the same deadening effect on the virtues of sympathy and compassion that the ardent pursuit of any other good object tends to have. There is no reason to claim for experimental physiology an exemption from human weakness which cannot be claimed either for religion or philanthropy. If theological and social enthusiasts are often careless as to the amount of suffering caused by the carrying out of their designs for the moral or material elevation of mankind, it is hard to see why scientific enthusiasts should be less careless in the promotion of man's intellectual elevation. No class of men can be safely made judges in their own cause. An appeal must lie to the common sense of the community in all cases which involve the infliction of pain in the alleged interest of humanity. It follows from this that the practice of vivisection ought not to enjoy any special freedom from legal process. The tribunals which decide upon ordinary charges of cruelty ought equally to have jurisdiction in charges of cruelty against men of science. If it can be shown that their experiments are carried on for the mere purpose of demonstrating over again what has been sufficiently demonstrated already, or to give a manual dexterity which can be obtained in other ways, or without the use of anæsthetics where it is possible to apply them, conviction should follow as surely as in any other instance of wanton brutality. When a case can be set up in favour of the medical or scientific value of the experiment of sufficient force to convince men of ordinary sense, the summons would be dismissed, and in the event of either the general or the scientific public feeling aggrieved by the result there is the possibility of fresh legislation as an ultimate resource.

Another help to the repression of cruelty to animals is a clear appreciation of the moral causes which produce it. One great source of cruelty is thoughtlessness. If people would be at the trouble of considering the natural consequences of their actions, a great degree of unintentional brutality would be avoided. Probably few well-to-do people would acknowledge to themselves that their favourite horse was destined to end his days in a night cab. But if they would stop and follow his career in imagination from the time that he is sold on the score that he is getting rather past his work, they would see how inevitable the descent is. Dogs and cats, again, suffer a great deal from this same cause. Instead of

being drowned as puppies or kittens, they are kept to amuse a child, and, when they cease to answer this purpose, they are given to anyone who will consent to take them. The unwilling receiver will often be some poor person in the neighbourhood, who takes the gift to oblige the cook or "the young ladies." An animal thus placed out in life is not likely to receive much kindly treatment, and a moment's thought would suffice to show that to save an animal from death for no other purpose than to consign it to probable or certain misery, is only a subtle kind of cruelty. Another form of thoughtlessness which leads to a great deal of undesigned cruelty is to be seen in the omission to use steam rollers on newly macadamised roads, or to provide gravel for paved streets in slippery weather. In London the former omission is now becoming rare, but a few years ago it was the universal practice to leave the stones on the roads to be gradually crushed by the wheels of the vehicles passing along them. As in a great number of cases the weight which a given horse can draw is calculated on the assumption that all the conditions of surface and gradients will be as favourable as possible, it was a common thing to see a heavily-laden waggon stranded hopelessly in a flinty desert, to the middle of which the horses, by straining every sinew to the utmost, had just managed to bring it. It is not to be supposed that the authorities deliberately intended to cause all this suffering. It is quite possible that the same vestryman who in the morning had voted against the purchase of a steam-roller, would in the afternoon have applied for a summons against a carter for flogging his horses in order to get them to do a fractional part of the work which a steam-roller ought to have done before. But the two ideas were not associated in his mind, and he did not stop to think that it was the vestry, not the carter, who was really to blame.

A second source of cruelty is ignorance. Those who have the charge of animals are often cruel because they do not know how to make them do what they want without being cruel. This is very much seen in the training of animals. Our knowledge how to set to work is very much on a par with our knowledge a century ago how to train children. Punishment is the only method resorted to, and animals are so far worse off than children that they are never emancipated from the absolute control of those who have the power of punishing them. There is some cruelty, therefore, that must be acquiesced in, as the inevitable result of past ignorance. A horse who might have been taught to do this or that without the whip has only learned to do it under the whip, and is too old to understand a change of treatment. But, besides this, there is a great deal of cruelty which is due to present ignorance. A man has never been taught how to handle an animal properly, and his one idea is that the secret of success lies in violence; or he miscalculates the effect of this violence, and then gets angry with his beast because it has done what he made it do instead of what he meant it to do; or he has no knowledge of the strength of the obstacle to be got over, and attributes to vice or laziness what is really due to sheer inability; or he expects the animal

to divine his meaning by instinct, and punishes it because it has not done what he has never made it understand that it was to do.

Of course, it is often hard to draw the line between ignorance and brutality, and the habits which were originally attributable to the former cause may in the end be due rather to the latter. It will not do however to omit brutality from the list of causes of cruelty and to make ignorance bear all the blame, because in that case there would be no explaining the instances of cruelty which occur from time to time among the educated classes. A master of hounds ought to know something about horses; but a master of hounds has been known, while a carriage horse was standing quietly at the door of his house, to beat it savagely about the head and legs with a heavy hunting-whip, because it had jibbed in the park half an hour before. A Yorkshire magistrate ought to know something about horses; but a Yorkshire magistrate has been known to say on the bench that it is not cruelty to ride a horse so hard that it dies within a quarter of an hour after his rider has dismounted. And if brutality is not unknown among the educated classes, with whom self-restraint is to some extent a matter of habit, it is not likely to be unknown among a class which is not accustomed to restrain itself even when dealing with its fellows. It is not ignorance that leads men to throw their wives out of window, or to correct their children with the poker. Such acts as these are prompted by a vicious recklessness as to the suffering caused, or by a still more vicious pleasure in causing it. Where animals are concerned there is something of the same pleasure to be got from ill-treating them while there is comparatively no risk incurred by indulging in it. It may be conceded that what appears to be brutality is sometimes only temper, but the dividing line between brutality pure and simple and the blind rage which simulates brutality is very faintly drawn. There are cases, no doubt, in which anger, especially causeless anger, amounts for the time to something very like madness. But to allow of this plea being accepted by way of excuse for cruelty there must be no recognition of consequences discernible during the paroxysm. In the great majority of cases such a recognition is perfectly discernible. The angry man ill-treats his horse or his dog because it cannot retaliate, while he does not ill-treat his servant who may be able to thrash him in return, and can at all events prosecute him for assault.

Another cause of cruelty is avarice. To work animals beyond their strength or after their strength has gone, to underfeed them whilst in work, and to subject them to torture in order to make money by them, are varieties of cruelty which all spring from this one motive, and they include nearly all the commonest forms of the offence. It is avarice that puts a horse which is only fit for the knacker into the night cab; that keeps cattle without food or water on a journey; that allows lean stock to go to the brink of starvation in winter; that sends out one horse with a load which it requires two to draw without difficulty; that buys up worn-out horses on the calculation that if there is any work at all to be got out of them they will be a good investment; that puts beans inside a horse's shoes in order

to hide his lameness by making all the feet as tender as the lame foot. In fact, almost all second-hand cruelty is to be traced to this motive. Men who are in actual charge of animals may lose their temper with them, and be puzzled how to make them do their work; but the man who sends out animals, whether to work or to market, in an unfit state has ordinarily no excuse to offer for himself. Now and then he may be acting in ignorance or forgetfulness, but, for the most part, he acts upon calculation. Happily, if this is one of the most common causes of cruelty to animals, it is also one of the most easily dealt with. Where offences are matters of estimate the scale can be weighted on the side of virtue by a sufficient money penalty. The law is at present defective in not giving the magistrates the power to impose a fine of more than five pounds. There is a great deal of cruelty which, though not flagrant enough to make it prudent or even possible to punish it by imprisonment, is yet not adequately met by a fine which may not have the effect of making the offence too costly for repetition. If the offender found that every time he was discovered working lame horses or starving cattle he had to pay ten pounds, and if in addition the magistrates were empowered to order any animal past or unfit for work to be killed, or treated by a veterinary surgeon at the expense of its owner, cruelty would soon cease to be a paying speculation.

The repression of cruelty to animals is secured principally by the Act 12 & 13 Victoria, cap. 92. The offences punishable under this statute are the cruel beating, ill-treatment, over-driving, abusing, or torturing of any animal; the keeping or using any place for fighting or baiting any animal, whether domestic or wild; the neglect to provide food and water for impounded animals; the omitting to cut off the mane of any horse brought to a knacker's yard; the keeping horses so brought more than three days, neglecting to provide them with food and water during that time, working them or allowing them to leave the place for the purpose of being worked, and neglecting to describe them in a book so as to admit of their being identified; and the conveyance of animals in carts so as to subject them to unnecessary pain. Procuring or causing the commission of any of these offences counts as a distinct offence. The penalty for not feeding impounded animals is twenty shillings; for working horses from knackers' yards forty shillings for every day on which they shall be absent from the yard; for not writing a clear and distinct description of any horse brought to the yard forty shillings; for carrying animals cruelly three pounds; and for all other offences under the Act five pounds. Payment of these fines may be enforced by imprisonment with or without hard labour for two months, and two justices or one police magistrate may at their discretion imprison the offender with or without hard labour for three months. Any constable upon his own view, or upon the complaint of any person giving his name and address, may take into custody any person offending against the Act and convey him before a magistrate. Or a summons may be applied for from any justice of the peace within whose jurisdiction the offence shall have been committed. Or, if there is reason to

believe that an offender will evade the summons, a warrant may be issued for his apprehension.

A law forbidding cruelty to animals operates in two ways—directly by the fear of punishment, indirectly by the creation of a sentiment opposed to cruelty. The effect of the first is necessarily imperfect from the fact that, as animals cannot lay complaints for themselves, the proportion of convictions to offences must be exceedingly small. Even in a large town a great deal of cruelty goes undetected; and, if so, how many unnoticed cases must there not be in country roads, in solitary fields, in mines and quarries! This consideration makes it very important that, wherever any charge of flagrant cruelty is made good, the sentence should be as severe as the law allows. If the majority of such offences were detected the probability of exposure would in itself serve as a deterrent influence; but, where only a fraction are detected, this probability becomes so small that it needs to be supplemented by the knowledge that exposure if it does come will be followed by real suffering. The indirect operation of such a law is fortunately much more extensive. In the first place the acts which are forbidden come by degrees to be regarded as immoral as well as illegal, and in this way the number of those who are disposed to commit them is lessened. Next, the growth of a disapproving sentiment influences those whose business it is to enforce the law. It is easier to obtain convictions for cruelty than it was some years ago, because even magistrates who dislike the law are coming to dislike still more the comments which any gross evasion of their duty is likely to provoke. And, lastly, in proportion as cruelty to animals becomes unpopular as well as illegal, the chances of its detection are increased. This is shown by the change which the procedure of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has undergone of late years. When it was first founded its officers were exclusively employed in patrolling the streets of London and summoning persons guilty of cruelty. This method has now been abandoned, because the whole time of the staff is taken up in investigating and prosecuting acts of cruelty which are brought to the notice of the Society by private persons.

The better prevention of cruelty to animals depends on the combination of several separate agencies. Something may in time be done by giving kindness to animals a higher and more constant place in moral training. The clergy, for example, may preach about it; and in districts where the opportunities for cruelty are many, and the practice of it frequent, they could hardly make a better use of the pulpit. One reason, perhaps, why the Anglican clergy have so little influence is that they so rarely descend from generalities to those special sins which their congregations are most tempted to commit. A man who interested himself in the condition of donkeys at a watering place, or of cattle in the neighbourhood of a market, might find that he could wish no better introduction to donkey boys and drovers. They might think him meddlesome at first, but they could no longer regard his sermons as things with which they

have no concern, and which are meant exclusively for gentlefolk. The managers and teachers of elementary schools may render a similar service to their scholars. Care should be taken not to indulge in any of the sentimental regrets over the death of animals which are sometimes to be seen in the columns of that otherwise excellent journal *The Animal World*. To kill an animal, if it be done without inflicting more than momentary pain, is not cruelty; indeed in proportion as people become genuinely human the number of animals killed will very much increase. The point to be insisted on is the duty of not adding torture to death, or deriving amusement from the mere spectacle of death. Still, if this educational influence is to be really effective, it must always be backed up by the consciousness that there is a law behind it. Happily, Englishmen have not yet grown so philosophical as to refuse to obey a law of which they do not know the reason, and it may often cut short some display of unseasonable casuistry to be able to say that the law forbids the ill-treatment of animals, and that those who disobey it will have to reckon with the policeman. In this respect the magistrates have very great power of checking cruelty. If their decisions had always been satisfactory, both as regards their definitions of what constitutes cruelty and their punishment of it when defined, public opinion on this subject would have been very much sounder than it yet is. A judge is bound to remember that, though it rests with him to inflict either the maximum penalty prescribed or anything short of it, the intention of the Legislature in appointing a maximum penalty is that it should be inflicted in all flagrant cases. What would be thought of a judge who habitually dismissed men convicted of homicide only short of murder with the very lightest sentence for manslaughter? Yet a magistrate who punishes a case of aggravated cruelty by a fine instead of by imprisonment, or by a fine of one pound instead of by a fine of five pounds, is acting in the same spirit. When Parliament says that any man who shall cruelly beat or ill-treat any animal shall pay a penalty not exceeding five pounds it prescribes in effect a graduated scale of fines of which the lighter are to be reserved for lighter offences, and the heavier to be assigned to more serious offences. A magistrate who inflicts a fine of two pounds, and accompanies it by a statement that it is one of the worst cases that ever came before him, flies directly in the face of the statute.

There is room, again, for some amendments in the statute itself. Of these the most necessary is a more extended definition of the term "animal." It is now applied, for all the purposes of the Act but one, to "domestic" animals only, and the consequence of this limitation is that many forms of cruelty lie altogether beyond the reach of the law. Thus very gross cruelty is practised in connection with exhibitions of performing wild beasts. The ordinary instruments of the lion-tamer are, as every frequenter of such shows must occasionally have observed, the steel whip, the pitchfork, and the hot iron. From time to time these have to be resorted to, even in public, and when dealing with trained animals;

and it is easy to divine how much more liberal must be the use of them in private, and while the training process is still going on. A wild animal, if kept in a state of confinement, might possibly be brought within the Act, but the success of the attempt would be very doubtful, and it is beyond question that acts of cruelty to wild animals not so kept may be committed with impunity. A man convicted of roasting a cat alive, would certainly be punished; a man convicted of roasting a hare alive, would certainly escape scot free. It is an offence against the statute to pluck live poultry; it is not an offence against the statute to pluck live quails. There can be no reason why the prohibition in the second section of the Act, to "abuse or torture any animal," should be restricted by the twenty-ninth section to any domestic animal. The objection that would probably be raised against the omission of this limitation would be, that trapping of vermin would be impossible if the Act were thus amended. But the trapping of vermin is either a necessary means of protecting more valuable animals or it is not. In the former case, it is not cruelty; in the latter, it ought not to be permitted. Other improvements in the Act would be raising the fine to 10*l*., the making imprisonment, without fine, obligatory in cases of repeated convictions, and, where the cruelty is very aggravated, in the case of a first offence. It is impossible to prevent magistrates from exercising discretion as to what constitutes aggravated cruelty, and wherever there is discretion it may of course be misused; but something would be effected if the Act of Parliament directed them to pass sentence of imprisonment under certain circumstances, instead of, as now, giving them the power to do so "if they shall think fit." As the law stands, a case may be stated for the opinion of the Court of Queen's Bench whether the cruelty proved constitutes cruelty as defined by the Act. Power might also be given to take the opinion of the Court whether the facts proved constitute cruelty.

Even with the law remaining as it is, a great deal more might be done to prevent cruelty if the public were more bent upon putting it down. Where the victim of an injury can never make a complaint for itself, the detection and punishment of crime must, especially under a system of law such as ours, be the work of voluntary agents. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is always ready to undertake prosecutions, provided that the fulfilment of certain conditions can be assured. These conditions are—that it is supplied with sufficient funds, that it is furnished with sufficient information, and that this information is properly supported. It is common enough to see indignant letters in the *Times*, asking why the Society does not do this or that. Do the writers of these letters contribute to the Society's funds? There is no means of defraying the cost of investigation and prosecution except the voluntary subscriptions of those who take an interest in the purpose for which it exists. Every additional guinea given to the Society is so much given to the maintenance of an additional officer, and consequently to the investigation and prosecution of additional cases. But, however large the Society's staff might

be, it would still be impossible for it to have officers employed except at what may be called centres of cruelty; and even in these much might go on behind the officer's back. If the public will supply information of acts of cruelty committed under their eyes and within their knowledge, they are to that extent doing the work of an officer. The Society issues forms, setting out the kind of particulars which should be forwarded to them; and it undertakes to make inquiry into every case so brought to its knowledge, and, if sufficient evidence is forthcoming, to prosecute the offender, without expense to the complainant or his witnesses. It often happens, however, that complaints of this kind have to be passed over because those who make them will not appear to substantiate them before a magistrate. Anyone who acts in this way is really little better than an accomplice in the cruelty of which he complains. He knows or believes that it has been committed, but he will not take the trifling trouble, or undergo the trifling annoyance, of repeating in the witness-box what he has already written to the Society. A great number of additional convictions might be obtained if the public were more active in reporting cases to the Society, and a still wider effect would be produced by the general sense of being under surveillance which would be created in those who have the care of animals. There would be little overt cruelty in a street or village in which an officer of the Society was known to be on duty; and if private persons would be at the pains of noting down all cases of cruelty which pass under their eye, the offenders would come in time to understand that every passer-by might be as good as an officer of the Society for their particular benefit. Again, if the Society were better supplied with money, it would be able to combine its old and its present methods of procedure. It is a decided gain that its officers should now be employed almost exclusively in following up information furnished by private persons; but it would be better still if it were able to employ its existing staff in this manner, and to maintain an additional staff as a patrol in places where acts of cruelty are especially common. The presence of a dozen active officers in the streets of London, for example, would soon make a visible difference in the condition and treatment of the horses employed there; and if the money were to be had, this work might at once be done, without the ordinary work of the Society being left undone. With larger funds, the Society might also employ officers for a given time in typical districts. A considerable stimulus might be given to individual energy if half-a-dozen competent officers were set to work for six months in a mining district, on the towing-paths of some canal-system, or in the neighbourhood of a group of seaside towns. Persons specially interested in the prevention of particular forms of cruelty might contribute to special funds set apart for this purpose. Lamentations over the amount of cruelty practised on animals are common enough; what is needed to make them either sincere or useful is a serious determination on the part of those who utter them that nothing shall be wanting on their part to make the law effectual.


KASTONE.

Young Brown.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER III.

BEAUMANOIR.



LIEUTENANT BROWN was well received by the Duke of Courthope when he presented his letters of introduction. His Grace had lived more and more in the country of late years, and his place, though very stately, was somewhat dull. The arrival of a stranger properly introduced would have been welcome therefore at any time, and the visit of an officer from the seat of war was an event which interested all the county.

The Duke of Courthope, like most provincial magnates, was fond of early news and exclusive information, and he generally contrived to obtain it, for the world is very eager to convey both verbal and epistolary information to a nobleman of his rank. No one was sooner acquainted with the changing events of current history. He knew the very latest movements in party politics, and as they were often false movements, made by persons who had to retrace their steps, he had rather a less accurate idea of the state of affairs than the outside public. He was present at all the false starts for power, so that when the race was run and won, nobody was more surprised at the result than himself. He had around him at Lieutenant Brown's arrival the usual party which assembles at ducal palaces when pheasant shooting begins. They were mostly good shots, for his Grace, who sold his game by contract to a London poulterer, could not afford to have his birds knocked about, and did not like to have them made wild by random firing. There was a brace of parliamentary colonels, who always killed with their right and left barrels. There was a local banker,

who had an absurd resemblance to the Duke in dress, manners, and whiskers. There was a sprinkling of minor barons, a few official dependents who had prospered under the shadow of the great house, an Italian singer and his wife to amuse the evenings, and Lady Overlaw with her aunt the Countess of Clanmore to do the honours.

The Duke took a fancy to the young Indian soldier from the first; perhaps because his manners were perfectly free from either embarrassment or self-assertion. The Lieutenant never made his presence felt oppressively, for he had the secret of amusing himself without getting in other people's way. His voice was never heard at unseasonable times, and he was cheerful without being boisterous or brilliant.

"Come, Captain Brown, and shoot beside me," the Duke would say to him in high good humour, and giving him brevet rank by courtesy. His Grace liked a young man who never missed his bird, never fired first, and picked up the outsiders with unerring aim. The boy's silent, pleasant laughter and deferential manners won him, and while his Grace was amusing himself, he thought he was paying off his son's debt of gratitude very handsomely, so that his conscience approved him not a little.

There was also, however, a subtler influence than either of them could have explained, had they been interrogated, which drew those two together. That splendid Peer and the village lad who had showed such unusual qualities when put to the test had many thoughts in unison, and the speech of either found a natural echo in the other's mind. They both felt as soldiers, and despised trade; they had both an innate love of grandeur; they had even some physical peculiarities in common. Both were straight and tall, with a chest rather deep than broad, and admirably formed for exertion; but the face of William Brown was one which had not been seen in the Courthope family for nearly two centuries. It was frank and open during an ordinary conversation and when he was engaged in the common concerns of life. His smile was almost as innocent and winning as the Duke's own, and made all his countenance sparkle when lit up with it. But in moments when his thoughts were concentrated upon any serious subject, his heavy brows closed like a horseshoe, and his look was earnest and intense. A very grave face it was too in repose, very fixed and determined. The lips, neither so full nor so delicate in their outline as the Duke's, were firmly shut, and the massive jaw seemed to lock them in with a clasp of iron. The Duke's eyes were of an uncertain colour, changing in the light, and had naturally a mournful, almost an appealing look, though they had latent fires in them. The eyes of William Brown were deep set, steady, and passionless, rather unforgiving eyes, with gleams like the flash of steel in them when he was roused to anger. But his feelings were not upon the surface. It was not easy to offend him; and in any quarrel he would be likely to have right on his side, whereas the Duke was for ever in the wrong. They would not have made bad types of success and failure. An observer would have at once perceived that the Duke of Courthope was unlucky,

and the Lieutenant fortunate: a little experience of the world would have revealed the causes which made them so. A phrenologist would have gone farther, and shown in what respects the nobleman was superior to his guest. His Grace had large perceptive faculties. He was a man eminently skilful in debate, very ready and sagacious, clear-sighted in his view of present things, but not far-seeing. The soldier's perception was defective or undeveloped; he might be deceived and misled, having a simple faith in those around him. His mind was reflective and far-sighted, not acute.

His Grace was fond of prosing to his guest—most dukes are—as the intimacy increased between them, and his discourse very much resembled extracts from an autobiography. He was not a bright or a witty man, and his idea of conversation was to record events that had happened to himself, with his reflections upon them. His ideas had little novelty. He was indeed a Conservative, and liked to think backwards; so that whenever a new thing was brought before him, his first impulse was to meet it by a negative. He could hardly have said the word "yes" without some qualification which neutralised it, ten times in the course of his existence since he had attained to years of discretion. Nor was the reason far to seek for this reticence. All his life long, sharp persons had been setting traps to catch his promises, and quoting his own words against him, so that he had, like many grand and powerful people, adopted a vocabulary which had no meaning at all, or he was shrewd enough to talk in his most unguarded moments upon subjects which had no connection with any matter of business by which he could be compromised.

One of his favourite topics was blood and race. He used to say that he could tell a man or woman of rank by the first inflection of their voice in speaking, and that there was something distinctive and beautifying in mere birth. He had a marked contempt for women, mentioning them as toys and playthings. They belonged, he observed, to no definite station, and beauty was their only title to consideration. One might have thought, to hear him, that he had never known what it was to love, and it seemed to William Brown, as he listened, only natural that there should be so little sympathy and affection betwixt him and his son, Lord Kinsgear, seeing that the Duke considered family ties as a troublesome, if not an ignominious restraint.

Lieutenant Brown liked this conversation amazingly. He already thought himself one of a privileged class, being received on equal terms by such good company. He was proud of his uniform, proud of his rank in the army, proud of his grand acquaintances: and if the Duke had told him that the noble idea was that the moon had been created out of cream cheese, he would have hastened to adopt it. Having succeeded so well in his profession, the boy was something of a soldier pedant, and was beginning already to look down upon the world in a way amusing enough to a philosopher.

CHAPTER IV.

The Heir of Courthope.

Not long after the return of William Brown to England, Lord Punjaub and the Marquis of Kinsgear came back also; the one having been raised to the rank of a full general, and the other to that of lieutenant-colonel, promotion always travelling by special trains for the nobility. Both of them had, however, well earned their advancement. The Marquis having risen chiefly by death vacancies, owed but little on this occasion to the accident of his birth, while Lord Punjaub had only been treated according to the usual rules of military precedence. It had been a fine thing for him at the outset of his career to be the brother and then the uncle of a duke, and many a stepping stone had been put in his way to help him over dangerous places in consequence; his position, indeed, had given him opportunities of acquiring distinction, which are denied to meaner men. But having once attained a certain rank by these means, favour was no longer of much use to him. He was surrounded by competitors as noble and high born as himself; and whose connections were quite as influential. Moreover, the eyes of the public were on him, and it would have been impossible to bestow honours upon him if he had not more or less deserved them. He could neither have obtained a command of importance, nor have held one after the loss of an ill-fought battle, or the commission of any signal blunder. Upon the whole, therefore, Anglo-Indian notions were very well satisfied with the rewards bestowed on the two noblemen; and it was said and printed in many places that they had only been fairly treated when their services were handsomely and promptly acknowledged.

But the time had come when nothing which this world has to offer could be of much value to the young Marquis. His health had steadily declined since he had received that wound in the Indian battle, and at last the physicians who had attended upon him at Calcutta had reluctantly consented to his return homewards.

So Lord Kinsgear obtained leave of absence upon sick certificate, and some weeks afterwards arrived at Beaumanoir with Lord Punjaub, not being even permitted to live his natural and appointed time because he was a marquis. His title and great fortunes had always been unlucky to him. He had never enjoyed their possession, and yet he was summarily put to death because of them. Had he been a cheesemonger like his ancestor by his mother's side, who in constitution and mental endowments he most resembled, he might have been a useful and happy man; and have attained a good old age. As it was, he had always been misplaced in the world. It cost him a persistent effort to fill the position which had been assigned him in it, and constant calls had been made upon his energies, which his nature could not answer. Few and rare had been the times when the faint strain of Wyldwyl blood had manifested itself in him; at all others he had been lymphatic and indifferent; and

the splendour with which he had been surrounded had only wearied him.

He was brought down in an invalid carriage to the palace where his family had kept high state for centuries, and not a footfall was suffered to be heard about the gorgeous chambers of his home, after he was carried up-stairs and laid upon the bed from which he was never to rise again in mortal form. The hand of the destroyer was quite visible upon him, and those who looked upon his livid face and wasted limbs could cherish no illusions as to his possible recovery. The light in his eyes was nearly extinct, his lips were white, and there was that tightening and glazed appearance of the skin over the upper part of his face which announces approaching dissolution. He seemed to be nearly dead already, and only rallied for a short season when he saw William Brown. He appeared to feel under some restraint in his father's presence, and though his manner was respectful and becoming to the last, he only answered the questions put to him, and voluntarily said nothing. It was as though he felt himself a being apart from that splendid and haughty race which claimed him as its representative, and considered himself an unwilling intruder upon it. He had been very happy as a boy in his mother's dower house, with his scantily furnished room and his mechanical occupations. He had never been altogether at his ease after he was removed from them.

The hopeless condition of Lord Kinsgear was a cause of terrible anxiety to the Duke of Courthope, all of whose plans were upset by his son's illness. He earnestly pressed William Brown to prolong his visit, because the Marquis only revived in his society, and would not hear of his going away.

"Don't leave me, Willie," he said faintly. "I shall not trouble you long, and you must make this your home as long as I am here, and I hope afterwards."

So an extension of the lieutenant's leave was obtained from the Horse Guards, and William Brown stopped on at Beaumanoir.

It might have been evident to any one better acquainted with the ways of the world than this young soldier of fortune, that the Duke of Courthope had far other and deeper causes for anxiety connected with his son's death, than even the sorrow which parental affection must have inspired for the loss of his only son and heir. Though all the guests but Lady Overlaw and some near relations of the Wyldwyls had departed from Beaumanoir in presence of the grief which had descended like a pall upon the great house, flies and carriages were hurrying backwards and forwards through the Park to the station, all day long at intervals, and generally they deposited a lawyer, or a lawyer's chief clerk, who would remain often for many hours closeted with his Grace, and then hurry away with sheaves of paper and parchments in blue bags. Not even the express trains which sped to London thrice a day could keep pace with the hurried rush of legal business consequent upon the expected demise of the Marquis; and messengers and telegrams were despatched hot foot

with supplementary instructions, or answers to interrogations from Lincoln's Inn.

Mr. Sharpe had now his own apartments in the palace, and had been there for days, drafting documents, which his clerks took away and brought back upon sheets of lambskin with large seals and gaudy stamps attached to them. Narrow silken ribbons bound them together. Lawyers are very neat in their instruments of torture. The Duke of Courthope would sit with haggard eyes in the great Gothic library with its carved oak sculpturing and oriel windows, while these things were doing, and pore painfully hour after hour over the papers which his solicitors sent to him.

It may have been fact or fancy, but late one evening, when the household were gone to bed, Lady Overlaw went into the library for the last volume of the latest new novel which had arrived from London: she thought she saw that splendid noble, to whom life had hitherto been one long worry and yet a festival, with his head bowed upon his hands, and moaning grievously. Before him were whole reams of foolscap fresh covered with the drafts of legal documents, and on their margins were annotations in the Duke's own hand. On either side of him were two tall candlesticks, which had been burning so long that the lights flared in their sockets and gave a gaunt unearthly aspect to the apartment as they flickered and blazed by turns. The first beams of a moon which rose late streamed in through the oriel windows, and touched the dark colouring of a portrait by Vandyck as it hung grim and silent amidst the hard carved oak around. It was the picture of the Lord Chief Justice Wyldwyl—an upright judge, who had redeemed the fortunes of Philip Wyldwyl, Earl of Allswon, in the time of Charles the First.

The beautiful lady stopped, with the silver lamp which had lighted her from her dressing-room in her hand, and looked at him. She might have stood for a picture of Mercy watching over Sorrow, and she made a hesitating step towards him, for her heart, light and frivolous as it was, had been touched by that supreme agony, in one so proud and great. But the Duke, if her fancy, overwrought by some romance, had not deceived her altogether, lifted up his head instantly at the sound of her footstep, and rising with the knightly grace which belonged to him, came towards her with a gallant smile and lofty courtesy.

"Belle Cousine!" said he. "What eyes unclosed so late! I shall have some of the park-keepers taking them for stars, and telling marvels to his neighbours of how my place is haunted by heavenly visitors. Stay," he added kindly, "let *me* look for your book;" and then, when he had found it, he conducted her to the door and held it open for her as she passed through, and bade her a chivalrous good-night. He was so grand a prince of manners that perhaps she loved him then, and she went onwards with footsteps which seemed to hesitate. For a moment—it was when she reached the foot of the private staircase which led to her own suite of rooms—she turned and looked back. But the massive *door* of the library had been gently closed when she retired beyond it, and the

lord of Beaumanoir was alone again with his anguish. He toiled on with those papers all through the night, covering every inch of blank space on them with his marginal notes, and his features looked sometimes very shrewd and keen as he did so. The morning broke dim and grey, and the air, chilled by showers, was very bleak in the lofty room, but still he worked on with knitted brows and close attention, as one who fought for his life with an invisible enemy who must be combated upon paper. If there was any lawyer who was trying then to take advantage of him, the case of that lawyer was not hopeful. Some of the acumen of Judge Wyldwyl's mind was showing itself, struggling out of the superincumbent load of idleness and pleasure which had weighed it down so long. Old men who had passed half a century in the law courts would be amazed and puzzled by that night's work; for the Duke was brought to bay, and defending himself like a stag of ten who turns upon his hunters.

At about nine o'clock he rang for his valet, bathed himself, dressed entirely afresh, and ordered coffee; then he sent to ask if Lord Kinsgear was awake, for Mr. Sharpe was with his Grace again, and had brought a parchment deed ready for signature.

The Duke showed no outward trace of his vigil, but he looked very anxious till the answer came from his son's sick-room, pressing his lips together and drawing down one side of his mouth in a way he had when he had determined to act with resolution, or, if needs must, with harshness, and to stifle his natural feelings, which were considerate and amiable to all who were immediately about his presence.

Presently the servant came back with a message from the Duke's domestic physician, saying that Lord Kinsgear was awake, but very feeble, and that Captain Brown had been sitting up all night with him.

"I had rather he hadn't," said Mr. Sharpe, coarsely, when the servant was gone. "That Brown is always with him in business hours—and out of them."

"Enough!" answered the Duke, sternly. "You want to have the thing signed, and I will take care *that* is done." He touched the deed scornfully as he spoke, and Mr. Sharpe, bully as he was, perceived that he had struck some chord with a sharp note, and that it would not be safe to touch it again.

"It *must* be done, I suppose, Sharpe?" asked the Duke, after a pause.

"It *must*," answered the lawyer, "certainly, your Grace."

"Nothing from me or Lord George will do, instead of disturbing the dying boy in his last moments with this trumpery? It is a ghastly practice yours, to hunt a man out of the world with a pack of bonds and assignments after him."

"Nothing else will do, your Grace," answered Mr. Sharpe, decisively, "because his lordship is his mother's heir, and the latest securities touched her property."

"Well then, sir, follow me," said the Duke, coldly, and he led the way with an unfaltering step to the chamber where the dying Marquis lay.

CHAPTER V.

AMABEL WYLDWYL.

WHEN the Duke of Courthope and Mr. Sharpe entered the sick-room of Lord Kinsgear, they found him talking feebly to William Brown, who was seated by his bed-side. The young men were going over their Indian campaign again, as they used to do when together, and recalling many a stirring scene of battle and of bivouac. There was even a faint flush upon the faded cheek of the Marquis, which half resembled a sign of returning health, and perhaps, so strong is life before grief has sapped its sources, he might have then revived had he been left at rest. His native air had done something for him, and the companionship of his comrade seemed to have given him new strength, or, perhaps, a new interest in existence. William Brown, who had a creative mind, was showing the Marquis the model of a new pontoon bridge upon which he had been engaged for some time past, and had brought to great perfection; for he was always thinking of his profession, and devising something which might be useful in it, having reflected that behind every difficulty there lurks an invention. He had, therefore, put together, upon a new system, a number of flat-bottomed air-boats, very strong, very portable, and very easily managed. The Marquis, who was fond of mechanics, and understood all things relating to them extremely well, had dropped off to sleep on the previous night with his mind pleasantly occupied about this pontoon bridge, and had slept soundly, so he woke refreshed. The two officers were busy with their plan for facilitating the transport of troops across rivers. The Marquis sat propped up by pillows, and his wan hands held the soldierly toy, pointing out where it was defective and might be strengthened, or made to fold into a smaller compass.

He closed his eyes wearily when the Duke entered, and the transitory look of restored vigour faded out of his face. His head fell back upon the pillows, though a minute before it had been bent eagerly forward, and a petulant expression flitted over his countenance.

"What do they want of me now, Willie?" he muttered. "I signed something yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. When will it be all over? I wish we were back in India under canvas again. It was so pleasant."

"It will all come right," said young Brown. "You are ten times better to-day, you know. There's the Duke speaking to you. Come, cheer up."

Meantime, while the young men exchanged these words, his Grace had entered the room, and stood in the place of William Brown, who had risen respectfully to make way for him. He was too fine a gentleman, however, to disturb his guest without an apology, and courteously laid his hand for an instant on the lieutenant's arm, as though he desired to

detain him, and took his place at last only with a deprecatory bow and polished word. "I beg," said the Duke, kindly, "that you will not move, Captain—that is, unless you prefer the society of Lady Overlaw to that of the lawyers. You will find her in the breakfast-room, a little jealous of your deserting her levee so often." Then, and not till then, the Duke sat down in the chair which his guest had occupied, and William Brown discreetly retired, feeling, but neither seeing nor hearing, that he was in the way.

The room was nearly full when he left it. Not only the Duke and the lawyer were there, but Mr. Senior, the steward of the household, and Tripwell, the head footman, as well as one of Mr. Sharpe's clerks who had been sent for to attest the deed which the dying man was required to sign that day. They were in all five persons, and their presence seemed to overpower the Marquis, as though their robust vitality oppressed and was too much for him.

Leaving them there, Mr. Brown took his way through stately corridors and storied picture-galleries, away to the breakfast-room, which was a delicious apartment surrounded by conservatories, and which opened on to a flower-garden with a view of the lake. It had a southern aspect, and was so sheltered that it was possible to breakfast there with the windows open even in the finer winter days. It was quite at the farther end of the house, and was one of those quiet, pretty dwelling-rooms which are sometimes found even in palaces, as a refuge from splendour.

Presently William Brown heard the voices of Lady Overlaw and Mr. Heriot, who had just arrived on business at the palace by the morning mail train.

"Lord George, that is to say, Lord Punjaub, and his daughter, are expected to-day," Lady Overlaw was saying, in reply to a question from her solicitor; "for the rest, we have only my aunt, Lady Clanmore, whom you know; a few people who are always here, and—oh yes—there is a Mr. Brown, who I understand was a charity boy, and is now a sort of companion, or man-governess, to the Marquis; very stupid, and talks to me about 'field telegraphs,' I think. But, dear me, I declare there he is, coming through the conservatory."

"How do you do, Captain? See, I have kept some peaches for you"—and her ladyship was all smiles and gracious gossip directly.

The young fellow did not sulk, though he could not help hearing what had been said of him; and she knew that he knew it, but was no more embarrassed than great ladies usually are when they have said or done something rude. Moreover, the lieutenant had the instincts of a gentleman, and behaved well under punishment; but he felt it keenly, and therefore it did him good, for it cured him of consequentiousness for the rest of his life, and taught him that there was upon earth something which commanded more universal admiration than a lieutenant's commission; that it would not quite do to show himself a military pedant before ladies, unless he expected to be laughed at; and that fine society

is not given to overestimating those who suddenly obtain access to it; and that it finds out about them rather more than they know themselves, whatever the specious nothings of good manners might indicate to the contrary notwithstanding.

Still the young man had received a severe, though a wholesome lesson, and he smarted under it. He felt almost ashamed to go back to his friend's sick room, lest he should be marked by the servants as a toady and a sycophant who gave his companionship for wages and succulent food. He wandered through the great rooms when he had quitted Lady Overlaw and Mr. Heriot after breakfast, becoming every moment more dejected. He no longer liked to order a horse for a ride in the park, or to send for one of the keepers and a couple of dogs, as he would have done yesterday; he who was looked upon as a charity-boy, and an upper servant. He was degraded in his own esteem; he felt himself to be an interloper and an intruder, who had no right to be among all that marble and carved oak, and gilding, and suits of armour, and pictures, every one of which was probably worth more than he could ever expect to win;—a poor soldier of fortune raised from the ranks to a place where he was only despised by those born to fill it. He had better, he thought bitterly, have remained a private, or at most a non-commissioned officer, and been content to associate with his equals, since there were barriers to intercourse with gentlefolks which no exertions or merits of his own, if he had merits, could surmount; and very likely he had no merits; no, it was quite certain that he had none. Had not Lady Overlaw sneered at him for being stupid? She was a great lady, and must have judged him better than he judged himself. He was a fool, an idiot,—yes, a pretentious donkey—that was the best description of him. He would go back to barracks again. Colonel Oakes liked him, and if he resigned his post as aide-de-camp to Lord Punjaub, as he certainly would, some day he might be made adjutant of his regiment, and then he would have enough to do; and, meanwhile, he could forget the baseness of his origin in the call of the bugles to stable-duty. He was perhaps good enough to associate with a horse, if not with dukes and marquises and fine ladies.

He had wandered into the library while in this contented frame of mind, and looked listlessly out of window, thinking of how he should take leave of the Duke that day. The weather was gusty and sad; great lead-coloured clouds rolled up heavily from the west, and now and then a shower seemed to sweep scornfully over the landscape. A travelling-carriage-and-four, piled high with imperials, came galloping up the avenue, arriving from the station, which was a good way off, owing to the great extent of the park, which the late Duke would not allow to be cut up when the railway was making, so that he and his guests were obliged to use post-horses; and the Courthope Arms at Revel was one of the few posting-inns still in existence. Doubtless the carriage contained some more of the relatives or dependants of the noble family whose heir was

dying. He had come from the station in a fly; and the lowest menials of the place must have made a mock at him, he fancied now.

He was still torturing himself, and might have imagined that he had committed the unpardonable sin, or that he was a leper before he had done, so deeply had Lady Overlaw's contempt stung him; but while he was honestly trying to hurt his feelings a little more, the library door was suddenly flung open, and a radiant vision, all joy and laughter, came bounding up to him on feet of air, looked archly at him for a moment, then dropped a demure curtsey, and threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"Thank you for getting well, Cousin Kinsgear. I am so happy; and it is so nice. Come out into the garden with me. I want to see my golden pheasants again," said this young person.

"Hallo, Brown," cried the deep voice of Lord Punjaub, who now entered the room; "I told you I would show you my daughter when I could get her back from Ireland. Missy, Lieutenant Brown, one of the finest fellows in the army, and a member of my family."

The General spoke in Indian fashion of his aide-de-camp, but Lieutenant Brown looked as if he had just dropped from the clouds, and was wonder-stricken at what had happened to him; while Miss Wyldwyl had disappeared, and was not seen again till dinner-time, when she was so entirely absorbed in a conversation with the Dowager Marchioness of Newcomen, that she did not even see Mr. Brown, which was at least extraordinary after her conduct in the library; and the General scolded her for being "uncivil to one of the finest young fellows in the service, you minx."

"I hate fine young fellows, Pa," answered the young lady, with much spirit. "They are always in the way when they are not wanted. They ought to be put to death."

Somehow or other it happened that after this remarkable incident in his biography, Lieutenant Brown had no desire to leave Beaumanoir that day, or for some time afterwards. Had he not his duties as aide-de-camp to Lord Punjaub to attend to? He was on leave of absence; but what of that? The General was staying in the same house with him, and the first duty of a soldier was obedience. The General had always plenty of employment for him, for his lordship was accustomed to be surrounded by young men who were ready to gallop forty miles before breakfast at his nod, and liked it. He could not do without them, and it was, "Here, Brown, just step up to the village, will you, and get some sweetmeats for that girl of mine;" or, "Brown, that tyrant of ours wants a new sash from Howell and James's. Bring it down with you this afternoon." Indeed it appeared as if the young lady herself insisted that these commissions should be executed by the handsome young aide-de-camp, evincing upon every occasion a passionate eagerness to get him out of the way; yet never failing to ask when he would come back again. But she would not speak to him or look at him, or even be introduced to him,

saying, pertly, that she knew a great deal too much about him as it was; and the General, who had hitherto found her always the charm and darling of his "family," as they call aides-de-camp in India, was surprised and a little hurt at her capricious behaviour towards his favourite. "He'll get the Victoria Cross too, some day, Miny; think of that. Ho! ho! think of that," remonstrated the old soldier, who had a mighty idea of military distinctions, as it was right and becoming that he should have. But nothing would move Miss Amabel Wyldwyl from her entrenchments, and when her father pleaded very hard with her for young Brown, by-and-bye she got into a way of putting one of her small hands before his mouth, and pretending to stop her ears with the other. Yet, when he said no more, it was she who began to talk of the soldier.

CHAPTER VI.

WOOING.

AMABEL WYLDWYL had been brought up in England, and was now just eighteen years old. She was very beautiful, very much accustomed to have her own way in everything, and had been spoiled all her life. She had been the darling of the Dowager Marchioness of Newcomen, whose children were all grown up and had left her, so that she was glad of that bright young presence in her lonely dower house. She resided for the greater part of the year at a fine picturesque castle on the coast of Ireland, but she came to London occasionally, and was not unknown to the world of fashion and politics; being herself by birth one of the ancient family of the Townshends of Tynedale. Miss Wyldwyl had lived with this excellent lady much as the beauty of a fairy tale lives with her godmother; and there had been always the best possible understanding between them. Amabel had learned to ride with great courage and skill, for the Tynedales had ever been leaders of the turf. She had also become an accomplished musician, for the Townshends were hereditary patrons of art. She could draw and paint too, with no common cunning, and the Dowager having a very sound taste for books, because she had had too much experience of life to tolerate a false representation of it, Miss Amabel was familiar with a class of authors who do not often come under the notice of young ladies. She was indeed that most precious product of nature and of education, a beautiful girl, who had many of the best qualities, and much of the intellect, of an honest man. It did not prevent her from being graceful and womanly; it did not save her from being extremely capricious. But her caprices were all harmless and innocent. They came merely of youth and high spirits; there was never anything cruel or calculating in them, and when her feelings were touched she was as docile as a child. If she plagued her father, it was because she knew that he liked to be plagued by her, and teased her into reprisals. If she had been wayward and aggressive towards Lieutenant Brown, it

was because their first introduction to each other had been of an unusual character, and the girl had lain awake of nights crying and laughing and hiding her blushing head in her pillow dozens of times when she remembered it. She thought that she could never bear to see Mr. Brown, still less to speak to him any more; and then she found herself watching for him, and wondering about him, talking of him, dreaming of him, and she grew angry with herself.

It was not till she learned how brave and good he was, how simple-hearted and unassuming, that she began to forgive herself, and then she resolutely determined to look upon him as a brother. He was her father's aide-de-camp, and it was the custom in India for Generals to consider their aides-de-camp as members of their family. There could be no harm in her following so time honoured a practice; and so the maiden lulled her troubled heart to rest, and sometimes slept the tranquil sleep of self-approval. Mr. Brown's manners were so reserved, that it was clear he must have forgotten how forward she had been in having kissed him by mistake for her cousin; perhaps he had not noticed what had happened; or, if he must have noticed it, he must have known that it was all a dreadful, shocking, tragical event for her. These later considerations followed her into her doze and brought her back to broad wakefulness again; and once more she hid her pretty head in her pillow and felt so angry, oh, so angry, and so ashamed, that she could have died, if something had not whispered to her that it might be sweet to live; and so, when she had cried a little, and laughed a short reluctant laugh, followed by a plaintive whine, she lost consciousness, and awoke next morning while all the birds of the garden were singing their matins, or perhaps chirping out to each other in merry couplets that she had been naughty, and her slumbers were broken in consequence.

It was worse still in the morning. She was afraid for days and days to go downstairs to breakfast for fear of meeting Mr. Brown; and the Dowager was much edified to see Miss Amabel come demurely into her dressing-room, to share her dry toast, when there were such very nice things prepared for her elsewhere, and the girl had a fine appetite.

She got a little more self-assurance after breakfast, for even dry toast, accompanied by hot coffee and boiled cream, such as the Dowager's maid combined, has invigorating qualities. "Why," she then argued with herself, "should she torment herself about a stupid person—well, perhaps he was not stupid, it was only Lady Overlaw who said he was stupid, and Lady Overlaw never liked any one who did not pay her compliments; but why should she torment herself about a *person* who could never be anything to her?" Why, indeed? said some internal voice, which seemed to mock her slyly; and all the morning as she walked with the Dowager and her poodle, or as she sat with her pencils and Bristol boards before her, sketching under the beech trees, she thought of William Brown, till she drew caricatures of him in a grotesque and petulant despair at being quite unable to get him out of her head for a moment, and then

she drew knights and paladins and troubadours, who one and all resembled him. Even King Arthur, portrayed by her pencil, sat his fabled steed like William Brown; and had the same steadfast look in his royal eyes as when last she saw the young soldier, riding away from Beaumanoir to do some idle errand for her, leaving all the palace and the park behind him uninhabited, and without the soul which made them stately and fair.

Yet still, now pleaded graver conscience, what if he were a hero and a gallant gentleman, as she owned he was, what could he be to her? A friend whom she could never see—nothing more. She might follow him in her imagination, indeed, where brave men win their bright renown; she might sometimes pray for him when he was in sorrow or in danger; and when they were old, old people who had done with life, she might meet him again with eyes which would not burn and ache and weep by turns, as hers did now.

Why had they talked of him to her so much and so often? Why had she seen for herself how fearless and gentle he was? Why was his name for ever on her father's honest lips, but another word for valour and for goodness? Every one liked him, from the under-gamekeeper, whom she had heard praise his shooting to her own groom, up to Dean Mowledy, who treated him as if he were his own son, and whose language took more than its usual grave sweetness when he spoke to the young soldier. Why had they all joined together to steal her heart away from her, when perhaps she might have kept it fancy-free, or lured it back again from its first tremulous flight? They all knew that she had been engaged almost from her cradle to the Marquis of Kinsgear, and that they were betrothed as man and wife. If he were dying, as the physicians said, she would remain a widow for his sake, as a noble lady should do. But only a few hours ago, the Marchioness of Newcomen, her last refuge from persecution, had put up her glasses to look at him, when he had offered her ladyship some ordinary token of respect, and had remarked that he was the handsomest and best-bred man she had ever seen; "except the late Duke of Courthope, my darling, who, by the way, he resembles in a manner which is quite astonishing," added the Dowager; and moreover the likeness which the lieutenant bore to the Wyldwyl family was generally noticed. It was that which had deceived Miss Amabel when she first saw him, and had she ventured to admit any excuse to herself, it lay there quite ready for her acceptance. He was but a taller and finer resemblance of her affianced husband, and as she had not seen her betrothed for three years, she had been the more easily misled.

The girl had no idea of breaking her engagement, if her cousin could have lived to claim it. She had been brought up to look upon Lord Kinsgear as her husband, and she did so. The ties of relationship are very strong among the Anglo-Indians; and her father always wrote to her and spoke to her as if a duty were imposed upon her from which she could in nowise depart. She was aware also that there was

a mystery in her family, though she did not know its precise nature, and that many things would be set right when she married the Marquis. She had tranquilly accepted her lot in life also, without question and without repugnance hitherto, for the Marquis was very kind and pleasant, though so silent, and sometimes, as she thought, a little awkward. They had not seen much of each other; but whenever they had passed a few months together she had liked him, and taken possession of him, in her girlish way, as something which was to belong to her by-and-by. If now the doctors barely gave him another week to live, that did not seem to her to loosen the bond between them. On the contrary, she felt that she should love him better now, and mourn for him worthily.

Meantime William Brown rode with her and her father daily; and Amabel became too sad to avoid him, as she had hitherto done. She no longer spoke of him with pertness or mockery, and the conversation, as they wound slowly through meadows and woodlands in the autumn afternoons, was very pensive. They could hardly be gay while the young lord was dying; and even the General's bluff good humour was not proof against the melancholy circumstances which surrounded them. The good old man was grieved to see the hope of his race smitten down so early; but the feeling scarcely amounted to a personal sorrow. His rough soldierly nature had little sympathy with the taciturn Marquis and his sedentary pursuits. They had never understood each other, and although they had preserved the outward forms of kinsmanship when they met, they had met but seldom. The General's house had always been open to the young man, but he had rarely gone there; and if they had a cold mutual respect for each other, there was no affection between them. Young Brown was far more to his mind. The lieutenant was silent and reserved too, and studious, which Lord George had never been; but he could back a horse and take a joke, and sit steadily behind a bottle as long as any youngster he had ever known. His lordship was glad to get out with him from the stifling air and hushed whispers of Beaumanoir, and generally prolonged his ride, upon some pretext or other, from two o'clock, when lunch was over, till nearly six, when it was time to dress for dinner.

They wandered along through the home park, where the deer browsed, and the timid hare flitted across their path, and the partridges called to each other from their cover, and so on out into the open country, amidst the lovely English landscape, with its village-church steeples and old manor-houses half hidden in ancient oaks and ivy. The General rode between them, with one of the young people on either side of him; and both of them would have thought it treason to say a word which he could not hear or comprehend, and yet, unconsciously to themselves, no accent passed their lips but had some hidden meaning.

They conversed chiefly about India; and the young soldier said that when the General's present command expired he should return thither, having neither interest nor desire for a career in England.

Miss Amabel answered that he would do well, though her cheek paled slightly as she spoke, and her horse showed signs of uneasiness.

Then the General asked what he should do when they had both gone away from him, and seemed to class them together as though they had been his son and daughter. He thought that Lord Kinsgear might still recover, and that then she would be soon lost to him.

Miss Amabel said that she would never leave him now; and young Brown added that he should never go while the General, or any one near or dear to him, desired his presence. The young lady rejoined that England must be dull and spiritless to one who had seen so much of camps; and the soldier replied that he had never found it so. It was not dull, he deemed, but sorrowful—a place where vain, ambitious, hopeless fancies grew. It was only for the rich and high-born to aspire to live there. It was an abode for happiness, not for disappointment.

"Disappointment, Brown!" observed the General, bluntly. "Pray, how the deuce can you be disappointed?"

"Papa," replied Miss Amabel, with a woman's ready tact, "you speak as if there was nothing in life beyond the army regulations and the rules of the service."

"Stuff, Missy!" retorted Lord Punjaub. "A young fellow has no right to be discontented who has got a captain's commission in prospect, and is well and strong. He may be anything he likes, do anything he likes, and have half the girls in the kingdom breaking their hearts for him, if he likes. Look at me. Egad, I might have married a dowager bishopess and a lovely west-country heiress at the same time, if I had not preferred your mother. They both set their caps at my red coat."

"Captain Brown will choose a lovely west-country heiress, I suppose?" said Miss Wyldwyl, dryly; and she appeared to have just caught a slight cough. Captain Brown winced as the sharp little shaft struck him, and it was some time before he found words to answer that he should never marry.

"Quite right, quite right," said the General, putting spurs to his powerful thoroughbred, and pounding along the road at a thundering trot, while the light horse on either side of him broke into a canter. "It won't do to marry till you become a field officer, and can get good quarters for your wife, and buy her a smart turban now and then."

"Turban, papa!" exclaimed Miss Amabel, horror-stricken, yet laughing, as she breasted a south wind which brought back the colour to her cheeks, at a hand-gallop. "Who upon earth wears a turban?"

"Everybody did in my time, Missy. A turban made of an Indian shawl, with a bird-of-paradise feather in it: most becoming, I assure you," replied the General, with perfect gravity, his notions of the fashion being dated about forty years before this present writing.

"If Captain Brown makes his wife wear a turban, papa, she will never speak to him again," observed Miss Amabel, decisively.

"Why, you small firefly," returned her father, "do you mean to command Brown's wife as well as himself?"

"Oh, dear, no, papa; I am sure I shall never see the lady," said Miss Amabel, as they checked their horses after a burst over the turf.

"What next? Are you going to shut your doors upon Brown when he gets married, as all the fine ladies did upon your mother and me, because we had not got ten thousand a year? Ho! ho! ho! If you do, I hope he will laugh at you, as we did at them," remarked Lord Punjaub.

"I shall never put Miss Wyldwyl's hospitality to the test for a wife, my lord," said young Brown. "It is enough honour if she will condescend to receive me, when next I return home. I shall live and die a bachelor."

"You will do as other young fellows have done before you," observed the General, with rough good humour. "You will become the slave of the first pretty girl who thinks you worth catching."

"A fish cannot be caught twice, my lord, if he is once safely netted," said Mr. Brown.

"Oh, that's the way the cat jumps!" exclaimed the General, slyly. "A dead man cannot be killed over again."

"Of course, if Captain Brown is engaged, the case is altogether different," observed the young lady, adjusting a button of her glove.

"Who is it, Brown?" inquired the General, maliciously. "One of the Dashwood girls, or Miss Swan? I do not think that you visited anywhere else in Calcutta, except at the house of that cantankerous old Scotchman, who looked as if he had never seen a petticoat."

"You forget, my lord, that Miss Swan has married Major Gosling—and the two Miss Dashwoods—well, I had better, perhaps, say nothing more about them."

"Garrison hacks, eh? Ah, I daresay you are right. You youngsters are always hard upon girls who have been long in the market. They are good girls, too, Brown. They were the belles of the room at a ball I gave; let me see, when was it? In 1840, I think."

"They must be very interesting young ladies indeed, papa," said Miss Wyldwyl.

"Very!" returned the General, seriously. "One of them talked to me about botany, I think it was, or astronomy, I forget which, the last time I saw her at Government House. Brother a very good fellow too; made a Member of Council just before I left Calcutta. But who the deuce is your flame, Brown, if you have not caught fire from the Dashwoods? Somebody down Dronington way, eh? Famous places for pretty girls those Oxfordshire villages round Dronington and Wakefield-in-the-Marsh."

"It is some one whom I am never likely to see again after I have left England, and therefore I do not presume to pronounce her name," said young Brown, despondingly.

"That is a bad business," remarked the General, with twinkling eyes, as though he saw some humour in all love-affairs. "But faint heart never won fair lady. Have you asked her?"

"I might as well have asked for the moon," said young Brown; "and it would not be fair to laugh at me, because I could not get for the asking."

"Yes, it would," observed the General, curtly. "You may have anything worth winning in this world, if you try for it, and go on the hunt with a bold heart and a clear conscience. If the girl's got a father, send him to me, and I will say a word for you in the right way. You must win the lady's good graces yourself. I cannot help you there. If she has got a mother, by George, Missy will ask the dowager to help you, won't you, my girl? I have seen this young dog under fire," observed the General, turning to his daughter, "and now he tells me he is afraid because he is love-sick."

Lord Punjaub struck his hand with bluff affection on his aide-de-camp's shoulder as he spoke: "I won't stand by and see your life's happiness marred if I can help it," he resumed; "and if you are very hard hit by a pair of bright eyes, we must win them together. It will not be the first time we have ridden out to a victory."

George Wyldwyl had always taken pleasure in the happiness of those around him, and had a ready-made theory of his own, that his life would be worth little if it could not contribute to the advancement and the good of others. He was a candid old man who had seen the world, and he had no doubt that if there was any obstacle to the love-making of a handsome youngster, money was more likely to be the thing really in the way than any other. Then he thought of his Indian strong box, and how little anything that could be wanted in the present instance would diminish it.

"My lord," said the young man, "I am quite overcome by your goodness. You cannot help me. I think I am in love with a dream." He laughed and turned away his head; but for the first time since he had become a man, there were tears in his eyes.

"How you do tease everybody, papa!" whispered Miss Amabel, shaking her little forefinger, and she stooped over her saddle bow, till her lips just touched Lord Punjaub's white moustache.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEIR'S DEATH.

THE Marquis of Kinsgear grew rapidly worse. The physicians now said that his malady was pulmonary disease. There is always a name for everything, but all that they knew was that his brief life was drawing fast to a close. Many learned things are always said about the death of a Marquis, and doctors dispute over it.

Reputations are made and lost, as the medical men who attend upon him may be popular in their profession, or otherwise—the honour remaining with him who can state his case the best in print, though print has but

little to do with the healing art. Perhaps there was truth in what they said, that the wounds which he received in the Indian battle should have been cured, or should have killed him long before. But nature is a poor student of logic, and they had never healed satisfactorily, or grown much worse. They were always breaking out afresh, as though he had some radical vice of constitution. There may have been a poison, too, which works slowly, upon the Indian's spear, or he may have received some internal injury which none could detect or guess at. When a pin's point is sufficient to produce death, it is but waste of time to wonder that the immediate cause of it cannot always be detected with complete accuracy. This much was clear, and no more—the Marquis of Kinsgear was dying. He had a cruel cough—he was wasted to a shadow—he could not eat or drink, or sleep, as the healthy do—his eyes lacked lustre, when they were not all aflame—his cheeks were livid, when they had not a hectic flush upon them. He was like a fire of straw, which flares when the wind smites upon it, then falls into an unsubstantial heap of ashes.

So many hopes were centred in him, it seemed hard that he should pass away from the world so early, leaving no memorial to show that he had been here. There is a verse in the hundred-and-ninth psalm—it is the twelfth verse, and it probably explains why the young man died, in the dawn and promise of his career: but no one thought of that at Beaumanoir. They only marvelled, and some wept, because he drew to his end as a post that hasted by, or, as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parts the air, which immediately comes together again, so that none can know where it went through.

Ever since the day of his birth numbers of grasping people had speculated upon what they might gain by him; and ambitious people had planned how he should further their interests, or those of their children, when he grew up; and plots and combinations without end were making in which he played some part involuntarily.

The next heir of the Courthopes was Lord Punjaub, and he was old; after him there was nobody, and the two historic dukedoms, which had now been united for three generations, would become extinct. Some of the Scotch peerages in the family descended in the female line; and so, if the last two Dukes of Courthope both died without issue, Miss Wyldwyl might claim to be Countess of Winguid in her own right, and would succeed to those great estates in the North now forming the chief property which maintained the hereditary splendour of the dukedoms, for the English estates were overhoused and unproductive. It cost more to keep them up than their net rental; and although the present Duke had made enormous purchases in land since he succeeded to the title, not an acre which he nominally possessed was unencumbered, and he had mortgaged every inch of ground he acquired on the day he bought it, or he could not have found the money to feed his passion for adding field to field. Title-deeds and mortgage-deeds had both changed hands at the same time. Every estate which he had bought would be sent to the hammer

when the Marquis died, and his Grace would have to live henceforth abroad, a ruined man, with no means of existence but what could be saved out of his son's life assurances. So Mr. Mortmain had told him plainly: the splendid noble now stood face to face with poverty, and there were six executions for debt in his palace. The bailiffs were waiting to seize his very furniture and the bed upon which his son was dying, under bills of sale for seventy thousand pounds, and collateral heirs in all parts of the kingdom were starting up, and rushing to the Court of Chancery with moth-eaten wills and testaments, to show that some of it might, or could, or would, or should belong to them.

Moreover, all the money-lenders were in arms. If the Scotch estates were to descend to Miss Wyldwyl, they would come to her without a charge upon them; and all the securities based upon their rental, which had been given by the present Duke and his son, in virtue of their life-interest, would be waste paper.

Then the old stories came up again, and the newspapers teemed with advertisements for poor Madge, who was dead and gone; or for some proof of the late Duke of Courthope's alleged marriage with a Scotch lady, whereby the succession to the vast estates of Winguid might be changed; and lawyers were ferreting out the records of every village and town in Scotland, to find what they sought, working as actively and stealthily, in silence and darkness, as ferrets or moles. Even their advertisements were discreet and lawyer-like, for it would not do to put Mr. Mortmain, the family solicitor of Lord Punjaub, upon his guard on the one hand, and upon the other it was inexpedient to say too much at once. What the money-lenders wanted, was to discover a needy heir, whose case might present an aspect formidable enough to serve their turn, and then to make their own terms, or to effect a compromise in which everybody's interests should be sacrificed but their own. The unsecured debts amounted to about four hundred thousand pounds, as far as the real state of the Duke's affairs could be known, and the money-lenders might well make a desperate effort to save themselves from such a loss as that.

In this fierce conflict of interests there was little time for the home affections to make themselves heard, had they been better known at Beaumanoir. But the Duke had always looked upon his son rather as a part of his grandeur than of his heart, and there were only two persons who mourned for him. Miss Wyldwyl did all which a young lady could do under such circumstances; it was but little, for she was necessarily excluded from the sick-room. Young Brown was constant in his attentions, and sat up night after night by the side of his comrade and brother officer, taking only brief intervals of rest when the Duke of Courthope came to replace him; and the intricate web of business which the lawyers continued to spin round the dying man required the latest remnants of his strength to unravel it.

Although there was little love in the great house among the young

heir's kindred and connections, the servants liked him, for he had never been rude or uncivil to them, and had wanted little waiting on while he could wait upon himself. So the under-housemaids might be seen crying on the stairs while the under-footmen comforted them. Without too, among the public, and wherever the honest heart of England could be heard beating, there was sympathy for the young soldier lord, who was heir to such illustrious fortunes, and would never own them. Thousands of good and gentle people read the daily bulletins which were issued of his state with emotion, and remembered how a few short months before his name had been mentioned in gazettes and newspapers; and they said with patriotic pride that the highest of their nobles still knew how to die for their country. Royalty also telegraphed daily for news of him, and cards and letters of inquiry poured in by hundreds every hour both at Whitehall and Beaumanoir. Simple people living in country towns and remote hamlets sent their family recipes and remedies, hoping that they might do something to ease the young lord's sufferings, or by heaven's blessing to prolong his days. For we are not an evil or an unfeeling people.

Then occurred one of those passages of low comedy which will intrude into the saddest drama, though some say that Shakspeare would have better represented life had he left out the part of the gravedigger from Hamlet. Mr. Sharpe, in abject fear for his securities and bills and bonds, brought down a quack doctor who had faith in tar-water, and came with a quart bottle of it in a gig. They were obstreperous and argumentative; they would not go away, till William Brown, hearing a scuffle outside the door of the chamber where his friend had just fallen into a fitful slumber, came forth and forbade their entrance.

It was nearly all over then. When the Marquis awoke after his last conscious sleep, he appeared calmer than he had done for some days, and spoke hopefully of his recovery.

"Do you remember, Willie"—he said, as the two young men talked together over their campaign once more—"Do you remember the evening I found you reading under my tent, when I came in from dining with General Violet?"

"Yes, well," replied young Brown; "I was reading Macaulay's account of the battle of Killiekrankie. You asked me, 'How goes the day?' I answered, 'Well for King James,' which you know is in the book," observed the lieutenant gravely. "Is that right?"

"Quite right, Willie; and I answered, 'Then it matters the less for me.' I wonder why I should think of it all so clearly now? Yes. It matters the less for me."

Suddenly the Marquis started after he had spoken, and was seized with a fit of coughing followed by a slight convulsion. William Brown supported his comrade's head upon his breast, and held him there till the shock seemed over.

"I am better now," the young lord murmured faintly, and a peculiar

light passed over his face. He sunk gently backwards upon his pillow, sighed very softly once, and so he died.

"His Grace has sent to ask if the Marquis is awake?" said the groom of the chambers, opening the door gently and looking in.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Soldier and the Lady.

They were seated together on the banks of the lake, both in deep mourning; and he had come to say good-by to her, yet could not find the words to do so fittingly. It was full a year after the Marquis's death, yet the great house reared its stately fabric as haughtily as ever amidst the ancestral woods of the Wyldwyls, and all was outwardly much as it had been. Lord Punjaub, who had an honest sense of the becoming, had paid off the most pressing claims on the family property, saying simply that he could not wear a tarnished name; so the men in possession had been paid out, and the collateral heirs who trembled for the old plate and pictures, had been unable to advertise their high birth and claims by law-suits, which was a sad thing for the Inns of Court, and several rising young barristers had put down their broughams when it was known in the clubs that the Duke of Courthope's affairs were settled.

Settled?—well, perhaps Mr. Sharpe could have told a different story. No man likes to tell all his liabilities, and the Duke had only mentioned those which immediately disquieted him, and something fresh was always turning up. Still the outward dignity of the ducal house was preserved, and the gentlemen of the county were assembled there as usual that year to shoot the covers of time-honoured Beaumanoir.

Captain Brown dropped pebbles absently into the lake and watched the cygnets sailing over its placid surface. Miss Wyldwyl was sketching; and the Dowager Marchioness of Newcomen was taking her usual airing in a bath-chair near them, being pushed slowly from behind by a black servant in livery. Her poodle barked beside her, and now and then she watched the soldier and the lady through her keen eyes furtively, knowing or suspecting more of them than they knew or dreamed of themselves.

It was Miss Wyldwyl who first broke silence. "Why should you go back to India?" she said gently. "The Duke tells me that you have been offered employment at home, and surely you have done enough for fame?" They had become almost as intimate as brother and sister now, having lived daily and every day together in the same house.

"I go," he answered, "because I am restless, and discontented, unworthy of my good fortune and kind friends, dissatisfied most of all with myself."

"And why?" she asked; "why can you not stay with us? My father has urged you so often to remain with him; and I," she added somewhat mournfully, "am I such a dull companion for you both?"

"My place will be soon filled up," replied the soldier with a sad smile, "and I shall leave no regrets which will not be forgotten in a week, though I shall take with me memories which will endure as long as I."

"What memories?" she said; "since you have no ties to England strong enough to detain you."

"It would be truer to say that I shall carry my chains with me, because they are fastened to no other heart but my own," he answered.

"You do injustice to your friends," returned Miss Wyldwyl. "My father said but yesterday that he had never known the Duke speak so warmly of any one, and you know his own feelings towards you. We have all lived together under one roof so long, that it will be a hard parting for him, for all of us."

"Yet it is better I should go, Miss Wyldwyl," replied the soldier dejectedly. "I told you long ago that I was in love with a dream. I think it is the dream of your goodness. And so farewell. I was not a charity boy, as they say here," he added with a blush, "but I was a peasant born and bred, a mere soldier of fortune, who has been raised above his sphere, and looked upwards till he grew giddy."

She did not answer him, but still he lingered, though he had said good-bye, and bade God be with her now.

"Can you ever forgive me?" he resumed. "I can never pardon myself. But I could no more resist your loveliness than I could have withstood the powers of heaven. Think of me sometimes as of one who would willingly have died for you; who dared not ask to live; and who had nothing, not even hope."

He turned with a sombre grace to leave her, but she had risen and stood before him in all the radiance of her youthful beauty.

"Is not my heart enough for you?" she said, and placed her hand in his. Then her head drooped upon his shoulder, and she hid her face.

An hour afterwards Miss Wyldwyl's arms were round her father's neck, and she told him of her happiness; and asked the General's blessing on her.

"You have chosen me one of the finest fellows in the army for a son-in-law. Mind you don't spoil him," said Lord Punjaub to her fondly.

And that night it was told at dinner, that Captain Brown, a person whom nobody knew, had carried off the greatest heiress in England, so that everybody must know him now.

CHAPTER IX.

A Discovery.

When many persons had remarked the extraordinary likeness which existed between Captain Brown and the Courthope family, and it became the common talk of the palace, the Duke at last had observed it also; and it had

rendered him pensive. He was old and childless now: as far as he knew, he had few interests in life, and he began to feel a kind of lazy curiosity in this Indian soldier of fortune, who was so like himself. He set himself to remember if there was any event in his past career which could account for the astonishing resemblance between them, and he could recollect nothing. His Grace interrogated Captain Brown in his own shrewd way, apparently so careless and polite, yet so searching, but he could only find out that he was born at Wakefield-in-the-Marsh, on the borders of Oxfordshire; a fact which threw no light upon the subject. The Duke had lived a great deal in that neighbourhood when he was a young man at the University, and had afterwards hunted the country.

Then he set inquiries on foot, but conducted them in a discreet way, mostly through Dean Mowledy and the local gentry, so that he obtained no precise information. The Dean was especially reserved for reasons of his own, and the Oxfordshire squires could only say that young Brown was the son of an innkeeper, who had enlisted and done well in the army, as the Duke knew, and that his family had died in the wreck of the *Royal Charter* as they were about to emigrate, which circumstance touched upon a fact he did not care to remember, having resolutely forgotten some proceedings which had been taken at that time against a possible claimant on his father's estate. Of course, if Captain Brown was connected with those people, his likeness to the Courthope family might be only too well accounted for, and the less said upon the subject the better.

Still, he was not sure about that, and if there was the remotest chance of this young fellow ever becoming troublesome, it might be well to keep him in hand. Upon the whole, his Grace thought it would be as well to consult Mr. Sharpe, who knew everything, and would be certain to have it in his power to clear up the mystery, if it were worth his while to do so.

Meantime the Duke had taken a very strong liking to the young man. He was very frequently at Beaumanoir with Lord Punjaub, being still the General's aide-de-camp, and in constant attendance upon him. He had been sent frequently with confidential messages between the Duke and his uncle; and the General being an indifferent penman, conducted all his correspondence through young Brown, who wrote a straight upright hand, the characters of which were as stiff and plain as a regiment of soldiers. In all these circumstances the aide-de-camp had behaved himself with perfect good taste, and shown himself peculiarly straightforward and unassuming. The Duke himself was not a straightforward man at all, and therefore liked those who were, because his own habits of subterfuge made him prompt to see through all kinds of deception and trickery. Gradually Captain Brown had come to fill the post of private secretary between the two noblemen, and many intricate accounts and complicated questions of business had passed through his hands. He seemed naturally to encourage confidence without inviting it, or thrusting himself into it. He never showed a vulgar astonishment at anything, however strange; but did what was

wanted of him without remark, paying little real attention to it, if the truth must be told, for he was perpetually thinking of Miss Wyldwyl, and would have done anything, however dry or wearisome, which kept him near her, and she with the Dowager Lady Newcomen were now installed at Beaumanoir, Lord Punjaub, indeed, having been legally placed by Mr. Mortmain in possession of it, and the Duke's life-interest having been formally ceded to him, though his Grace was still permitted by his kinsman's courtesy to be master there to outward seeming.

"Sharpe," said the Duke of Courthope one day, entering the lawyer's office in Argyll Street, "I want you to guess a riddle for me."

Mr. Sharpe no longer came to Beaumanoir, since it had belonged to Lord Punjaub, who had an Indian soldier's hatred of money-lenders: but the Duke and he kept up their old intercourse, and often did business together without the General's knowledge, some promises which had been given by the Duke to his uncle notwithstanding.

"To guess a riddle, your Grace?" echoed Mr. Sharpe. "With all the pleasure in life, if I can; and I think I may go so far as to say that there are few that I can't guess. What's the figure this morning, your Grace?" inquired Mr. Sharpe, blandly, having been recently paid many of his claims, and having little anxiety about the others, because he had received their value many times over in the shape of interest already.

"What are you good for, Sharpe?" asked the Duke, who could never refuse the offer of money. He liked even the crisp rustle of new bank-notes in his pocket, and it literally soothed his fingers to handle sovereigns.

"Anything your Grace likes under five figures," replied Mr. Sharpe, cheerfully; and the conversation diverged into the details of certain pecuniary transactions, during which the Duke's placid dignity was at times slightly ruffled.

"By the way, Sharpe," said the Duke, after a pause, and quite recovering his good spirits, as soon as all conversation about money was at an end, "you have not heard my riddle."

"Another riddle?" inquired Mr. Sharpe, in some alarm, for his Grace could whistle down even such an old bird as he sometimes; and had sometimes got a loan he should not have had on strict business principles. "I'm afraid we must put it off till next week, your Grace. I can meet you then, if you will give me an order on the manager of your tin mine."

"Ah! then, we'll talk about that. When shall it be—on Monday morning? I shall be in town on Monday morning, Sharpe, if that will suit you," said the Duke, graciously. Then he put his head a little on one side with that innocent childlike smile of his, and asked, "Can you tell me who the deuce is a Captain Brown, Lord Punjaub's aide-de-camp?"

"He! he!" laughed Mr. Sharpe. "Well, perhaps I could if I tried, your Grace."

"I thought so," replied the Duke, drawing his chair closer to the money-lender, in an excited way he had when amused. "Damn it, Sharpe, you know everything. Who the deuce is he, now?"

"Captain Brown, of the 1st Lancers, your Grace means?" asked Mr. Sharpe, to make sure about the person inquired after.

"Ay! that's the man I mean," smiled the Duke.

"Captain Brown, of the 1st Lancers," replied the lawyer, demurely, "is your Grace's son. His mother was barmaid of the 'Chequers' inn at Wakefield-in-the-Marsh. She was your cousin's daughter by the Scotch marriage, and therefore Countess of Winguid in her own right. She was married to Thomas Brown, a Northumberland-shire man, before her son's birth, and he is therefore in law Earl of Winguid now, for she is dead. In that mottled tin box, on the fourth shelf, marked W. B. in white letters, your Grace, are the proofs of his mother's marriage, which I took for heriot, as agent to Sir Richard Porteous, under whom she was a copyholder. Your Grace, or young Brown, might now have been Earl of Winguid if he had employed a sharp solicitor; though we should have made a fight for it, your Grace—we should have made a fight for it."

"Ah!" said the Duke, grandly, without any trace of emotion, "I thought you might know. Going to Richmond, Sharpe, this afternoon? It's monstrous fine weather, and I hear my horses fretting outside there. Pleasant afternoon."

Five minutes afterwards the Duke of Courthope was driving with exquisite skill down Bond Street, and Mr. Stultz remarked to his foreman how well his Grace looked that day; perhaps he was a little flushed. Towards eight o'clock he dined at White's, and played high stakes during the evening, winning largely; for the game was whist, which wants a cool head.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

THE Duke of Courthope did not, possibly, choose to make a parade of his feelings to Mr. Sharpe. It is not, however, fair to infer that the communication which he received from the money-lender made no impression upon them. He was a slow and rather indistinct thinker, and he had not made up his mind as to what he should do, or whether he should do anything. It no longer signified much to him, personally, who should be heir to the Winguid estates. His life-interest in them, as in all the rest of his property which he had not inherited from his mother, Lady Pencarrow, had been recently assigned to Lord Punjaub. It did not matter, therefore, one straw to him whether Captain Brown became Earl of Winguid, or whether Amabel Wyldwyl became a Countess

in her own right, after his decease. Any idea of dispossessing him now, during his lifetime, was, he well knew, utterly absurd. He would be dead long before such a case could be carried into Court by the most expert and diligent lawyers; and he thought of the term of human life with a sly satisfaction, because it would enable him to get the better of any possible enemies. Meanwhile, any talk or gossip which might arise on the subject would be utterly indifferent to him. He had been early hardened to public praise and public censure, and cared just as much for one as for the other. When he had been a young man, and the bitter clergyman of *The Times* had written a leader upon him and the game laws, he had felt very sore about it; now, the bitter clergyman or anybody else might write what they pleased about him—it would not disturb his rest or diminish his appetite.

He had not a very good appetite, and could no longer eat a couple of lunches at the farm-houses on his own land when he went out shooting. He was obliged to be abstemious, and to content himself with a cutlet and a pint of claret after very moderate fatigue on his shooting pony. By the way, Captain Brown had broken that shooting pony for him, and taught the beast to amble and to stand fire like a rock. Captain Brown was always turning up. Well, "blood is thicker than water," thought his Grace, who was fond of old proverbs, and perhaps after all it was natural that Captain Brown should turn up.

The Duke, who had much experience of life, had long observed that the handsome young officer, who was so like what he had been once upon a time, had made considerable progress in the good graces of Miss Wyldwyl; and he had watched their intercourse and walks and rides together, with the somewhat mischievous amusement of a man of the world, who does not mean to interfere with what does not concern him. He did not care how the matter ended then; and when their approaching marriage had been announced to him, it had not taken him by surprise. He has wished them joy as lord-lieutenant of his county, and shaken hands with Lord Punjaub, as is usual on such occasions, also with Captain Brown, whom he had asked to take wine with him. The Captain would be a rich man soon, and his Grace had noticed that young fellows who had just come into property could be often induced to invest it upon security tendered by their connections, though it was not strictly marketable.

What if he were to take up young Brown, and handsomely acknowledge the relationship between them? How would that work? The Duke rubbed his chin, and something seemed to answer, "Doubtfully." All the best cards were on the other side. Egad, he would have done better years ago if he had married that village girl at Wakefield; but how could he know then that she was his first-cousin, and heiress to the Winguid property? The parsons would tell him that in any case he should have married her, and that a life passed under the law is always more prosperous than a life of licence, bearing many good seeds in it, which always blossom in due time; whereas the other life grows ever

such bitter weeds. Perhaps the parsons were right, but it was over now. He had made his choice, and must abide by it. His eyes grew moist, and there was an oppression on his chest when he thought of this. Was his heart yearning towards the young soldier? Would he have really wished to have that stout arm to lean upon in his old age, and to be able to say in the face of the world, "This is my son; look at him—see how brave and good he is. I am not childless; I have a companion and a friend, as well as an heir, who shall transmit my name to unborn generations"?

The Duke was an unscrupulous man, and he knitted his brows till they met while he sought for a solution of this difficulty. Few obstacles had ever stood in the way of those resolute Wyldwyls. He might, it was quite possible—he might declare that he had been privately married to Madge over the border; and Sharpe, if it served his purpose, could produce witnesses in support of the statement. It might be easily done, and the sovereign might revive all his titles in the person of an undoubted Earl of Winguid. But how could the real marriage of Madge with Thomas Brown be got over? It was unfortunate that the English laws do not recognise the right of adoption. To be sure, the Duke was a *Count of* the Holy Roman Empire among other things, and by declaring his marriage in Italy, young Brown would become a Count of the *Holy* Roman Empire too; but that was only giving him a fine historic title, which perhaps he would not appreciate, and means must be taken *to* make him Duke of Courthope. His Grace would think over them, and take advice. Mortmain was of no use in troubled waters, but Sharpe, who knew the whole story, would go any lengths. Lord Overlaw, the Premier, too, who had just succeeded Lord Hanaper, as usual, was *his* firmest friend now living, and could understand a gentleman's wishes in such a case. Much might be done in this way with time and management. There were several peerages which had been manipulated. They might begin by making young Brown a baron on his marriage with Lord Punjaub's heiress, or give him the remainder in the General's patent; then shortly afterwards he could be raised to an earldom, as had been done in a recent case. He might take the Wyldwyl name, too, ostensibly in right of his wife. "Oh, yes," muttered the Duke, drawing down the corners of his mouth, "I think I can pull him through."

Having made up his mind to acknowledge his own son, the Duke determined to be quick about it, for he was eager to enter into possession of the only affection left to him; and he thought with complacency how keen an interest he would begin to take again in politics, with the new objects which he had in view. Nevertheless, there was more than one hitch in the way of putting things upon the footing which he desired they should occupy. The Captain treated him with deference and respect, but his manners had grown somewhat cooler of late, because he had not been able to resist the conviction which an intimate knowledge of the Duke's affairs had forced upon him, that his Grace had not behaved altogether

honourably towards Lord Punjaub. The Duke could not go up to him all at once and say, "You are my son; I have left you to starve for nearly a quarter of a century, or to beg, or to steal, and now I want to make you a peer of the realm, because I am a lonely old nobleman with a heartache." Some more cautious way of breaking the business gently must be found, and the Duke, upon consideration, became convinced that no better mediator could be found between them than Dean Mowledy.

The priest came readily at the summons of the noble, and they conferred long together in that fine old library where the fortunes of the Courthopes had been so often decided. The Dean was much distressed, though his Grace spoke with infinite tact and delicacy; but the upshot of it all was that the only woman he had ever loved had been betrayed, that her heart had been broken, and that her destroyer stood before him, one of the princes of his people, and now sought a reward for his crime, instead of submitting meekly to the punishments which were due to it.

"I cannot—I dare not help your Grace," said the Dean, bowing his head upon his hands. 'It is not for me to judge what you have done; *I beseech* you to ask forgiveness where pardon may be found for all those who repent."

The Duke was not prepared for this view of the case. He had been satisfied with himself, and thought he was doing a becoming and generous act. He was annoyed to find that a new-fledged Dean presumed to consider him as a reprobate, beyond the benefit of clergy. His Grace changed the conversation in a dry way he had when displeased, without condescending to discuss the merits of the topic in dispute; and he left an invitation to stay at Beaumanoir, which he was prepared to give the Dean, unuttered, as well as the implied promise of a bishopric which he had also prepared, not without a fair chance of being some day able to fulfil it, through Lord Overlaw, because Dean Mowledy was an unknown man, and there were no potent rivalries likely to be aroused by his promotion.

Then the Duke decided to act for himself; and one morning, after lunch, he took Captain Brown with winning familiarity by the arm, and walked about with him up and down the south terrace, where the monthly roses grew in gay profusion. The Duke was a wise and skilful gardener, and took great pains with them himself, having a natural taste for flowers, as he had for everything which was pretty, and bright, and fragrant. He often led his guests apart there when he had anything to say to them of a confidential character, and walked with them out of ear-shot up and down that terrace, while the roses nodded and tossed their fair heads to every light air that wantoned with them.

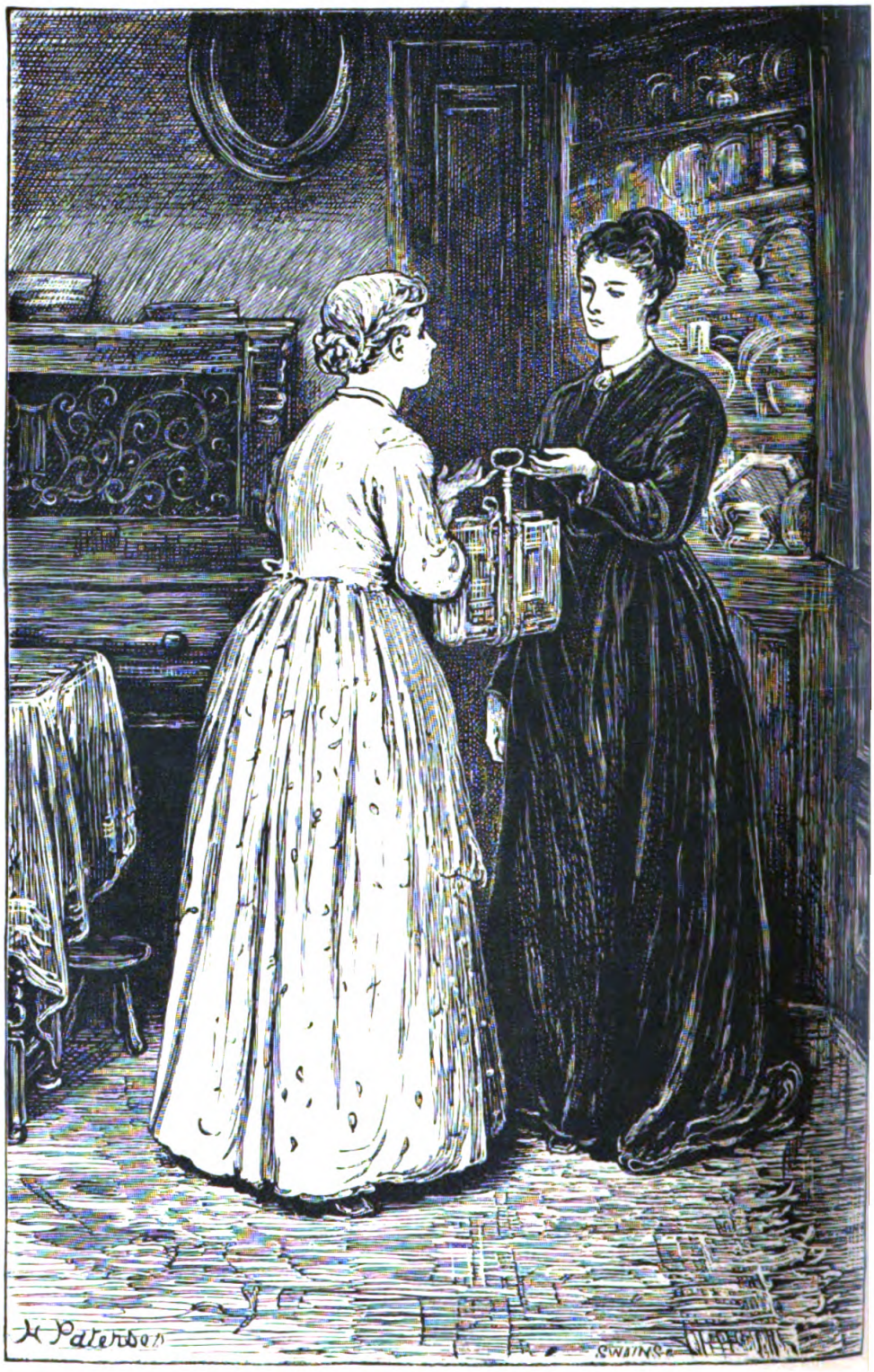
What passed between the two gentlemen on this occasion was never known. It is possible that the Duke spoke in his grand, kind, protecting way, and let the truth rather appear than told it. He had the art of raising those he spoke to up to himself, if he so willed it, and had considerable command of pathos.

Miss Wyldwyl, observing them from her balcony, thought they made

a stately picture, as they walked slowly amidst the statues, fountains, and flowers which surrounded them, with here and there a peacock, strutting and displaying his gorgeous colours in the noonday sun. The Duke was fond of peacocks.

Their talk grew very earnest after a while, and then Miss Wyldwyl saw the Duke shade his eyes with one hand, stretch out the other, and place it upon his companion's shoulder; but the younger man turned away, and Miss Wyldwyl knew, by that subtle sympathy which is part of a deep affection, that there was indignation or sudden anger in the movement which he made. Still they walked on again presently, though her lover's head was downcast, and his whole form drooped in a dejected manner, as though he were weary or humbled. By-and-by they ceased speaking; some embarrassment was visible between them, and they parted. The Duke returned to the library, where he was for ever writing letters now; but William Brown did not seek her as he was wont. He took his way alone towards the sombre beech-woods of the park, with his hands hanging down listlessly, and an air of brooding sadness which she had never seen before.

She thought they must have been talking of the dead Marquis, and never penetrated that mystery, if mystery it was, though in after-life she guessed at it. They were married soon afterwards, and lived very happily, being rich—very rich—for the fortune of Mr. Brown, the Indian merchant, was bequeathed to them; and they were also prosperous and honoured, which is better still than being rich. Her husband's behaviour to the Duke of Courthope was henceforth subdued and respectful. He seemed to be always on the watch to render his Grace some service; and when he mounted the broad flight of steps on the terrace of Beaumanoir somewhat stiffly and feebly, her husband placed his hand beneath the Duke's arm and supported him. Captain Brown never addressed the Duke, but listened when he spoke as though under the influence of some spell which he dared not break; and once she saw him hold the Duke's stirrup when they rode out together. It was not usual for Captain Brown to show such deference to mere rank, and she observed it in her womanly way, then grew accustomed to it, and perhaps divined the cause. His Grace died suddenly of an affection of the heart one day while dressing for dinner, and honest George Wyldwyl became the last Duke of Courthope and Revel. The titles were never revived, the late peer having been called away, before his schemes were ripe, to a place where, maybe, dukedoms are of little worth. But in the fulness of years Amabel Wyldwyl became Countess of Winguid, as Madge should have been; so that, after all, William Brown and her descendants suffered little by the law of inheritance. For Time works wonders, and Wisdom is justified of her children.



"GET THE FRONT DOOR KEY." LIDDY FETCHED IT.

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1874.

Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOMESTEAD: A VISITOR: HALF-CONFIDENCES.



BY daylight, the bower of Oak's new-found mistress, Bathsheba Everdene, presented itself as a hoary building, of the Jacobean stage of Classic Renaissance as regards its architecture, and of a proportion which told at a glance that, as is so frequently the case, it had once been the manorial hall upon a small estate around it, now altogether effaced as a distinct property, and merged in the vast tract of a non-resident landlord, which comprised several such modest demesnes.

Fluted pilasters, worked from the solid stone, decorated its front, and above the roof pairs of chimneys were here and there linked by an arch, some gables and other unmanageable features still retaining traces of their Gothic extraction. Soft brown mosses, like faded velveteen, formed cushions upon the

stone tiling, and tufts of the house-leek or sengreen sprouted from the eaves of the low surrounding buildings. A gravel walk leading from the door to the road in front was encrusted at the sides with more moss—here it was a silver-green variety—the nut-brown of the gravel being visible to the width of only a foot or two in the centre. This circumstance, and the generally sleepy air of the whole prospect here, together with the animated and contrasting state of the reverse façade, suggested to the imagination that on the adaptation of the building for farming purposes the vital principle of the house had turned round inside its body to face the other way. Reversals of this kind, strange deformities, tremendous paralyses, are often seen to be inflicted by trade upon edifices—either individual or in the aggregate as streets and towns—which were originally planned for pleasure alone.

Lively voices were heard this morning in the upper rooms, the main staircase to which was of hard oak, the balusters, heavy as bed-posts, being turned and moulded in the quaint fashion of their century, the handrail as stout as a parapet-top, and the stairs themselves continually twisting round like a person trying to look over his shoulder. Going up, we find the floors above to have a very irregular surface, rising to ridges, sinking into valleys, and being at present uncarpeted, the face of the boards is shown to be eaten into innumerable vermiculations. Every window replies by a clang to the opening and shutting of every door, a tremble follows every bustling movement, and a creak accompanies a walker about the house, like a spirit, wherever he goes.

In the room from which the conversation proceeded, Bathsheba and her servant-companion, Liddy Smallbury, were to be discovered sitting upon the floor, and sorting a complication of papers, books, bottles, and rubbish spread out thereon—remnants from the household stores of the late occupier. Liddy, the maltster's great-granddaughter, was about Bathsheba's equal in age, and her face was a prominent advertisement of the light-hearted English country-girl. The beauty her features might have lacked in form was amply made up for by perfection of hue, which at this winter time was the softened ruddiness on a surface of high rotundity that we meet with in a Terburg or a Gerard Douw, and like the presentations of those great colourists, it was a face which always kept on the natural side of the boundary between comeliness and the ideal. Though elastic in bearing, she was less daring than Bathsheba, and occasionally showed some earnestness, which consisted half of genuine feeling, and half of factitious mannerliness superadded by way of duty.

Through a partly-opened door, the noise of a scrubbing-brush led up to the charwoman, Maryann Money, a person who for a face had a circular disc, furrowed less by age than by long gazes of perplexity at distant objects. To think of her was to get good-humoured; to speak of her was to raise the image of a dried Normandy-pippin.

"Stop your scrubbing a moment," said Bathsheba through the door to her. "I hear something."

Maryann suspended the brush.

The tramp of a horse was apparent, approaching the front of the building. The paces slackened, turned in at the wicket, and, what was most unusual, came up the mossy path close to the door. The door was tapped with the end of a whip or stick.

"What impertinence!" said Liddy in a low voice. "To ride up the footpath like that! Why didn't he stop at the gate? Lord! 'tis a gentleman! I see the top of his hat."

"Be quiet!" said Bathsheba.

The further expression of Liddy's concern was continued by exhibition instead of relation.

"Why doesn't Mrs. Coggan go to the door?" Bathsheba continued.

Rat-tat-tat-tat, resounded more decisively from Bathsheba's oak.

"Maryann, you go!" said she, fluttering under the onset of a crowd of romantic possibilities.

"Oh, ma'am—see, here's a mess!"

The argument was unanswerable after a glance at Maryann.

"Liddy—you must," said Bathsheba.

Liddy held up her hands and arms, coated with dust from the rubbish they were sorting, and looked imploringly at her mistress.

"There—Mrs. Coggan is going!" said Bathsheba, exhaling her relief in the form of a long breath, which had lain in her bosom a minute or more.

The door opened, and a deep voice said—

"Is Miss Everdene at home?"

"I'll see, sir," said Mrs. Coggan, and in a minute appeared in the room.

"Dear, dear, what a universe this world is!" continued Mrs. Coggan (a wholesome-looking lady who had a voice for each class of remark according to the emotion involved: who could toss a pancake or twirl a mop with the accuracy of pure mathematics, and who appeared at this moment with hands shaggy with fragments of dough and arms encrusted with flour). "I am never up to my elbows, Miss, in making a pudding but one of two things happens—either my nose must needs begin tickling, and I can't live without scratching it, or somebody knocks at the door. Here's Mr. Boldwood wanting to see you, Miss Everdene."

A woman's dress being a part of her countenance, and any disorder in the one being of the same nature with a malformation or wound in the other, Bathsheba said at once—

"I can't see him in this state. Whatever shall I do?"

Not-at-homes were hardly naturalized in Weatherbury farm-houses, so Liddy suggested—"Say you're a fright with dust, and can't come down."

"Yes—that sounds very well," said Mrs. Coggan, critically.

"Say I can't see him—that will do."

Mrs. Coggan went downstairs, and returned the answer as requested,

adding, however, on her own responsibility, "Miss is dusting bottles, sir, and is quite a object—that's why 'tis."

"Oh, very well," said the deep voice, indifferently. "All I wanted to ask was, if anything had been heard of Fanny Robin?"

"Nothing, sir—but we may know to-night. William Smallbury is gone to Casterbridge, where her young man lives, as is supposed, and the other men be inquiring about everywhere."

The horse's tramp then recommenced and retreated, and the door closed.

"Who is Mr. Boldwood?" said Bathsheba.

"A gentleman-farmer at Lower Weatherbury."

"Married?"

"No, Miss."

"How old is he?"

"Forty, I should say—very handsome—rather stern-looking—and rich."

"What a bother this dusting is! I am always in some unfortunate plight or other," Bathsheba said, complainingly. "Why should he inquire about Fanny?"

"Oh, because, as she had no friends in her childhood, he took her and put her to school, and got her her place here under your uncle. He 's a very kind man that way, but Lord—there!"

"What?"

"Never was such a hopeless man for a woman! He's been courted by sixes and sevens—all the girls, gentle and simple, for miles round, have tried him. Jane Perkins worked at him for two months like a slave, and the two Miss Taylors spent a year upon him, and he cost Farmer Ives's daughter nights of tears and twenty pounds-worth of new clothes; but Lord—the money might as well have been thrown out of the window."

A little boy came up at this moment and looked in upon them. This child was one of the Coggans (Smallburys and Coggans were as common among the families of this district as the Avons and Derwents among our rivers), and he always had a loosened tooth or a cut finger to show to particular friends, which he did with a complacent air of being thereby elevated above the common herd of afflictionless humanity—to which exhibition people were expected to say, "Poor child!" with a dash of congratulation as well as pity.

"I've got a pen-nee!" said Master Coggan in a scanning measure.

"Well—who gave it you, Teddy?" said Liddy.

"Mis-terr Bold-wood! He gave it to me for opening the gate."

"What did he say?"

"He said, 'Where are you going, my little man?' and I said, 'To Miss Everdene's, please;' and he said, 'She is a staid woman, isn't she, my little man?' and I said, 'Yes.'"

"You naughty child! What did you say that for?"

"'Cause he gave me the penny!"

"What a pucker everything is in!" said Bathsheba, discontentedly,

when the child had gone. "Get away, Maryann, or go on with your scrubbing, or do something! You ought to be married by this time, and not here troubling me."

"Ay, mistress—so I did. But what between the poor men I won't have, and the rich men who won't have me, I stand forlorn as a pelican in the wilderness. Ah, poor soul of me!"

"Did anybody ever want to marry you, Miss?" Liddy ventured to ask when they were again alone. "Lots of 'em, I daresay?"

Bathsheba paused as if about to refuse a reply, but the temptation to say yes, since it really was in her power, was irresistible by aspiring virginity, in spite of her spleen at having been published as old.

"A man wanted to once," she said, in a highly experienced tone, and the image of Gabriel Oak, as the farmer, rose before her.

"How nice it must seem!" said Liddy, with the fixed features of mental realisation. "And you wouldn't have him?"

"He wasn't quite good enough for me."

"How sweet to be able to disdain, when most of us are glad to say Thank you! I seem I hear it. 'No, sir—I'm your better,' or 'Kiss my foot, sir; my face is for mouths of consequence.' And did you love him, Miss?"

"Oh, no. But I rather liked him."

"Do you now?"

"Of course not—what footsteps are those I hear?"

Liddy looked from a back window into the courtyard behind, which was now getting low-toned and dim with the earliest films of night. A crooked file of men was approaching the back door. The whole string of trailing individuals advanced in the completest balance of intention, like the remarkable creatures known as Chain Salpæ, which, distinctly organized in other respects, have one will common to a whole family. Some were, as usual, in snow-white smock-frocks of Russia duck, and some in whitey-brown ones of drabbet—marked on the wrists, breasts, backs, and sleeves with honeycomb-work. Two or three women in pattens brought up the rear.

"The Philistines are upon us," said Liddy, making her nose white against the glass.

"Oh, very well. Maryann, go down and keep them in the kitchen till I am dressed, and then show them in to me in the hall."

CHAPTER X.

Mistress and Men.

Half-an-hour later Bathsheba, in finished dress, and followed by Liddy, entered the upper end of the old hall to find that her men had all deposited themselves on a long form and a settle at the lower extremity. She sat down at a table and opened the time-book, pen in her hand, and

a canvas money-bag beside her. From this she poured a small heap of coin. Liddy took up a position at her elbow and began to sew, sometimes pausing and looking round, or, with the air of a privileged person, taking up one of the half sovereigns lying before her, and admiringly surveying it as a work of art merely, strictly preventing her countenance from expressing any wish to possess it as money.

"Now, before I begin, men," said Bathsheba, "I have two matters to speak of. The first is that the bailiff is dismissed for thieving, and that I have formed a resolution to have no bailiff at all, but to manage everything with my own head and hands."

The men breathed an audible breath of amazement.

"The next matter is, have you heard anything of Fanny?"

"Nothing, ma'am."

"Have you done anything?"

"I met Farmer Boldwood," said Jacob Smallbury, "and I went with him and two of his men, and dragged Wood Pond, but we found nothing."

"And the new shepherd have been to Buck's Head, thinking she had gone there, but nobody had seed her," said Laban Tall.

"Hasn't William Smallbury been to Casterbridge?"

"Yes, ma'am, but he's not yet come home. He promised to be back by six."

"It wants a quarter to six at present," said Bathsheba, looking at her watch. "I daresay he'll be in directly. Well, now then"—she looked into the book—"Joseph Poorgrass, are you there?"

"Yes, sir—ma'am I mane," said the person addressed. "I am the personal name of Poorgrass—a small matter who is nothing in his own eye. Perhaps it is different in the eye of other people—but I don't say it; though public thought will out."

"What do you do on the farm?"

"I does carting things all the year, and in seed time I shoots the rooks and sparrows, and helps at pig-killing, sir."

"How much to you?"

"Please nine and ninepence and a good halfpenny where 'twas a bad one, sir—ma'am I mane."

"Quite correct. Now here are ten shillings in addition as a small present, as I am a new comer."

Bathsheba blushed slightly as she spoke at the sense of being generous in public, and Henery Fray, who had drawn up towards her chair, lifted his eyebrows and fingers to express amazement on a small scale.

"How much do I owe you—that man in the corner—what's your name?" continued Bathsheba.

"Matthew Moon, ma'am," said a singular framework of clothes with nothing of any consequence inside them, which advanced with the toes in no definite direction forwards, but turned in or out as they chanced to swing.

"Matthew Mark, did you say?—speak out—I shall not hurt you," enquired the young farmer, kindly.

"Matthew Moon, mem," said Henery Fray, correctingly from behind her chair, to which point he had edged himself.

"Matthew Moon," murmured Bathsheba, turning her bright eyes to the book. "Ten and two-pence halfpenny is the sum put down to you, I see?"

"Yes, mis'ess," said Matthew, as the rustle of wind among dead leaves.

"Here it is, and ten shillings. Now the next—Andrew Candle, you are a new man, I hear. How came you to leave your last farm?"

"P-p-p-p-p-pl-pl-pl-pl-l-l-l-l-ease, ma'am, p-p-p-p-pl-pl-pl-pl-please ma'am-please'm-please'm——"

"'A's a stammering man, mem," said Henery Fray in an under tone, "and they turned him away because the only time he ever did speak plain he said his soul was his own, and other iniquities, to the squire. 'A can cuss, mem, as well as you or I, but 'a can't speak a common speech to save his life."

"Andrew Candle, here's yours—finish thanking me in a day or two. Temperance Miller — oh, here's another, Soberness, both women I suppose?"

"Yes'm. Here we be, 'a b'lieve," was echoed in shrill unison.

"What have you been doing?"

"Tending thrashing-machine, and wimbling haybonds, and saying Hoosh! to the cocks and hens when they go upon your seeds, and planting Early Flourballs and Thompson's Wonderfuls with a dibble."

"Yes—I see. Are they satisfactory women?" she enquired softly of Henery Fray.

"O, mem—don't ask me! Yielding women—as scarlet a pair as ever was!" groaned Henery under his breath.

"Sit down."

"Who, mem?"

"Sit down!"

Joseph Poorgrass, in the background, twitched, and his lips became dry with fear of some terrible consequences as he saw Bathsheba summarily speaking, and Henery slinking off to a corner.

"Now the next. Laban Tall. You'll stay on working for me?"

"For you or anybody that pays me well, ma'am," replied the young married man.

"True—the man must live!" said a woman in the back quarter, who had just entered with clicking pattens.

"What woman is that?" Bathsheba asked.

"I be his lawful wife!" continued the voice with greater prominence of manner and tone. This lady called herself five-and-twenty, looked thirty, passed as thirty-five, and was forty. She was a woman who never, like some newly married, showed conjugal tenderness in public, perhaps because she had none to show.

"Oh, you are," said Bathsheba. "Well, Laban, will you stay on?"

"Yes, he'll stay, ma'am!" said again the shrill tongue of Laban's lawful wife.

"Well, he can speak for himself, I suppose?"

"O Lord no, ma'am. A simple tool. Well enough, but a poor gawkhammer mortal," the wife replied.

"Heh-heh-heh!" laughed the married man with a hideous effort of appreciation, for he was as irrepressibly good-humoured under ghastly snubs as a parliamentary candidate on the hustings.

The names remaining were called in the same manner.

"Now I think I have done with you," said Bathsheba, closing the book and shaking back a stray twine of hair. "Has William Smallbury returned?"

"No, ma'am."

"The new shepherd will want a man under him," suggested Henery Fray, trying to make himself official again by a sideway approach towards her chair.

"Oh—he will. Who can he have?"

"Young Cain Ball is a very good lad," Henery said, "and Shepherd Oak don't mind his youth?" he added, turning with an apologetic smile to the shepherd, who had just appeared on the scene, and was now leaning against the doorpost with his arms folded.

"O, I don't mind that," said Gabriel.

"How did Cain come by such a name?" asked Bathsheba.

"O you see, mem, his pore mother, not being a Scripture-read woman, made a mistake at his christening, thinking 'twas Abel killed Cain, and called en Cain, meaning Abel all the time. She didn't find it out till 'twas too late, and the chiel was handed back to his godmother. 'Tis very unfortunate for the boy."

"It is rather unfortunate."

"Yes. However, we soften it down as much as we can, and call him Cainy. Ah, pore widow-woman! she cried her heart out about it almost. She was brought up by a very heathen father and mother who never sent her to church or school, and it shows how the sins of the parents are visited upon the children, mem."

Mr. Fray here drew up his features to the mild degree of melancholy required when the persons involved in the given misfortune do not belong to your own family.

"Very well, then, Cainy Ball to be under shepherd. And you quite understand your duties?—you I mean, Gabriel Oak."

"Quite well, I thank you, Miss Everdene," said Shepherd Oak from the doorpost. "If I don't, I'll enquire." Gabriel was rather staggered by the remarkable coolness of her manner. Certainly nobody without previous information would ever have dreamt that Oak and the handsome woman before whom he stood had ever been other than strangers. But perhaps her air was the inevitable result of the social rise which had

advanced her from a cottage to a large house and fields. The case is not unexampled in high places. When, in the writings of the later poets, Jove and his family are found to have moved from their cramped quarters on the peak of Olympus into the wide sky above it, their words show a proportionate increase of arrogance and reserve.

Footsteps were heard in the passage, combining in their character the qualities both of weight and measure, rather at the expense of velocity.

(All.) "Here's Billy Smallbury come from Casterbridge."

"And what's the news?" said Bathsheba, as William, after marching to the middle of the hall, took a handkerchief from his hat and wiped his forehead from its centre to its remoter boundaries.

"I should have been sooner, Miss," he said, "if it hadn't been for the weather." He then stamped with each foot severely, and on looking down his boots were perceived to be clogged with snow.

"Come at last, is it?" said Henery.

"Well, what about Fanny?" said Bathsheba.

"Well, ma'am, in round numbers, she's run away with the soldiers," said William.

"No; not a steady girl like Fanny!"

"I'll tell ye all particulars. When I got to Casterbridge Barracks, they said, 'The 11th Dragoon-Guards be gone away, and new troops have come.' The Eleventh left last week for Melchester. The Route came from Government like a thief in the night, as is his nature to, and afore the Eleventh knew it almost, they were on the march."

Gabriel had listened with interest. "I saw them go," he said.

"Yes," continued William, "they pranced down the street playing 'The Girl I Left Behind Me,' so 'tis said, in glorious notes of triumph. Every looker-on's inside shook with the blows of the great drum to his deepest vitals, and there was not a dry eye throughout the town among the public-house people and the nameless women!"

"But they're not gone to any war?"

"No, ma'am; but they be gone to take the places of them who may, which is very close connected. And so I said to myself, Fanny's young man was one of the regiment, and she's gone after him. There, ma'am, that's it in black and white."

"Did you find out his name?"

"No; nobody knew it. I believe he was higher in rank than a private."

Gabriel remained musing and said nothing, for he was in doubt.

"Well, we are not likely to know more to-night, at any rate," said Bathsheba. "But one of you had better run across to Farmer Boldwood's and tell him that much."

She then rose; but before retiring, addressed a few words to them with a pretty dignity, to which her mourning dress added a soberness that was hardly to be found in the words themselves.

"Now mind, you have a mistress instead of a master. I don't yet

know my powers or my talents in farming; but I shall do my best, and if you serve me well, so shall I serve you. Don't any unfair ones among you (if there are any such, but I hope not) suppose that because I'm a woman I don't understand the difference between bad goings-on and good."

(All.) "No'm!"

(Liddy) "Excellent well said."

"I shall be up before you are awake; I shall be afield before you are up; and I shall have breakfasted before you are afield. In short I shall astonish you all."

(All.) "Yes'm!"

"And so good-night."

(All.) "Good-night, ma'am."

Then this small thesmothete stepped from the table, and surged out of the hall, her black silk dress licking up a few straws and dragging them along with a scratching noise upon the floor. Liddy, elevating her feelings to the occasion from a sense of grandeur, floated off behind Bathsheba with a milder dignity not entirely free from travesty, and the door was closed.

CHAPTER XI.

MELCHESTER MOOR: SNOW: A MEETING.

FOR dreariness, nothing could surpass a prospect in the outskirts of the city of Melchester, at a later hour on this same snowy evening—if that may be called a prospect of which the chief constituent was darkness.

It was a night when sorrow may come to the brightest without causing any great sense of incongruity: when, with impressible persons, love becomes solicitousness, hope sinks to misgiving, and faith to hope: when the exercise of memory does not stir feelings of regret at opportunities for ambition that have been passed by, and anticipation does not prompt to enterprise.

The scene was a public path, bordered on the left hand by a river, behind which rose a high wall. On the right was a tract of land, partly meadow and partly moor, reaching, at its remote verge, to a wide undulating heath.

The changes of the seasons are less obtrusive on spots of this kind than amid woodland scenery. Still, to a close observer, they are just as perceptible; the difference is that their media of manifestation are less trite and familiar than such well-known ones as the bursting of the buds or the fall of the leaf. Many are not so stealthy and gradual as we may be apt to imagine in considering the general torpidity of a moor or heath.

Winter, in coming to the place under notice, advanced in some such well-marked stages as the following :—

The retreat of the snakes.
The transformation of the ferns.
The filling of the pools.
A rising of fogs.
The embrowning by frost.
The collapse of the fungi.
An obliteration by snow.

This climax of the series had been reached to-night on Melchester Moor, and for the first time in the season its irregularities were forms without features; suggestive of anything, proclaiming nothing, and without more character than that of being the limit of something else—the lowest layer of a firmament of snow. From this chaotic sky-full of crowding flakes the heath and moor momentarily received additional clothing, only to appear momentarily more naked thereby. The vast dome of cloud above was strangely low, and formed as it were the roof of a large dark cavern, gradually sinking in upon its floor; for the instinctive thought was that the snow lining the heavens and that encrusting the earth would soon unite into one mass without any intervening stratum of air at all.

We turn our attention to the left-hand characteristics. They were flatness as regards the river, verticality as regards the wall behind it, and darkness as regards both. These features made up the mass. If anything could be darker than the sky, it was the wall; if anything could be gloomier than the wall, it was the river beneath. The indistinct summit of the façade was notched and pronged by chimneys here and there, and upon its face were faintly signified the oblong shapes of windows, though only in the upper part. Below, down to the water's edge, the flat was unbroken by hole or projection.

An indescribable succession of dull blows, perplexing in their regularity, sent their sound with difficulty through the fluffy atmosphere. It was a neighbouring clock striking ten. The bell was in the open air, and being overlaid with several inches of muffling snow, had lost its voice for the time.

About this hour the snow abated: ten flakes fell where twenty had fallen, then one had the room of ten. Not long after a form moved by the brink of the river.

By its outline upon the colourless background, a close observer might have seen that it was small. This was all that was positively discoverable. Human it seemed.

The shape went slowly along, but without much exertion, for the snow, though sudden, was not as yet more than two inches deep. At this time some words were spoken aloud :—

"One. Two. Three. Four. Five."

Between each utterance the little shape advanced about half a dozen

yards. It was evident now that the windows high in the wall were being counted. The word "Five" represented the fifth window from the end of the wall.

Here the spot stopped, and dwindled small. The figure was stooping. Then a morsel of snow flew across the river towards the fifth window. It smacked against the wall at a point several yards from its mark. The throw was the idea of a man conjoined with the execution of a woman. No man who had ever seen bird, rabbit, or squirrel in his childhood, could possibly have thrown with such utter imbecility as was shown here.

Another attempt, and another; till by degrees the wall must have become pimpled with the adhering lumps of snow. At last one fragment struck the fifth window.

The river would have been seen by day to be of that deep smooth sort which races middle and sides with the same gliding precision, any irregularities of speed being immediately corrected by a small whirlpool. Nothing was heard in reply to the signal but the gurgle and cluck of one of these invisible wheels—together with a few small sounds which a sad man would have called moans, and a happy man laughter—caused by the flapping of the waters against trifling objects in other parts of the stream.

The window was struck again in the same manner.

Then a noise was heard, apparently produced by the opening of the window. This was followed by a voice from the same quarter.

"Who's there?"

The tones were masculine, and not those of surprise. The high wall being that of a barrack, and marriage being looked upon with disfavour in the army, assignations and communications had probably been made across the river before to-night.

"Is it Sergeant Troy?" said the blurred spot in the snow, tremulously.

This person was so much like a mere shade upon the earth, and the other speaker so much a part of the building, that one would have said the wall was holding converse with the snow.

"Yes," came suspiciously from the shadow. "What girl are you?"

"O, Frank—don't you know me"? said the spot. "Your wife, Fanny Robin."

"Fanny!" said the wall, in utter astonishment.

"Yes," said the girl, with a half-suppressed gasp of emotion.

There was a tone in the woman which is not that of the wife, and there was a manner in the man which is rarely a husband's. The dialogue went on.

"How did you come here?"

"I asked which was your window. Forgive me!"

"I did not expect you to-night. Indeed, I did not think you would come at all. It was a wonder you found me here. I am orderly to-morrow."

"You said I was to come."

"Well—I said that you might."

"Yes, I mean that I might. You are glad to see me, Frank?"

"O yes—of course."

"Can you—come to me!"

"My dear Fan, no! The bugle has sounded, the barrack gates are closed, and I have no leave. We are all of us as good as in Melchester Gaol till to-morrow morning."

"Then I shan't see you till then!" The words were in a faltering tone of disappointment.

"How did you get here from Weatherbury?"

"I walked—some part of the way—the rest by the carrier."

"I am surprised."

"Yes—so am I. And Frank, when will it be?"

"What?"

"That you promised."

"I don't quite recollect."

"O you do! Don't speak like that. It weighs me to the earth. It makes me say what ought to be said first by you."

"Never mind—say it."

"O, must I?—it is, when shall we be married, Frank?"

"O, I see. Well—you have to get proper clothes."

"I have money. Will it be by banns or license?"

"Banns, I should think."

"And we live in two parishes."

"Do we? What then?"

"My lodgings are in St. Mary's, and this is not. So they will have to be published in both."

"Is that the law?"

"Yes. O, Frank—you think me forward, I am afraid! Don't, dear Frank—will you—for I love you so. And you said lots of times you would marry me, and—and—I—I—I——"

"Don't cry, now! It is foolish. If I said so, of course I will."

"And shall I put up the banns in my parish, and will you in yours?"

"Yes."

"To-morrow?"

"Not to-morrow. We'll settle in a few days."

"You have the permission of the officers?"

"No—not yet."

"O—how is it? You said you almost had before you left Casterbridge."

"The fact is, I forgot to ask. Your coming like this is so sudden and unexpected."

"Yes—yes—it is. It was wrong of me to worry you. I'll go away now. Will you come and see me to-morrow, at Mrs. Twills's, in North

Street? I don't like to come to the Barracks. There are bad women about, and they think me one."

"Quite so. I'll come to you, my dear. Good night."

"Good night, Frank—good night!"

And the noise was again heard of a window closing. The little spot moved away. When she passed the corner, a subdued exclamation was heard inside the wall.

"Ho—ho—Sergeant—ho—ho!" An expostulation followed, but it was indistinct; and it became lost amid a low peal of laughter, which was hardly distinguishable from the gurgle of the tiny whirlpools outside.

CHAPTER XII.

FARMERS: A RULE: AN EXCEPTION.

THE first public evidence of Bathsheba's decision to be a farmer in her own person and by proxy no more was her appearance the following market-day in the corn-market at Casterbridge.

The low though extensive hall, supported by Tuscan pillars, and latterly dignified by the name of Corn-Exchange, was thronged with hot men who talked among each other in twos and threes, the speaker of the minute looking sideways into his auditor's face and concentrating his argument by a contraction of one eyelid during delivery. The greater number carried in their hands ground-ash saplings, using them partly as walking-sticks and partly for poking up pigs, sheep, neighbours with their backs turned, and restful things in general, which seemed to require such treatment in the course of their peregrinations. During conversations each subjected his sapling to great varieties of usage—bending it round his back, forming an arch of it between his two hands, overweighting it on the ground till it reached nearly a semi-circle; or perhaps it was hastily tucked under the arm whilst the sample-bag was pulled forth and a handful of corn poured into the palm, which, after criticism, was flung upon the floor, an issue of events perfectly well known to half a dozen acute town-bred fowls which had as usual crept into the building unobserved, and waited the fulfilment of their anticipations with a high-stretched neck and oblique eye.

Among these heavy yeomen a feminine figure glided, the single one of her sex that the room contained. She was prettily and even daintily dressed. She moved between them as a chaise between carts, was heard after them as a romance after sermons, was felt among them like a breeze among furnaces. It had required a little determination—far more than she had at first imagined—to take up a position here, for at her first entry the lumbering dialogues had ceased, nearly every face had been turned towards her, and those that were already turned rigidly fixed there.

Two or three only of the farmers were personally known to Bathsheba, and to these she had made her way. But if she was to be the practical woman she had intended to show herself, business must be carried on, introductions or none, and she ultimately acquired confidence enough to speak and reply boldly to men merely known to her by hearsay. Bathsheba too had her sample-bags, and by degrees adopted the professional pour into the hand—holding up the grains in her narrow palm for inspection, in perfect Casterbridge manner.

Something in the exact arch of her upper unbroken row of teeth, and in the keenly pointed corners of her red mouth when, with parted lips, she somewhat defiantly turned up her face to argue a point with a tall man, suggested that there was depth enough in that lithe slip of humanity for alarming potentialities of exploit, and daring enough to carry them out. But her eyes had a softness—invariably a softness—which, had they not been dark, would have seemed mistiness; as they were, it lowered an expression that might have been piercing to simple clearness.

Strange to say of a female in full bloom and vigour, she always allowed her interlocutors to finish their statements before rejoining with hers. In arguing on prices, she held to her own firmly, as was natural in a dealer, and reduced theirs persistently, as was inevitable in a woman. But there was an elasticity in her firmness which removed it from obstinacy, as there was a naïveté in her cheapening which saved it from meanness.

Those of the farmers with whom she had no dealings (by far the greater part) were continually asking each other "Who is she?" The reply would be—

"Farmer Everdene's niece; took on Weatherbury Upper Farm; turned away the baily, and swears she'll do everything herself."

The other man would then shake his head.

"Yes, 'tis a pity she's so headstrong," the first would say. "But we ought to be proud of her here—she lightens up the old place. 'Tis such a shapely maid, however, that she'll soon get picked up."

It would be ungallant to suggest that the novelty of her engagement in such an occupation had almost as much to do with the magnetism as had the beauty of her face and movements. However, the interest was general, and this Saturday's *début* in the forum, whatever it may have been to Bathsheba as the buying and selling farmer, was unquestionably a triumph to her as the maiden. Indeed, the sensation was so pronounced that her instinct on two or three occasions was to merely walk as a queen among these gods of the fallow, like a little sister of a little Jove, and to neglect closing prices altogether.

The numerous evidences of her power to attract were only thrown into greater relief by a marked exception. Women seem to have eyes in their ribbons for such matters as these. Bathsheba, without looking within a right angle of him, was conscious of a black sheep among the flock.

It perplexed her first. If there had been a respectable minority on either side, the case would have been most natural. If nobody had

regarded her, she would have taken the matter indifferently—such cases had occurred. If everybody, this man included, she would have taken it as a matter of course—people had done so before. But the exception, added to its smallness, made the mystery—just as when the difference between the state of an insignificant fleece and the state of all around it, rather than any novelty in the states themselves, arrested the attention of Gideon.

She soon knew thus much of the recusant's appearance. He was a gentlemanly man, with full and distinctly outlined Roman features, the prominences of which glowed in the sun with a bronze-like richness of tone. He was erect in attitude, and quiet in demeanour. One characteristic pre-eminently marked him—dignity.

Apparently he had some time ago reached that entrance to middle age at which a man's aspect naturally ceases to alter for the term of a dozen years or so; and, artificially, a woman's does likewise. Thirty-five and fifty were his limits of variation—he might have been either, or anywhere between the two.

It may be said that married men of forty are usually ready and generous enough to fling passing glances at any specimen of moderate beauty they may discern by the way. Probably, as with persons playing whist for love, the consciousness of a certain immunity under any circumstances from that worst possible ultimate, the having to pay, makes them unduly speculative. Bathsheba was convinced that this unmoved person was not a married man.

When marketing was over, she rushed off to Liddy, who was waiting for her beside the yellow gig in which they had driven to town. The horse was put in, and on they trotted—Bathsheba's sugar, tea, and drapery parcels being packed behind, and expressing in some indescribable manner, by their colour, shape, and general lineaments, that they were that young lady-farmer's property, and the grocer's and draper's no more.

"I've been through it, Liddy, and it is over. I shan't mind it again, for they will all have grown accustomed to seeing me there; but this morning it was as bad as being married—eyes everywhere!"

"I knowed it would be," Liddy said. "Men be such a terrible class of society to look at a body."

"But there was one man who had more sense than to waste his time upon me." The information was put in this form that Liddy might not for a moment suppose her mistress was at all piqued. "A very good-looking man," she continued, "upright; about forty, I should think. Do you know at all who he could be?"

Liddy couldn't think.

"Can't you guess at all?" said Bathsheba with some disappointment.

"I haven't a notion; besides, 'tis no difference, since he took less notice of you than any of the rest. Now, if he'd taken more, it would have mattered a great deal."

Bathsheba was suffering from the reverse feeling just then, and they

bowled along in silence. A low carriage, bowling along still more rapidly behind a horse of unimpeachable breed, overtook and passed them.

"Why, there he is!" she said.

Liddy looked. "That! That's Farmer Boldwood—of course 'tis—the man you couldn't see the other day when he called."

"O, Farmer Boldwood," murmured Bathsheba, and looked at him as he outstripped them. The farmer had never turned his head once, but with eyes fixed on the most advanced point along the road, passed as unconsciously and abstractedly as if Bathsheba and her charms were thin air.

"He's an interesting man—don't you think so?" she remarked.

"O yes, very. Everybody owns it," replied Liddy.

"I wonder why he is so wrapt up and indifferent, and seemingly so far away from all he sees around him."

"It is said—but not known for certain—that he met with some bitter disappointment when he was a young man and merry. A woman jilted him, they say."

"People always say that—and we know very well women scarcely ever jilt men; 'tis the men who jilt us. I expect it is simply his nature to be so reserved."

"Simply his nature—I expect so, miss—nothing else in the world."

"Still, 'tis more romantic to think he has been served cruelly, poor thing! Perhaps, after all, he has."

"Depend upon it he has. O yes, miss, he has. I feel he must have."

"However, we are very apt to think extremes of people. I shouldn't wonder after all if it wasn't a little of both—just between the two—rather cruelly used and rather reserved."

"O dear no, miss—I can't change to between the two!"

"That's most likely."

"Well, yes, so it is. I am convinced it is most likely. You may take my word, miss, that that's what's the matter with him."

CHAPTER XIII.

SORTES SANCTORUM: THE VALENTINE.

IT was Sunday afternoon in the farm-house, on the thirteenth of February. Dinner being over, Bathsheba, for want of a better companion, had asked Liddy to come and sit with her. The mouldy pile was dreary in wintertime before the candles were lighted and the shutters closed; the atmosphere of the place seemed as old as the walls; every nook behind the furniture had a temperature of its own, for the fire was not kindled in this part of the house early in the day; and Bathsheba's new piano, which was an old one in other annals, looked particularly sloping and out of level on the warped floor before night threw a shade over its less

prominent angles and hid the unpleasantness. Liddy, like a little brook, though shallow, was always rippling; her presence had not so much weight as to task thought, and yet enough to exercise it.

On the table lay an old quarto Bible, bound in leather. Liddy looking at it said,

"Did you ever find out, Miss, who you are going to marry by means of the Bible and Key?"

"Don't be so foolish, Liddy. As if such things could be."

"Well, there's a good deal in it all the same."

"Nonsense, child."

"And it makes your heart beat fearfully. Some believe in it; some don't; I do."

"Very well, let's try it," said Bathsheba, bounding from her seat with that total disregard of consistency which can be indulged in towards a dependent, and entering into the spirit of divination at once. "Go and get the front door key."

Liddy fetched it. "I wish it wasn't Sunday," she said, on returning. "Perhaps 'tis wrong."

"What's right week days is right Sundays," replied her companion in a tone which was a proof in itself.

The book was opened—the leaves, drab with age, being quite worn away at much-read verses by the fore-fingers of unpractised readers in former days, where they were moved along under the line as an aid to the vision. The special verse in the Book of Ruth was sought out by Bathsheba, and the sublime words met her eye. They slightly thrilled and abashed her. It was Wisdom in the abstract facing Folly in the concrete. Folly in the concrete blushed, persisted in her intention, and placed the key on the Book. A rusty patch immediately upon the verse, caused by previous pressure of an iron substance thereon, told that this was not the first time the old volume had been used for the purpose.

"Now keep steady, and be silent," said Bathsheba.

The verse was repeated; the Book turned round; Bathsheba blushed guiltily.

"Who did you try?" said Liddy curiously.

"I shall not tell you."

"Did you notice Mr. Boldwood's doings in church this morning, miss?" Liddy continued, adumbrating by the remark the track her thoughts had taken.

"No, indeed," said Bathsheba, with serene indifference.

"His pew is exactly opposite yours, miss."

"I know it."

"And you did not see his goings on?"

"Certainly I did not, I tell you."

Liddy assumed a smaller physiognomy, and shut her lips decisively.

This move was unexpected, and proportionately disconcerting. "What did he do?" Bathsheba said perforce.

"Didn't turn his head to look at you once all the service."

"Why should he?" again demanded her mistress, wearing a nettled look. "I didn't ask him to."

"O no. But everybody else was noticing you; and it was odd he didn't. There, 'tis like him. Rich and gentlemanly, what does he care?"

Bathsheba dropped into a silence intended to express that she had opinions on the matter too abstruse for Liddy's comprehension, rather than that she had nothing to say.

"Dear me—I had nearly forgotten the valentine I bought yesterday," she exclaimed at length.

"Valentine! who for, Miss?" said Liddy. "Farmer Boldwood?"

It was the single name among all possible wrong ones that just at this moment seemed to Bathsheba more pertinent than the right.

"Well, no. It is only for little Teddy Coggan. I have promised him something, and this will be a pretty surprise for him. Liddy, you may as well bring me my desk and I'll direct it at once."

Bathsheba took from her desk a gorgeously illuminated and embossed design in post-octavo, which had been bought on the previous market-day at the chief stationer's in Casterbridge. In the centre was a small oval enclosure; this was left blank, that the sender might insert tender words more appropriate to the special occasion than any generalities by a printer could possibly be.

"Here is a place for writing," said Bathsheba. "What shall I put?"

"Something of this sort, I should think," returned Liddy promptly:

The rose is red,
The violet blue,
Carnation's sweet,
And so are you.

"Yes, that shall be it. It just suits itself to a chubby-faced child like him," said Bathsheba. She inserted the words in a small though legible handwriting; enclosed the sheet in an envelope, and dipped her pen for the direction.

"What fun it would be to send it to the stupid old Boldwood, and how he would wonder!" said the irrepressible Liddy, lifting her eyebrows, and indulging in an awful mirth on the verge of fear as she thought of the moral and social magnitude of the man contemplated.

Bathsheba paused to regard the idea at full length. Boldwood's had begun to be a troublesome image—a species of Daniel in her kingdom who persisted in kneeling eastward when reason and common sense said that he might just as well follow suit with the rest, and afford her the official glance of admiration which cost nothing at all. She was far from being seriously concerned about his non-conformity. Still, it was faintly depressing that the most dignified and valuable man in the parish should withhold his eyes, and that a girl like Liddy should talk about it. So Liddy's idea was at first rather harassing than piquant.

"No, I won't do that. He wouldn't see any humour in it."

"He'd worry to death," said the persistent Liddy.

"Really, I don't care particularly to send it to Teddy," remarked her mistress. "He's rather a naughty child sometimes."

"Yes—that he is."

"Let's toss, as men do," said Bathsheba, idly. "Now then, head, Boldwood; tail, Teddy. No, we won't toss money on a Sunday, that would be tempting the devil indeed."

"Toss this hymn book; there can't be no sinfulness in that, miss."

"Very well. Open, Boldwood—shut, Teddy; no, it's more likely to fall open. Open, Teddy—shut, Boldwood."

The book went fluttering in the air and came down shut.

Bathsheba, a small yawn upon her mouth, took the pen, and with off-hand serenity directed the missive to Boldwood.

"Now light a candle, Liddy. Which seal shall we use? Here's a unicorn's head—there's nothing in that. What's this?—two doves—no. It ought to be something extraordinary, ought it not, Lidd? Here's one with a motto—I remember it is some funny one, but I can't read it. We'll try this, and if it doesn't do we'll have another."

A large red seal was duly affixed. Bathsheba looked closely at the hot wax to discover the words.

"Capital!" she exclaimed, throwing down the letter frolicsomely. "'Twould upset the solemnity of a parson and clerk too."

Liddy looked at the words of the seal, and read—

"Marry me."

The same evening the letter was sent, and was duly sorted in Casterbridge post-office that night, to be returned to Weatherbury again in the morning.

So very idly and unreflectingly was this deed done. Of love as a spectacle Bathsheba had a fair knowledge; but of love subjectively she knew nothing.

CHAPTER XIV.

Effect of the Letter: Sunrise.

At dusk, on the evening of St. Valentine's Day, Boldwood sat down to supper as usual, by a beaming fire of aged logs. Upon the mantel-shelf before him was a time-piece, surmounted by a spread eagle, and upon the eagle's wings was the letter Bathsheba had sent. Here the bachelor's gaze was continually fastening itself, till the large red seal became as a blot of blood on the retina of his eye; and as he eat and drank he still read in fancy the words thereon, although they were too remote for his sight,

"Marry me."

The pert injunction was like those crystal substances, which, colourless

themselves, assume the tone of objects about them. Here, in the quiet of Boldwood's parlour, where everything that was not grave was extraneous, and where the atmosphere was that of a Puritan Sunday lasting all the week, the letter and its dictum changed their tenor from the thoughtlessness of their origin to a deep solemnity, imbibed from their accessories now.

Since the receipt of the missive in the morning, Boldwood had felt the spherical completeness of his existence heretofore to be slowly spreading into an abnormal distortion in the particular direction of an ideal passion. The disturbance was as the first floating weed to Columbus—the contemptibly little suggesting possibilities of the infinitely great.

The letter must have had an origin and a motive. That the latter was of the smallest magnitude compatible with its existence at all, Boldwood, of course, did not know. And such an explanation did not strike him as a possibility even. It is foreign to a mystified condition of mind to realise of the mystifier that the very dissimilar processes of approving a course suggested by circumstance, and striking out a course from inner impulse and intention purely, would look the same in the result. The vast difference between starting a train of events, and directing into a particular groove a series already started, is rarely apparent to the person confounded by the issue.

When Boldwood went to bed, he placed the valentine in the corner of the looking-glass. He was conscious of its presence, even when his back was turned upon it. It was the first time in Boldwood's life that such an event had occurred. The same fascination that caused him to think it an act which had a deliberate motive prevented him from regarding it as an impertinence. He looked again at the direction. The mysterious influences of night invested the writing with the presence of the unknown writer. Somebody's—some *woman's*—hand had travelled softly over the paper bearing his name: her unrevealed eyes had watched every curve as she formed it: her brain had seen him in imagination the while. Why should she have imagined him? Her mouth—were the lips red or pale, plump or creased?—had curved itself to a certain expression as the pen went on—the corners had moved with all their natural tremulousness: what had been the expression?

The vision of the woman writing, as a supplement to the words written, had no individuality. She was a misty shape, and well she might be, considering that her original was at that moment sound asleep and oblivious of all love and letter-writing under the sky. Whenever Boldwood dozed she took a form, and comparatively ceased to be a vision: when he awoke there was the letter justifying the dream.

The moon shone to-night, and its light was not of a customary kind. His window only admitted a reflection of its rays, and the pale sheen had that reversed direction which snow gives, coming upward and lighting up his ceiling in a phenomenal way, casting shadows in strange places, and putting lights where shadows had used to be.

The substance of the epistle had occupied him but little in comparison with the fact of its arrival. He suddenly wondered if anything more might be found in the envelope than what he had withdrawn. He jumped out of bed in the weird light, took the letter, pulled out the flimsy sheet, shook the envelope—searched it. Nothing more was there. Boldwood looked, as he had a hundred times the preceding day, at the insistent red seal: "Marry me," he said aloud.

The solemn and reserved yeoman again closed the letter, and stuck it in the frame of the glass. In doing so he caught sight of his reflected features, wan in expression, and insubstantial in form. He saw how closely compressed was his mouth, and that his eyes were wide-spread and vacant. Feeling uneasy and dissatisfied with himself for this nervous excitability, he returned to bed.

Then the dawn drew on. The full power of the clear heaven was not equal to that of a cloudy sky at noon, when Boldwood arose and dressed himself. He descended the stairs and went out towards the gate of a field to the east, leaning over which he paused and looked around.

It was one of the usual slow sunrises of this time of the year, and the sky, pure violet in the zenith, was leaden to the northward, and murky to the east, where, over the snowy down or ewe-lease on Weatherbury Upper Farm, and apparently resting upon the ridge, the only half of the sun yet visible burnt incandescent and rayless, like a red and flameless fire shining over a white hearthstone. The whole effect resembled a sunset as childhood resembles age.

In other directions, the fields and sky were so much of one colour by the snow, that it was difficult in a hasty glance to tell whereabouts the horizon occurred; and in general there was here, too, that beforementioned preternatural inversion of light and shade which attends the prospect when the garish brightness commonly in the sky is found on the earth, and the shades of earth are in the sky. Over the west hung the wasting moon, now dull and greenish-yellow, like tarnished brass.

Boldwood was listlessly noting how the frost had hardened and glazed the surface of the snow, till it shone in the red eastern light with the polish of marble; how, in some portions of the slope, withered grass-bents, encased in icicles, bristled through the smooth wan coverlet in the twisted and curved shapes of old Venetian glass, and how the footprints of a few birds, which had hopped over the snow whilst it lay in the state of a soft fleece, were now frozen to a short permanency. A half-muffled noise of light wheels interrupted him. Boldwood turned back into the road. It was the mail cart—a crazy, two-wheeled vehicle, hardly heavy enough to resist a puff of wind. The driver held out a letter. Boldwood seized it and opened it, expecting another anonymous one. So greatly are people's ideas of probability a mere sense that precedent will repeat itself, that they often do not stop to think whether the fact of an event having once occurred is not in many cases the very circumstance which makes its repetition unlikely.

"I don't think it is for you, sir," said the man, when he saw Boldwood's action. "Though there is no name, I think it is for your shepherd."

Boldwood looked then at the address :—

To the New Shepherd,
Weatherbury Farm,
Near Casterbridge.

"Oh—what a mistake!—it is not mine. Nor is it for my shepherd. It is for Miss Everdene's. You had better take it on to him—Gabriel Oak—and say I opened it in mistake."

At this moment, on the ridge, up against the blazing sky, a figure was visible, like the black snuff in the midst of a candle-flame. Then it moved and began to bustle about vigorously from place to place, carrying square skeleton masses, which were riddled by the same rays. A small figure on all fours followed behind. The tall form was that of Gabriel Oak; the small one that of George ; the articles in course of transit were hurdles.

"Wait," said Boldwood. "That's the man on the hill. I'll take the letter to him myself."

To Boldwood it was now no longer merely a letter to another man. It was an opportunity. Exhibiting a face pregnant with intention, he entered the snowy field.

Gabriel, at that minute, descended the hill towards the right. The glow stretched down in this direction now, and touched the distant roof of Warren's Malthouse—whither the shepherd was apparently bent. Boldwood followed at a distance.

Hours in a Library.

No. VIII.—Dr. Johnson's Writings.

A book has recently appeared of which it is the professed object to give to the modern generation of lazy readers the pith of Boswell's immortal biography. I shall, for sufficient reasons, refrain from discussing the merits of the performance. One remark, indeed, may be made in passing. The circle of readers to whom such a book is welcome must, of necessity, be limited. To the true lovers of Boswell it is, to say the least, superfluous; the gentlest omissions will always mangle some people's favourite passages, and additions, whatever skill they may display, necessarily injure that dramatic vivacity which is one of the great charms of the original. The most discreet of cicerones is an intruder when we open our old favourite and, without further magic, retire into that delicious nook of eighteenth-century society. Upon those, again, who cannot appreciate the infinite humour of the original, the mere excision of the less lively pages will be thrown away. There remains only that narrow margin of readers whose appetites, languid but not extinct, can be titillated by the promise that they shall not have the trouble of making their own selection. Let us wish them good digestions, and, in spite of modern changes of fashion, more robust taste for the future. I would still hope that to many readers Boswell has been what he has certainly been to some, the first writer who gave them a love of English literature, and the most charming of all companions long after the bloom of novelty has departed. I subscribe most cheerfully to Mr. Lewes's statement that he estimates his acquaintances according to their estimate of Boswell. A man, indeed, may be a good Christian, and an excellent father of a family, without loving Johnson or Boswell, for a sense of humour is not one of the primary virtues. But Boswell's is one of the very few books which, after many years of familiarity, will still provoke a hearty laugh even in the solitude of a study; and the laughter is of that kind which does one good.

I do not wish, however, to pronounce one more eulogy upon an old friend, but to say a few words on a question which he sometimes suggests. Macaulay's well-known but provoking essay is more than usually lavish in overstrained paradoxes. He has explicitly declared that Boswell wrote one of the most charming of books because he was one of the greatest of fools. And his remarks suggest, if they do not implicitly assert, that Johnson wrote some of the most unreadable of books,

although, if not because, he possessed one of the most vigorous intellects of the time. Mr. Carlyle has given a sufficient explanation of the first paradox; but the second may justify a little further inquiry. As a general rule, the talk of a great man is the reflection of his books. Nothing is so false as the common saying that the presence of a distinguished writer is generally disappointing. It exemplifies a very common delusion. People are so impressed by the disparity which sometimes occurs, that they take the exception for the rule. It is, of course, true that a man's verbal utterances may differ materially from his written utterances. He may, like Addison, be shy in company; he may, like many retired students, be slow in collecting his thoughts; or he may, like Goldsmith, be over anxious to shine at all hazards. But a patient observer will even then detect the essential identity under superficial differences; and in the majority of cases, as in that of Macaulay himself, the talking and the writing are palpably and almost absurdly similar. The whole art of criticism consists in learning to know the human being who is partially revealed to us in his spoken or his written words. Whatever the means of communication, the problem is the same. The two methods of inquiry may supplement each other; but their substantial agreement is the test of their accuracy. If Johnson, as a writer, appears to us to be a mere windbag and manufacturer of sesquipedalian verbiage, whilst, as a talker, he appears to be one of the most genuine and deeply feeling of men, we may be sure that our analysis has been somewhere defective. The discrepancy is, of course, partly explained by the faults of Johnson's style; but the explanation only removes the difficulty a degree further. "The style is the man" is a very excellent aphorism, though some eminent writers have lately pointed out that Buffon's original remark was *le style c'est de l'homme*. That only proves that, like many other good sayings, it has been polished and brought to perfection by the process of attrition in numerous minds, instead of being struck out at a blow by a solitary thinker. From a purely logical point of view, Buffon may be correct; but the very essence of an aphorism is that slight exaggeration which makes it more biting whilst less rigidly accurate. According to Buffon, the style might belong to a man as his coat or his hat belongs to him. There are parasitical writers who, in the old phrase, have "formed their style," by the imitation of accepted models, and who have, therefore, possessed it only by right of appropriation. Boswell has a discussion as to the writers who may have served Johnson in this capacity. But, in fact, Johnson, like all other men of strong idiosyncrasy, formed his style as he formed his legs. The peculiarities of his limbs were in some degree the result of conscious efforts in walking, swimming, and "buffeting with his books." This development was doubtless more determined by the constitution which he brought into the world, and the circumstances under which he was brought up. And even that queer Johnsonese, which Macaulay supposes him to have adopted in accordance with a more definite literary theory, will probably appear to be the natural expression of

certain innate tendencies, and of the mental atmosphere which he breathed from youth. To appreciate fairly the strangely cumbrous form of his written speech, we must penetrate more deeply than may at first sight seem necessary beneath the outer rind of this literary Behemoth. The difficulty of such spiritual dissection is, indeed, very great; but some little light may be thrown upon the subject by following out such indications as we possess.

The talking Johnson is sufficiently familiar to us. So far as Boswell needs an interpreter, Mr. Carlyle has done all that can be done. He has concentrated and explained what is diffused, and often unconsciously indicated, in Boswell's pages. When reading Boswell, we are half ashamed of his power over our sympathies. It is like turning over a portfolio of sketches, caricatured, inadequate, and each giving only some imperfect aspect of the original. Macaulay's smart paradoxes only increase our perplexity by throwing the superficial contrasts into stronger relief. Mr. Carlyle, with true imaginative insight, gives us at once the essence of Johnson; he brings before our eyes the luminous body of which we had previously been conscious only by a series of imperfect images refracted through a number of distorting media. To render such a service effectually is the highest triumph of criticism; and it would be impertinent to say again in feebler language what Mr. Carlyle has expressed so forcibly. We may, however, recall certain general conclusions by way of preface to the problem which he has not expressly considered, how far Johnson succeeded in expressing himself through his writings.

The world, as Mr. Carlyle sees it, is composed, we all know, of two classes: there are "the dull millions, who, as a dull flock, roll hither and thither, whithersoever they are led," and there are a few superior natures who can see and can will. There are, in other words, the heroes, and those whose highest wisdom is to be hero-worshippers. Johnson's glory is that he belonged to the sacred band, though he could not claim within it the highest, or even a high, rank. In the current dialect, therefore, he was "nowise a clothes-horse or patent digester, but a genuine man." Whatever the accuracy of the general conception, or of certain corollaries which are drawn from it, the application to Johnson explains one main condition of his power. Persons of colourless imagination may hold—nor will we dispute their verdict—that Mr. Carlyle overcharges his lights and shades, and brings his heroes into too startling a contrast with the vulgar herd. Yet it is undeniable that the great bulk of mankind are transmitters rather than originators of spiritual force. Most of us are necessarily condemned to express our thoughts in formulas which we have learnt from others and can but slightly tinge with our feeble personality. Nor, as a rule, are we even consistent disciples of any one school of thought. What we call our opinions are mere bundles of incoherent formulæ, arbitrarily stitched together because our reasoning faculties are too dull to make inconsistency painful. Of the vast piles of books which load our libraries, ninety-nine hundredths and more are but printed echoes:

and it is the rarest of pleasures to say, here is a distinct record of impressions at first hand. We commonplace beings are hurried along in the crowd, living from hand to mouth on such slices of material and spiritual food as happen to drift in our direction, with little more power of taking an independent course, or of forming any general theory, than the polyps which are carried along by an oceanic current. Ask any man what he thinks of the world in which he is placed: whether, for example, it is on the whole a scene of happiness or misery, and he will either answer by some cut-and-dried fragments of what was once wisdom, or he will confine himself to a few incoherent details. He had a good dinner to-day and a bad toothache yesterday, and a family affliction or blessing the day before. But he is as incapable of summing up his impressions as an infant of performing an operation in the differential calculus. It is as rare as it is refreshing to find a man who can stand on his own legs and be conscious of his own feelings, who is sturdy enough to react as well as to transmit action, and lofty enough to raise himself above the hurrying crowd and have some distinct belief as to whence it is coming and whither it is going. Now Johnson, as one of the sturdiest of mankind, had the power due to a very distinct sentiment, if not to a very clear theory, about the world in which he lived. It had buffeted him severely enough, and he had formed a decisive estimate of its value. He was no man to be put off with mere phrases in place of opinions, or to accept doctrines which were not capable of expressing genuine emotion. To this it must be added, that his emotions were as deep and tender as they were genuine. How sacred was his love for his old and ugly wife; how warm his sympathy wherever it could be effective; how manly the self-respect with which he guarded his dignity through all the temptations of Grub Street, need not be once more pointed out. Perhaps, however, it is worth while to notice the extreme rarity of such qualities. Many people, we think, love their fathers. Fortunately, that is true; but in how many people is filial affection strong enough to overpower the dread of eccentricity? How many men would have been capable of doing penance in Uttoxeter market years after their father's death for a long-passed act of disobedience? Most of us, again, would have a temporary emotion of pity for an outcast lying helplessly in the street. We should call the police, or send her in a cab to the workhouse, or, at least, write to *The Times* to denounce the defective arrangements of public charity. But it is perhaps better not to ask how many good Samaritans would take her on their shoulders to their own homes, care for her wants, and put her into a better way of life.

In the lives of most eminent men we find much good feeling and honourable conduct; but it is an exception, even in the case of good men, when we find that a life has been shaped by other than the ordinary conventions, or that emotions have dared to overflow the well-worn channels of respectability. The love which we feel for Johnson is due to the fact that the pivots upon which his life turned are invariably noble motives, and not mere obedience to custom. More than one modern

writer has expressed a fraternal affection for Addison, and it is justified by the kindly humour which breathes through his *Essays*. But what anecdote of that most decorous and successful person touches our hearts or has the heroic ring of Johnson's wrestlings with adverse fortune? Addison showed how a Christian could die—when his life has run smoothly through pleasant places, secretaryships of state, and marriages with countesses, and when nothing—except a few overdoses of port wine—has shaken his nerves or ruffled his temper. A far deeper emotion rises at the deathbed of the rugged old pilgrim, who has fought his way to peace in spite of troubles within and without, who has been jeered in Vanity Fair and descended into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and escaped with pain and difficulty from the clutches of Giant Despair. When the last feelings of such a man are tender, solemn, and simple, we feel ourselves in a higher presence than that of an amiable gentleman who simply died, as he lived, with consummate decorum.

On turning, however, from Johnson's life to his writings, from Boswell to the *Rambler*, it must be admitted that the shock is trying to our nerves. The *Rambler* has, indeed, high merits. The impression which it made upon his own generation proves the fact; for the reputation, however temporary, was not won by a concession to the fashions of the day, but to the influence of a strong judgment uttering itself through uncouth forms. The melancholy which colours its pages is the melancholy of a noble nature. The tone of thought reminds us of Bishop Butler, whose writings, defaced by a style even more tiresome, though less pompous than Johnson's, have owed their enduring reputation to a philosophical acuteness in which Johnson was certainly very deficient. Both of these great men, however, impress us by their deep sense of the evils under which humanity suffers, and their rejection of the superficial optimism of the day. Butler's sadness, undoubtedly, is that of a recluse, and Johnson's that of a man of the world; but the sentiment is fundamentally the same. It may be added, too, that here, as elsewhere, Johnson speaks with the sincerity of a man drawing upon his own experience. He announces himself as a scholar thrust out upon the world rather by necessity than by choice; and a large proportion of the papers dwell upon the various sufferings of the literary class. Nobody could speak more feelingly of those sufferings, as no one had a closer personal acquaintance with them. But allowing to Johnson whatever credit is due to the man who performs one more variation on the old theme, *Vanitas vanitatum*, we must in candour admit that the *Rambler* has the one unpardonable fault: it is unreadable.

What an amazing turn he has for commonplaces! That life is short, that marriages from mercenary motives produce unhappiness, that different men are virtuous in different degrees, that advice is generally ineffectual, that adversity has its uses, that fame is liable to suffer from detraction;—these and a host of other such maxims are of the kind upon which no genius and no depth of feeling can confer a momentary interest. Here

and there indeed the pompous utterance invests them with an unlucky air of absurdity. "Let no man from this time," is the comment in one of his stories, "suffer his felicity to depend on the death of his aunt." Every actor, of course, uses the same dialect. A gay young gentleman tells us that he used to amuse his companions by giving them notice of his friends' oddities. "Every man," he says, "has some habitual contortion of body, or established mode of expression, which never fails to excite mirth if it be pointed out to notice. By premonition of these particularities, I secured our pleasantry." The feminine characters, Flirtillas, and Cleoras, and Euphelias, and Penthesileas, are, if possible, still more grotesque. Macaulay remarks that he wears the petticoat with as ill a grace as Falstaff himself. The reader, he thinks, will cry out with Sir Hugh, "I like not when a 'oman has a great peard! I spy a great peard under her muffler." Oddly enough Johnson gives the very same quotation; and goes on to warn his supposed correspondents that Phyllis must send no more letters from the Horse Guards; and that Belinda must "resign her pretensions to female elegance till she has lived three weeks without hearing the politics of Button's Coffee House." The Doctor was probably sensible enough of his own defects. And yet there is still a more wearisome set of articles. In accordance with the precedent set by Addison, Johnson indulges in the dreariest of allegories. Criticism, we are told, was the eldest daughter of Labour and Truth, but at last resigned in favour of Time, and left Prejudice and False Taste to reign in company with Fraud and Mischief. Then we have the genealogy of Wit and Learning, and of Satire, the son of Wit and Malice, and an account of their various quarrels, and the decision of Jupiter. Neither are the histories of such semi-allegorical personages as Almamoulin, the son of Nouradin, or of Anningait and Ayut, the Greenland lovers, much more refreshing to modern readers. That Johnson possessed humour of no mean order, we know from Boswell; but no critic could have divined his power from the clumsy gambols in which he occasionally recreates himself. Perhaps his happiest effort is a dissertation upon the advantage of living in garrets; but the humour struggles and gasps dreadfully under the weight of words. There are, he says, "some who would continue blockheads, even on the summit of the Andes or the Peak of Teneriffe. But let not any man be considered as unimprovable till this potent remedy has been tried; for perhaps he was found to be great only in a garret, as the joiner of Antæus was rational in no other place but his own shop."

How could a man of real power write such unendurable stuff? Or how, indeed, could any man come to embody his thoughts in the style of which one other sentence will be a sufficient example? As it is afterwards nearly repeated, it may be supposed to have struck his fancy. The remarks of the philosophers who denounce temerity are, he says, "too just to be disputed and too salutary to be rejected; but there is likewise some danger lest timorous prudence should be inculcated till courage and enterprise are wholly repressed and the mind congested in perpetual in-

activity by the fatal influence of frigorifick wisdom." Is there not some danger, we ask, that the mind will be benumbed into perpetual torpidity by the influence of this soporific sapience? It is still true, however, that this Johnsonese, so often burlesqued and ridiculed, was, as far as we can judge, a genuine product. Macaulay says that it is more offensive than the mannerism of Milton or Burke, because it is a mannerism adopted on principle and sustained by constant effort. Facts do not confirm the theory. Milton's prose style seems to be the result of a conscious effort to run English into classical moulds. Burke's mannerism does not appear in his early writings, and we can trace its development from the imitation of Bolingbroke to the last declamation against the Revolution. But Johnson seems to have written Johnsonese from his cradle. In his first original composition, the preface to Father Lobo's *Abyssinia*, the style is as distinctive as in the *Rambler*. The Parliamentary reports in the *Gentleman's Magazine* make Pitt and Fox* express sentiments which are probably their own in language which is as unmistakeably Johnson's. It is clear that his style, good or bad, was the same from his earliest efforts. It is only in his last book, the *Lives of the Poets*, that the mannerism, though equally marked, is so far subdued as to be tolerable. What he himself called his habit of using "too big words and too many of them" was no affectation, but as much the result of his special idiosyncrasy as his queer gruntings and twitchings. Sir Joshua Reynolds indeed maintained, and we may believe so attentive an observer, that his strange physical contortions were the result of bad habit, not of actual disease. Johnson, he said, could sit as still as other people when his attention was called to it. And possibly, if he had tried, he might have avoided the fault of making "little fishes talk like whales." But how did the bad habits arise? According to Boswell, Johnson professed to have "formed his style" partly upon Sir W. Temple and on "Chambers's Proposal for his Dictionary." The statement was obviously misinterpreted: but there is a glimmering of truth in the theory that the "style was formed"—so far as those words have any meaning—on the "giants of the seventeenth century," and especially upon Sir Thomas Browne. Johnson's taste, in fact, had led him to the study of writers in many ways congenial to him. His favourite book, as we know, was Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. The pedantry did not repel him; the weighty thought rightly attracted him; and the more complex structure of sentence was perhaps a pleasant contrast to an ear saturated with the Gallicized neatness of Addison and Pope. Unluckily, the secret of the old majestic cadence was hopelessly lost. Johnson, though spiritually akin to the giants, was the firmest ally and subject of the diver-fish dynasty which supplanted them. The very faculty of hearing seems to change in obedience to some mysterious law at different stages of intellectual development; and that which to one generation is delicious music

* See, for example, the great debate on February 13th, 1741.

is to another a mere droning of bagpipes or the grinding of monotonous barrel-organs.

Assuming that a man can find perfect satisfaction in the versification of the *Essay on Man*, we can understand his saying of Lycidas, that "the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing." In one of the *Ramblers* we are informed that the accent in blank verse ought properly to rest upon every second syllable throughout the whole line. A little variety must, he admits, be allowed to avoid satiety; but all lines which do not go in the steady jogtrot of alternate beats, as regularly as the piston of a steam-engine, are more or less defective. This simple-minded system naturally makes wild work with the poetry of the "mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies." Milton's harsh cadences are indeed excused on the odd ground, that he who was "vindicating the ways of God to man" might have been condemned for "lavishing much of his attention upon syllables and sounds." Moreover, the poor man did his best by introducing sounding proper names, even when they "added little music to his poem." An example of this feeble, though well-meant expedient, being the passage about the moon, which—

> the Tuscan artist views,
> At evening, from the top of Fiesole
> Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, &c.

This profanity passed at the time for orthodoxy. But the misfortune was, that Johnson, unhesitatingly subscribing to the rules of Queen Anne's critics, is always instinctively feeling after the grander effects of the old school. Nature prompts him to the stateliness of Milton, whilst Art orders him to deal out long and short syllables alternately, and to make them up in parcels of ten, and then tie the parcels together in pairs by the help of a rhyme. The natural utterance of a man of strong perceptions, but of unwieldy intellect, of a melancholy temperament, and capable of very deep, but not vivacious emotions, would be in stately and elaborate phrases. This style was not more distinctly a work of art than the style of Browne or Milton, but, unluckily, it was a work of bad art. He had the misfortune, not so rare as it may sound, to be born in the wrong century; and is, therefore, a giant in fetters; the amplitude of stride is still there, but it is checked into mechanical regularity. A similar phenomenon is observable in other writers of the time. The blank verse of Young, for example, is generally set to Pope's tune with the omission of the rhymes; whilst Thomson, revolting more or less consciously against the canons of his time, too often falls into more pompous mouthing. Shaftesbury, in the previous generation, trying to write poetical prose, becomes as pedantic as Johnson, though in a different style; and Gibbon's mannerism is a familiar example of a similar escape from a monotonous simplicity into awkward complexity. Such writers are like men who have been chilled by what Johnson would call the "frigorifick" influence of the classicism of their fathers, and whose numbed

limbs move stiffly and awkwardly in a first attempt to regain the old liberty. The form, too, of the *Rambler* is unfortunate. Johnson has always Addison before his eyes; to whom it was formerly the fashion to compare him for the same excellent reason which has recently suggested comparisons between Dickens and Thackeray, namely, that their works were published in the same external shape. Unluckily, Johnson gave too much excuse for the comparison by really imitating Addison. He has to make allegories, and to give lively sketches of feminine peculiarities, and to ridicule social foibles of which he was, at most, a distant observer. The inevitable consequence is, that though here and there we catch a glimpse of the genuine man, we are, generally, too much provoked by the awkwardness of his costume to be capable of enjoying or even reading him.

In some of his writings, however, Johnson manages, to a certain extent, to throw off these impediments. In his deep capacity for sympathy and reverence we recognize some of the elements that go to the making of a poet. He is always a man of intuitions rather than of discursive intellect; often keen of vision, though wanting in analytical power. For poetry, indeed, as it is often understood now, or even as it was understood by Pope, he had little enough qualification. He had not the intellectual vivacity implied in the marvellously neat workmanship of Pope, and still less the delight in all natural and artistic beauty which we generally take to be essential to poetic excellence. His contempt for *Lycidas* is sufficiently significant upon that head. Still more characteristic is the incapacity to understand Spenser, which comes out incidentally in his remarks upon some of those imitations, which even in the middle of the eighteenth century showed that the sensibility to the purest form of poetry was not quite extinct amongst us. But there is a poetry, though we sometimes seem to forget it, which is the natural expression of deep moral sentiment; and of this Johnson has written enough to reveal very genuine power. The touching verses upon the death of Levett are almost as pathetic as Cowper; and fragments of the two imitations of Juvenal have struck deep enough to be not quite forgotten. We still quote the lines about pointing a moral and adorning a tale, which conclude a really noble passage. We are too often reminded of his melancholy musings over the

> Fears of the brave and follies of the wise,

and a few of the concluding lines of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, in which he answers the question whether man must of necessity

> Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate,

in helplessness and ignorance, may have something of a familiar ring. We are to give thanks, he says,

> For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
> For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
> For faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
> Counts death kind nature's signal for retreat;

These goods for man, the laws of heaven ordain,
These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain,
With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

Some of these lines, if I am not mistaken, are noble in expression, as well as lofty and tender in feeling. Johnson, like Wordsworth, or even more deeply than Wordsworth, had felt all the "heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world;" and, though he stumbles a little in the narrow limits of his versification, he bears himself nobly, and manages to put his heart into his poetry. Coleridge's paraphrase of the well-known lines, "Let observation with extensive observation, observe mankind from China to Peru," would prevent us from saying that he had shaken off his verbiage. He has not the felicity of Goldsmith's *Traveller*; but his ponderous lines show genuine vigour, and can be excluded from poetry only by the help of an arbitrary classification.

The fullest expression, however, of Johnson's feeling is undoubtedly to be found in *Rasselas*. The inevitable comparison with Voltaire's *Candide*, which, by an odd coincidence, appeared almost simultaneously, suggests some curious reflections. The resemblance between the moral of the two books is so strong that, as Johnson remarked, it would have been difficult not to suppose that one had given a hint to the other but for the chronological difficulty. The contrast, indeed, is as marked as the likeness. *Candide* is not adapted for family reading, whereas *Rasselas* might be a textbook for young ladies studying English in a convent. *Candide*, whatever the disgust which it may cause, not only to the orthodox but to the reverent mind, is a marvel of clearness and vivacity; whereas to read *Rasselas* is about as exhilarating as to wade knee-deep through a sandy desert. Voltaire and Johnson, however, the great sceptic and the last of the true old Tories, coincide pretty well in their view of the world, and in the remedy which they suggest. The world is, they agree, full of misery, and the optimism which would deny the reality of the misery is childish. *Il faut cultiver notre jardin* is the last word of *Candide*, and Johnson's teaching, both here and elsewhere, may be summed up in the words "Work, and don't whine." It need not be considered here, nor, perhaps, is it quite plain, what speculative conclusions Voltaire meant to draw from his teaching. The peculiarity of Johnson is that he is apparently indifferent to any such conclusion. A dogmatic assertion that the world is on the whole a scene of misery, may be pressed into the service of different philosophies. Johnson asserted the opinion resolutely, both in writing and in conversation, but apparently never troubled himself with any inferences but such as have a directly practical tendency. He was no "speculatist"—a word which now strikes us as having an American twang, but which was familiar to the lexicographer. His only excursion to the borders of such regions was in the very forcible review of Soane Jenyns, who had made a jaunty attempt to explain the origin of evil by the help of a few of Pope's epigrams. Johnson's sledge-hammer smashes his flimsy platitudes to pieces with an energy too good for such a foe. For speculation, properly so called, there

was no need. The review, like *Rasselas*, is simply a vigorous protest against the popular attempt to make things pleasant by a feeble dilution of the most watery kind of popular preaching. He has no trouble in remarking that the evils of poverty are not alleviated by calling it "want of riches," and that there is a poverty which involves want of necessaries. Such consolation, indeed, came rather awkwardly from the elegant country gentleman to the poor scholar who had just known by experience what it was to live upon fourpence-halfpenny a day. Johnson resolutely looks facts in the face, and calls ugly things by their right names. Men, he tells us over and over again, are wretched, and there is no use in denying it. This doctrine appears in his familiar talk, and even in the papers which he meant to be light reading. He begins the prologue to a comedy with the words:—

> Pressed with the load of life, the weary mind
> Surveys the general toil of human kind.

In the *Life of Savage* he makes the common remark that the lives of many of the greatest teachers of mankind have been miserable. The explanation to which he inclines is that they have not been more miserable than their neighbours, but that their misery has been more conspicuous. His melancholy view of life may have been caused simply by his unfortunate constitution; for everybody sees in the disease of his own liver a disorder of the universe; but it was also intensified by the natural reaction of a powerful nature against the fluent optimism of the time, which expressed itself in Pope's aphorism, Whatever is, is right. The strongest men of the time revolted against that attempt to cure a deep-seated disease by a few fine speeches. The form taken by Johnson's revolt is characteristic. His nature was too tender and too manly to incline to Swift's misanthropy. Men might be wretched, but he would not therefore revile them as filthy Yahoos. He was too reverent and cared too little for abstract thought to share the scepticism of Voltaire. In this miserable world the one worthy object of ambition is to do one's duty, and the one consolation deserving the name is to be found in religion. That Johnson's religious opinions sometimes took the form of rather grotesque superstition may be true; and it is easy enough to ridicule some of its manifestations. He took the creed of his day without much examination of the evidence upon which its dogmas rested; but a writer must be thoughtless indeed who was more inclined to laugh at his superficial oddities, than to admire the reverent spirit and the brave self-respect with which he struggled through a painful life. The protest of *Rasselas* against optimism is therefore radically different from the protest of Voltaire. The Frenchman is aiming, with an irritating flippancy, though not without quick feeling, at popular theology; the Englishman desires to impress upon us the futility of all human enjoyments, with a view to deepen the solemnity of our habitual tone of thought. It is true, indeed, that the evil is dwelt upon more forcibly than the remedy. The book is all the more impressive. We are almost appalled by the gloomy strength which sees so forcibly the misery of the world and rejects

so unequivocally all the palliatives of sentiment and philosophy. The melancholy is intensified by the ponderous style, which suggests a man weary of a heavy burden. The air seems to be filled with what Johnson once called "inspissated gloom." *Rasselas*, one may say, has a narrow escape of being a great book, though it is ill calculated for the hasty readers of to-day. Indeed, the defects are serious enough. The class of writing to which it belongs demands a certain dramatic picturesqueness to point the moral effectively. Not only the longwinded sentences, but the slow evolution of thought and the deliberation with which he works out his pictures of misery, make the general effect dull beside such books as *Candide* or *Gulliver's Travels*. A touch of epigrammatic exaggeration is very much needed; and yet anybody who has the courage to read it through will admit that Johnson is not an unworthy guide into those gloomy regions of imagination, which we all visit sometimes, and which it is as well to visit in good company.

After his fashion, Johnson is a fair representative of Greatheart. His melancholy is distinguished from that of feebler men by the strength of the conviction that "it will do no good to whine." We know his view of the great prophet of the Revolutionary school. "Rousseau," he said to Boswell's astonishment, "is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations." That is a fine specimen of the good Johnsonese prejudices of which we hear so much; and, of course, it is easy to infer that Johnson was an ignorant bigot, who had not in any degree taken the measure of the great moving forces of his time. Nothing, indeed, can be surer than that Johnson cared very little for the new gospel of the rights of man. His truly British contempt for all such fancies ("for anything I see," he once said, "foreigners are fools") is one of his strongest characteristics. Now, Rousseau and his like took a view of the world as it was quite as melancholy as Johnson's. They inferred that it ought to be turned upside down, assured that the millennium would begin as soon as a few revolutionary dogmas were accepted. All their remedies appeared to the excellent Doctor as so much of that cant of which it was a man's first duty to clear his mind. The evils of life were far too deeply seated to be caused or cured by kings or demagogues. One of the most popular commonplaces of the day was the mischief of luxury. That we were all on the high road to ruin on account of our wealth, our corruption, and the growth of the national debt, was the text of any number of political agitators. The whole of this talk was, to his mind, so much whining and cant. Luxury did no harm, and the mass of the people, as indeed was in one sense obvious enough, had only too little of it. The pet "state of nature" of theorists was a silly figment. The genuine savage was little better than an animal; and a savage woman, whose contempt for civilized life had prompted her to escape to the forest, was simply a "speaking cat." The natural equality of mankind was mere moon-

shine. So far is it from being true, he says, that no two people can be together for half an hour without one acquiring an evident superiority over the other. Subordination is an essential element of human happiness. A Whig stinks in his nostrils because to his eye modern Whiggism is "a negation of all principles." As he said of Priestley's writings, it unsettles everything and settles nothing. "He is a cursed Whig, a *bottomless* Whig as they all are now," was his description apparently of Burke. Order, in fact, is a vital necessity; what particular form it may take matters comparatively little; and therefore all revolutionary dogmas were chimerical as an attack upon the inevitable conditions of life and mischievous so far as productive of useless discontent. We need not ask what mixture of truth and falsehood there may be in these principles. Of course, a Radical, or even a respectable Whig, like Macaulay, who believed in the magical efficacy of the British Constitution, might shriek or laugh at such doctrine. Johnson's political pamphlets, besides the defects natural to a writer who was only a politician by accident, advocate the most retrograde doctrines. Nobody at the present day thinks that the Stamp Act was an admirable or justifiable measure; or would approve of telling the Americans that they ought to have been grateful for their long exemption instead of indignant at the imposition. "We do not put a calf into the plough; we wait till he is an ox"—was not a judicious taunt. He was utterly wrong; and, if everybody who is utterly wrong in a political controversy deserves unmixed contempt, there is no more to be said for him. We might indeed argue that Johnson was in some ways entitled to the sympathy of enlightened people. His hatred of the Americans was complicated by his hatred of slaveowners. He anticipated Lincoln in proposing the emancipation of the negroes as a military measure. His uniform hatred for the slave trade scandalised poor Boswell, who held that its abolition would be equivalent to "shutting the gates of mercy on mankind." His language about the blundering tyranny of the English rule in Ireland would satisfy Mr. Froude, though he would hardly have loved a Home Ruler. He denounces the frequency of capital punishment and the harshness of imprisonment for debt, and he invokes a compassionate treatment of the outcasts of our streets as warmly as the more sentimental Goldsmith. His conservatism may be at times obtuse, but it is never of the cynical variety. He hates cruelty and injustice as righteously as he hates anarchy. Indeed, Johnson's contempt for mouthing agitators of the Wilkes and Junius variety is one which may be shared by most thinkers who would not accept his principles. There is a vigorous passage in the *False Alarm* which is scarcely unjust to the patriots of the day. He describes the mode in which petitions are generally got up. They are sent from town to town, and the people flock to see what is to be sent to the king. "One man signs because he hates the Papists; another because he has vowed destruction to the turnpikes; one because it will vex the parson; another because he owes his landlord nothing; one because he is rich; another because he is poor; one to show that he is

not afraid, and another to show that he can write." The people, he thinks, are as well off as they are likely to be under any form of government; and grievances about general warrants or the rights of juries in libel cases are not really felt so long as they have enough to eat and drink and wear. The error, we may probably say, was less in the contempt for a very shallow agitation than in the want of perception that deeper causes of discontent were accumulating in the background. Wilkes in himself was a worthless demagogue; but Wilkes was the straw carried by the rising tide of revolutionary sentiment, to which Johnson was entirely blind. Yet whatever we may think of his political philosophy, the value of these solid sturdy prejudices is undeniable. To the fact that Johnson was the typical representative of a large class of Englishmen we owe it that the Society of Rights did not develope into a Jacobin Club. The fine phrases on which Frenchmen became intoxicated never turned the heads of men impervious to abstract theories and incapable of dropping substances for shadows. There are evils in each temperament; but it is as well that some men should carry into politics that rooted contempt for whining which lay so deep in Johnson's nature. He scorned the sickliness of the Rousseau school as, in spite of his constitutional melancholy, he scorned valetudinarianism whether of the bodily or the spiritual order. He saw evil enough in the world to be heartily, at times too roughly, impatient of all fine ladies who made a luxury of grief or of demagogues who shrieked about theoretical grievances which did not sensibly affect the happiness of one man in a thousand. The lady would not have time to nurse her sorrows if she had been a washerwoman; the grievances with which the demagogues yelled themselves hoarse could hardly be distinguished amidst the sorrows of the vast majority condemned to keep starvation at bay by unceasing labour. His incapacity for speculation makes his pamphlets worthless beside Burke's philosophical discourses; but the treatment, if wrong and defective on the theoretical side, is never contemptible. Here, as elsewhere, he judges by his intuitive aversions. He rejects too hastily whatever seems insipid or ill-flavoured to his spiritual appetite. Like all the shrewd and sensible part of mankind, he condemns as mere moonshine what may be really the first faint dawn of a new daylight. But then his intuitions are noble, and his fundamental belief is the vital importance of order, of religion, and of morality, coupled with a profound conviction, surely not erroneous, that the chief sources of human suffering lie far deeper than any of the remedies proposed by constitution-mongers and fluent theorists. The literary version of these prejudices, or principles, is given most explicitly in the *Lives of the Poets*—the book which is now the most readable of Johnson's performances, and which most frequently recalls his conversational style. Indeed, it is an admirable book in its way, and but for one or two defects might enjoy a much more decided vitality. It is full of shrewd sense and righteous as well as keen estimates of men and things. The *Life of Savage*, written in earlier times, is the best existing portrait of that

large class of authors who, in Johnson's phrase, "hung loose upon society" in the days of the Georges. The lives of Pope, Dryden, and others have scarcely been superseded, though much fuller information has since come to light; and they are all well worth reading. But the criticism, like the politics, is woefully out of date. Johnson's division between the shams and the realities deserves all respect in both cases, but in both cases he puts many things on the wrong side of the dividing line. His hearty contempt for sham pastorals and sham love-poetry will be probably shared by modern readers. "Who will hear of sheep and goats and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets through five acts? Such scenes please barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away as men grow wise and nations grow learned." But elsewhere he blunders into terrible misapprehensions. Where he errs by simply repeating the accepted rules of the Pope school, he for once talks mere second-hand nonsense. But his independent judgments are interesting even when erroneous. His unlucky assault upon *Lycidas*, already noticed, is generally dismissed with a pitying shrug of the shoulders. "Among the flocks and copses and flowers appear the heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone; how one god asks another god what has become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves can excite no sympathy, he who thus praises will confer no honour."

Of course every tyro in criticism has his answer ready; he can discourse about the æsthetic tendencies of the *Renaissance* period, and explain the necessity of placing oneself at a writer's point of view, and entering into the spirit of the time. He will add, perhaps, that *Lycidas* is a test of poetical feeling, and that he who does not appreciate its exquisite melody has no music in his soul. The same writer who will tell us all this, and doubtless with perfect truth, would probably have adopted Pope or Johnson's theory with equal confidence if he had lived in the last century. *Lycidas* repelled Johnson by incongruities, which from his point of view were certainly offensive. Most modern readers, I will venture to suggest, feel the same annoyances, though they have not the courage to avow them freely. If poetry is to be judged exclusively by the simplicity and force with which it expresses sincere emotion, *Lycidas* would hardly convince us of Milton's profound sorrow for the death of King, and must be condemned accordingly. To the purely pictorial or musical effects of a poem Johnson was nearly blind; but that need not suggest a doubt as to the sincerity of his love for the poetry which came within the range of his own sympathies. Every critic is in effect criticizing himself as well as his author; and I confess that to my mind an obviously sincere record of impressions, however onesided they may be, is infinitely refreshing, as revealing at least

the honesty of the writer. The ordinary run of criticism generally implies nothing but the extreme desire of the author to show that he is open to the very last new literary fashion. I should welcome a good assault upon Shakspeare which was not prompted by a love of singularity; and there are half-a-dozen popular idols—I have not the courage to name them—upon whom I could witness a genuine attack with entire equanimity, not to say some complacency. If Johnson's blunder in this case implied sheer stupidity, one can only say that honest stupidity is a much better thing than clever insincerity or fluent repetition of second-hand dogmas. But in fact, this dislike of *Lycidas*, and a good many instances of critical incapacity might be added, is merely a misapplication of a very sound principle. The hatred of cant and humbug and affectation of all vanity is a most salutary ingredient even in poetical criticism. Johnson, with his natural ignorance of that historical method, the exaltation of which threatens to become a part of our contemporary cant, made the pardonable blunder of supposing that what would have been gross affectation in Gray must have been affectation in Milton. His ear had been too much corrupted by the contemporary school to enable him to recognize beauties which would even have shone through some conscious affectation. He had the rare courage—for, even then, Milton was one of the tabooed poets—to say what he thought as forcibly as he could say it; and he has suffered the natural punishment of plain speaking. It must, of course, be admitted that a book embodying such principles is doomed to become more or less obsolete, like his political pamphlets. And yet, as significant of the writer's own character, as containing many passages of sound judgment, expressed in forcible language, it is still, though not a great book, really impressive within the limits of its capacity.

After this imperfect survey of Johnson's writings, it only remains to be noticed that all the most prominent peculiarities are the very same which give interest to his spoken utterances. The doctrine is the same, though the preacher's manner has changed. His melancholy is not so heavy-eyed and depressing in his talk, for we catch him at moments of excitement; but it is there, and sometimes bursts out emphatically and unexpectedly. The prospect of death often clouds his mind, and he bursts into tears when he thinks of his past sufferings. His sacred love of truth and uncompromising hatred of cant in all its innumerable transmutations, prompts half his most characteristic sayings. His queer prejudices take a humorous form and give a delightful zest to his conversation. His contempt for abstract speculation comes out when he vanquishes Berkeley, not with a grin, but by "striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone." His arguments, indeed, never seem to have owed much to what is generally meant by logic. He scarcely waits till his pistol misses fire to knock you down with the butt-end. The merit of his best sayings is not that they compress an argument into a phrase, but that they are vivid expressions of an intuitive judgment. In other words, they are always humorous rather than witty. He holds

his own belief with so vigorous a grasp that all argumentative devices for loosening it seem to be thrown away. As Boswell says, he is through your body in an instant without any preliminary parade; he gives a deadly lunge, but cares little for skill of fence. "We know we are free and there's an end of it" is his characteristic summary of a perplexed bit of metaphysics; and he would evidently have no patience to wander through the labyrinths in which men like Jonathan Edwards delighted to perplex themselves. We should have been glad to see a fuller report of one of those conversations in which Burke "wound into a subject like a serpent," and contrast his method with Johnson's downright hitting. Boswell had not the power, even if he had the will, to give an adequate account of such a "wit combat."

That such a mind should express itself most forcibly in speech is intelligible enough. Conversation was to him not merely a contest, but a means of escape from himself. "I may be cracking my joke," he said to Boswell, "and cursing the sun: Sun, how I hate thy beams!" The phrase sounds exaggerated, but it was apparently his settled conviction that the only remedy for melancholy, except indeed the religious remedy, was in hard work or in the rapture of conversational strife. His little circle of friends called forth his humour as the House of Commons excited Chatham's eloquence; and both of them were inclined to mouth too much when deprived of the necessary stimulus. Chatham's set speeches were as pompous as Johnson's deliberate writing. They resemble the chemical bodies which acquire entirely new properties when raised beyond a certain degree of temperature. Indeed, we frequently meet touches of the conversational Johnson in his controversial writing. *Taxation no Tyranny* is at moments almost as pithy as Swift, though the style is never so simple. The celebrated Letter to Chesterfield, and the letter in which he tells MacPherson that he will not be "deterred from detecting what he thinks a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian," are as good specimens of the smashing repartee as anything in Boswell's reports. Nor, indeed, does his pomposity sink to mere verbiage so often as might be supposed. It is by no means easy to translate his ponderous phrases into simple words without losing some of their meaning. The structure of the sentences is compact, though they are too elaborately balanced and stuffed with superfluous antitheses. The language might be simpler, but it is not a mere sham aggregation of words. His written style, however faulty in other respects, is neither slipshod nor ambiguous, and passes into his conversational style by imperceptible degrees. The radical identity is intelligible, though the superficial context is certainly curious. We may perhaps say that his century, unfavourable to him as a writer, gave just what he required for talking. If, as is sometimes said, the art of conversation is disappearing, it is because society has become too large and diffuse. The good talker, as, indeed, the good artist of every kind, depends upon the tacit cooperation of the social medium. The chorus, as, indeed, Johnson has shown very well in one of the *Ramblers*, is

quite as essential as the main performer. Nobody talks well in London, because everybody has constantly to meet a fresh set of interlocutors, and is as much put out as a musician who has to be always learning a new instrument. A literary dictator has ceased to be a possibility, so far as direct personal influence is concerned. In the club Johnson knew how every blow would tell, and in the rapid thrust and parry dropped the heavy style which muffled his utterances in print. He had to deal with concrete illustrations, instead of expanding into platitudinous generalities. The obsolete theories which impair the value of his criticism and his politics, become amusing in the form of pithy sayings, though they weary us when asserted in new expositions. His greatest literary effort, the *Dictionary*, has of necessity become antiquated in use, and, in spite of the intellectual vigour indicated, can hardly be commended for popular reading. And thus but for the inimitable Boswell, it must be admitted that Johnson would probably have sunk very deeply into oblivion. A few good sayings would have been preserved by Mrs. Thrale and others, or have been handed down by tradition, and doubtless assigned in process of time to Sydney Smith and other conversational celebrities. A few couplets from the *Vanity of Human Wishes* would not yet have been submerged, and curious readers would have recognised the power of *Rasselas*, and been delighted with some shrewd touches in the *Lives of the Poets*. But with all desire to magnify critical insight, it must be admitted that that man would have shown singular penetration, and been regarded as an eccentric commentator, who had divined the humour and the fervour of mind which lay hid in the remains of the huge lexicographer. And yet when we have once recognised his power, we can see it everywhere indicated in his writings, though by an unfortunate fatality the style or the substance was always so deeply affected by the faults of the time, that the product is never thoroughly sound. His tenacious conservatism caused him to cling to decaying materials for the want of anything better, and he has suffered the natural penalty. He was a great force wasted, so far as literature was concerned, because the fashionable costume of the day hampered the free exercise of his powers, and because the only creeds to which he could attach himself were in the phase of decline and inanition. A century earlier or later he might have succeeded in expressing himself through books as well as through his talk; but it is not given to us to choose the time of our birth, and some very awkward consequences follow.

On the Side of the Maids.

If we grant that all laws and social conditions are the result of experiment and growth, and are therefore neither divine nor unelastic, we must regard certain class changes into which we are drifting as things to be accepted, not fought against, and hold it wiser to make the best of them rather than the worst. The subversion of present arrangements is not necessarily unrighteous because subversive; it may be just the contrary; and such an entire revolution in the relations, say as those between masters and servants, probable in the near future, may be the expression of a higher sense of justice and sincerity of living than anything we have hitherto put into practice. For the present at least we will suppose that it is.

No one is satisfied with things as they are. The masters resent the endeavour of servants to better their condition; the servants resent the endeavour of masters to keep them in the old inferior grooves; the first complain that servants are not what they were—forgetting to add that they themselves too are not what they were; the last regard their employers as their enemies *ex officio*, and their own position in the family as that of household Ishmaelites who must fight if they would not be oppressed. They also hold themselves as underpaid and generally ill-treated; and right or wrong they have determined to make better terms for themselves than those to which they have been bound heretofore.

In this age of strikes it seems strange that they have not had a strike in the kitchen as well as in the workshops. Perhaps the individual character of the service, the isolated position of the servants, the difficulties of meeting to combine—of fixing on a maximum of work and a minimum of wages—of arranging anything like arbitrary details—will always prevent an organized strike among them. This, however, may take place in a small community of level averages, or in large cities in houses of a certain calibre, where the servants are divided into superiors and subordinates, and where the work does not overlap in any department. The superior servants of such establishments as these can define their terms with more precision than is possible in small middle-class houses of two or three maids at most. It is in these very middle-class houses, however, where the sharpest pinch is felt, and where the greatest changes have to come.

The middle class is comparatively a modern invention, very faintly representing the old burghers from which it sprang, and in nothing more than in its treatment of servants. If we want to see anything

analogous to our own former state of things, we must go abroad, notably to France. There we find the *bonne* treated with a friendliness, a familiarity, and granted personal privileges, unknown to us in England; and there service has consequently retained much of that old-world closeness of attachment which we have almost entirely lost at home. Here in England we have risen above our servants in all the material appliances of life, and habits and manners have followed suit. So far from retaining anything like friendliness in our personal intercourse, a lady who "talks to her servants" is accounted wanting in propriety of feeling and false to the duty she owes her superior position. But we have sought to keep them in their old circumstance of inferiority while we have vacated our own of kindly companionship. The whole gist of the strife lies in this one fact. The home character of domestic service has gone, and it is now merely a business without personal affection or individual ties, wherein time and labour are carried to the best market and sold for the highest price they will fetch, like any other commodities. But employers still speak of their servants as "dependants on their bounty," and as "eating their bread all the same," as when the castle table fed its hordes of pauper serfs bound to render the service of their lives in return for the coarse means of living liberally tossed to them and the dogs alike; and, though they have abandoned the patriarchal protection of masterhood, they still demand the devoted fidelity which was its return. In other words, they desire to be free from the obligations of proprietorship while retaining the submissive service of slaves.

Remnants of the absolutism of slavery still linger in the conventional arrangements of domestic service. Only in quite exceptional houses are servants held to have any rights beyond the elemental ones of food, lodging, and wages. The mistress may of her own free grace grant privileges; that is another matter; but the kindest-hearted mistress treats it as an impertinence when her maids stipulate for rights, say in the matter of a fixed holiday, beyond their portion of each Sunday in rotation. Servants are assumed to have no right to a holiday save at rare, indeterminate intervals. Yet the confined and incessant nature of their work would seem to make frequent breaks almost necessary to their well-being. A servant's work is never done potentially, if even actually. She is liable to be rung up at all hours; her very meals are not secure from interruption; she has no time that is absolutely her own; and even her sleep is not sacred. In the dead of night something may be wanted, and she must get up to bring or to do it. Can there be a choice of agency between a delicate, consumptive maid, fatigued with her day's hard work, and a buxom, well-constituted lady, whose greatest exertion has been a drive in the park and the handing to her man a few cards to be left at friends' doors? The one is a servant, the other a lady; and physiological conditions stand nowhere in the face of such divine distinctions. Any one who should propose that the heaviest end of the domestic stick should be laid on the stoutest shoulders, irrespective of condition, would

be laughed at as an impossible dreamer, if not condemned as an unrighteous one; and we might as well talk to a high caste Hindoo of the common humanity of a Brahmin and a Pariah as to English gentlefolks of the common humanity of a mistress and her maid. Personal fitness and natural rights have no place in the artificial arrangements of society, and domestic service is no exception to the rule.

Let us consider for a moment what the life of a servant is, forgetting all that we have been taught of the sacredness of present conditions. She lives under ground, and she either sleeps underground or just below the roof. Damp, drains, want of efficient ventilation, with the constant presence of draughts, surround her in winter; in summer these are supplemented by a furious fire for many hours in the day. Up under the tiles she has the bleakest room in winter and the hottest in summer; but she is not allowed a fire to warm her chilly garret during the one—perhaps indeed her room has no fire-place—and she must gasp through the sweltering nights of the other as she best can. Her food is of poorer quality and less appetizing than the family's; for if the bread and meat are the same, other things as important are not. She comes up from the country and is plunged at once from the fresh air and free expanse of her old surroundings into the dismal darkness of a London kitchen. But she has come to London, you say, of her own free will, and the bustle and brightness of the great city make amends for her dreary "place." When does she see this bustle, this brightness? On her Sunday out the shops are shut; modern housekeeping has done away with personal marketing; and even when she gets the gift of an evening to herself she sees things only in the unnatural light of the flaring gas, and if there is more rollick in the street there is less amusement. She is not, like the French *bonne*, the companion of her mistress to the lively markets, down the gay boulevards, or for long sweet summer hours in the gardens of the Tuileries or the Luxembourg. Fresh air and the brisk circulation of out-of-door life do not count in England as necessary for our poor maids; as little as the fêtes, the sight-seeing, the friendly companionship of the mistress, which form the rule of middle-class life in France. We are a people of grim caste and stern work, and servants have to yield to the social powers above them and work like the rest; only they yield more, work harder, and enjoy less, and have infinitely less liberty than the rest.

In no other trade or profession is there such a want of personal freedom, such continuous command, such arbitrary denial as in this. Take the list of what is denied in an ordinary well-conducted house. No followers, no friends in the kitchen, no laughing to be heard above stairs, no romping for young girls to whom romping is an instinct all the same as with lambs and kittens, no cessation of work save at meal-times, no getting out for half an hour into the bright sunshine save "on the sly," or after the not always pleasant process of asking leave; and above all, no education for the fancy or the intellect beyond a dull magazine for Sunday

reading, which is held quite sufficient recreation for lonely Betty moping in the dreary kitchen on the afternoon of her Sunday in. All grinding work and claustral monotony, with the world seen only through the gratings of the area window as the holiday folks flock to and fro—this is English domestic service. And then we wonder that our maids, touched by the fever of this ardent, restless Present, revolt against it and think their condition hard.

But mistresses say they should be very happy. To be sure they have left their friends and associates, their early affections, their treasured memories. They are among strangers, hard worked and horribly dull, without a friend to whom to cling, only employers to please and strange tempers to conciliate. May be they suffer from home-sickness, or from heart-sickness, which is worse; but they are sufficiently fed, they have no rents or taxes to meet, their anxieties are few, and their wages are punctually paid. What more do they want?—nay, are they not the most to be envied of us all? When they have done their work, is it not pleasure enough for these young women in the prime of life, and with the first flush of that desire for experience inherent in human nature knocking at their hearts, to sit down alone, or two together, in the silent kitchen with a basketful of sewing for their evening's amusement? Perhaps the family keeps a butler whose work scarcely exercises his brawny muscles, and whose higher nature is as much considered as the higher nature of the beasts in the fatting yard; perhaps there is a young and sprightly "page boy" of eighteen or twenty. According to the odd self-complacency of English respectability the fact that these young men and women live together, "under our roof," is held sufficient guarantee against everything unbecoming. The Refuges tell a different tale; and if we had to go into causes, we should find the want of more society and the want of more varied pleasures at the root of nine-tenths of the disasters which occur.

If the pleasures of servants are restricted, so is their sphere of education. Suppose for a moment that Betty was detected in any endeavour after improvement beyond the three R.'s? Suppose she set herself to learn French or German, to play the piano, to try her skill in paint and crayons? Would it be allowed? I think not. I think that a literary or artistic maid would rank as twin-sister with an immoral one, and that if she wanted to keep her place she would have to understand that the golden apples of the tree of knowledge never grew for her plucking, and that for a servant to be educated into the region of thought and the æsthetics is a monstrosity calling for condemnation and dismissal. Some employers, and these by no means the minority, lament that servants are taught even to read or write. They maintain that the more ignorant the woman the more likely the machine. And a docile machine, a transferable slave—that is their ideal of a good servant. Yet there is no valid reason why a servant should not be well-educated outside her professional duties—duties, let it be remembered, which cultured women consider so miserably unsatisfying, they think themselves degraded in performing, but which *en*

revanche are held to be all sufficient for the hearts and brains of their poorer sisters. Even intellect and intellectual rights are questions of social status in our free England, and poverty has no claim to knowledge. Why not? A box of crayons on the kitchen-table in the evening would not spoil the pastry in the morning, and a piano below stairs would sound no more inharmoniously than a piano above stairs; and for my own part I cannot see why Betty should not utilise her leisure in higher ways than that eternal sewing which she generally does so ill. Margaret Clement, Sir Thomas More's "ingenious kinswoman" and domestic, was educated in the learned languages and liberal sciences equally with his own daughters. She corresponded with Erasmus, who praised her letters "for their good sense and chaste Latin," and the chances are that she could make fine bread and hog's pudding as well as the most ignorant.

Nor can I understand why Betty may not have her friends and lovers to come and see her, poor wench, all the same as they come to see the young ladies upstairs; nor why the feelings of the family should be outraged, and propriety along with them, if her merry laugh penetrated even to the sacred enclosure of the dining-room and the parlour. This may be rank democracy; and democracy is a word of fear to the British householder; but the recognition of human rights seems to me a better flag under which to fight than the maintenance of arbitrary arrangements by which they are violated.

It is a heresy, as yet, to maintain that the master exists for the servant quite as much as the servant exists for the master. Money is assumed to confer more than the mere power to buy the time and labour which others have to sell. It is assumed to buy the whole being—liberty, affection, mind, freewill, and creed. There are householders who do not allow even her own chapel to their maid. She must go to the parish church with the family, or she takes no service with them. It is the family they say, and the family demands religious uniformity; that is the suppression of inconvenient individualism of conscience below stairs, and minds and souls put into the livery which bodies—at least feminine bodies—refuse to wear. The employer is absolute, the servant is still only his movable serf from whom he demands all he desires, stinting nothing of his own margin while giving back only the stipulated convention. Take the case of a family where there is illness and no sick-nurse is hired. The servants are expected to do their share in the sitting up o' nights and the extra work that must needs be about. And should they refuse they would be considered unwomanly and inhuman, and would probably lose their situations with a bad mark against their characters. But were they themselves to feel ill, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand they would be sent to the hospital or their own homes; and the mistress would justify herself for the expulsion in her hour of need of the woman who had lost her health in her service—and her friends would justify her too. Indeed mistresses speak of their maids' diseases, for the most part, in an injured tone, as if they were personally aggrieved by them, and say with

a provoked air, "How tiresome!" when Molly is down with housemaid's knee, or Betty has brought scarlet fever or smallpox—and her own death—into the household which has money enough to escape while there is yet time and no harm done to the sacred members of the upper chambers. Servants have a proverb among themselves, mournfully true and as mournfully suggestive: "Service is no inheritance." There is not only the demoralising impossibility of drawing any great prizes in the sordid lottery of brooms and saucepans into which they have put their all—not only the impossibility of chance of making a solid provision for their future, save in the case of the upper servants of high class houses—but no length or fidelity of services constitutes a *claim* for support when the working-time is over and old age has come on. Even in the case of a nurse who stands nearest to the family, and who has to give more than mere time and professional deftness—a loving care that wages cannot buy nor repay—if she is to the mind of her mistress she is kept during the baby years when she is wanted, but no sooner is the nursery empty than she is found superfluous and dismissed. To be sure in some good loving households she is made one of the family for her life; but these are comparatively rare instances, and, for the most part, Nurse, however devoted she has been, is kept just for so long as she is of use in her department and not a moment beyond. All her maternal care of the children, her close attendance that rarely knows a break, the patience she must have with fractious tempers—a patience that the mother could not exercise but that she expects to buy from a stranger for so much money and other considerations—her watchful days and sleepless nights, all are forgotten if a ruffle comes upon the smooth surface of the conventional manners prescribed for servants, or if she has outlived the repeopling of the cradle. And if this is true of Nurse it is doubly so of every other servant. With what conscience then can we demand, as we do, energies, devotion, self-sacrifice beyond the stipulated tale of tasks, when we give on our side absolutely nothing but the bare bones of our enforced obligations?

If the servants of the middle classes have wrongs and sorrows, what shall we say of the lodging-house slaves—of the wretched maids of all work who fill our hospitals, our unions, our lunatic asylums? From our absurd liking to be housekeeping troglodytes, living in brick and mortar cells, compartmented, as our modern expression of cave-life, rather than honestly attempt co-operation, we submit to every kind of inconvenience, and commit therewith injustice. When we leave home we go into dirty lodgings, where the cooking is bad and the service worse; where the landlady is dishonest and the drudge incompetent; and where, at the end of the week, we find we have spent nearly as much for our tough steaks and dingy rooms as we should had we gone to an hotel, and shared appliances with our fellow-creatures—all because we will not eat at one table while a couple of strangers eat at another, and because we object to meeting people we do not know on the stairs. If it was only for the difference there is in the lives of the servants of an hotel or lodging-

house, we ought in justice to prefer the former. In a lodging-house is neither method nor order, neither leisure for the drudge nor satisfaction for the lodgers. Every one considers himself entitled to be served at his own hours and without delay. And if two or three have the same hours, each considers himself entitled to be served first. What are the results to the poor maid of all work no one needs to be told. Ignorant, inept, friendless, she has only the choice between her miserable serfdom and the streets. She knows nothing that the world wants at her hands. Reared in poverty and brutish ignorance from the beginning, she is a slave with a movable master, but immovable conditions; and she receives a slave's portion. In an hotel, on the contrary, the servants have their work clearly defined and exactly apportioned. It is an orderly, almost scientific arrangement of time and duties; and if a servant chooses, she need never hear a harsh word nor receive an order. And it is not fixed work, even if heavy, so much as interruption, following after, and scoldings, to which servants object. And if they are good for anything, and know their business, they will not submit to the unmethodical dictation, the constant herding and hounding which some mistresses hold as the very soul and perfection of housekeeping. For even housework is following the scientific tendencies of the age, and the constant phrase of a servant, "I know my business," expresses the more professional and less domestic aspect characteristic of modern service.

No lady feels herself degraded by the use of harsh language to her servants, just as no slave-holding lady feels herself degraded if she strikes her slave or orders her out to be flogged. And no one acknowledges that she has been unjust, or apologises to the maid she has wronged. Here again the maintenance of an artificial social status is held of a higher quality than truth, justice, generosity, or repentance. The servant, for her part however, is required to bear everything without a murmur. Accused wrongfully, she must not justify herself. "I allow no answers," says the mistress, severely. When harshly spoken to she must have only the soft answers which are said to turn away wrath. When fretted, nervous, ill, in trouble, she must wear the same smooth manner, the same placid face, which also are parts of her spiritual livery; and whatever the private foxes hidden beneath her cloak, she must be at all times patient, willing, respectful, and submissive. She must have neither temper nor nerves; neither brooding fancies nor quick resentments. She must abandon every personal affection and the outward show of all personal desires when she enters this cold stranger's house; and I have often heard mistresses complain, as of a wrong done themselves, when a faithful servant is leaving to be married, or a valuable one is changing to better herself. I have heard, too, the fiercest indignation expressed because a cook left suddenly, on the morning of a dinner-party, to go to her dying mother. "So selfish, so inconsiderate—she might have waited over the day; and what am I to do?" said the house mistress, passionately. Of a surety the smooth serving of a dinner counted more to that poor small

soul than the last farewell of mother and daughter, and the tragedy of life and love in a cottage.

This changing to better herself, of which mention was just now made, is a sharp thorn in the side of mistresses who have good servants, whom they wish to keep at subventions under market value. That Betty should leave for the sake of the man she loves, to have her own home where she is mistress, and to gather little children about her knees to call her mother, is bad enough; but to leave for the sake of five pounds a year is monstrous. That the master should leave his flock, if a parson; his editor, if a journalist; his company, if an officer; his post, whatever his profession and whatever his personal ties, for a higher salary, is only what is just to his wife and children and wise on his own account; for is not the right and wrong of every question determined by the social condition of the actor? Again, if the mistress really cared for Betty, she would give her that extra five pounds to keep her. But this would be considered spoiling her; so she is let to go, and is held to have behaved ill for going.

The simple fact is, that with all society changing above and around us, we want to keep the lower-lying classes—and notably the servants—from changing too. A generation or two ago country people stayed at home throughout their lives, with rarely a break; and a visit to London was an event to be remembered for a decade and more. Now everyone everywhere leaves home as a rule once at least in the year; and Paris or Vienna is not farther removed from us to-day than was the country town or the metropolis from our great grandmothers. But when Betty, bitten by the national mania for locomotion, asks to do her little outings, and to go with the cheap trips to this show-place, or to that, or may be only to her friends in town or country, she is considered as a gad-about, and evil things are prophesied of her. So with dress. Our middle-class ladies now spend what a few years ago would have been thought an iniquitous proportion of their income on their backs; and of all fashions afloat, that of simplicity is the only one decried. Following their example, influence filtering downwards, Betty spends largely too. But what is only proper attention to appearances in the mistress is a sin in the maid; though at the bottom of each lies the principle common to all women—desire to attract admiration. I own I cannot see that what is both amiable and antiseptic in the one is evil and corrupting in the other. Women instinctively put a great deal of their self-respect into their attire; and our maids are women before they are servants. They might certainly have better taste and knowledge. They might be more reticent in the matter of colour, and not so fond of cheap and flaring finery. So they would be if they were better taught; and that box of crayons downstairs, with a sideway from the kitchen into the beautiful world of art and harmony, would do more to reform the national taste in dress among the servants and their sisters than all the frowns of great ladies indignant at the ugly imitation of their style, or the exhortation of preachers inveighing against a general instinct as a specialised wrong-doing.

This question, too, is a test of the reality, the logical sincerity of liberal principles. When I hear women who are earnest for the recognition of their own political and professional equality with men speak to their servants as to inferior beings—maintain, indeed, the necessity for this race of inferior beings, by whose degradation they may be exalted, and into whose hands they may fling all their own natural duties, and in so flinging them dishonour them—I know then that they are simply self-seekers, not fighters for truth and justice, envious of others' good things, but unwilling to share their own. Equality "stars" all ways; above, below, and all round; and sincerity has the same form. If the advanced women who now demand the gift of equality from men would first of all grant it to their maids, the world would be better disposed towards them than it is. Let them take an educated class of women into their houses, as helpers, not menials; let them impose on themselves the absolute rule of treating these helpers with respect, the same kind of respect say as that with which a commanding officer treats his subordinates, the colonel and the captain; let them honour their natural work by carrying to its fit performance intellect, zeal, and education; let them bring back the old patriarchal spirit of friendliness and household relationship by raising the intellectual and personal status of the maid, and they will then get rid of one of the most galling sores of modern home life. Or failing this, let them then accept the alternative of the purely professional character of domestic service, and cease to complain of a state of things which they could but will not alter. It cannot be all on one side—the devotion from below characteristic of the patriarchal times, without the friendliness and close companionship from above; professional accuracy in the maid and personal interference in the mistress. It must be a state of reciprocal duties, reciprocal advantages. It is for the mistress to decide by which principle she will stand, and the day is not distant when she will be forced into a decision.

We cannot mop out the Atlantic with a broom. Mrs. Partington tried it and failed; so shall we, and have. For good or ill the tide of social disintegration has set in, and all classes alike are in a state of inchoate revolution and "unstable equilibrium"—our servants with the rest. We must make the best of the inevitable; and it is ever a wiser thing to head a movement than to be overtaken by it, and perhaps overwhelmed. Of the inevitable, is the changed character of domestic service. The old affectionate and patriarchal relations, when the servants stood in the light of humble friends rather than hireling strangers, have gone, at least for the time. Whether mistresses like it or not, aid it or endeavour to retard it, we shall probably come round to the same relative positions on another and a higher platform. Machinery, by which human hands will be spared the dirty and revolting work they have to do now, will be more and more in use in our homes. This will allow of a more cultivated class of servants, who will thus be brought nearer to their employers because made equal to them in refinement and true culture.

Wages will be higher; and with better wages, a more liberal education, and the automatic performance of distasteful work, there is no reason why servants should not be to all intents and purposes gentlewomen; as much so as milliners, schoolmistresses, and shopkeepers. There is nothing in the fact of work that degrades; it is only the workers who are degraded. With a better class of servants domestic service will lose much of its present character of serfdom, and become more a distinct profession, having its duties, times, and functions accurately defined. Hence it will lose that element of personal humiliation in its enforced obedience to arbitrary tempers, tyrannical command, capricious regulations, and the like, which now fret so painfully the women who find themselves under the rule of women. Co-operation, maybe day-service, will also come into the ordering of the future; and households, as well as society, will have to be remodelled in consideration of the servants, instead of being, as now, organised with no more regard to their lives or welfare than if they were so many cab-horses or black-beetles. The efforts of servants to make service a mere business like any other, unelastic in its details, definite in its requirements, and impersonal and devoid of margins, are efforts demanding the earnest consideration of society; partly because they are embarrassing, partly because they will succeed, mainly because they are just. In the revolution sweeping on so rapidly, those among us will be the wisest and the safest who keep that one step in advance which ensures a free path; and it will be better to recognise the claims of servants to more equality in the matter of education, to personal rights as well as professional duties, to better wages, whereby they may have the possibility of an assured future, such as should be integral to all work, to the recognition that service does not mean slavery even in its most modified aspects—than to have all this forced from us harshly, and with a damaging uprooting, instead of by gradual growth and self-adjusting evolution.

E. L. L.

The Courtier of Misfortune: a Bonapartist Story.

I.

Captain Jean Cœurpreux, of the 5th Algerian Spahis, having been sent to Paris with despatches from Marshal M'Mahon to Marshal Lebœuf, was invited to the last ball given at the Tuileries by Napoleon III.

He was a man of about thirty, with a complexion the colour of leather, clipped hair that stood on end like bristles, and a full brown beard. His uniform was a light-blue loose-fitting jacket called a *dolman*, braided across the front with black silk frogs, and embroidered from the cuffs to within an inch of the shoulders with gold lace of three rows interwoven. His baggy trowsers were scarlet; and he held in his hand a red kepi with the three rows of gold braid which marked his grade, the Spahis having no other head-dress than a kepi even for gala occasions. On Cœurpreux's breast glittered the ribbon and cross of the Legion of Honour, the yellow ribbon and pendant of the *médaille militaire*, which proved he had risen from the ranks, and the three campaigning medals of the Italian, Cochin-China, and Mexican expeditions. Below these hung the white and blue ribbon and silver cross of Pius IX. and the medal of Mentana; also three other medals, two of silver and one of gold, attached to tricoloured ribbons, and showing that the Captain had three times in the course of his career saved human lives. His muscular frame and smileless mien, the large size of the white gloves he wore, and the beard, which is the distinctive token of African service, all helped to mark a man who was no carpet soldier; and he looked embarrassed enough in the palace saloons, where he appeared to know not a soul, and where flitted before him, alert as dragon-flies, all the dandy officers of the crack corps—the Cent-Gardes in their azure tunics and gold aiglets, the Lancers of the Guard in Austrian white, the Guides in emerald and gold, the Artillery of the Guard, the colour of whose uniforms was invisible for the mass of braiding that adorned them, and the whole host of State dignitaries, from diplomatists and senators in blue and gilding to the prefects and deputies in black and silver. Pushed into a corner by this glittering throng, fearful of treading on the skirts of the ladies who streamed by him in a sea of silk and diamonds that made his head whirl, the Captain would evidently have felt much more at home in his saddle, hunting rebel Arabs, than in this place, to which the War Minister had procured him an invitation as a conspicuous, though well-deserved, honour.*

* The *Spahis* are the native cavalry of Algeria, as the *Turcos* are the native infantry: both are mainly officered by Frenchmen; natives being restricted from rising above

Yet leaning in a corner of the noble Salle des Maréchaux, where he had been hemmed in, the Captain cast his serious blue eyes about him as if he were in search of somebody. Twelve years before this ball, and when he was but a quick-hearted boy of eighteen, he had fallen in love with a girl as beautiful as sunlight and a year less than his own age. He was thought too young to marry then; besides which, though a gentleman, he had no money to expect; so the girl's parents and his own had cut the courtship short, and told him to dismiss all ideas of it and for ever. He protested at first, but finding resistance vain, had enlisted to try and banish a passion which could lead to nothing. Soon after, he heard that Mdlle. Violette Desprès, the young lady in question, had been married to a sub-prefect, who subsequently became a full prefect—one M. de Cri, twenty years older than herself, an active placeman and a loyal. Cœurpreux had never seen her since, for most of his time had been spent in warfare; and when he came to France on furlough, it was only for a few occasional weeks, which he dutifully devoted to his family. But now, having no one to speak to him, he glanced at every face that passed, half-dreading, yet moved by a curious anxiety, to see the woman whom he had never forgotten nor could forget; the loves of some soldiers being strangely deep and constant. It had reached him that day that M. de Cri was in Paris, angling for promotion after his wont, and he thought it probable that his wife might be at this court ball. Had a surgeon laid his stethoscope on Captain Cœurpreux's heart, he would have heard it beat like a boy's. So much for the man who had stared death a hundred times out of countenance, and was called the lion of his regiment!

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the rank of lieutenant. The *dolman* is the summer-jacket as distinguished from the *pelisse*, which is worn in winter, and has Astrakan fur round the collar and cuffs. Some of the Spahi regiments used to wear scarlet jackets and light blue trowsers and caps, but this has been recently altered, and the whole of the French light cavalry now wear the light blue jacket and scarlet trowsers. The yellow-ribboned *médaille militaire* was instituted by Napoleon III. as a minor decoration to the Legion of Honour. It is conferred on privates and non-commissioned officers as a first step towards the other order, and carries with it a pension of 5*l.* a year, just as the lowest grade in the Legion of Honour carries (in the army, not for civilians) 10*l.* The *médaille militaire* is sometimes conferred on field-marshals and generals when they have attained to the highest rank, that of Grand' Croix, in the Legion of Honour; but in this case it is a manner of proclaiming that their cup of military distinction is full to the brim, and that the State can do nothing more for them. General de Cissey, War Minister under M. Thiers, was presented with the military medal by Marshal M'Mahon, when the latter became President. The medals with tricoloured ribbons are called *médailles de sauvetage*, and are bestowed for acts of bravery in saving life. The first two are of silver; if a third be won, it is of gold. There are five grades in the Legion of Honour. When in mufti, the chevaliers (companions as we should call them) wear a slip or small bow of red ribbon in their button-holes; and the members of the four superior degrees — officers, commanders, grand officers, and grand-crosses — rosettes. In evening dress or uniform the commanders wear collar-ribbons; the grand officers and grand-crosses broad ribbons *under* the waistcoat and just peeping over the edge of it, not *across* the waistcoat, as knights in England. The grand-crosses also wear a star on the breast and a jewel-cross pendant.

The rooms continued to fill. Officers and dignitaries poured in faster and faster; the press of ladies became a crush; and presently, the Empress, seated under a canopy at the further end of the room, observed this officer standing by himself, so grave and unnoticed. No sovereign ever better discharged her duties of hostess than this august lady, as gentle as she was amiable, as queenly as she was fair; so she turned to the Emperor, and inquired who was yonder Spahi, so medalled and decorated. Napoleon, perhaps dreaming of the recent plebiscite, about which he had just been conversing with M. Emile Ollivier, sedate in his sheen spectacles and black whiskers, referred the question to the Duke de Bassano, the Grand Chamberlain, who, of course, knowing nothing of the matter, asked Marshal Lebœuf, then standing by his side. The War Minister came forward, and in that well-modulated voice which made him the first of courtier soldiers, summed up the Captain's history in twenty words. Wounded in Italy, wounded in Mexico, Cœurpreux had conquered every step in his rise at the sword's point. His last achievement was the capture of two Arab chiefs and three villages with a troop of fifty horse—that is at odds of something like ten to one. The Governor General of Algeria had sent him to Paris, that he might himself bear the tidings of the action in which he was the hero, "and with your Majesty's leave," added the Marshal, "I intended submitting Captain Cœurpreux's name for promotion to the rank of chef d'escadron, and for advancement in the Legion of Honour." The Emperor thanked him, and the Marshal retreated.

Thereon the observant Duke de Bassano whispered to Viscount Laferrière; and this courtly Vice-Chamberlain, having a key embroidered on his coat, glided through the crowds with the expertness of a well-bred eel, and, smiling as he bowed, asked Captain Cœurpreux whether he should find him a partner. The Captain would much rather not have danced, for he had grown rusty in this science, and the offer made him redden. But he regarded a vice-chamberlain somewhat as a superior officer, and further reflected that if people were invited to balls, it was presumably to the end that they might disport themselves. Accordingly he drew up his collar, cleared his throat, and followed M. de Laferrière with an erect stride, as if he were being told off for outpost duty. The Viscount did not take him far. He hesitated a single moment which side he should turn, then made straight for a lady dressed in lilac silk and surrounded by a circle of admirers two deep. She seemed used to be worshipped, and flirting her fan, warded off with short laughs, glances, and tosses of her pretty head, the ready compliments of her bevy, composed of attachés, subalterns of the Guard, and budding Councillors of State. But at sight of the bronzed soldier this young troop fell back, and M. de Laferrière, always smiling, said:—

"Madame, allow me to introduce to you an officer who respectfully begs the honour of your acquaintance: Mdme. de Cri, Captain Cœurpreux."

It was singular that the chamberlain should have led him direct like that to the woman whom his own keen eyes had been unable to discern—the woman whose image had shone upon him from many a beacon-fire, lit up many a cloudy night, nerved him to more brave deeds than might ever have been reckoned to his glory had he not been animated during every day and hour of twelve long years with the thoughts of his first and only love. But perhaps the image he had enshrined in his heart was that of the young girl as he had first known her, with her virginal face and simple attire, and it was this that had prevented him from recognising her as she was then—not less fair, but of completer beauty. At all events, the recognition was prompt enough now ; and there was not a lineament in those features, so often seen in dreams, awake or sleeping, but seemed to him embellished by time. He faltered out a request for the next waltz, in a thick voice that struggled vainly to be distinct, and he found himself trembling as he had never done in danger or trouble since the day they had last parted.

Madame de Cri blushed, though very slightly, and remarked that it was a long time since they had met. But this was all, for Strauss's band suddenly struck up Metra's *Valse des Roses*, that delicious melody which may be said to have lulled the second Empire to its death ; and Mdme. de Cri, forgetting or unheeding a promise made to another partner, stood up with Cœurpreux. He encircled her waist with his arm, she rested one of her small hands on his shoulder, casting a wondering look the while at the rows of medals on his breast, and they whirled together into the maze. But why should the bravest of men have been so poor a dancer ? There is not much waltzing in Algeria, nor, had there been, was Cœurpreux the man to care for it. He had held his own once in ball-rooms along with the best ; but this was when Violette Desprès used to be his partner, and he had had none since. His arm tightened round her lithe form ; he felt her soft breath on his face, and his honest brain spun round like a wheel. The polished habituates of the Tuileries, accustomed to gyrate gracefully on a few yards of space, had never seen a man spin about in this fashion, and several couples skipped out of his way with alacrity. It was the best thing they could do, for the Captain crashed through the rest as if they were paper hoops, though he took care some how that his own shoulders should be the rams and that his partner should turn unharmed. Characteristically he had omitted to take off his sword, and ignored the drawing-room art of balancing himself in such wise that it should hang perpendicular. It was no toy either, this weapon, but a huge cavalry sabre, which knew the taste of blood, and clanked noisily as if excited, sweeping round at right angles with its owner, entangling itself in *crêpe de Chine* skirts, and ripping therein gaps a foot wide. Desolate wails sprang up on the headlong Spahi's path, and Mdme. de Cri felt that he had lost all control over his pace. "I—I think we had better stop," she murmured, growing afraid. But Cœurpreux could not have halted had he wished it. He had scattered most of the other dancers as effectually as a run-

away charger might a flock of sheep; and he only kept his balance by the force of motion as a teetotum does. Unluckily, too, there was one waltzer who had not noticed him. A Carabinier captain, six feet high and a centaur in breadth of limb, came revolving in an opposite direction. "Take care!" cried the Carabinier's partner—a countess, frail as a feather, who perceived the danger; but Cœurpreux was already upon them. He bumbed like a shell full upon the Carabinier, and the two couples reeled asunder from the shock. The Carabinier righted himself instantly, being adept; but Cœurpreux had only just time to disengage himself from his partner, so as not to involve her in his fall, and floundered heavily to the ground, making an unholy clatter with his scabbard, and imprinting his two spurs into the slippery flooring clean as gimlets.

Despite the Imperial presence, a titter broke out amid the muttered imprecations of those who had had their toes trodden on, and the Captain bade fair to be branded to all time as the lout who had made such a figure of himself at the Tuileries. But quick as kindness, a hand was extended to the fallen man, who grasped it not knowing whose it was, scrambled to his feet by its means, and stood crestfallen and giddy before the Emperor. It was at the Emperor's feet he had rolled; it was the Emperor who raised him.

"Commandant," said Napoleon, in the tones which those who once heard him speak, could never remember without emotion, "this is the second time I have seen you fall—the first was by my side on the field of Magenta." Then turning to Madame de Cri, while the laughers around lapsed silent and converged their gaze with surprise on the quivering soldier: "Madame, a man may be pardoned for missing his footing in a ball-room, who has kept it so often and so well in posts of danger. But Commandant Cœurpreux will owe you a *revanche*, and as he belongs from this day to my regiment of Guides, he will have many opportunities of proving to you in this very room that a gallant heart can always retrieve ill-fortune."

A general picked up and restored to the new Commandant * a medal of his that he had dropped; and Cœurpreux bent low without a word before his Sovereign. What indeed could he have said? To save a man from ridicule and exalt him to be the admiration of a thousand people who were disposed to laugh him to scorn, is not a service to be repaid by words; and Cœurpreux felt simply too much moved to speak. The crowds parted in two respectful lanes to right and left of him, as he gave his arm to Madame de Cri and flattering murmurs buzzed their music in his ears, making of his progress a triumphal march. The ladies forgave him for their torn skirts, and eyed him with complacency; the

* Commandant is the colloquial appellation of French brigade-majors, whose title is chefs d'escadron, or chefs de bataillon, according as they are in the cavalry or infantry. *Major* is in France an administrative and depôt title. The French *major* keeps the regimental records and does some of the work of English quartermasters. He does not command in the field.

men bore no rancour for their grazed elbows or bruised feet; and the Carabinier captain, who had been inclined to resent his clumsiness with a scowl, offered him a smirking apology, now that Cœurpreux was promoted over his head and was a man to be courted among men. And Madame de Cri, what did she say or do? As her partner conducted her to her place, he was aware of an arm trembling upon his; and when she was seated and he ventured a few words, not very firm or coherent, in apology for his mishap, it did not escape him that her agitation exceeded his own. It is perhaps not a bad world where the trials of twelve years can be effaced by a moment's joy: for Cœurpreux felt he would have suffered twelve years more to be repaid at the end with another such glance as Violette cast upon him when she muttered: "I had not heard of your dangers and triumphs; I hope you will come and tell me about them yourself."

"Yes, we most sincerely hope Commandant Cœurpreux will do us the pleasure to call," intervened a personage who hurried up, looking like a yellow grasshopper. He had not much hair, but a riband round his neck, and an open mouth that seemed to dribble words as if it had a leak in it. "We shall always be delighted to see you, Commandant. We are staying at the Grand Hôtel pending my transfer to a livelier prefecture, I trust, than that which I now hold. But I am come with orders from her Majesty. The Empress desires that you shall be a guest at her supper-table, in order that she may pin the officer cross of our Order to your coat with her own hand."

The glow had faded from Violette's cheek and she had turned slightly pale at the arrival of this intruder.

"Commandant," she said in an abashed voice, "my husband—M. de Cri."

II.

M. de Cri belonged to a family who had housed and fed themselves out of the public taxes ever since the great Revolution, and perhaps before it, which proves once again that revolutions and reforms are synonymous. Whatever befel kings, the family of de Cri remained where they were, and they were always in first-rate places; so that now and then, when a Frenchman who had helped to overturn a throne came to a public office and found a de Cri there as if nothing had happened, he was inclined to marvel whether his revolution had been of much use, which marvel was well grounded. The Cris were of course cousins by marriage and sworn brothers in all else to the great house of Jobus, who also clung to their posts through all wind and weather. If it had been computed what sums in gold these two valuable tribes had sucked out of the Treasury since they had first put their lips to the national udder, one would have reached a total which could have amply sufficed to gild every house-top, window-sill, and rain-pipe in France, to say nothing of all the mile-stones from Havre to Marseilles; and if it had been reckoned what they had done for

their country in return for these payments, a mass of written paper might have been accumulated sufficient to light the kitchen-fires of Europe for a score of years and the cigars of Christendom to all eternity. As it was, the buttermen, tobacconists, and grocers of France wrapped all their wares in printed forms filled up by members of the Cri and Jobus connections, so that it cannot be contended these families were either useless or unprofitable in their generation. They fared plenteously, and, when their individual constitutions would admit of it, were sleek. It did not do to offend them, for they were naturally convinced that all things in France were theirs, and they could make their displeasure felt as effectively as a swarm of drones can. As there was not a coat upon a Cri or Jobus' back but had been paid for by the public, they missed no occasion of declaring how greatly the public were beholden to them. And it is fair to add that if the public occasionally evinced a different opinion, there was no want of moralists who asserted that we live in a thankless age.*

M. Nepos Lémargeux Desfonds de Cri, Violette Desprès' husband, had been allotted his share in the budget at an early age. His father holding a post of emolument, it had been frankly conceded that his son was entitled to do the same, and, further, that this post ought to be a lucrative one, for, as we all know, the great Revolution abolished hereditary privileges. So young de Cri got a sub-prefectship, just as his father before him had obtained one because his father had enjoyed such a sinecure when sub-prefectships were first invented. Young de Cri was not pleased with his first appointment, because there was not enough pay to it, and, as a general rule, M. de Cri never was pleased, nor, at heart, were the different Ministers who promoted him, for there was not one of them but felt that, if half the Mint should be poured into M. de Cri's cash-bag, such a reward would not be in excess of that faithful servant's deserts. Whenever a Home Minister came to grief, one of the first trains following the catastrophe brought M. de Cri into Paris; and another train soon after bore him out of the capital, with a patent of promotion signed and sealed in his coat-pocket. He visited the metropolis as ordinary folk do a kitchen-garden—to pick fruit there; and, in the course of his official changes, had been moved about the land like a chessman, displacing in his onward march many a humble pawn, who, being either inoffensive, or hard-working, or content with his lot, was naturally deprived of his emoluments on the first convenient opportunity. M. de Cri was honoured with the esteem and confidence of all out of whom he had ever cozened favour, from the Emperor in person down to the lowest clerk in the Home Office, presumably some relative of his own. M. Rouher knew him, so did M. de Persigny; M. de Lavalette accounted him a blameless functionary, and M. Chevandier de Valdrôme was full of his praises. If M. Conti, his Majesty's Secretary, had been asked to

* For additional particulars as to the Jobus influence, see *Le Ministre malgré lui*, Cornhill Magazine, April, 1872.

mention an indispensable official, he would have named M. de Cri; and if M. Emile Ollivier had been sounded as to who was the fitting man to be entrusted with a post involving a substantial receipt of public monies, he would have pronounced M. de Cri to be that fitting man beyond all doubt. Nor was the reason of this far to seek, for M. de Cri had followed throughout his life a rule which cannot be too universally commended: —he had never left to another the task of blowing his own trumpet. His own trumpet was an instrument he carried about with him, always ready for use, and he never allowed it to grow rusty. If men would but bugle their merits as M. de Cri did, pitching his notes now loud, now with soft melodiousness, according to the mood of his listener, this earth would offer a concert of sweet sounds, to make the very angels hang their heads.

Now a fortnight or so after the ball at the Tuileries, M. de Cri returned to his lodgings at the Grand Hôtel, elate at having obtained his promotion from a second to a first class prefectship, but pensive in another respect — which other respect was Commandant Cœurpreux. The fact is, when a man like Cœurpreux, having neither kith nor kin in a Government office, or indeed anything at all to recommend him, save his own bravery, is suddenly raised to a brilliant post by an act of sovereign prerogative, he upsets a whole series of thoughtful plans, devised for the good of the world by the real masters of the State, who are the Government underlings, and he jostles out of the way Jobuses, Cris, and their hangers-on without number. It is true that by popular fiction an Emperor is supposed to rule and dispense honours; but this is purely a fiction, for it is the Cris and Jobuses who rule; it is they who dispense honours, and they render unto each man according to his deserts, after laws of their own as immutable as those that went to work on Daniel. Thus, for a man like Cœurpreux, there is no stint of dignities, but they must be of the proper sort that fit him. Let him be advanced, by all means, and sent into marching regiments to fight Arabs, and, if heaven so wills it, be knocked on the head. But the leading commands in crack regiments like the Guides, and, indeed, all snug military, as all civil berths generally, where there is no work to be done and plenty of plums to be gathered, these are the rightful appanages of the Cris and Jobuses, and ought on no account to be interfered with. Captain de Cri-Hurlant had been confidently awaiting the commandantship which Cœurpreux had got, a Lieutenant Jobus had been expecting Cri-Hurlant's vacancy, and a Sub-Lieutenant Jobus-Cri had made perfectly sure of stepping into the shoes which Lieutenant Jobus abandoned. These were combinations which ought not to have been roughly set aside, the less so, as this new commandant was not one of your decent speakers, who keep a civil tongue between their teeth, and have the grace to attribute to the Jobuses and Cris whatever good-luck may befall them with or without the assistance of these worthies. He was a grumbler, after the manner of the Algerian officers, whose allowance is that which the monkey got. He thought

there were abuses at the War Office, and used to say so in Africa; he would probably discover there were abuses in the Guides, and bawl the fact in the Emperor's hearing. This was altogether undesirable—in fact, quite obnoxious to contemplate, and when M. Nepos Lémargeux Desfonds de Cri went to get his letter of appointment at the Home Office, he was told by his relatives there how greatly agitated and ruffled were the feelings of the War-Office Jobuses and Cris. They had deferred making out Cœurpreux's commission, in the hope that his Majesty might reconsider his promise, and post the Commandant to active service again; and to this end they had spared no pains to impress upon his Majesty that Cœurpreux was a disaffected sort of subject, a reformer, a man who disapproved of guard regiments, and who had even at sundry times expressed himself in no becoming terms of the Imperial dynasty. Unfortunately, Napoleon had a weakness for keeping the promises he made; and as the Jobuses and Cris were aware (they are somehow aware of everything) that Mdme. de Cri, *née* Desprès, had been formerly acquainted with Cœurpreux, they besought Prefect de Cri that Madame might use her influence on the Commandant, so that he might voluntarily forego his squadron in the Guides, and petition of his own accord to be sent warring again. In this case there would be a commandantship in Cochin-China that would suit him admirably. The Cochin-Chinese were not yet subdued, and if Cœurpreux survived marsh fevers, dysentery, and poisoned arrows, he might get his colonelcy almost as soon as by staying in Europe.

So when M. de Cri entered his drawing-room, which was a smart one on the first floor, looking out on to the Place de l'Opéra, he said to his wife, who had been dividing her forenoon equally between a novel of M. Arsène Houssaye and a fashion-book from Worth's:—

"My dear, has that Commandant Cœurpreux called since the other night?"

"Yes, twice;" and Violette bent over one of Mr. Worth's notions of a plain morning dress—fifty guineas without the trimming.

"Were you alone with him?"

Violette cast a terrified look at her husband, and slightly blanched—"No; there were several visitors both times."

M. de Cri seemed disappointed, and took up his position next the mantel-shelf, with his coat-tails lifted under his arms, and his hands in his trowsers'-pockets—a graceful and well-known attitude.

"My dear, I have the utmost confidence in your diplomatic powers, and I want you to try them on this kind of petted savage, who I believe was attached to you in bygone times. In a moment of heedless generosity, the Emperor conferred on him a post far too good for such a man as he. It leads to equerryships and all sorts of things. We must get him to drop it." And M. de Cri explained to his wife the little machination on which all the Jobuses and Cris had set their patriotic wits and their hopes.

Violette listened in silence at first, whilst she was recovering from the start which her husband's question had caused her; but when she per-

ceived the drift of M. de Cri's request, an indignant flush mounted to her face. She was a frivolous lady, as a woman cannot well help being who is mated to a gentleman like M. de Cri. Her married life had been made up of dressing and amusement, chastened by a little fashionable devotion in Passion Week, and what hours she could spare between the calls of society and those of her toilet-table she mostly passed in blushing over the novels of M. Houssaye, or in shedding a few refreshing tears over those of M. Octave Feuillet. But at sight of Jean Cœurpreux's honest features, she had felt all that was good in her young life revive, as flowers shrunk by rain may do at the first return of sun-warmth. He had breathed to her not a word that her husband might not have heard; but who is the woman that needs to be told of what is in a man's heart? Since she had seen Cœurpreux come back to her after twelve years' absence, with the unalterable look he had worn in bidding her good-by, she had thought of him alone, more perhaps than was quite safe.

"Do you mean to say," she exclaimed slowly, but with a hot flush, "that you wish M. Cœurpreux to renounce his post, in order that the Emperor may suspect him of ingratitude, and let him be sent out of France again?"

"Yes; that is exactly it," answered M. de Cri briskly, and quite unobservant of the flush. "If this Spahi seems to make light of his appointment to the Guides, the Emperor will think the man has some crotchet about household brigades, and offer no impediment to his being posted elsewhere. Then Cri-Hurlant will get the squadron."

"I never heard such an odious thing in my life," ejaculated Violette, almost crying from humiliation. "Why, M. Cœurpreux is the soul of courage and loyalty, and you wish to damage him in favour of a man who has never done anything but lead quadrilles at court balls—a puppy whom I can never look at with common patience."

M. de Cri opened his mouth, and stared with a panic of astonishment.

"You appear to forget Cri-Hurlant is my cousin!"

"And what of that?" retorted Violette, flashing scorn from her eyes; "he is not worthy to be the groom of the man to whom you grudge this poor little piece of Imperial bounty, because he appears to be friendless! Oh, it is cruel and shameful, and I should esteem myself the lowest of women if I were to do what you have asked me."

M. de Cri's physiognomy changed to an ashen colour that was by no means picturesque. He let fall his coat-tails, drew his hands from his pockets, and rubbed his fingers together quietly.

"I beg to observe that I was this morning appointed Prefect of the Haute-Seine, and there is no reason whatever why, if I play my cards well, I should not soon be in the Senate, and perhaps the Cabinet. My relations have always been kind to me, and I am bound to stand by them, especially as in this instance Cri-Hurlant is only waiting for his squadron in the Guides to make a rich marriage. Besides" (and here M. de Cri drew himself up with a pompousness that was pretty droll) "I believe this

man Cœurpreux would be dangerous to the Emperor's service. He is an innovator, perhaps a republican in disguise. He carps at the Government—such persons have been known to desert to the rabble in times of rebellion."

"Ah! this is too much!" cried Violette, trembling from head to foot, and with one of those stinging laughs with which women can goad a husband to fury. "Why, I have been informed you were a republican yourself when you wished to retain a post under the republic, and a royalist when you were first made a sub-prefect by Louis-Philippe."

M. de Cri broke out with something very like an oath, and turned a flaming visage upon his wife.

"I am not here to be taunted by you as to any passage in my life, nor to hear your judgment on it. You will do as I tell you, or else," added he with significant emphasis, "I shall conclude you have reasons for shielding this soldier which no honest woman would care to avow."

What answer M. de Cri might have received to this unmanly thrust, there is no saying, but perhaps it was well for him that at this juncture a waiter knocked at the door and came in announcing, "Commandant Cœurpreux."

The prefect's countenance underwent a rapid transformation, and he rushed forward to receive his visitor with his usual gush of affability and garrulousness. "How do you do, my dear Commandant? delighted to see you! What a difference you must find between our climate and the delicious summers of Africa! I declare it looks as if it were going to rain again. But I am afraid I must leave you, having an appointment at the Home Office. Mdme. de Masseline is going to call for Mdme. de Cri by-and-by, to take her to the Picture Exhibition, and I daresay you will fill my place, and act as their cavalier. The ladies could not be in better hands." He wrung Cœurpreux's fingers with most affectionate cordiality, sketched a smile to his wife, and was gone. Cœurpreux and Violette were alone.

The Commandant was changed in appearance since the ball. He shone in civilian's dress and had shaved off his beard, wearing now only the waxed moustache and *impériale* of the Guard. In his button-hole was a rosette instead of a plain ribbon, and, though it would have been impossible not to recognize him for a soldier by his drilled gait and the military cut of his clothes, he was got up with that careful neatness and good taste which marks a French gentleman of the best school.

He took a seat beside the sofa on which Violette sat, and noticed that she was nearly overcome with emotion. A burning flush overspread her features, and her manners were almost hysterical.

"Tell me, Commandant," she said, beginning the conversation feverishly, "are you gazetted yet?"

"No, I am still waiting."

"And why, since the Emperor promised you your appointment before the whole court?"

Cœurpreux smiled gently and gave a true French shrug.

"The Emperor reigns, but does not rule. There are formalities to be accomplished, papers to be signed, and I believe there are moments when a signature costs a War Office clerk as much as if it were wrung from him with a thumbscrew. I am not a favourite with those gentlemen; and if they could find some impediment to my getting on in the world, they would sleep a happy night all round."

Violette put her lace handkerchief to her mouth and bit it distractedly in a torment of hesitation.

"Do not be offended at what I am going to ask you," she faltered. "Is it true that you are a republican?"

The officer recoiled and turned red as if he had been accused of a dishonourable action.

"Since I enlisted to drive away a sorrow which I then thought curable," he said, in a grave tone of pain, "I have had one benefactor, whose name has been connected with every rise that has made me what I am. When my first epaulette was given me, it was in the Emperor's name; when I received the cross of honour for services far too slight to deserve such a dignity, I was told that the Emperor had with his own hand written my nomination on the margin of the despatch in which my unworthy claims were submitted to him. The other night, when my awkwardness was nearly covering me with well-merited ridicule, you saw how he saved me, and you heard what he said. It would be trivial to declare I would die for the Emperor—that is no more than my duty; but if by going barefooted and hungry I could save him a pang, if by sacrificing all I have now and all my prospects to come, I could relieve him from an annoyance, however slight, I would do it and deem myself happy at being able to acknowledge a debt which is more than I can ever pay."

Violette was crying.

"Then you have enemies," she sobbed—"false and heartless enemies, who are maligning you." She gave way during a few minutes to a paroxysm of grief, which shook her whole frame, and which she was utterly unable to repress. Cœurpreux sat by, pale and silent, whilst beads of perspiration pearled on his forehead, and his eyes fastened, with an expression of anxiety impossible to render, on the woman who was all in all to him, and whose uncontrollable anguish was occasioned solely by fears for his sake. He rose noiselessly, sank on one knee, and drew one of her hands within his.

"Violette, thank you for these tears," he murmured, with deep feeling. "Do you not think I bless my enemies with all my might for this unexpected happiness they have given me?"

Violette disengaged her hand from his, and struggled pitifully with herself for a moment.

"You must go, Jean," she wailed in alarm, and shutting out the sight of him with her hands. "I thought you would forget me—and oh! if I could have foreseen this day! but it is too late—misfortune hangs

over us, and you must go away. Do not face the malice of these men; they would find means to break your heart, for I know of what things they are capable; and besides, if you remained near the court, we might see each other, and this cannot—this must not be. No, you must go away far—not abroad, where you would be in battles and danger again; but there must be regiments in France, to which you might be sent without exciting any one's jealousy. But you must leave me, for you see I am weak, and . . ." Sobs choked her utterance again, and she averted her head from him, burying it on a pillow and convulsed in her agony.

"I ask you so little, Violette, and to see you occasionally would be such a gladness," muttered Cœurpreux, in a broken voice, standing over her.

"No, no!" and here she rose with an effort, clasped her hands, and with streaming eyes implored him: "Save me from myself, Jean, I entreat you—on your honour."

"Good-by, then," he faltered with a great throb at his heart, and he drew her to him rapidly, kissed her and fled.

But he did not go to the War Office to renounce his commission to the 2nd Guides, for that afternoon it was too late, and by the time he went next day some kind friends had saved him all trouble on that head. The court were at St. Cloud, and in the evening one of those beings whose privilege it is to come quite near to the ear of royalty—and what a noble use they make of that privilege!—remarked that his Majesty was never tired of combating his detractors with good gifts. Napoleon inquired what detractors; and the Empress, who was examining with Princess Metternich an album of which the Prince Imperial turned the leaves, raised her soft eyes anxiously, wondering, maybe, when the tongues of detractors would tire. The Being then explained that M. *de* Cœurpreux, who would soon have the honour of commanding three troops of their Majesties' body-guards, was a curious sort of man, most brave, and all that, but wrong-headed, a *grognard* of the politico-military species—rather perilous, and with acid enough in him to turn the whole 2nd Regiment of Guides sour. For instance, whilst quartered at Constantine two years ago, he used to take in the *Lanterne*, and read it aloud after dinner to his brother officers, dilating much as he went on the humour of M. Rochefort; whereat Napoleon frowned, for M. Rochefort was just then cooling his humour in prison, and was no very welcome topic at court evenings. The Being proceeded to state that the projected appointment of M. *de* Cœurpreux had excited great admiration on all sides, as illustrating once again the inexhaustible benevolence of his Majesty, but that, singularly enough, the Commandant himself was the only man who seemed nowise enchanted by it. He had a mean opinion of Guard regiments, laughed at them, and thought the Spahis much better. He had said, sneering, that with a troop of mounted negroes he would put the entire Cavalry of the Guard to flight, and dispose of the Infantry afterwards. There was no question, however, that he was brave to rashness, that is, to a fault.

Now a sovereign may well like to reward valour, and yet be excused for not desiring to have about him a man who would turn his pet regiment sour: so the Emperor said calmly—

"I thought to do Commandant Cœurpreux a kindness by putting him in the Guides; but if he prefer some other corps, let him have his way." And at this the Empress, who had lost interest in the album, heaved a little sigh of relief, as though to say, "Only fancy, if this wrong-headed Commandant had come and arrested us all at early morning, like the officer on guard did poor Prince Couza at Bucharest!" or as a lady of humble sphere might have expressed it, "What an escape we have had of all being murdered in our beds!"

However, the Emperor, who perhaps recalled Cœurpreux's manly face, and the warm things that had been written of him by Marshal M'Mahon, expressed the wish that the Commandant should be well provided for, and took the same occasion to ask who would get this post in the Guides which M. Cœurpreux disdained? The Being deferentially submitted that Captain de Cri-Hurlant was a chivalrous warrior, and deeply devoted to their Imperial Majesties, and he indicated by a glance the warrior in question, who was courageously revolving a stereoscope for the two Mesdemoiselles d'Albe, the Empress's graceful nieces. The Emperor said nothing, but before another day had passed there was balm for the whole tribe of the Jobuses and the Cris: Captain de Cri-Hurlant had the squadron, Lieutenant Jobus got the captaincy, Sub-Lieutenant Jobus-Cri walked into the lieutenantship, and a Jobus-Hurlant, just out of St. Cyr, gained possession of the cornetcy—whereupon the world set to going round again, as if it had not been temporarily, and most infelicitously, put out of course.

As for Cœurpreux, he presented himself at the War Office in uniform on the day following his visit to Violette, and after waiting no more than an hour and a quarter in an ante-room, was admitted to the presence of a Jobus clerk, permanent, of course, and irresponsible. There he learned all that was good for him to know, namely, that he was not to have the commission he had been promised; but the Jobus clerk added blandly, that he would get something else some day or other, when his Excellency the Minister should have time to think about him. This high and mighty clerk, who may have stood five feet three allowing his boots to count, was condescending enough to patronise such poor folk as this Cœurpreux, who had done nothing but help win half-a-hundred battles or so, and he loftily waved his paw to him in token that he might depart.

But Cœurpreux, who had come to forego the Imperial favour *motu proprio*, felt not a little hurt that it should be withdrawn from him in this unceremonious style, and so exclaimed drily enough:

"I should like to know whether the Emperor gave you orders to break his word for him in that fashion. However, I don't lay on the Emperor's shoulders the dirty tricks that are done in his name, for if I did, there might come from this office alone mud enough to choke the Seine up."

"Sir!" gasped the little Jobus-clerk, rising to his full height and

frowning at his insulter with all the dignity of a flea on a perch browbeating a lion with muzzle on—"Sir!" but he could find nothing else to say, for Cœurpreux eyed him coolly, and as duelling is not extinct in France, the small Jobus doubtless reflected that if he were tweaked by the nose, he might get run through next daybreak into the bargain. Yet it was very monstrous to this clerk that a miserable officer should dare to bandy words with him thus shamelessly.

"I was going to say," continued Cœurpreux, drawing a large envelope from the breast of his jacket, "that I intended declining the honour which his Majesty wished to bestow, and here is a letter which I had written to beg the Emperor to employ me on active service again. I have got my promotion, for his Majesty called me Commandant, and not all the clerks in Paris can take that from me, or shall. But I only ask to go back to my regiment, even if I take simple brevet rank of commandant, and I daresay you gentlemen will not object to that much. Please see that my letter reaches the Emperor, or else there'll be a row. Good-morning."

The Jobus-clerk grumbled something and thanked heaven he was well rid of such a brute. Cœurpreux went and lunched at the general rendezvous of officers, the Café du Helder on the Boulevard des Italiens, and as, by sitting at one of the tables outside, he could descry the Grand Hôtel some hundred yards to the left, he did so when his frugal lunch was over, and remained smoking all the afternoon, watching if haply Violette might pass by in her barouche and afford him one passing glimpse of her. But she did not pass, either that day or the next, or on any of the twenty days more during which the War Office clerks kept Cœurpreux rapping his heels on the asphalte of Paris. Cœurpreux chafed and growled and vented his fury in much imprudent talk among brother officers at the Helder, vowing that the administration of the army had grown rotten up to the hilt, as France would find if she ever ran tilt against a less-Jobus-ridden Power. As armies are never quite devoid of high-souled officers anxious to curry favour with the Jobus-clerks, these sayings were faithfully reported to the War Office, and did Cœurpreux all the good one may imagine. It became an urgent question of consigning him to Cochin-China without delay, of treating him to the governorship of that delightful settlement of convicts and *vomito negro*, Cayenne, "where," remarked the clerks humorously, "he would find himself in congenial company." But Violette, who watched over Cœurpreux in secret, frustrated these designs, and accosted Marshal Lebœuf, at a party one night, with a tale so worded as to touch him. Marshal Lebœuf, who has borne and will bear to all time the burden of the sins which his underlings committed—and of which they of course promptly washed their hands—was no fool, but a gallant soldier, as can witness his management of the artillery at Solferino. His fault was excessive good nature, which made him loth to tackle the Jobuses and Cris, as peremptorily as his predecessor Marshal Niel had done; he had let them get the upper hand of him, and walked in dread of them. Wherefore, hearing the wife of M. de Cri denounce the doings

of the potent league of which her husband was so honoured a member, he marvelled slightly, but ended by smiling, as a Frenchman will do when a pretty woman pleads the cause of a soldier at once brave and handsome. He promised to see into the matter, and next day, to the disgust of the Jobuses, who had not been so much as consulted, Cœurpreux received his commission to a full commandantship in that doughty regiment the 25th Cuirassiers, with orders to join as soon as he should have gone to Algeria to fetch his traps and carry despatches to Marshal M'Mahon. The Duke of Magenta laughed in his quiet way when he heard from Cœurpreux, at a private dinner, what things this worthy fellow had endured at the hands of the clerks. He for his own part knew the Jobuses well. Had they not poisoned the Emperor's mind against him by reminding his Majesty on every occasion that Marshal M'Mahon had voted against the Government Bill of Public Safety in the Senate, was a suspicious subject, and enjoyed a dangerous ascendancy over the army? This had prevented the victor of Magenta from ever becoming War Minister, and his vice-royalty in Algeria was virtually an exile. "My poor Cœurpreux," said he smiling, "you do not understand the secret of getting on in life. Here is Marshal Lebœuf, who writes to me privately that you have been wagging that honest tongue of yours too freely, and he tells me to give you a friendly hint that it won't do." "But, Marshal, I have never breathed a word against the Emperor," protested Cœurpreux. "No," said the Duke, "though perhaps it would have been safer if you had, for the Emperor forgives; but the clerks are more powerful than the Emperor, and they don't forgive. You had best make your peace with them, believe me, Cœurpreux, for they are stronger than all of us put together;" and the Marshal, who liked soldiers of Cœurpreux's mould, gave him a cigar and went out on the balcony of the Government House to smoke with him and talk about Paris.

Exactly a month after this dialogue, Commandant Cœurpreux, who was installed in his new garrison, received orders along with the rest of the 25th Cuirassiers to go and join Marshal M'Mahon's army on the Rhine, for war had been declared by France against Germany.

III.

On the 4th September, 1870, towards one o'clock in the afternoon, an officer in a cuirassier uniform got out of a train on the platform of the Northern Station, jumped into the first cab he could find—it happened to be an open one—and told the coachman, in a fevered voice, to drive him to the Tuileries. His uniform was soiled and torn; there was mud on his boots up to the knees, his head was bound up in bandages clotted with blood, and his haggard face bore a week's unshaved beard. A mob pressing outside the station for news, recognised him for an officer, no doubt from Sedan, and gave him a ringing cheer, but he bent his head and made no response. The city bore nothing of the mourning aspect he

had expected. The *cafés* were full and noisy. Bands of workmen, who ought to have been at drill, strolled by rows of twenty arm-in-arm along the carriage-ways, bawling vinously, "*Vive la République! Vive Trochu! A bas Badinguet!*" Policemen were invisible. Women and peasants pushing hand-carts laden with furniture before them streamed in from the country districts round Paris, and seemed to be on the look-out for lodgings. Newspapers found a brisk sale, boys screamed the *Marseillaise*, and tradesmen, with scared faces, were climbing ladders to unhook Imperial escutcheons, and paint out the words "Purveyor *to their Majesties*," in which but a day ago they had gloried.

The cab drove quickly, but at the bottom of the Rue de Valois had to stop, for the Place du Palais Royal was full of people. The cuirassier got out, paid the driver, and endeavoured to hurry unobserved through the crowd, which was rather a curious than an excited one. He did somehow force himself a passage through the mobs surging towards the Hôtel de Ville on the one hand, towards the Tuileries Gardens on the other; and when he reached the sentry mounting guard somewhat nervously at the Carrousel gate, opened his cloak to show the despatch-bag slung over his tunic, and was allowed to pass in without question. The immense yard, adorned with a triumphal arch reared to celebrate past victories over a people now conquerors in their turn, was almost deserted; but at broken intervals men, for the most part in civilian dress, shuffled panic-stricken across the yard and entered the palace. The cuirassier followed them, climbed the staircase, where no usher or footman stood to ask intruders their business, brushed past a terrified group of ladies, who were coming down the stairs with travelling-bags in their hands, and asked for the aide-de-camp on duty. He was directed to go down a passage to the right, did so, and remitted his despatch-bag. Then with the receipt crushed between his fingers, wandered about unheeded amid startled figures running or rushing down the corridors, till he found himself in the room where some three months before he had received a kindness from an Emperor, then in the full pomp and grandeur of his power.

All the last friends of the fallen court were there, but not so much high dignitaries—for these took care of themselves—nor Jobuses—they are never to be seen in such moments—as younger men and modest functionaries, whose fealty had not perhaps been always appreciated in brighter days, but came out true and pure now in this hour of adversity. The appearance of the officer and his travel-stained clothes caused a sensation, and a move was made towards him. A few recognised him despite his bandage, which, now his kepi was off, gave him the look of being turbaned, and they said, "It's Colonel Cœurpreux, who rode next M'Mahon in the charge of the cuirassiers at Reischoffen, and was promoted on the field." They gathered round him eagerly, and inquired of him if he had news:

"You were at Sedan, Colonel; is all really lost?" and it was a gloomy thing to hear these men ask this about a country and a sovereign they loved.

"Yes, all's lost," groaned Cœurpreux, "but the honour of the Emperor, who has been betrayed, and that of our War Office, who had no honour to lose."

"How did the Emperor bear it?"

"Simply, like a man. He was never greater than when he drove through the town with an expression on his face that might have touched the very stones, and gave up his sword to save his army. People will say here that he should have died, but anybody has the courage to die. The courage is to live, and to endure all this"—and he pointed with his hand to the Tuileries Gardens, at the end of which a mob was to be seen approaching with gesticulations and waving of flags.

Count Palikao, the Prime Minister, passed rapidly through the room, and disappeared into a chamber where the Empress was known to be; and all gathered round the windows. The mob were drawing nearer, and the quays could be seen covered with people who had been to the Corps Législatif, where M. Gambetta had been haranguing the multitude, and exhorting it to clamour for the Emperor's deposition. Chevalier Nigra, the Italian Ambassador, entered with a breezy aspect as if nothing particular were happening, and a chaplain asked him if there were any hope. "Hope of what?" answered M. Nigra, cheerfully, and went the way of M. de Palikao, but with a careless, swinging stride, for all this was no great concern of his. Cœurpreux leaned in a window-recess moaning, but as he perceived that the mob swelled and advanced each second like a rising tide, he drew a revolver, and casting a keen look about him, said:

"Gentlemen, I hope we are all prepared to defend the Empress against yonder curs?"

A silence replied to this question, and one young man alone stepped out with a revolver. The rest had come unarmed. They were faithful to the point of risking death, but not of courting it. Cœurpreux glanced from one to another, as if he could not believe his eyes. Then a great sob escaped him, and he turned with brimming eyes to watch the sea which advanced slowly, and the thin line of soldiers in the private garden below, who would be the only dyke against it. "Our place is with those men there," he said to the young man who was armed; "let us go to them; we shall at least die in good company."

A few of the bystanders winced—in particular, two priests, who would not have grudged their blood, though it was not their duty to shed any. Several moved to follow Cœurpreux; but at this moment a door was opened, and the Empress appeared with one of her ladies-in-waiting, Count Palikao, an aide-de-camp, and one or two other advisers. She was dressed in black, was calm and resigned, and, hearing that firearms had been exhibited, sent to request as a last favour to her that no resistance should be offered. Her Majesty was then told that one of the gentlemen who wished to defend her was Colonel Cœurpreux, and she prayed her aide-de-camp to summon him. M. Cœurpreux arrived with the tears still welling over his eyes—though it was no fault of his, for he struggled hard enough to keep

them in—and possibly as he stood before her, with his head bowed and his knees shaking, the Empress recognised the man who had been painted to her by the Jobuses and Cris as a factious subject.

"Colonel, you found your way through the enemy's lines to bring me a letter from the Emperor," she said, in a soft, sad voice. "I thank you, and wish it were still in my power to reward your devotion."

"Madam," murmured Cœurpreux, in words of which each syllable sprang vibrating from his heart, "you can give me the only reward I covet by allowing me to lay down my life for you."

"No, not a drop of French blood must be shed for me," she answered quietly, "nor would I forgive myself for depriving France of a life like yours, Colonel, at a time when brave men are more than ever needed. Still, again I thank you." And she extended her hand to him with a grateful smile. He dropped on one knee and pressed it to his lips reverentially.

At this juncture Prince Metternich and M. de Lesseps approached quickly. They spoke a few words, but their looks said more than they uttered. The Empress glanced towards the gardens where the crowd had by this time become a host, whose shouts broke loud and imperatively through the stillness of this room filled with expectant courtiers. Her lips quivered faintly for a single instant, and the pallor of her face deepened just enough to show that it was pain, not fear, she felt. Then she turned with queenly self-possession, and made to the loyal few who remained her grandest curtsey—that of the state galas now gone and forgotten amidst other ruins; this was the signal that all was over: the Empire had fallen; the Empress retired, and the friends of the eleventh hour were free to go and see to themselves, their goods and their chattels. They scampered downstairs, putting their best feet foremost, and the palace became a show to the rabble, who presently flooded in, their mouths agape, and filled it from floor to attic with their savoury majesty.

Cœurpreux had heard a few of the words which Prince Metternich had let fall, and he went and stood near the gate of the Louvre opposite the Church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, where a cab was waiting. In a few minutes the veiled forms of two ladies glided out, and Cœurpreux, though he could not be seen behind the angle where he had sheltered himself, bared his head as they passed. He watched to see that no one recognised or molested the Lady whom M. de Lesseps handed into the fly, and his gaze followed this vehicle as it turned and disappeared with its blinds down, and the Italian ambassador on the box beside the coachman. It would have fared ill, then, with any partisan of equality who should have stood in the horse's way or offered a rude word to the Empress, whom this unconscious hack was drawing into exile, for Cœurpreux was in that mind when to have faced a whole horde of the populace with his solitary sword and revolver, and to have bitterly flung in their teeth their base treason and cowardice, would have been a grim pleasure. But nobody afforded him that satisfaction. The fly jogging along unremarked mingled with other flys; and Cœurpreux emerging from his concealment, went with

an aching heart about business of his own. As he strode down the Rue de Rivoli, not caring much whom he elbowed, it was twenty minutes past three, and the tricolour flag which had been waving eighteen years on the late Imperial palace was hauled down. Two *petit-crevés*, or swells of the small French sort, watched this historical occurrence from a corner of the Place des Pyramides, and one, removing his eyeglass the better to see, said to the other: "There go twenty years of jollity." "Yes," sighed the other, "and only to think I used to be fool enough to vote for the opposition just for the fun of the thing." The pair of noble hearts sighed, and went their ways. Cœurpreux shrugged his shoulders, and followed.

One of the most comforting features of French revolutions is, as we have hinted, that although thrones go crash and kings go where they can, the Cris and Jobuses bend their respected heads like reeds, and let the whole whirlwind sweep above without uprooting them. The signboard and landlord of the Inn are changed, but cooks and waiters are the same, and inasmuch as the public depend rather on the cooks and waiters for comfort and good attendance than upon the landlord and the signboard, this may serve to explain why the collapse of many thrones affects less in the general weal than the displacement of a single Jobus might do. Anyhow, when Cœurpreux came to report himself at the War Office, he found there the set of clerks who had just been rolling the army into the chasm, filling up printed papers that were to roll other armies the same way, with their habitual serenity. It was Sunday, and they had no need to work; but never mind that; they were always ready to devote themselves to their country's good, especially on a Revolution Sunday, when, if absent, their places might be filled up by other folk. Nothing was altered, save that in the room of the little big clerk, who had received Cœurpreux before, a bust of the Emperor had disappeared in favour of a photograph of General Trochu, and the small clerk informed his visitor that he had foreseen all along how it would end, and that if his—the clerk's—advice had been taken, matters would have turned out very differently. He supposed Colonel Cœurpreux would be asked to form and command a regiment during the siege, but he could give him no orders for the present. He only ventured to warn him (and looked very immaculate in so doing) that he must now moderate the Bonapartist zeal for which he had been unfavourably conspicuous. The Empire had disgraced itself, and no Frenchman worthy of the name could feel any sympathy for so odious a *régime*: "Odious a *régime*!" echoed Cœurpreux, as the blood mounted to his face. "And who made it odious but you and your likes? Ah, sir clerk, try and give me and others as little of your advice as possible, and the better it will be for us all. When I think that the earth once swallowed up a pair called Dathan and Abiram, and when I see you sitting alive there with that heap of papers, I am inclined to wonder whether we are footing the same globe. Heaven help me!" and he went out slamming the door, and shaking the dust off his feet. The Jobus-clerk, naturally much disgusted, preserved an attitude full of dignity, and on the first

opportunity informed General Trochu that a certain Cœurpreux was in all likelihood a Bonapartist conspirator, and might with advantage be despatched to outposts where the shells fell thickest. The General promised to make a note of the matter, and eventually did.

But Cœurpreux's 4th September trials were not over yet. On his way from the War Office back into the noisier part of Paris, where he hoped to learn for certain who were definitely the new rulers of his country—a point on which, in common with other men who accept new Governments like wind and rain, as they come, he was still doubtful—he crossed a Victoria carrying M. Nepos Lémargeux Desfonds de Cri, an umbrella, and a carpet-bag. M. de Cri checked the driver, and waved the umbrella to attract Cœurpreux's attention. This chivalrous prefect had put away the rosette which used to grace his button-hole, and which of yore he had grovelled so patiently to earn, and he had so arranged things that the title of a republican newspaper peeped over the edge of his breast pocket, herald of his new-born convictions. In this guise he stretched forth his hand to Cœurpreux out of the cab in the midst of the Rue Royale, and gabbled:

"Congratulate me, Commandant—at least, no, you're Colonel now—congratulate me, I'm off."

"Where to—the army?" and the Colonel wondered whether mayhap this person had been stricken with honesty in his declining years, and impelled to do something in defence of the country that had been such an unchanging and untiring milch-cow to him.

"The army? oh, no—I leave that to Bayards like you," sniggered M. de Cri, as if vastly tickled by the notion. "No, I'm off to my prefectship, which has just been confirmed to me by Gambetta; and I may tell you, in confidence, that I managed this thing very slyly. Foreseeing, you know, after the first defeat of you gentlemen, how the wind would soon blow, I came up to Paris on the quiet, and entered into relations with all this crew, Favre, Simon, Gambetta. I promised that if there was a republican rising, I would abet them, and play my department into their hands, which of course was all chaff, for if the rising hadn't been successful here I shouldn't have been such a ninny as to start pranks out there, but they took it in. They counted me as one of theirs, and here am I off as a prefect of the Republic to the town where yesterday I was a prefect of the Empire—and I hope for promotion soon. *Sic itur ad astra*—hee, hee!"

"And what will Mdme. de Cri think of this sudden conversion?" asked Cœurpreux with more contempt in his voice than would have served to wither up any other ten men not being hereditary place-hunters.

"Oh, my wife; it's she who advised me to do it all. *Dux fœmina facti*—hee! hee! You see we've no private fortune, and if I'd lost my place I don't well know what I could have done, for I have saved little—a man who expects to be Cabinet Minister and will be able then to rig the money-market and clear what sums he pleases, doesn't go in for cheese-paring economies, you know; so my wife said to me, 'Make the best of our national disasters: it's an ill wind that blows *nobody* good; and, as

you perceive, that is true enough, for there are plenty of folk will be housed well to-night who were not much to look at yesterday."

Cœurpreux turned cruelly sick at heart. On an ordinary trimmer he would not have wasted a breath of scorn—nor so much as a shrug—disdaining such vermin as a sportsman does rats; but that Violette's husband should be a man of this class, and that he should have inoculated with his sordid principles a woman who had been true and pure before she had been sold to him in bondage, was a pang indeed. Yet Cœurpreux had the comfort of believing that M. de Cri lied ignobly, and that Violette had never consented to the impudent barter of conscience which her husband laid to her charge. But in this he was mistaken. Wedded to him, Violette would have endured poverty without a murmur, and scaled with a glad brave heart any heights of heroism and self-sacrifice to which he had chosen to lead her. But poverty along with M. de Cri was a very different story, and Violette had really asked her husband to make what he could of the general ruin which was bowing all patriotic heads in shame. This would seem to show that heroism, like other plants, needs special soils to make it thrive, and that wives are but as looking-glasses in which their husbands' souls are reflected with more or less fidelity. M. de Cri's soul being a dingy one, Violette's partook of it in many domestic features. This is not poetry, but it is the truth which meets us at every step; and had it not been so—that is, had Violette wished to remain heroic after her marriage to one like M. de Cri, she must have become a faithless wife, which is a dilemma worth brooding over by moralists great and small.

IV.

Two years and a half sped by, and, just a twelvemonth ago now, at the beginning of the year 1873, it began to be bruited in the prosperous town of Seinebourg that General Cœurpreux, who commanded the district, would shortly marry Mdme. de Cri, née Violette Desprès, the widow of the late lamented Prefect. People were still full of the details of M. de Cri's untimely death, and of the imposing funeral which had been decreed him out of the public taxes. At the time when the Commune was raging in Paris, the striking (or, as they are by some humorously called, the "working") classes of Seinebourg had tried to get up a similar institution for themselves, and might have succeeded but for General Cœurpreux. Before he had time to parley with them or adopt their views to save his precious life, the Communists slew M. de Cri with an accidental bullet. Whereon orations in his honour were solemnly pronounced in the National Assembly; a pension was voted to his widow; and the municipal council of Seinebourg, escorted by a whole regiment, with muffled drums and arms reversed, followed him to his grave, where soon after a monument was erected on which a local journalist proposed to inscribe the words, "*Sta, viator, martyrem calcas!*" There are men whose luck attends them beyond the tomb. After hoaxing mankind in this life, they bamboozle it through ages to come by means of perjured epitaphs.

As for General Cœurpreux, he was the man who had covered himself with what little glory was gleaned during the siege of Paris. He had fought, not talked. His regiment went to battle without bragging, and returned always thinned, but never daunted. The War-Office clerks opined that it was scandalous a man should rise from Captain to General of Brigade in less than two years, and they busied themselves actively to get him shorn of some of the honours he had earned whilst they sat by their fireside, hoping with brotherly unanimity they might soon be called in their official capacities to record his death. But the Commission which was appointed to revise the distinctions conferred during the war rose bareheaded when Cœurpreux was introduced, and the General who presided handed him his commission ratified by the signatures of the entire Board. The Provisional Republic sent him to command at Seinebourg, and Cœurpreux accepted the appointment because he considered the Republic a provisional one and nothing more. He made no secret of his opinions on this head, and continued to speak of Napoleon III. as Emperor, without prefixing an "ex." Had the Republic been consolidated, his good friends the clerks would have had the gratification of writing to request he would resign; as it was, the big people of Versailles kept a watchful eye on him, and booked him mentally as a dangerous man, who must be tolerated for his good services, but shelved as soon as feasible.

Perhaps, in truth, Cœurpreux's conduct was not quite prudent. In his rooms he hung portraits of the Emperor, the Empress, and the Prince Imperial. Three times a year—that is, towards the 16th March, the 15th August, and the 15th November—he applied for a week's leave, and went to Chislehurst, with a bouquet of violets made in Paris and of a yard's circumference. He offered this fête-day tribute to the exiled family, and assured them of his unwavering devotion; then he returned, and if people asked him where he had been, he replied simply: "To do homage to my Sovereign." Seinebourg was a righteous town, which drove an honest trade and went to church when it had time; but it did not understand chivalry pushed to this length. It had given the Emperor an enthusiastic reception once when he had visited the town, and witnessed with unmixed satisfaction the prosecution of journalists who assailed his rule. By-and-by it had vouchsafed a reception equally enthusiastic to M. Thiers, and watched with undiminished pleasure the chastisement of scribes who cavilled at this new state of things. If the Emperor had returned, there would have been a third reception, quite as enthusiastic as the two preceding ones; but pending this consummation, it was idle to express opinions which were, at best, premature, and which might interfere with the due profits of business. So Seinebourg, as represented by its commercial men, who are the salt of this world, eyed their General rather askance, but contrived to be civil in their tones when they talked to him of the Napoleons, for Cœurpreux had an awkward trick of frowning if there was any slip of the tongue in apportioning the responsibilities of the war's disasters; and it was known that he had handled a republican

big-wig somewhat unceremoniously. Said the big-wig: "Monsieur de Sedan must have more pluck than I should give him credit for, if he hopes ever to put us under his heel again." This was at a dinner: Cœurpreux stared him in the face, and answered: "May I inquire what you were doing whilst he whom you call M. de Sedan was under fire of the Prussian batteries?" The big-wig looked much shocked, for it so chanced that he had been engaged at the time in question in writing a series of newspaper articles on the degeneracy of the French army; but he declined furnishing this explanation, or indeed continuing the conversation in any way, for there was no knowing but that with such an unmannerly person it might lead to an encounter in the field, and to France becoming by one republican the poorer—which was a catastrophe by no means to be desired.

It will naturally be supposed that to recompense him for his disfavour amid the republicans, General Cœurpreux passed among Bonapartists of all sizes and denominations for a trusty knight, and was well beloved; but this would argue small knowledge of the human mind as politics do fashion it. The most active men in state factions are those who have most interest in the game, and those who are most interested are seldom, if ever, those who are most nice. Cœurpreux was a Bonapartist, but his loyalty did not extend to all the weedy people whom the Bonapartes had delighted to honour. He said some very rough things about certain of these gentlemen, asserting that he would rather see the Emperor in exile than have him return with some of his old advisers, for that at Chislehurst at least his honour was safe; whereas on the throne, and acting as the tool of sundry personages he could mention, his fair fame was slurred by all the foolish and villanous deeds committed in his name. This was not pleasant to hear. Such of the Jobuses and Cris as had not been able to secure posts under the Republic, and were consequently loud in proclaiming that they would scorn to accept such if offered, insinuated at Chislehurst, even as they had done at St. Cloud, that this Cœurpreux was a man of crafty mood, whose pretended staunchness was nothing but a device for being amply recompensed when the Empire returned. Probably he aspired to be a senator or war minister—for there is no knowing where the ambition of such men will stop: meantime they gave him a wide berth, and thanked Providence they were not as he was—which was wise on their part, for a soul like Cœurpreux's is not that which pays best here below. Altogether, if Cœurpreux had reckoned all the people who were his true friends, he might easily have computed the total with the fingers of one hand. But what did he care? His conscience let him rest, and Violette admired him with all her heart—this was quite enough for his desires.

He went to see Violette every day, and the love which had lain in abeyance during the years of her marriage grew and ripened. Cœurpreux's character was a wonder and a study for the woman he worshipped; and comparing it with that of her late lord, so unhappily deceased, she would fall into reveries how it was possible that two men could be so unlike. It has been said she was frivolous, and doubtless till she came to know her

lover well, never suspected there was stainless honour anywhere but in story-books. M. de Cri used to talk of stainless honour, rectitude of purpose, unsullied principles, &c., at public banquets, and the salaried newspaper of the prefecture used to write of stainless honour at so much a column. But M. de Cri would put off his stainless honour when he got home, as he did his silver-laced coat, and the salaried journalist of the prefecture was a poor rogue, who sold himself to the highest bidder. Sometimes Violette heard two men dubbed men of honour because they had quarrelled and fought about a ballet dancer who was faithless to them with a third. And at other times she saw men of honour who had eloped with other men of honour's wives. There were women of honour who sold their daughters to dilapidated but rich debauchees, girls of honour who submitted very willingly to the sale, and priests of honour who blessed the transaction in the name of heaven. There were financiers of honour who signed the prospectuses of bubble companies; statesmen of honour who truckled to the people with false flatteries; and electors of honour who bartered their votes for what they could fetch. These were the beings of honour amongst whom Violette's acquaintance had always lain; and she had somehow learned to define a man without honour as one without money. She could not at first get used to Cœurpreux's way of dealing with people whom she had been wont to reverence; it was as if he had knocked together a number of sham bronze statuettes, and they had all smashed in the process, revealing their composition to be only bad plaster. She heard of his doing great and generous things in a secret way, and he would never own to them, nor talk about them. He shook the hands of people he esteemed with a grip of iron, and smiled to them with his whole face; but to persons he mistrusted he was barely civil, no matter how much gold lace they might sport on their swallow-tails. To Violette, however, he was gentle and kind, always submissive; and, though she was aware of how poor an idea he entertained of the martyred M. de Cri, he never alluded to him with disrespect—in fact, never alluded to him at all but once, and this was on the day when she had promised to marry him so soon as her second year's widowhood should be completed. They were sitting together. He coughed a little; then, with some shyness, touched upon money matters, and expressed a wish that she should resign the pension she had of Government, and, indeed, all other monies—the sum was slight—bequeathed her by M. de Cri. He suffered visibly during the explanation this entailed; but it came to this, that M. de Cri's earnings did not seem to him very clean things. He had pocketed salaries all his life by changing his opinions as fast as his interests required it; and, applied to minor operations in finance, this sort of thing was called obtaining money under false pretences. The phrase was not a euphonious one; but truth never was euphonious. For all this, Cœurpreux said nothing to wound Violette, and she consented to everything, as women will do for the men they love. If the lamented M. de Cri could have risen from the grave and beheld his wife promising so cheerfully to denude

herself—she who had cost him a tidy fortune in dresses, and had never failed to draw her pin-money when it became due, and occasionally in advance—he might have indulged in some ghostly meditations on the ways of women and the difficulty of fathoming their natures.

So it was agreed that on the 18th of March, the day after he should have returned from carrying the Prince Imperial's birthday bouquet to Chislehurst, Cœurpreux should take Violette to wife, and never more part from her.

"It is now the 2nd of January, Violette," he said fondly; "and do you know, when I think of the happiness in store for me, I feel sure that, could I have foreseen it years ago, I should have worked so as to be a field-marshal by this time, or turned coward for fear of being cut off from you."

"And if *I* could have foreseen it, I would have striven to be more of you than I am," she answered, looking up into his eyes; and her own brimmed as she did so, for she never thought of his long constancy to her without being moved to the heart.

Cœurpreux went off to review his men, riding spiritedly down the red-trowsered lines, and scanning them with pride when they executed their movements as soldiers should do, smartly and without blunder. He gave the colonels under him some trouble; and the soldiers would not have liked him the less if he had marched them about less often. But General Cœurpreux was no idler, and had never earned his pay by lolling about with his hands in his pockets. Besides, at this period, he had most significant reasons for seeing that his men drilled well. It is pretty well known at this time by all who care to know it, that in the month of January of the year 1873 the Bonapartists had determined upon attempting a *coup-de-main* in the month of March, and that the operation which the Emperor underwent at the beginning of January was intended to enable him to ride on horseback and re-enter France, as his uncle had done after his escape from Elba. The Emperor had affirmed that he would delegate to no one else the honour of heading the movement, and it was understood that some six weeks after the operation he would be in a position to ride. Several generals had been sounded, and amongst them Cœurpreux. The wire-pullers of the party would have done little for our friend after the victory; but he was a useful man before and during the struggle, so their words were sweeter than honey from the honeycomb. Cœurpreux's answer was plain:

"I regard the Emperor as the lawful sovereign of France, until the last plebiscite shall have been cancelled. If his Majesty lands in France, I shall call upon my men to rally round him; if they mutiny, I will go alone; and if we fail, I shall give myself up to these Republicans, or whatever else they call themselves, and let them shoot me at their leisure."

This is why the Imperialist soldier kept a quick eye to the marching and counter-marching, and was precise in seeing all the movements that concern firing and charging with bayonets practised repeatedly, until perfection was attained. There could have been no more enlivening sight

for a true republican, knowing what was in General Cœurpreux's mind, than to have seen these nimble red-trowsers strutting and wheeling under the General's direction, kneeling, loading, discharging, and doubling forward with bayonets fixed, as if they were already sweeping Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and the entire rights of man off the globe's surface.

It was on the afternoon of the 9th January that, returning to his quarters in very hopeful spirits after a few hours' manœuvring, which had fairly worn out every one save himself, Cœurpreux was greeted by the orderly, who wore a blank, scared look as he helped him to dismount. Bad tidings come always suddenly, and the soldier's face was that of a messenger of woe: "General, have you heard the news?" he asked, holding out in a trembling hand a special edition of a cheap paper.

"What news?"

"The Emperor's dead, General."

Cœurpreux had half swung himself out of the saddle, but the announcement struck him like a bullet; he reeled and would have fallen, but for the orderly who caught him by the arm and sustained him.

"Thank you," he stammered; "it'll be nothing. Where's the paper?" And he walked in, passing his hand over his forehead and stepping unsteadily. A child might have knocked him down.

The news caused little commotion at Seinebourg, or anywhere else in France. Out of sight, out of mind, is never so true as in the case of French Emperors; but people noticed not without sympathy that General Cœurpreux appeared in deep mourning, and in uniform wore a crape round his arm. He was depressed and silent, too, and as soon as the day for the funeral was fixed, the clerks at the War Office received, unsealed, and perused this letter, which had a deep black border:

"*To his Excellency General de Cissey, War Minister.*

"12th January.

"GENERAL—I have the honour to solicit of you a week's leave, in order that I may attend the funeral of the Emperor, and pay to him my last tribute of veneration and gratitude. "Pray receive, &c.,

"JEAN CŒURPREUX."

The clerks stamped the letter, filed it, laughed at it among themselves, and answered it in this wise:—

"*To M. le Général de Brigade Cœurpreux.*

"GENERAL—In answer to your letter of the 12th, I am directed to inform you that an order will be issued in to-morrow's *Journal Officiel*, refusing leave to all officers to attend the ex-Emperor's funeral. A few exceptions will perhaps be made to this rule, but after giving the matter his most anxious consideration, General de Cissey does not judge it expedient to include your name among them.

"Pray receive the assurance of my deep respect,

"Z. JOBUS-HURLANT."

Post for post came back this, again with a black border :—

"*To his Excellency General de Cissey, War Minister.*

"GENERAL—I respectfully beg you will accept my resignation. The Emperor did too much for me whilst he was alive for me to forget what is owing to his memory now that he is dead.

"I have the honour to be your Excellency's obedient servant,

"JEAN CŒURPREUX."

And lest the small incidents of history should be forgotten, which ought not to be, seeing that of them is made up the fate of empires, let us cut out this slip from the *Journal Officiel*:

"M. le Général de Brigade Jean Cœurpreux, Commander of the Legion of Honour, &c., has tendered his resignation."

"ARMY APPOINTMENTS.—Colonel de Cri-Hurlant to be General of Brigade in command at Seinebourg vice General Cœurpreux; Lieut.-Col. Jobus to be Colonel; Commandant Jobus-Cri to be Lieut.-Col.; Captain Jobus-Hurlant to be Commandant, &c."

General Cœurpreux attended the funeral at Chislehurst, and was among the foremost of those who did homage to the Prince Impérial in the levee held at Camden Place after the sad ceremony was over. He returned to France with a trainful and a boatful of passengers who had gone on the same pilgrimage as himself; but several of whom wondered naïvely that he should have thrown up his commission for such a purpose. They had few of them sacrificed anything themselves, and they prophesied that some of his brother-officers might resent his conduct as an affectation of being more disinterested and virtuous than themselves, which is always inexpedient. Cœurpreux found that many of his brother-officers did take this convenient view of the case, as was natural. Was it to be considered, forsooth, that they were less mindful of past favour, because they were less quixotic? Quixotic is a useful word. If we could marshal into column all those who have snubbed others by its means from doing kind and noble things, and all those who have been so snubbed, what a pair of imposing hosts they would make on the march of modern progress!

But we may conclude that Cœurpreux was consoled by Violette, who judged the matter as he did, though all these events indeed retarded her marriage for some months. Cœurpreux did not consider it seemly to marry within half a year of a bereavement which he mourned for as when his father had died. Moreover, being now reduced to his half-pay and his savings—the which for one so open-handed as he were not considerable—he would apply, he said, for appointment on the Bonapartist press, in order that he might defend the dynasty he loved with his pen until the time came for championing it again with his sword. Assuredly, when the Jobuses and the Cris saw him embark on this venture, which is the forlorn hope of political outcasts, they must have rejoiced exceedingly one

and all, and hoped that before long the Government of M. Thiers might be moved to imprison him at Ste. Pélagie. And maybe they promised each other a banquet to celebrate this auspicious day, for it is good to be merry in season.

V.

But the turns in fortune's wheel are more numerous than even the Jobuses who feed on the budget; and about the beginning of June last, an erect man in evening dress, but wearing black gloves, might have been seen descending at early morning from a fly at the gate of the Prefecture of Versailles, where Marshal M'Mahon, the new President of the Republic, was lodged. He entered the door well known to suitors and reporters during M. Thiers's well-meaning reign, and exhibited a letter of audience to the aide-de-camp on duty.

"The President has summoned me to a private audience at ten o'clock," he said.

"This way, General," answered the aide-de-camp; and within a few minutes General Cœurpreux stood alone with his old chief, who looked at him and shook his head.

"Did not I warn you, Cœurpreux, not to dabble in anything that might displease anybody—politics especially, which are no game for us soldiers?"

"Till we become Presidents," answered Cœurpreux, with a grave smile, as he bowed and pressed the hand which the hero of Magenta extended to him.

"Yes, till we become Presidents—that's it; but we can't all be Presidents." And the Marshal's iron features relaxed about the lips, though it is chiefly with eyes that he usually smiles. "Now listen, Cœurpreux: I hear you were going to be married; and my advice is, don't delay about that ceremony, for your wife will keep you out of mischief. And see here—there was some informality in your resignation; so it is cancelled, and I have signed you a new commission; but if I hear of your meddling again in state business"—and here the Marshal paused and frowned—"I give you my word I'll put you in a Government office, and if that doesn't make you less of a rebel, I don't know what will."

"I am not likely to rebel against your Excellency," responded Cœurpreux, whose face lighted up as he received his commission.

"No, but you must let the clerks alone, now that they're under my wing. Ah, yes, I know what you're going to say: that you can never forget, and will be always faithful, I know; but you had better be off, or they'll say we're plotting for Napoleon IV. together."

"I had rather we plotted for Napoleon IV. in March, 1874, when he will be of age to govern; and if your Excellency decides to do so then, remember to count me among the fighting conspirators," rejoined the incorrigible Bonapartist.

Feng-Shui.

The Son of Heaven has declined, with or without thanks, the proffered railway. A committee of wealthy Englishmen proposed to construct for Imperial use a short line of railway in any locality appointed to them, and to present the whole, fixed plant and rolling stock complete, the free gift of English capitalists to the monarch of China. A curious public, as well as the disappointed subscribers, will expend some ingenuity in conjecturing the secret motives which prompted refusal of so magnificent an offer. Did the youthful Emperor's advisers regard the luxurious saloon-carriage as no better than a Trojan horse, concealing under its velvet cushions some nefarious project against their sovereign's life or prosperity? No *canard* of that kind would be too monstrous for the credulity of the multitude, but the intelligent statesmen, whose wit has been sharpened in many a keen encounter with English diplomatists, from Sir Henry Pottinger to Lord Elgin, and has of recent years been kept in constant exercise by Sir Harry Parkes in his prison, by Bruce, and Alcock, and Wade at the embassy, by Lay and Hart outside of it—they know us better than to suspect treachery, however deeply they dislike our obtrusiveness and dread our power. Were they afraid of lowering the Imperial dignity in the eyes of its subjects by the reception of a gift at the hands of outside barbarians? Surely, no; for to the popular mind the splendid gift would naturally assume the aspect of tribute, and be welcomed as a sign that the troublesome foreigners were inclining, at last, to the principles of right reason, and striving to apologize for their rude intrusion into the sacred presence by this solid recognition of the supremacy of the heaven-ordained lord of the habitable world. What was the objection then? Was it Feng-Shui? We grant that the imperial councillors were, doubtless, shrewd enough to foresee that acceptance of this railway for royal use would furnish an awkward advantage to foreign ambassadors in their arguments for the introduction of a national railway system into China. But this only carries our question back a stage. Why this aversion to avail themselves of advantages which Western science presses upon their attention? The enormous area of the Chinese Empire renders improved means of inter-communication one of the prime desiderata for a stable and efficient government. The great officials, who have consumed months in tedious journeying between the capital and the provinces, cannot but be aware of this, if more forcible illustrations of the necessity were not constantly recurring. In the north-west and south-west formidable rebellions, the

embers of which are not yet extinguished, have defied the central government for years, which the drilled troops and improved materials of war, furnished to China by their intercourse with the West, could put down in double-quick time but for the difficulty of transporting their forces to the scene of action. What is the obstacle to China's imitating her progressive neighbour Japan by the adoption of railways? It is Feng-Shui. Not Feng-Shui alone, perhaps. The bigoted toryism of China is doubtless haunted by a hundred fears: fear of interference with the present carrying-trade; fear of loss of prestige; reluctance to admit foreign surveyors and engineers into the interior of the country; dislike of increasing their intimacy with foreign powers; and so forth. These objections, however, are mostly ill-suited for presentation at the foreign legations. When the mandarins fall back upon a line of defence which Western logic cannot hope to penetrate, it is Feng-Shui. Demonstrate to themselves that it is an absurd superstition, they may smile and politely assent, though secretly unconvinced, while, at the same time, impregnably fortified by the universal belief of the masses in this conservative Feng-Shui. What then is this Feng-Shui, which decides affairs of state for one-third of the earth's population? An attempt to elucidate the mystery to the English mind may have some interest for the philanthropist and politician, as well as the general reader.

Amid the general meanness of Chinese architecture the only exception which adorns the landscape is the frequency of the lofty and graceful pagodas which crown the heights, rise up amid groves of trees, give point and beauty to little islets in the broad rivers. In some districts the pagodas are dotted over the prospect like village spires in an English county. The inquiring traveller asks his interpreter, or his missionary friend, what these pagodas are erected for? Are they temples? No, not exactly, though generally a statue or tablet of the god of literature is found enshrined within. Are they monuments? No, they are built to improve the Feng-Shui of the villages or towns at their feet. In some mountain valley the traveller remarks a handsome, well-kept tomb of a horse-shoe shape, resting against the side of a rounded hill, backed by loftier heights and flanked by declivities gently falling on either hand into the plain, over which a broad and silvery stream meanders. The beauty and peacefulness of the retired scene impresses his mind and he muses half-aloud: "There must be poetry in the Chinese soul after all. Were I a native of the land, just such a spot would I select for my last resting-place, and here, when my sorrowing friends should come to mourn my loss, the soothing influence of nature's everlasting strength and calm would breathe an undefined sense of consolation to their breasts." But his guide annihilates his kindling sympathies by the information that neither affection nor poetry, but Feng-Shui fixed upon this hillside for the grave. As they wander on, before long our traveller's wonder is excited by another strange sight. On a tomb-covered hill he notices a number of large glazed earthenware pots, set down here and there, among the graves.

He ventures to remove the lid of one, and finds that it contains a human skull and bones. Accident has overturned and broken some of these fragile sepulchres, and the bones are scattered on the hillside, dried and blanched by sun and rain. Once more he receives an explanation derived from the same source. These bones have been disinterred, because experience proved that the Feng-Shui of the grave was bad, and they are put into this jar temporarily, until such time as a site with good Feng-Shui can be procured. Such is the acquaintance with the working of Feng-Shui which the mere passing traveller will acquire, and now, when he demands, what then is Feng-Shui? he is told that Feng means Wind, Shui means Water, but that the mere translation "Wind and Water" gives no clue to the understanding of the custom. It is an ancient and absurd superstition of the people, the origin and nature of which not even the Chinese themselves can explain, but which involves the belief that the lot of the living is determined by the spirits of the dead, and their good-will or malignancy depends mainly upon the situation of the tomb; and, moreover, that human prosperity and adversity, even virtue and vice, are mysteriously influenced by a sort of electricity of nature, which is attracted or repelled by the configuration of the hills and the erection of lofty buildings. This is about all our inquisitive traveller can gain from old residents in China, even though they be consuls or missionaries who have grown familiar with the native language and literature. If the explanation be obscure and unsatisfactory, deficiency here will be balanced by abundant details of the practical effects of the superstition.

Feng-Shui has its professed experts who gain their living by the occult science, and are regularly called in and consulted about the site and plan for a new house, the position of a grave, the advantages or injuriousness of a pagoda. Nor is the exercise of their craft a simple and hasty process. Guided by a little compass set in a wide circular rim inscribed with a perfect maze of mysterious formulæ, the geomancer sets out on his solemn quest, studying the face of the country like a gold-seeker or geologist. If his clients are a wealthy family the corpse of their deceased parent may have to remain above ground for months, or even years, before the suitable spot for sepulture can be discovered. Meantime the coffin is deposited in a temple, or in a little lodge in the garden or the field, built for its reception. The mansion which has cost thousands may have to be remodelled, or even pulled down, while yet in process of building. After the highest art has been liberally rewarded for services rendered, some family disaster may demonstrate the failure of the trusted professor, and then, as we have seen, the relics of the dead must be reclaimed from the grave and a new voyage of discovery be undertaken on their behalf. Experience can sometimes be gained at a cheaper rate than pulling down a building. One summer evening when wandering over a level wooded district of the Canton province, we came upon a pagoda three stories high, looking, at a slight distance, exactly like the common

type of brick erections which stud that country. But this, on near approach, proved to be of wood, and close inspection betrayed that it was put together of thin light boards attached to a framework in such manner that the whole thing could be taken down and removed without much difficulty. It was a temporary pagoda, after the manner of our temporary iron churches, put up in a destitute district to draw a congregation together. It was tentatively erected by the neighbouring villagers in their efforts to improve their Feng-Shui. If their crops were good in successive years, if no pestilence invaded their precincts, and above all, should some talented youth distinguish himself at the provincial examinations, and pour a flood of glory over his native place by attaining to the distinguished degree of *Keu jin*, then the experiment would be pronounced successful. Efficacious in attracting good fortune in general, there is nothing in which the charm of a well-planted pagoda is more conspicuous than in its influence upon the literary talent of the community at its foot. On this account it is that the upper story of the building usually contains a representation of the god of literature, before which incense burns, and hence the popular name for pagodas, "towers of literature." It would be too inconvenient and expensive to experiment in a similar way in the case of dwellings; therefore the best use of the diviner's skill must be made at the time, and after that the consequences be taken as they come, or palliated by putting up lucky symbols in suitable places. We remember a village in a beautiful country where the prospect before the cottage door would have delighted the eye, but before each door was erected a brick wall nearly as high as the cottage itself, and of a width which must have entailed a heavy cost upon the poor country people. These brick screens were raised to fend off obnoxious influences from the opposing hills. Sometimes it is considered that precaution enough has been taken if a stone has been built into the wall exposed to unlucky Feng-Shui, bearing an inscription of defiance to the power of the evil principle.

Feng-Shui is far from being a mere matter of individual and family concern which only affects its believers. Its invisible, but benignant or direful forces are liable to be set in motion by those who have never even heard of the name. Therefore if a new house is built it is not only the owner's affair, but that of all his neighbours also. Who knows, says the Chinese, but his chimney-pot may draw down the wrath of heaven and earth on my head, or the bare, blank aspect of his end wall may reflect the malarious breath of nature into my door, bringing disaster to my enterprises, disease and death to my wife and children? The devout believer in Feng-Shui consults his trusted geomancer on the new influences about to affect his life and fortunes, and no possible effort will be omitted to prevent any unfavourable change in his surroundings. Thus it arises that foreigners from the far west, who come from an island too barbarous to know of the existence of Feng-Shui, may, by their ill-advised erections, imperil the happiness of a Chinese town. The churches of the missionaries,

on account of their superior height, are especially fatal to the well being of the streets surrounding their bases. In the treaty ports under the protection of the consular flags no effectual opposition can be raised to these buildings, and the injured native watches the rising walls with smothered indignation. But in the interior the foreigner, too, must respect Feng-Shui if he would live in peace. We lodged once in a long low school-house, built by German missionaries, which rested against a steep hillside. Not long before, the missionaries, having been vexed by frequent nocturnal visits of thieves, had added two little watch-towers, like ears, a few feet high, on each end of the building, to be occupied by watchmen during the night. But they had unintentionally infringed upon Feng-Shui. One of these little towers was just visible over the rising ground to a tomb on another hill a quarter of a mile off. The enraged descendants of the occupant of that tomb gathered the village together against the missionaries and threatened to burn down their establishment. In vain did the missionaries argue that so small a portion of their building could be seen from the tomb, that if, as was most reasonable, one supposed that the deceased spirit preferred to *sit* upon his semi-circular arm-chair-like grave, instead of fatiguing himself by standing upon it, he then would not have the obnoxious projection within the field of vision at all. No matter, the offensive towers must be pulled down. As usual in China it was found that even Feng-Shui could be propitiated by a gift; and the missionaries bought toleration of the disturbed spirit for a certain number of dollars, paid down to his representatives in the flesh. Governor Amaral, of Macao, did not escape the vengeance of Feng-Shui so easily. He signalised his tenure of office in that tiny peninsula by cutting out new roads, utterly regardless of the interests of the numerous descendants of those buried in the tombs among which his roads passed. His contempt for Feng-Shui cost him his life. He was waylaid and beheaded on one of his own new roads. Without citing farther instances, the necessary antagonism between Feng-Shui and railways must already begin to be clear to the reader. Every cutting would cut away all the happiness of existence from untold multitudes; each embankment would threaten calamity to all the plain on either side. To tunnel through a mountain would be wantonly and wickedly to despise the protection heaven itself has built up against the disasters which would otherwise overwhelm the dwellers on its sheltered side. A line of telegraph posts would be so many conductors to draw down the fateful breath of nature's life, certain to spread abroad the deleterious influences while dissipating the good. Feng-Shui and railways are mutually destructive. We have read that the introduction of railways into India has produced considerable effect in weakening the exclusiveness of caste. It is hard to perceive how Feng-Shui in China could at all survive a similar invasion of engineering skill. Whether or no Feng-Shui will accommodate itself to the rush and roar of the iron horse, when it speeds over the vast plains of northern China and among the mountain valleys of the south, we cannot say; but there is no question

about the fierce opposition it will raise to the upturning of the first sod, the cutting of the first hill.

It is time to address ourselves to the inquiry what this mysterious Feng-Shui is, or is supposed to be. An elucidation of this far-away superstition will be quite a novelty to the great majority of our readers, for popular works on China are almost unanimous in avoiding the subject. Works like Williams's *Middle Kingdom* and Doolittle's *Social Life of the Chinese*, though seeming to cover the whole ground in their descriptions of Chinese national idiosyncrasies, omit Feng-Shui altogether. This can only be accounted for on the hypothesis that these learned authors did not care to include a topic about which they felt themselves unable to enlighten the public. Very few even of the Chinese could give a clear and connected account of this obscure topic. Question a native, and he would reply, Feng-Shui is the influence of nature and of the spirits upon the destinies of the living; it is called Feng because it is a thing like wind, which you cannot comprehend, and Shui, because it's like water, which you cannot grasp. Feng-Shui has a literature of its own; but its repulsive technicology, with its "azure dragon" and "white tiger," its breath of nature, and male and female principles, and its profuse use of the numerical diagrams of the Classic of Changes, are quite excuse enough for the neglect it has received from Sinologues. While the vast fields of Chinese philosophy, poetry, history, and religion are still the unexplored Africa of literature, no wonder that students should turn away from this unattractive desert of superstitious nonsense, and devote their labours to more promising regions. Besides this, it must be admitted that Feng-Shui is an invisible underground principle, which does not obtrude itself upon the attention. It is not a religion, nor the sect of a religion. It has no temple nor priesthood, nor college, nor any authorised professors or incorporated believers. Its occult influence pervades all Chinese society, but does not come conspicuously to the surface in any imposing rite or permanent visible manifestation. There would be houses and tombs did not Feng-Shui exist. Even pagodas had their origin in Buddhism, and still retain their quasi-religious character. Thus it was easy to describe the whole superficies of Chinese society, without alluding to this underlying element of superstition. At last, however, an erudite German scholar, well known among Oriental students by his valuable investigations into Chinese Buddhism, has undertaken the long-delayed task, and now in a pamphlet* of eighty pages, the curious in such matters may read a complete exposition of the origin, character, and influence of Feng-Shui. We cannot but admire the liveliness of style and aptness of illustration by which Dr. Eitel has relieved the tediousness of studying the minute details of the ground-plan and architecture of this, which is essentially a castle erected in the dominions of the "prince of the power of the air," formidable in dimensions and apparent solidity, but in accordance with its

* *Feng-Shui, or The Rudiments of Natural Science in China*, by Ernest J. Eitel, M.A., Ph. D. Trübner & Co., 1873.

name, composed of no more substantial materials than the castles of cloud-land built up out of water-vapour by the action of wind. But no ingenuity of treatment could allure any but an enthusiastic student of foreign superstitions to inflict upon himself the penance of mastering the intricacies of the "Numerical Proportions of Nature." We will not, therefore, attempt to abridge Dr. Eitel's dissection of the anatomy of the system; but, endeavour to present in one view the picture which its totality produces in our minds.

Feng-Shui is a product of a mode of thought characteristic of the primeval era of human development; perhaps the most remarkable, as it is one of the latest, manifestations of fetichism. Feng-Shui views heaven and earth, the whole universe, as one great fetich, animated by a blind unintelligent but omnipotent vitality, a vitality in which man shares, and of which, by the exercise of his intelligent faculties, he may procure a larger and better share than would otherwise fall to his lot. As a practical art, Feng-Shui is the terrestrial sister of Astrology, a mode of deciphering the destinies of an individual as included in the vast complications of the universal whole, but in this respect the earthly sister excels her star-gazing prototype, that by means of Feng-Shui a man learns not only what his fate is, but how it may be modified to his own advantage. We cannot better introduce this curious conception of man's power over destiny than by a quotation which shows that we English are a wiser race than we thought ourselves: "Strange to say, Chinese constantly assert that foreigners know all about Feng-Shui. When mortality was frightful among the Hong Kong troops quartered in Murray barracks, and the Colonial surgeon proposed the planting of bamboos at the back of the buildings, the Chinese justly remarked that this measure was in strict accordance with Feng-Shui. When foreign residents of Hong Kong began to build villas in Pokfoolum (which Feng-Shui declares to be the best site of the island), when the Government began to build a reservoir there, when tanks were built on the north side of Hong Kong, and the hillside was studded with trees, when the cutting of earth was forbidden in places where there is much decomposed rock, the Chinese in all these cases supposed foreigners to know much more about Feng-Shui than they would tell, and the Surveyor General was put down as a profound adept in Feng-Shui. Why, they say, there is Government House, occupying the very best spot on the northern side of the island, screened at the back by high trees and gently-shelving terraces, skirted right and left by roads with graceful curves, and the whole situation combining everything that Feng-Shui would prescribe, how is it possible that foreigners pretend to know nothing of Feng-Shui?" This then is the practical embodiment of the system. The configuration and character of the surface of the earth determines the weal or woe of its inhabitants. Rising grounds, groups of trees, pools of water, winding roads, when properly situated and combined, are the causes of health, wealth, peace, and happiness, to the fortunate dwellers in these desirable localities. Another extract, referring to the same little

island, will present the obverse view: "Hong Kong, with its abundance of rocks and boulders scattered about on the hillside, abounds accordingly in malign breath, and the Chinese think our Government very wise in endeavouring to plant trees everywhere on the hill to screen these harbingers of evil. But the most malicious influence under which Hong Kong suffers is caused by that curious rock on the edge of the hill near Wanchai. It is distinctly seen from Queen's Road East, and foreigners generally see in it Cain and Abel, Cain slaying his brother. The Chinese take the rock to represent a female figure, which they call the bad woman, and they firmly and seriously believe that all the immorality of Hong Kong, all the recklessness and vice of Taipingshan, are caused by that wicked rock. So firmly is this belief impressed upon the lowest classes in Hong Kong that those who profit from immoral practices actually go and worship that rock, spreading out offerings and burning incense at its foot. None dares to injure it, and I have been told by many otherwise sensible people, that several stone-cutters who attempted to quarry at the base of that rock died a sudden death immediately after the attempt." Now that we have before us the two-fold energies of Feng-Shui, baneful as well as blessing, we see that it is a materialistic fatalism according to which human happiness and misery, virtue and vice, are determined, or, at least, mightily influenced, by invisible currents of nature's breath flowing over the surface of the earth, adapting itself to its inequalities, attracted or repelled by its elevations and depressions, its straight lines and curves.

Feng-Shui begins where Astrology ends. So familiar are we with the latter delusion, it seems hardly strange to us that imaginative minds, speculating on the tangled destinies of man, unable to discover in character or conduct a clue to the endless diversities, the strange vicissitudes of the human lot, should have gazed up at the bewildering hosts of stars, until they dreamt that the mystic dance of those pale watch-fires of night, must rain down a spiritual influence upon man, which decides his fortunes for good or evil. But the astrologer at the utmost only aimed to interpret, he never aspired to rule, the courses of the planets. Shall we say that the practical mind of the Chinese could not rest in this conception of itself as the helpless sport of irresistible because unapproachable heavenly powers? Or, shall we see rather a farther flight of poetic imagination in the daring assumption which brought down heaven to earth, and placed its mighty forces partially under human control? However that might be, the passage from Astrology to Feng-Shui was effected by the conception, strange enough to the European mind, that the stars operate directly upon the surface of the earth, and the surface of the earth upon the two-legged insects which crawl upon it. Mountain peaks correspond to the stars; rivers and oceans are the terrestrial milky way; the sky above is divided into constellations, such as the potent "azure dragon" and the baneful "white tiger;" the earth, too, has its azure dragons and white tigers innumerable, mountain ranges or undulating

grounds, in which the geomancer, by the aid of his compass and the rules of his art, detects the analogues of the celestial monsters. The five planets—and to the Chinese mind only five exist, or could exist—the five planets take their names from the five elements, of the essences of which they are the embodiments. "As to their counterparts on earth, the rules by which each mountain may be referred to one or other of the five planets are very simple. If a peak rises up bold and straight, running out into a sharp point, it is identified with Mars, and declared to represent the element fire. If the point of a similarly shaped mountain is broken off and flat, but comparatively narrow, it is said to be the embodiment of Jupiter, and to represent the element wood. If the top of a mountain forms an extensive plateau, it is the representative of Saturn, and the element earth dwells there. If a mountain runs up high, but its peak is softly rounded, it is called Venus, and represents the element metal. A mountain whose top is the shape of a cupola is looked upon as the representative of Mercury, and the element water rules there." Behold, now, the immense superiority of Feng-Shui. Its planets are no wandering fires; its task is not to win secrets from the inaccessible sky; the professor of this mundane astrology plants his feet upon the solid ground, compass in hand, and reads off the face of the landscape the blessings or curses stored up therein for the denizen of each particular spot.

This, however, is the least superiority of the Chinese system. It possesses, also, the immense advantage that the terrestrial phenomena are within reach of the mattock and spade. "Heaven," it is said, "requires the aid of man to carry out its schemes of justice. Earth requires the aid of man to bring its products to absolute perfection. Neither heaven nor earth are complete in themselves, but leave the last finish of everything to man. Consequently, as regards the natural outline of the earth's surface, there is much room for the active interference of man. The influence of the planets and of the five elements is very great, but it is not all. The influence of the natural configuration of the ground is very powerful, but man may alter the natural configuration." A low hill may be elevated, a straight, and consequently ill-omened water-course may be diverted. The point of a mountain can be cut off, and thus Mars is converted into Jupiter. An easier task is to raise a pointed mound on the top of a high but flat mountain, by which Saturn is changed into Mars. And if most of nature's works are too vast to be essentially altered, favourable modifications may be introduced, such as a pond here, a pagoda there. Feng-Shui too will guard its believers against wantonly and wickedly opening passages for the pernicious influence of nature, among which straight lines, straight ridges are the most fatal. It can, therefore, preserve China from the inevitable destruction of national prosperity that would follow the making of railways, which would not only destroy many most important features of the good Feng-Shui, but in their long straight ways, and their deadly embankments, positively invite every noxious influence to devour the land.

To the English reader this will appear such unmitigated nonsense that he will be almost ready to doubt the sanity of the people professing to believe it. But this disgust at the folly of the Chinese would be a good deal qualified by a careful consideration of the mental processes through which these curious results have been reached. We must refer the philosophic inquirer to Dr. Eitel's book, where he will find Feng-Shui traced up to the ancient opinion that the whole universe is a living organism, in which the trinity, heaven, earth, and man, share a common life, each member of the triad acting upon, and influenced by, the other two. There he will see also how the vast totality of phenomena are deduced by a system of permutations and combinations of numbers from two universal primordial principles, called the male and female principles, which two, when happily combined, constitute the favourable, and when disharmonious, the malign breath of nature. After he has fairly bewildered himself in the effort to follow this scheme through its complicated ramifications, and to do justice to it as *a* conception, though an imaginary one, of the true nature of things in themselves, he will probably cease to marvel that opinions supported by such an unbroken array of learned names, and argued out with such an appearance at once of plausibility and profundity, have taken deep root in the Chinese mind. Space forbids our attempting even a sketch of Chinese metaphysics, out of which this unique superstition, Feng-Shui, has grown, a not incongruous fruit. It remains, however, to point out the connection between Feng-Shui and the influence of the dead upon the living. A few sentences upon this topic will serve as a specimen of Chinese philosophical thought.

According to Choo-he and his followers, the soul of man is not simple, but possesses a dual nature. The two natures, which may be distinguished as *animus* and *anima*, belong respectively to the "breath of heaven" and the "breath of earth." The animus is the spiritual and male element of the soul: while the material element or female principle of nature forms the anima. In living man the two principles exist in combination, but at death, with the dissolution of the body, the union is broken up, the animus returns to heaven and the anima to earth. Not that we are to conceive of this returning as movement in space, but rather that each part is absorbed again into the general elements of nature whence each derived its origin. The souls of deceased ancestors, therefore, are as omnipresent as the elements of nature, as heaven and earth themselves. Thus the Chinese have been taught to consider themselves as constantly surrounded by a spirit-world, invisible indeed and inaccessible by touch or handling, but none the less real, none the less influential. From the groundwork of these not altogether despicable imaginations about the invisible world, the transition is easy to the popular belief that the anima of the deceased binds him to the tomb, while the masculine animus hovers round the dwelling of his descendants. This, again, produces the inference that if the tomb be so placed that the animal spirit supposed to dwell there is free from disturbing elements, the ancestral spirit will be both able and

disposed to visit with benign influences the homes of his pious descendants. Hence practical Feng-Shui has no more important problem than to select the site of a grave.

It does not require much wisdom to ridicule and despise the absurd superstitions of individuals and races less enlightened than our noble selves. But in recent years we have seen another spirit arise. Men have taken to studying ancient myths and modern superstitions instead of mocking at them. The result is a growing conviction that the soil of the human mind cannot produce and foster pure error, unmixed falsehood. The human intellect has been guilty of a thousand aberrations and extravagances, but through them all there has run a vein of loyalty to, or at least desire for, truth. The error we denounce is either a truth pushed to an extreme, or it is, though erroneous, the best interpretation the mind is for the time being capable of, of the phenomena which press upon it for a solution, or perhaps it is to be attributed to the eagerness of the mind to frame for itself some explanation of a problem really quite insoluble. It is to this latter class that we would attach Feng-Shui. This Chinese superstition, absurd as it is, has not maintained itself for a thousand years among a vast civilised people, a nation whose thinkers and scholars are innumerable, without basing itself upon something or other natural to man and not evidently repugnant to his reason. Where shall we look for this connecting link? I think we may see it in that mystery which has perplexed philosophers and theologians of all ages and countries, and of which we may reject the Chinese solution, but are ourselves unable to furnish a better. How is it that such innumerable diversities subsist among the characters and experiences of the children of men? Why is one born in the purple, cradled in luxury and splendour, while another drags along a few miserable years in a condition compared with which that of the brutes is enviable? Why, again, do we see some men naturally endowed with remarkable capacity and inclination, not for wisdom only but for virtue, where others display inherent tendencies to the worst of vices? Still more puzzling is the indisputable fact that the power, and beauty, and happiness of the world frequently fall to the share of the ignoble, while wisdom and goodness are linked to want and suffering. The Chinese looked around for an explanation of these mysterious arrangements of human life, not from a vague curiosity, but with the express hope of improving his own lot. Buddhism gave him a solution in its theory of successive existences, determined each by the merit and demerit of the preceding one; but Buddhism failed, even in its season of widest popularity, to lay hold of the Chinese national mind. The teachings of Confucius and his first disciples ignored difficulties which they could not remove. According to them, virtue is not only its own reward, but rightly and surely secures for itself the approval of heaven, the favour of man, and the lordship of this fair world.

The Chinese did homage to the ethical teaching of their great master, and accepted it as their highest trust for evermore. But the fact stared

them in the face that the sage himself passed a life of toil and wanderings "like a homeless dog," while licentious and illiterate princelets divided the world among them. It was an article of the Confucian creed that if the sage and the virtuous did not themselves attain to earthly honour and felicity, heaven, in recognition of their merit, would bestow these boons on their posterity. Experience has not confirmed this sentiment into a positive belief. The varieties and inequalities of earthly condition remained inexplicable. That right moral conduct is man's true life, the Chinese readily assented to; but that there is also some other principle at work, moulding human destinies without much regard to human character, seemed too palpable for disbelief. What is this principle? Philosophy stepped in, with her all-comprehensive speculations about the original absolute, the unity, the generation of all phenomena from one eternal substance, according to one all-pervading law, the evolution of the infinite variety of forms and conditions from the action and reaction of the great original upon itself. Clothed though they be in a Chinese garb, the European student frequently recognizes thoughts already familiar to him in Western speculation. Had Chinese metaphysics stopped at this stage, the result would be a striking similarity to the issue to which certain of our Western speculations seem to tend: a self-evolved universe, an organic whole, operating in all things by immutable law, but without a Law-giver; moving according to infinite order, but guided by no superintending Intelligence; explicable from itself, but containing no prophecy of a better explication to come. And it is, perhaps, more correct to say that Chinese philosophy did stop here; and to attribute the growth of Feng-Shui rather to the craving of the popular mind for something more definite and practical, some clue to the mystery which could be followed up to its own advantage. If philosophy teaches that fatalism governs the immense whole, while utterly careless of the result to the individual, can we marvel that in a superstitious age men caught at the idea that they might possibly divert the mighty current of nature's irresistible forces into little artificial channels for their own behoof? Feng-Shui is the very audacity of superstition, and it will hold its own until it fades away before the progress of Christianity, or the spread of science, or the influence of both combined.

F. S. T.

The Unpleasant Past.

When I put upon paper a few thoughts about "The Unpleasant Past," I do not mean the unpleasant past through which I have lived myself. In talking, indeed, about one's own earlier days, everybody, or nearly everybody, is so grievously hypocritical, that it is impossible to know how far they are deceiving themselves, or how far they are consciously deceiving others. There is the popular talk, for instance, about one's school days, or rather, I should say, one's school. Women, it should be observed, in this respect, are not so hypocritical as men. There are some women, certainly, who speak with a sort of fervent affection of their former governesses, and, as far as one can see, with truth. But, as a rule, women care wondrously little for any school at which they have been doomed to pass their childhood and early youth. Perhaps this is because there are no great girls' schools which are national institutions always before the public eye, about which it is the correct thing to discourse with seeming enthusiasm. But with men who have had the happiness to be brought up at one of those glorious institutions, the great public schools of England, the case is quite different. The amount of deception which the English gentleman, as such, thinks it his duty to practise upon himself and upon his brother "public school men," is amazing. With rare exceptions, every "public school man" seems to have succeeded in enveloping his own particular school with a certain mysterious haze of glory. I beg to state, with all due deference, that I except from this charge of mingled hypocrisy and self-deception that venerated race of youths, now oldish men, who came forth from Rugby under the reign of Arnold, accounting themselves apostles, or "missioners," to use the new cant term, sent abroad by a providential arrangement for the reformation of other young men in general (to say nothing of their elders), and of Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates in particular. Yet even the Rugby boys, while boys, were not always of the fiercely Arnoldian type, and ventured to say that they did not like Rugby under the Arnoldian dispensation. But I do not doubt that, now that they are grey-headed fathers of families, even they have learnt to talk as most fathers talk, and join in the general chorus of those who sing the praises of those ancient sacred nurseries of virtue, sport, and learning.

To what exact extent all this is simply fudge I will not presume to say. I know that in some cases it is pure fudge, and I suspect that in most cases it is a combination of self-deception and fudge. If it were not such

a dreadfully stale quotation, I should say that, in most instances, it is "distance that lends enchantment to the view." On the whole, and in my secret thoughts, I look upon what public school men say concerning their school days as being almost as hypocritical as what respectable Englishmen in general say about religion. It seems as if the Englishman is only honest when he speaks about business matters; and how often is he sincere even then?

Now, for myself, in this one respect at least, I am an honest man. I was at one of these very great public schools. I will not mention its name, or give the slightest hint by which it may be identified; but I can truly say that I always detested it, and that I have never pretended that I did otherwise than detest it. I learnt absolutely nothing there which I did not teach myself, and I often wished that it had been my destiny to have been sent to some other of the few "great public schools" which in those days were alone supposed (what a hypothesis!) to send forth "scholars and gentlemen" to the two great Universities. So far, then, when I meditate on the unpleasant past of the world, I include my own personal very unpleasant past.

When, again, people would have me believe that it is a delight to them to think over their own past lives, apart from these current school-day illusions, and that thus thinking they are made happy, it is doubtless a tenable supposition that they are not playing tricks either upon themselves or upon those who listen to them. I am entirely out of sympathy with them; but that is another thing. What is misery to one mind may be enjoyment to another. There was a certain infatuated banker, we all know, who wrote a prettyish poem on the *Pleasures of Memory*, which he, being a wealthy banker, could afford to pay the great Turner a considerable sum to illustrate with many exquisite little pictures. But does anybody read that poem because he loves the ideas which the verses suggest, or does anybody believe that there was one word of genuine, honest truth in the recollections of the verse-maker himself? In fact, it may be doubted which of the three once well-known poems was the more absolutely unreal, Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory*, Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*, or Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*.

This same word "unreal," too, if I may wander into a little bypath of discourse, how suggestive it is of the betterness of the present over the past! The word "betterness," itself, I am aware, is wholly unjustifiable on any legitimate authority; in truth, it suddenly formed itself in my brain as I was writing the last sentence. But is it not a better word than "superiority," or any kindred term? If the adjective "good," I argue, has its corresponding substantive "goodness," why should not "better" have its corresponding substantive "betterness"? But to return to the word "unreal" in the sense in which I have just used it, which is by no means the same in which it was used half a century ago. What should we do without it now, when we want to describe certain moods of feeling, or habits of thought, or religious professions and forms of speech, which

all come under this designation of "unreality"? Happily, it has never become a slang word; and, in fact, it only came into use at the time of the Oxford movement of 1853. The Tractarian writers began to use it by way of disparaging the genuineness and healthiness of the current Low Church books, and sermons, and diaries. And now it is one of the most valuable of modern additions to the English language. Originally it was used to signify that which had no actual existence, as opposed to things which did exist. Its new meaning is the result of the prevalence of a peculiar cast of mind which was little known to our rougher forefathers, who were not given to deliberate self-inspection, and did not get up "frames of mind," and fancy them the spontaneous creation of energetic activity. But some fifty years ago the religious world was teeming with the thing "unreality;" and when the new Oxford school applied to it the old name with a somewhat modified meaning, the application was so convenient that the English language was speedily found to have been enriched with a new and valuable word.

In this very matter, indeed, of the enrichment of the English tongue, we are wiser than our forefathers. There is not now that extreme reluctance to the introduction of new words which was once a sign of a "polite education." We have learnt that as the thoughts, and feelings, and actions of a people become more and more complex, it is well that we should have good, honest English terms to describe them. English is a very rich speech, undoubtedly; but there are a vast number of ideas for which it has no corresponding expressions. To express these ideas at once simply and accurately, one must go to French, or German, or Italian, or old Greek, or Roman; and this is impracticable, or sounds affected when it is resorted to. When people possessing the same acquirements are talking together, they do, as a matter of fact, make use of foreign or ancient languages when these latter supply a more correct expression of their thoughts. If we were all equally good scholars, this pleasant process would suffice for all our needs, and we should rejoice that the present was in this respect so much pleasanter than the past. But, in the mean time, I do maintain that it is wise to welcome every new word or phrase which accurately expresses the ideas which we either did not hitherto possess, or could only utter with a cumbrous, blundering lengthiness of phraseology.

They say that at least two hundred English words have now become naturalised in French conversation and literature. What that august and heterogeneous *Académie* says to this influx I do not know. Clearly, the current of public opinion has been too strong for any fastidiousness which the Academicians may feel or pretend to feel. And the invasion of downright English words, comically pronounced, but usually correctly spelt, is not confined to any one class of ideas. One can understand that, with the entrance of English habits in all matters of politics and sporting, English words should have become a necessity. But how is it that Frenchwomen now talk and write of *un bébi*, as if they never saw a baby

in their lives before? How did they do without the *bêbi* until the present generation? Who can say?

There are certain practical difficulties, it is true, about this system of enrichment of our older English which cannot be overlooked. There are some new and popular terms which I cannot bring my lips to utter, or my pen to write, except for the purpose of expressing my aversion. There is the word "ornamentation," for instance; what a disagreeable sound and appearance it has! Yet it expresses an idea for which I cannot find any other accurate expression. All I can say is that the next generation may use it; but I can get through the brief remainder of my life without descending to its utterance. It is nearly as bad as calling a waistcoat a "vest," like the tailors; or as spelling honour, favour, and other such words without the letter *u*, as do the Americans. During the last general election there was a candidate who "solicited the *favor* of my vote." Could I vote for such a man? Impossible. Then there are certain small abominations of speech from which the children of every well-ordered household ought to be sedulously guarded by their anxious parents. Among the dialects of the English tongue there are three, which may be described as nursery English, kitchen English, and stable-boy's English; and the aptitude of boys and girls for assimilating these various noxious kinds of phrases and pronunciations is quite wonderful. Whether it is that some of these peculiarities have a certain barbaric force of their own, against which our more fastidious judgment revolts, but which commend themselves to the uncritical mind of childhood; or whether nursemaids, housemaids, and grooms express themselves with a certain point and positiveness of tone and idiom which attracts and commands the tender intelligence, such is certainly too often the result of our English household arrangements.

It is the same with that very delicate subject, the use of slang. Is there not much to be said for it when we compare the past with the present? Take the word "humbug," for instance. When I was a small boy it was just coming into use, and I was forbidden to use it as being "low." But how could the intercourse of society be now carried on without it? It is still of so familiar a quality that one could hardly use it in sedate writing without some sort of apology; but there is no longer the faintest odour of vulgarity attached to it any more than to the most sonorous of Johnsonian appellatives. As a matter of fact, almost everybody uses words in private conversation which still partake of the nature of slang; and some of them are truly valuable as expressing ideas which no other words could so happily express. Such are three words, all of them of American origin, but all good of their kind—a "loafer," to "skedaddle," and a "stampede." A loafer is by no means the same as a lounger, or even as the French *flâneur*. The *flâneur* is essentially Parisian in its origin, and was born upon the Boulevards. One may talk of the old-fashioned "Bond Street lounger," but he was a different sort of creature altogether. One cannot *flâner* under the English climate, and

in any variety of social existence except that of Paris. But now that we have got this Yankee notion of loafing, we find that London especially, and all England besides, swarms with loafers. Loafing is a totally different thing from lounging. It has a very decided element of scampishness about it. As the *flâneur* is born of the Boulevards, the loafer is the natural product of New York and the American drinking-bar. And, alas! the climate of England, though it forbids us to *flâner*, is by no means unfavourable to the multiplication of that offensive creature the real loafer. To "skedaddle" and a "stampede" came in with the American Civil War; but how expressive they are, the one being the comic correlative of the other! A "stampede" brings clearly before our eyes the tumultuous, passionate whirl of a host of men under sudden terror, like the furious flight of the herds of cattle in the South American plains, from which the word takes its origin; while "skedaddling" is the same sudden dispersion of a crowd or of one or two men under some fear, when all serious emotion is lost in the sense of the ludicrous.

Returning now to my main subject, I find myself of opinion that, on the whole, there never was a time since the inhabitants of this island wore any clothes—if they were ever thus denuded of everything but the primitive skins of the animals they killed—when life was more desirable than it is in this latter portion of the nineteenth century. Beginning with a period so near as its earlier portion, was it, in truth, more pleasant to be an Englishman than it is to-day? I do not believe it, judging from my own notions of what makes life tolerable. The climate was more damp and foggy and the frosts were more severe, because nearly the whole country was undrained. The roads were horrible and infested with highwaymen. The streets were not lighted with gas, and thieves had it all their own way at night-time. Cabs are still bad enough; but think of the old-fashioned hackney-coach! It took nearly thirty hours to travel from London to York. Gentlemen wore clothes which required something like a mechanical apparatus to get them on and off. Of women's clothes I say nothing, for they are still, and always were, indescribable, except in this one point, that they are always changeable. Tea cost half a guinea a pound, and bread was sometimes sixteen pence the quartern loaf. There were few books written, and there were none but the humblest of circulating libraries whereby to get at them. Then think, in comparison, of the libraries of the British Museum and of the Bodleian at Oxford as it now is! The police are not perfect to-day; what were the old watchmen of half a century ago? Think also of the post-prandial drinking of our great-grandfathers, and of the delicacies with which they garnished their talk! Think of what Oxford and Cambridge and the Government schools were in those times, and what was the education and the average conduct of the working poor!

Then, I look still further backwards, and wonder how I should like to have lived at the nearest period when life was very decidedly different from what it is to-day. The time of the Commonwealth was just

such an era. And here I recognise the influence of the pictorial art, and of the novel-writer's art, and the power they wield in modifying a whole nation's opinions as to the real character of personages and struggles long gone by. If Vandyke had never lived, or if Charles the First had been as ugly as Cromwell, or if Scott had never glorified the Cavaliers and damaged the Puritans, how different would have been the popular English estimate of the mighty struggle of the seventeenth century! As for myself, I unfeignedly rejoice that I did not live during that violent conflict. How very disagreeable it must have been to choose between the two sides! Of course, politically, I should have detested the Cavaliers; and I look upon Oliver as one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, of the sovereigns who ever sat upon the English throne. Besides, do I not remember that he saved Raffaelle's cartoons for England, and that he introduced the culture of turnips into English agriculture; and where would English farming now be were it not for turnips? Let us think of our butcher's bills, and be thankful to the great Protector. But conceive the extreme disagreeableness of having to adopt the Puritanical notions of society, and amusements, and literature! What an unpleasant age to live in, when Prynne with his *Histriomastix*, and Laud with his Star Chamber bloodthirstiness, were among the most influential men of their generation! How pleasant it is to be able to write in the *Cornhill Magazine* without any fear of an Archbishop of Canterbury to get one clapped into prison, with one's thumbs crushed, one's ears slit, and all one's little property in the funds sold out and paid over to the Royal Treasury!

For myself, I have no taste for things of this kind. I dare say that if I were put to it I might prove as ready to sacrifice myself for my convictions as any other person. But I do not in cold blood feel as if I could do it. Certainly the bare notion of being called upon to do it is enough to make one shiver. It is, indeed, a matter of very curious speculation whether these great heroic martyrs and confessors were habitually more brave than I am myself, because, for myself, I confess that I am not brave—at least I do not feel so. It would want a tremendous winding-up with me to bring myself up to the point of having my bones smashed, my limbs torn apart; while as to being burnt alive, as so many people have been, of various religions, I cannot even contemplate it. It is very pleasant to me to read, as I have sometimes read, that the bravest army feels frightfully disturbed on the night before a battle; and that those who will face death without shrinking on the following day in the furious fight are sad and terribly serious the night before in the calmness of their anticipations. Learning how very much they thus felt as I should certainly feel before the battle, I hope that my courage would rise as theirs rose when the terrible moment came.

Besides, is it not the fact that a vast amount of what seems bravery is in reality nothing but hatred of somebody else? Duellists certainly exhibit a most unedifying combination of cowardice and diabolical hatred.

They are terribly afraid of what people will say of them if they don't fight, and they deliberately wish to slaughter one of their fellow-creatures. I admit that it is a delicate thing to introduce either of these motives to action in discussing the feeling, of oneself or of other people. Who is not afraid of what his neighbours will say about him? It is very easy and soothing to one's self-complacency to introduce that convenient Mrs. Grundy on many occasions, and to condemn our friends and acquaintances for paying obedience to her commands. But when I begin examining my own conscience, I see that if Mrs. Grundy is not at work there now, she was there a little while ago, and that she will be there again before long. As to wishing to kill anybody, it is a matter for very careful and subtle casuistry. I do not mean, of course, vulgar murder; but what is called "justifiable homicide." This is a deed which our Courts of Law not only recognise, but uphold.

Now here, just as in the case of one's cowardice suddenly developing into such bravery as would deserve the Victoria Cross, I cannot tell what it would be if I were brought face to face with actual facts. What should I practically think to be justifiable homicide if it were suddenly put into my power actually to kill a person against whom I had nourished homicidal designs based upon some theoretical casuistry? In former days the law used to kill a great many people for offences which are now considered as by no means deserving the gallows; sheep-stealing, for instance, and forgery. Now, supposing I were to argue in this way: Here is a person who does me a great deal more injury than could have been done to the owner of a sheep by being surreptitiously deprived of it; would it be morally wrong in me if I took advantage of some opportunity for secretly doing to him or her what the law openly did to the infatuated purloiners of sheep? There are many offences which the law cannot touch, and which it is the privilege of private persons to punish with their own hands. In such instances, would it not be permissible to put an end to the existence of the person who injured me, because there was no other way of putting an end to the injury? Here is a case which has doubtless occurred to many of my readers, though they have only in the most timid and trembling way wished that "something might happen" to the destroyer of their peace. A friend of mine lived next door to a person whom for politeness' sake I will call a lady. This lady, in spite of all remonstrances, insisted upon playing the pianoforte seven hours a-day for six days in the week. Happily she was a Sabbatarian, and on Sundays played hymns on a harmonium in some out-of-the-way part of the house. But on other days seven hours was her normal allowance. She played very loud and very much out of time, and she repeated the same pieces without cessation. She has often been known to play the same short passage upwards of one hundred and fifty times in succession, playing it quite as badly the hundred and fiftieth time as she played it the first time. She was deaf to all appeals, and she was not a professional player, but played solely for her own amusement.

I ask then, of all honest casuists, whether her offence against my friend was not far more serious than the loss of a sheep could have been to any landowner or farmer a hundred years ago. And if, from a severe point of view, it was desirable to hang the thief, would it not be equally desirable to get rid of the pianoforte player by summary suffocation, if such could be managed without the knowledge of the misguided uncasuistical public? But then, as I have said, the doubt occurs to me whether, if I actually came to have the guilty performer in my power, I should not abstain from making use of it. Such is the puzzle which I present to myself when I consider all these odious duellings, and killings in battle, and martyrdoms, and the like, which were so common in days gone by.

For the same reasons, how very glad I am that I did not live in the days of the Reformation! How delightful it is to live in a day when excommunication, to sensible people, is nothing more than a multiplication of cursings which hurt nobody who does not wish to be hurt! I have no patience with people who talk of the "good old times," as if they really would have enjoyed life more in those "good old times" than they enjoy it to-day. The period of the Reformation must have been a detestable time to live in, because one could not reform the church without running the risk of being hung, burnt, broken on the wheel, or otherwise tormented, instead of arguing, as we do now, quietly in the newspapers and reviews, or discoursing in sermons and so forth. I look now upon my peaceful bookshelves, and my eye ranges over their manifold contents. Of all this but little even existed at this same "glorious Reformation" period. What rational man, then, does not sympathise with Erasmus, a quiet soul, who loved books better than the slaying of those who differed from him? He was not a hero, it is true. One can't venerate him; one can hardly respect him; and tradition is not favourable to his reputation in the matter of wine and good cheer. But, at any rate, he was a rational being, and he would have enjoyed this nineteenth century mightily if he had been born nowadays.

There were his great friends, Sir Thomas More and Dean Colet. More did actually go to the scaffold rather than acknowledge the King's supremacy; and very likely Colet would have done the same. Thinking of them, I wonder whether, if I myself were compelled to acknowledge the Pope's supremacy under peril of being killed, I should not acknowledge it. Perhaps yes, perhaps not. The question, I think, would depend upon the mode of killing with which I was threatened. It would be comparatively easy to have one's head chopped straight off; but think of the agonies of the stake, and of the preliminaries in the way of torture with which one might be visited! The one grand, practical consolation is this, that the Pope has his hands tied; and that, though many thousands of people would gladly have me hanged, fortunately modern society does not permit them to enjoy that gratification.

Then going farther back again, to the middle ages and to the days of

old Greece and Rome, Pompeii is a wonderfully interesting place to visit; but think of living in such houses, even the best of them! Think of having no wheel-carriages! Compare the streets of London with the streets of Pompeii; and, still more, think of wearing the clothes which the ladies and gentlemen of Athens and Rome were wont to wear! The climate of Greece and Italy was then far worse than it is now; but if any men or women are discontented with their own modern clothing, let them inquire of any classically instructed friend as to the bodily covering of the gentlefolks of Greece and Rome, and their conversion to contentment with to-day will be complete. Those garments of theirs look uncommonly well in marble, and, compared with the statues of Greek and Roman statesmen, the mighty men who salute us in the streets and squares of London are objects fearful to behold. But think of what the Greek orators actually wore! Why I would not dress like Demosthenes, even to possess the eloquence of Demosthenes himself.

The music of the past is another of its unpleasantnesses from which all reasonable people ought to be thankful to be delivered. I do not doubt that the Greeks, with their wonderful feeling for grace and truth of expression, made as much as was possible of the little means they possessed; and the names of their "Modes," Lydian, Dorian, Mixo-Lydian, and so forth, sound very well, as long as one does not try to attach very accurate meanings to them; but in reality the ancients hardly knew what music was. Judging from paintings on vases and from bas-reliefs and pictures, such as they were, the Greek and Roman instruments must have been of a semi-barbarous construction. They had no complete scale, as we have it; and of harmony they knew nothing whatsoever. What doleful sounds do the first lines in Virgil's *Eclogues* suggest!

> Tityre, tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi,
> Silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avenâ.

A thin oaten pipe! I suppose he means something made out of a reed; but what a thought! No doubt, too, like the Jews and other Oriental races, the Greeks and Romans could make a terrible noise with their trumpets and horns and drumlike instruments; but it was all in unisons and in some one of their imperfect scales. Think of this, and of the splendours of Bach and Beethoven! Who, then, would willingly have lived before Bach and Beethoven? Surely no man whose musical capacity was higher than that of an organ grinder in the streets, or a Scotchman screaming with his bagpipe. Nor can I consent to be taken in by any learned critic's raptures concerning the antique drama—I mean, of course, its performance; for what would we not give for a Sophocles or an Aristophanes to-day? And would we not be most thankful even for a Euripides? But I cannot forget that fearful thing, the antique mask. Let the unlearned reader never forget that in those ancient days the actors wore gigantic masks upon their faces with the view of increasing the volume of their voices, so that they precisely resembled the huge-headed

monsters of a Christmas pantomime. Certainly, except as a matter o curiosity, I would rather read the *Œdipus Coloneus* in my own arm chair, than see it acted as Sophocles himself saw it acted.

As for the middle ages, undoubtedly they were wonderful times, an prolific times, and interesting times, and they laid the foundation of tha modern liberty in which I so delight, and they produced superb publi buildings; but they were terribly uncomfortable times nevertheless. I the first place, as has been said before, I am not fond of fighting, and don't want to be killed, or to kill any one. But who could help fightin in the middle ages, with all their magnificence in the way of cathedrals I quite admit the merits of feudalism as a means of getting society out o the horrid chaos of the really dark ages; but feudalism laid everybod under the obligation of fighting at the command of some one or other. Ther too, was invented that notion, which of all others I do most detest, tha a better blood flows in the veins of the lord than in those of the burghe or the peasant. And yet some singular and not unlearned men hav called those times the "Ages of Faith," meaning thereby faith in Chris tianity. If they believed in anything, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, they believed only in dukes and other lords, and in saints and their relics. But that is not the question. The middle ages were a period of universal struggle and fighting, and when it was impossible to be a man of peace and a scholar without belonging to the priesthood—a proceeding for which I should have had not the slightest inclination. Even those who had to fight as one of the privileged classes were bound t array themselves in steel plates of terrific weight, while the common herd of fighting men were so clothed that they instantly went to the ground before the shock of their well-protected knightly assailants. What a debasing thing was this! In all the feudal system there is nothing so contemptible as this self-protection which the privileged classes secured to themselves alone. Conceive such a cowardice to-day. Think of an English officer fighting beneath the shelter which was denied to his rank and file! No! it was an unpleasant past, with all its wonderfulness. England to-day is disagreeable enough as a place to live in. The hideousness of London and the badness of our dinners (unless we are rich people) may be taken as types of the many grounds for grumbling which lie around us on every side; but, on the whole, I suspect that life is now, taking all men one with another, a less unpleasant thing in England than it ever has been since the Druids offered human sacrifices in their old oak groves.

C.

The proposed Arctic Expeditions.

To those who are familiar with the stirring story of Arctic expeditions, recent discoveries, and applications to Government to send out another expedition, are very interesting.

In novels, and sometimes in the drama, we welcome the re-appearance of an old favourite in a fresh set of adventures. We trace the fortunes of imaginary characters from one stage to another till we come to feel almost as vivid an interest in them as if they lived and moved, and we had seen them face to face. And in Arctic story we experience the same feeling in an intenser form. Sameness of incident, repetition of discovery, monotony of result, cannot rob the theme of its undying charm. For here we see an effect which no wizard of the pen that ever lived—not Cooper, nor Dumas, nor even Defoe in his masterpiece of *vraisemblance*—could ever quite compass. The characters really step from the canvas. From the glamour which has entranced us there is no awaking. The facts thrill us more than any fiction, for they have happened to real human beings; many of them are happening in our own day, and a trip by rail or steamer will bring us within reach of some of the principal actors. Those actors gild with some rays of romance a prosaic century, and give the lie to Burke's lamentation that the age of chivalry is dead. They are the knights errant of our day, or rather, they would have been Templars and Hospitallers if they had lived at an earlier era. The record of their glorious achievements is as fascinating to grown-up men as to the young. The most sordid stock-jobbing Demas could hardly be proof to its charm. As boys, we pored over the pages of the immortal American, Kane. Years passed and Kane died, but then came a continuation of this true story, and familiar figures, such as Petersen and Hayes and Hans, again walked across the historic stage, and finally, as a sequel, we have the adventures of the *Polaris* with Hans again to the fore, and Kane's gallant companion, Morton. *The Three Musketeers, Twenty Years After, Ten Years after that.* It is almost as if men had taken it into their heads to enact a novel, and issue their lives in instalments for our edification and amusement. Take, again, an older episode of Arctic history. It seems but yesterday since we read with breathless interest, in Motley's eloquent narrative, of the sufferings and death of Barendz,—Barendz, than whom no nobler hero lies beneath the cold waters of that sea where none but heroes sleep. Two hundred and seventy-eight years had passed since his expedition, and no man had ever seen the spot where he had wintered; but

only two years and a half ago the secret of two and a half centuries was unlocked. A Norwegian captain sailed to that well-known "Ice Haven," and there found standing the house, as familiar to many of us as even Robinson Crusoe's hut, in which the Dutch crew had lived through the winter of 1596-1597. There it stood exactly as it had been represented in the drawing in Gerrit de Veer's narrative. The clock still hung against the wall in the same place, as in the picture. There were books and vessels and instruments lying about, and there was the little pair of shoes belonging to the ship boy who had died during the winter.

Take, again, the story of the American flag which has so often fluttered over the Polar Sea. Many volumes of romance might be evolved out of the events with which that flag has been connected. It may be said to be the most glorious flag in all the world. For it had originally been saved from the wreck of an United States sloop of war. It had been carried to the Antarctic regions by Wilkes. De Haven had had it in his memorable drift in the ice down Wellington Channel and Lancaster Sound into Baffin's Bay. Kane had had it when for the first time civilized men penetrated Smith's Sound. Hayes had had it when he sighted the most northern point in the till then known world. And lastly, when Hall set out with the *Polaris*, Mr. Grinnell, the most liberal patron of Arctic enterprise now living, presented it to him with the words "Now I give it to you, sir. Take it to the North Pole, and bring it back in a year from next October." And if Hall did not quite carry out this injunction, he did take his ship higher than any ship had ever gone before, and the northernmost land in the globe is of his naming. Surely the spirit of generous emulation is not so dead in Englishmen that we shall allow that flag to fly at the North Pole before the Union Jack. Even now we are still in the van of Arctic exploration. No other man has ever yet reached the latitude which Parry reached in 1827. But now we are rapidly losing ground. Correspondents of *The Times* have lately pointed out how our commerce is being supplanted by the Germans in China and South America and the West Indies and Japan. Unless we are quick we shall be outstripped by Americans or Germans or Norwegians or Danes in the Polar Sea. Already Captain Hall has pushed within thirty miles of the latitude reached by Parry, and has sailed higher than any other explorer.

If we look at a map of Smith's Sound—the route by which the North Pole will almost certainly be reached, if it is ever reached at all—we see each shore studded with American names, or English names conferred by American seamen. Victoria and Albert Land and Murchison Mountains have been christened by no English patriot. The most northern strait is named after an American Secretary. The most northern Cape is called Bismarck. For it is not on the west coast of Greenland nor by Americans only that we are beaten out of the field. The Germans have been busy on the East Coast. And the only man who has circumnavigated Spitzbergen is a Norwegian—that same Captain Carlsen who circum-

navigated Nova Zembla. It seems almost like sacrilege done to the memory of our great sea worthies, who made our name so famous in the North and in the annals of old adventure, to stand with folded hands while our laurels are snatched from us by other nations. That we still have among us men of the stamp of Parry and Davis and Baffin and Hudson is certain. Some of our living captains are worthy of being the countrymen even of those illustrious dead. And if we need further proof that the "spirit is willing" still, we have only to turn to the exploits of our whalers, to yachting cruises like those of Mr. Leigh Smith, or to the travels of men like Livingstone and Butler and Burton. Then how is it that as a nation we make no effort to grasp the prize which is now for the first time fairly within our reach—a prize, too, the greatest and well nigh the last of geographical discovery ever to be won by man? Are our millionnaires so dead-drugged by love of money that they cannot spare a fleabite from their fortunes to earn for themselves an everlasting name? How many men remember the name of the first Governor of the East India Company? But who, so long as the tale of the Arctic adventure is told, can fail to feel some interest in the man who gave his name to Smith's Sound? Have we no noblemen who will attempt to rescue their names from the ruck of Earls and Dukes, by something more creditable than pre-eminence in the massacre of tame animals? A year's enterprise, a sum spent insignificant to the spender, and the work would be done, and the name of some marquis or some merchant linked inseparably for ever with the unknown land or sea round the North Pole, and with one of the noblest chapters of our naval history.

It is urged against a Government expedition that to spend the public money on unpractical objects is unjustifiable, while so much misery and so much ignorance co-exist with such heavy taxation. Then why send out the *Challenger?* The objects of that expedition could afford better to wait. In the search for the North Pole we have eager rivals in the field, and the glory may be gone from us at almost any moment past redemption. Besides, it can be denied on many grounds that the search is unpractical. Science would gain by such an expedition in various ways. Nor can fresh prestige to the British navy be thought a valueless acquisition in these days of bloated armaments abroad and unbroken peace at home. But if the public purse is closed, and individual open-handedness is a thing of the past, why is not a national subscription opened by men whose past services entitle them to set one on foot? It is impossible to imagine that if Sir George Back or Sir Leopold M'Clintock appealed for funds the nation would not liberally respond. If no higher motive influenced a subscriber, surely many a man, who preferred not to risk his own life or comfort, and who would equally object to defray the entire cost of an expedition, would eagerly come forward with his cheque for 100*l.* or 1,000*l.*, with the prospect of handing down his name to some unknown cape or island, and the maps and charts of all future generations. It is indeed objected to an expedition of this sort that want of discipline is the

most fatal of all things to a party of explorers in the Polar Sea. But there need be no such want of discipline. If Ministers shudder at the idea of expense, surely they might let men and officers volunteer from the navy. If private subscription raised the money, the Government might at least supply the men. And even if that also is refused, a really well selected crew, physically, as well as by training, fit for the service, solemnly sworn to obedience, and placed under experienced commanders, would, it can hardly be doubted, be almost as efficient as if it was selected from the Royal Navy. It must be remembered that of late years the risks of the enterprise have been greatly diminished. Steam has enabled ships to reach the scene of effort sooner, to bore the pack ice with more power, to escape a "nip" with more ease, to try more openings in the ice, and to make twice as much use of the short summer season as of old. Such inventions as extracts of meat, and condensed milk, and improvements in scientific instruments give the modern seaman an immense superiority over his predecessors. The feats of past years are every-day commonplaces now. Numbers of whalers annually make their way into the North Water, as the sea beyond Cape York on the East, and Pond's Bay on the West, is called. Of the three passages into the North Water, one may almost invariably be made, and fortunately this is the one which can be made earliest. From 1817 to 1849 some whalers effected the passage each year without exception, and during five of those years this was done by all the whalers, and before the middle of June. This passage is known as the North-about Passage, and the course taken is along the Eastern side of Baffin's Bay, hugging the shore of the indentation called Melville Bay. That Bay was once "the strait and dreadful pass of death" in the Northern Seas. Along shore there is what Dr. Kane called the "ice-foot," that is a ledge of solid ice clinging to the land. The current flowing southwards brings down floes of ice, which, if met by a south-west wind, impinge on the ice-foot and upheave or crush to pieces any vessel which may be between. In 1830 nineteen whalers were in this way splintered into matchwood. But a ship for discovery, fortified as such ships now are, is far less at the mercy of these "nips" than used to be the case. And a steamer is perfectly safe where a sailing vessel would be lost.

Experience, too, has shown that by promptly cutting a dock in the ice-foot, all danger may practically be set at defiance. Even in 1830 some of the ships were saved in this way, and when solitary sailing ships have been so lost there has been no difficulty in escaping south by boats. Thus it may be said that what used to be the most formidable part of the voyage has been robbed of all its terrors and most of its difficulty. With ordinary skill and good fortune a perfectly safe advance northwards may be made in almost every year to the 78th degree of latitude.

How much farther north a ship may go must depend entirely on the season. In a favourable season, as Captain Hall proved, a ship may reach latitude 81, and could probably go much farther. And there can be but

little doubt that a thoroughly well organised expedition, consisting of two ships with ample crews, thoroughly victualled and furnished with those modern appliances, with none or few of which men like Parry and even Kane effected so much, could succeed in reaching the Pole by sledges or boats. Cold though the climate is, it is eminently healthy. With proper hygienic arrangements men will thrive in it, where without these they would languish and die. Scurvy and diseases of that nature have been so fatal in past years, simply because men would not or knew not how to adapt themselves to the climate. There needed only two things, scientific knowledge of the proper regimen to be adopted and discipline to enforce its adoption, to ensure the more than average health of a ship's crew.

Little in short is left to us now but to enter into the labours of our predecessors. But that little we seem disinclined to do, yet if ever anything is to be done, it should be done at once. Before the end of May this year our ships should be in Baffin's Bay, on the watch for a passage into the North Water. To delay longer is often to ruin the chances of an expedition. Government might well shrink from the cost and hazard of a fresh attempt, if there was the old schism as to which is the best route to the Pole. But at present there is only one route open to us. In the so-called Polynia of the Russians there is another possible route. For open water has been repeatedly seen in high latitudes, and a mysterious land which, though hardly sighted, has been named Wrangel Land, may offer facilities for an advance northwards. But to us this route is closed. It is farther off. Access to it through the Sea of Kara, or round the north-east of Nova Zembla, is more precarious. And we have little knowledge of the currents or the variations of the seasons in that quarter to guide us.

The second route—west of Spitzbergen—may also be said to be practically closed. Many advocated it some years ago. But over and over again attempts have been made in that direction, and over and over again it has been found impossible to make any way through the pack ice with a ship, while Parry's failure is a sufficient warning against expecting any result to be obtained by sledging. It would, indeed, be wilfully encountering a magnified task of Sisyphus to struggle painfully northwards with sledges yard by yard over hummocky icefields, while the whole pack beneath us was steadily drifting southwards from eight to ten miles a day. There remains, then, only one route, that by Smith's Sound. Fortunately, it is at once the easiest, the best known to us, and the one by which, even if we fail to reach the Pole, we are certain to obtain the most valuable discoveries. Here, and here only, is there land stretching straight towards the Pole in the highest latitudes known to us. That itself is an inestimable advantage. Every mile tracked there is a mile won to science, and there are only about 400 such miles to track before the Pole is reached. Even if we make no other discoveries—and we certainly should do so in geology, meteorology, zoology, botany, and probably ethnology—we can earn the honour of tracing the north shore of Greenland on the east, and

the north shore of Grinnell Land on the west; or, of showing, it may be, that Grinnell Land is only a part of Greenland, and all the water from Davis Straits to Robeson Straits merely a long bight of the sea. It is quite possible, indeed it is a good deal more than possible, that we may find land north of Grinnell Land, with a race of men who have had no intercourse with the rest of mankind for centuries. Esquimaux traditions tell of one island at all events—called Musk Isle—far beyond any present explorations, round which there is an open sea. And it must be remembered that the climate, so far from becoming colder and colder as we advance north, was found by Captain Hall to be much warmer at the highest point he reached than several degrees more south. Animal life also abounds in a similar proportion. Whether, as some have supposed, the Gulf-stream rises to the surface in those latitudes, or whether the increased heat of the sun sensibly alters the temperature, or from whatever other cause, it is certain that the climate was found to be more genial. It is equally certain that traces of Esquimaux have been found as high as the 81st parallel. And when we consider that till Sir John Ross's first voyage the existence of Esquimaux north of Melville Bay was not known, it is not unlikely that just as one tribe of natives was prevented by the Melville Bay glaciers from communicating with the natives of Upernavik, so another tribe has been cut off by the Humboldt glacier from the tribe below, and, driven by the pressure of increasing cold, has retreated to a warmer climate and a more plentiful food-supply further north.

A great and striking achievement of this sort would show the world that some sparks of the spirit of our forefathers still glow in our island. Practicable and even easy though the advance to the North Pole may be, it will lose none of its prestige for that. Nothing can dim the glory for which so many nations have competed for so many ages. The number of those who have perished in the great quest has been in reality small. Surely it is a stupidly narrow view to take that the lives of even that small number have been thrown away, and that we should be chary of risking other lives for a barren honour. Such honours are not barren, and such lives are not thrown away. It was for the honour, and in the interest of the Queen of the seas, that Franklin, as truly as ever Nelson, died, and only Nelson's name outshines his as a fruitful example of heroism in our naval annals. In old times another nation, which like ourselves had thrown open every land and every sea by its daring, was mistress of the ocean. May we not apply to ourselves the words placed by the greatest of Greek historians in the mouth of the greatest of Greek orators, when addressing the citizens of Athens, words which appraise human life at its true value and breathe the very spirit of a nation's greatness? *Περὶ τοιαύτης οὖν πόλεως οἵδε τε γενναίως ἐτελεύτησαν, καὶ τῶν λειπομένων πάντα τινὰ εἰκὸς ἐθέλειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς κάμνειν.*

A. H. B.



A Rose in June.

CHAPTER I.



"MARTHA, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. Let the child alone—she will never be young again if she should live a hundred years!"

These words were spoken in the garden of Dinglefield Rectory on a very fine summer day a few years ago. The speaker was Mr. Damerel, the Rector, a middle-aged man with very fine, somewhat worn features, a soft benignant smile, and, as everybody said who knew him, the most charming manners in the world. He was a man of very elegant mind as well as manners. He did not preach often, but when he did preach all the educated persons in his congregation felt that they had very choice fare indeed set before them. I am afraid the poor folk liked the Curate best, but then the Curate liked them best, and it mattered very little to any man or woman of refinement what sentiment existed between the cottagers and the Curate. Mr. Damerel was perfectly kind and courteous to everybody, gentle and simple, who came in his way, but he was not fond of poor people in the abstract. He disliked everything that was unlovely, and alas! there are a great many unlovely things in poverty. The Rectory garden at Dinglefield is a delightful place. The house is on the summit of a little hill, or rather table-land, for in the front, towards the Green, all is level and soft as becomes an English village; but on the other side the descent begins towards the lower country, and from the drawing-room windows and the lawn, where Mr. Damerel now sat, the view extended over a great plain, lighted up with links of the river, and fading into unspeakable hazes of distance, such as were the despair of every artist, and the delight of the fortunate people who lived there, and were entertained day by day with the sight of all the sunsets, the midday splendours, the flying shadows, and soft prolonged twilights. Mr. Damerel was fond of saying that no place he knew so lent itself to idleness as this. "Idleness! I

speak as the foolish ones speak," he would say, "for what occupation could be more ennobling than to watch those gleams and shadows—all nature spread out before you, and demanding attention, though so softly that only they who have ears hear? I allow, my gentle Nature here does not shout at you, and compel your regard, like her who dwells among the Alps, for instance. My dear, you are always practical—but so long as you leave me my landscape I want little more."

Thus the Rector would discourse. It was very little more he wanted—only to have his garden and lawn in perfect order, swept and trimmed every morning like a lady's boudoir, and refreshed with every variety of flower: to have his table not heavily loaded with vulgar English joints, but daintily covered, and oh! so daintily served; the linen always fresh, the crystal always fine, the ladies dressed as ladies should be: to have his wine, of which he said he took very little, always fine, of choice vintage, and with a bouquet which rejoiced the heart: to have plenty of new books: to have quiet, undisturbed by the noise of the children, or any other troublesome noise such as broke the harmony of nature: and especially undisturbed by bills and cares, such as, he declared, at once shorten the life and take all pleasure out of it. This was all he required; and surely never man had tastes more moderate, more innocent, more virtuous and refined.

The little scene to which I have thus abruptly introduced the reader took place in the most delicious part of the garden. The deep stillness of noon was over the sunshiny world; part of the lawn was brilliant in light; the very insects were subdued out of their buzz of activity by the spell of the sunshine; but here, under the lime tree, there was grateful shade, where everything took breath. Mr. Damerel was seated in a chair which had been made expressly for him, and which combined the comfort of soft cushions with such a rustic appearance as became its habitation out of doors; under his feet was a soft Persian rug in colours blended with all the harmony which belongs to the Eastern loom; at his side a pretty carved table, with a raised rim, with books upon it, and a thin Venice glass containing a rose. Another Rose, the Rose of my story, was half-sitting half-reclining on the grass at his feet—a pretty light figure in a soft muslin dress, almost white, with bits of soft rose-coloured ribbon here and there. She was the eldest child of the house. Her features I do not think were at all remarkable, but she had a bloom so soft, so delicate, so sweet, that her father's fond title for her, "a Rose in June," was everywhere acknowledged as appropriate. A rose of the very season of roses was this Rose. Her very smile, which came and went like breath, never away for two minutes together, yet never lasting beyond the time you took to look at her, was flowery too, I can scarcely tell why. For my own part, she always reminded me not so much of a garden-rose in its glory, as of a branch of wild roses all blooming and smiling from the bough, here pink, here white, here with a dozen ineffable tints. Her hair was light-brown with the least little curl in the world just about her forehead, but shining like

satin on her pretty head; her eyes too were brown, with a dancing gleam of light in each; the delicate eyebrows curved, the eyelashes curved, the lips curved, all wavy and rounded. Life and light shone out of the girl, and sweet unconscious happiness. In all her life she had never had any occasion to ask herself was she happy. Of course she was happy! did not she live, and was not that enough? Rose Damerel was the last dainty ornament of his house in which her father delighted most. He had spoiled her lessons when she was younger because of his pleasure in her and her pretty looks, and he interfered now almost altogether with that usefulness in a house which is demanded by every principle of duty from the eldest daughter of a large family; for alas! there was a large family, a thing which was the cause of all trouble to the Damerels. Had there been only Rose, and perhaps one brother, how much more pleasantly would everything have gone! In that case there might have been fewer lines in the brow of the third person whom Mr. Damerel spoke to, but whom the reader has not yet seen.

What Mrs. Damerel was like in her June of life, when she married her husband and was a Rose too, like her daughter, it is difficult to tell. Life, which often makes so little real change, brings out much that is latent both of good and evil. I have said she was a Rose, like her daughter—and so, indeed, she was still, so far as formal documents went; but, somehow or other, the name had gone from her. She had acquired from her husband, at first in joke and loving banter of her early cares of housekeeping, while they were still no more than married lovers, the name of Martha, and by degrees that name had so fastened to her that no one recognised her by any other. Nobody out of her own family knew that it was not her name, and of course the children, some of whom were indignant at the change, could not set it right. In her letters she signed herself "R. M. Damerel"—never Rose; and her correspondents took it for granted that the "M" stood for Martha. That she was careful and troubled about many things was the Rector's favourite joke. "My careful wife—my anxious wife" he called her, and, poor soul, not without a cause. For it stands to reason that when a man must not be disturbed about bills, for example, his wife must be, and doubly; when a man cannot bear the noise of children, his wife must and doubly; and even when a clergyman dislikes poverty, and unlovely cottages, and poor rooms, which are less sweet than the lawn and the roses, why his wife must, and make up for his fastidiousness. She had eight children, and a husband of the most refined tastes of any clergyman in England, and an income—not so much as might have been desired. Alas! how few of us have so much as might be desired! Good rich people, you who have more money than you want, how good you ought to be to us, out of pure gratitude to heaven for the fact that you can pay your bills when you like, and never need to draw lines on your forehead with thinking which is imperative and which will wait! Mrs. Damerel was well-dressed—she could not help it—for that was one of the Rector's simple luxuries.

Fortunately, in summer it is not so difficult to be well-dressed at a small cost. She had on (if any one cares to know) a dress of that light brown linen which everybody has taken to wearing of late, over an old black silk petticoat, which, having been good once, looked good even when tottering on the brink of the grave. She was no more than forty, and but for her cares, would have looked younger; but June was long over for this Rose, and the lines in her forehead contradicted the softness of the natural curves in her features. Those lines were well ruled in, with rigid straightening, by an artist who is very indifferent to curves and prettiness, and had given a certain closeness, and almost sternness, to the firm-shutting of her mouth. I am afraid, though she had great command of herself, that Mr. Damerel's delightful and unbroken serenity had an irritating effect on his wife, in addition to the effects produced by her burden of care; and irritation works with a finer and more delicate pencil than even anxiety. She had come out this morning to ask Rose's help with the children, to whom, among her other fatigues, she had lately begun to give lessons, finding the daily governess from the village impracticable. She had been called away to other duties, and the children were alone in the schoolroom. She had just asked her daughter to go in and take charge of them, and I scarcely think—let alone the answer she had just received from her husband—that the sight of this cool, fresh delightful leisure in direct contrast with the hot house, and the schoolroom, where all the children were more tiresome than usual by reason of the heat, had any agreeable effect upon Mrs. Damerel's nerves. Such a contrast to one's own frets and annoyances seldom is deeply consolatory.

"Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things—let the child alone!"

The Rector smiled, yet his tone was one of playful reproof. His was the superior position. With the soft air fanning him, and the shade refreshing him, and the beautiful landscape displaying itself for him, and all the flowers blooming, the leaves waving, the butterflies fluttering, the pretty daughter prattling, all for his pleasure, master of the creation as he was, he was in a position to reprove any harsh and hasty intruder who brought into this Paradise a discordant note.

"I do not want to burden her youth," said Mrs. Damerel, with a resolute quiet in her voice, which her children knew the sound of, and which they all learned to recognise as the tone of suppressed irritation, "but I think it would do Rose no harm, Herbert, to make herself useful a little and help me."

"Useful!" he said, with a half-pitying smile, "the other roses are still less useful. What would you have the child do? Let her get the good of this beautiful morning. Besides, she is useful to me."

"Ah," said Mrs. Damerel, faltering slightly, "if she is doing anything for you, Herbert!"

"My dear," said the Rector, with a gentle elevation of his eyebrows, "don't confound things which are different. Doing something is your

sole idea of human use, I know. No, Rose is doing nothing—it helps me to have her there. She is part of the landscape; suppose you sit down yourself, instead of fretting, and enjoy it."

"Enjoy it!" Mrs. Damerel echoed, with faint irony. She heard already the noise of the schoolroom growing louder and louder, and Mary, the housemaid, stood at the door, looking out anxiously, shading her eyes from the sun, for the mistress. Some one was waiting, she knew, in the hall, to see her; pray heaven not some one with a bill! "I am afraid I must go back to my work," she said, "and I hope you will come to me, Rose, as soon as your papa can spare you. I have no more time now."

Rose stirred uneasily, half-rising, and, with a prick of conscience, made a feeble attempt to detain her. "But mamma—" she began, as her mother moved away, crossing the broad sunshine of the lawn with hasty steps. Mrs. Damerel did not or would not hear, but went swiftly into the house as they watched her, meeting Mary, who was coming with a message. Her light dress shone out for a moment in the fierce blaze of the sunshine, and then disappeared. When she was out of sight the Rector said softly, changing his position with the leisureliness of extreme comfort, putting undermost the leg which had been uppermost, "What a pity that your mother does not see the beauty of repose more than she does! If I had not learnt long ago to take no notice, I don't know what I might not have been worried into by now."

"Mamma never worries any one," said Rose, flushing at once with instantaneous opposition. The more she felt guilty towards her mother, the less she would hear a word to her discredit. She blazed up quite hot and fiery, with a loyalty which was a very good quality in its way, though not so good as helping in the schoolroom. The father put forth his fine ivory hand, and patted her pretty head.

"Quite right, dear, quite right," he said; "always stand up for your mother. And it is true, she never worries anybody; but I wish she had more perception of the excellence of repose."

"Perhaps if she had we should not be able to enjoy it so much," said the girl, still giving expression to a slight compunction.

"Very well said, Rose; and it is quite possible you are right again. We should not be so comfortable, and the house would not go on wheels as it does, if she thought more of her own ease. One star differeth from another star in glory," said Mr. Damerel, who was fond of quoting Scripture, almost the only point in him which savoured slightly of the Church. "At the same time, my Rose in June, when you marry yourself—as I suppose you will one day—remember that there is nothing that worries a man like being too constantly reminded of the struggle and wear and tear that life demands. He has enough of that outside in the world," said the Rector, gazing out over the fair prospect before him, and again changing the position of his legs, "without having it thrust upon him in what ought to be the sanctity of his home."

Rose looked at her father with a little dawning wonder mingled w the admiration she felt for him. As a picture, Mr. Damerel was perfe He had a fine head, with beautiful and refined features, and that palen which has always been found to be so much more interesting th brighter colouring. He lay half-reclined in his easy chair, with eyes dreamily regarding the landscape, and the book he had been read closed over his hand. That hand was in itself a patent of gentility, s his whole appearance confirmed the title. Somewhat fragile—a piece delicate porcelain among the rough delf of this world—not able to end much knocking about; fastidious, loving everything that was beautiful, s supporting with difficulty that which was not, the Rector looked lik choice example of the very height of civilisation and refinement. A everything around him was in harmony. The velvet lawn, on which fallen leaf was allowed to lie for an hour; the pretty house behind, perf tion of English comfort and daintiness; the loose morning clothes, r more than half clerical, and perfectly unpretending, yet somehow more fi better cut, and better fitting than other people's clothes. Rose had him that enthusiasm of admiration which a girl often entertains fo handsome and gentle-minded father, who takes the trouble to enter in her feelings, and make her his companion. I do not know any m exquisite sentiment in humanity. She loved him entirely, and he was her a very model of everything that was most delightful, kind, tender, a beautiful. But as she looked at this model of man, his words someh struck and vibrated upon a new chord in the girl's mind. "The strug and wear and tear that life demands." Did Mr. Damerel have much of th "outside," as he said? He resumed his reading, but his daughter did look again at the book of poetry which lay open on her knee. Someh a reflection of the pucker on her mother's brow had got into her heart her mother, whom Rose loved, but who was not an idol and model excellence, like the gentle and graceful being at her side. The contr struck her for perhaps the first time in her life. What was the meani of it? Was it because Mrs. Damerel did not understand the beauty repose, or because a woman's business in this world is more detailed a engrossing than a man's? "Fancy mamma spending the whole morni out of doors, reading poetry!" Rose said to herself, with an involunta silent laugh over the absurdity of the notion. No doubt it was becau of the difference between man and woman; one of those disabiliti which people talked about; and perhaps (Rose went on philosophisin women are wrong to absorb themselves in this way in the management their houses, and ought to rule their domestic affairs with a lighter han not interfering with all the little minutiæ, and making slaves of thei selves. She looked towards the house as she mused, and the vague con punction which had been in her mind sharpened into something like prick of conscience. It was delightful being out here, in the so shade of the lime-trees, watching when she liked the flitting shadows ov the plain below, and the gleam of the river here and there among the tre

—reading when she liked *Balaustion's Adventure*, which was the book on her knee. The significance of the old story embedded in that book did not for the moment strike her. I think she was, on the whole, rather annoyed with Mr. Browning for having brought down the story of a woman's sacrifice, all for love, into the region of even poetic reason. To Rose, at that period of her development, it seemed the most ideal climax of life to die for the man she loved. What could be more beautiful, more satisfactory? Such an ending would reconcile one, she thought, to any suffering; it gave her heart a thrill of high sensation indescribable in words. How sweet the air was, how lovely all the lights! Rose was just enough of an artist to be able to talk about "the lights" with some faint understanding of what she meant. She was in a kind of soft Elysium, penetrated by the thousand sensations of the morning, the quiet, the flattering soft air that caressed her, the poetry, the society, the beauty all around. But then there came that sharp little prick of conscience. Perhaps she ought to go in and offer the help her mother wanted. Rose did not jump up to do this, as she would have done at once (she felt sure) had she been required to die, like Iphigenia, for her country, or, like Alcestis, for her husband. The smaller sacrifice somehow was less easy; but it disturbed her a little in the perfection of her gentle enjoyment, and dictated a few restless movements which caught her father's eye. He turned and looked at her, asking fretfully, with a look, what was the matter, for he did not like to be disturbed.

"Perhaps," said Rose, inquiringly, and appealing to him with another look, "I ought to go in and see what is wanted. Perhaps I could be of some use to mamma."

Mr. Damerel smiled. "Use?" he said. "Has your mother bitten you with her passion for use? You are not of the useful kind, take my word for it; and make yourself happy, like your namesakes, who toil not, neither do they spin."

"But perhaps—" said Rose softly to herself—her father gave her a friendly little nod and returned to his book—and she had to solve her problem without his assistance. She tried to do it, sitting on the grass, and it was a long and rather troublesome process. It would have been much more easily and briefly settled, had she gone into the schoolroom; but then I am afraid Rose did not wish it to be solved that way.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Damerel went back into the house with a countenance much less placid than that of her husband. I scarcely know why it is that the contrast of perfect repose and enjoyment with anxiety, work, and care should irritate the worker as it invariably does; but here indeed there was reason enough; for Mrs. Damerel felt that the two people luxuriating in total

absence of care on this delightful morning ought to have taken a considerable share with her in her labours and lightened the burden she was now obliged to bear alone. This mingled a sharpness of feeling with her toils. People who interpret human nature coarsely—and they are, perhaps, the majority—would have said that Mrs. Damerel was jealous of her husband's preference for Rose's society, and this would have been a total and vulgar mistake; but she had in her mind a feeling which it is difficult to explain, which for the moment made her irritation with Rose more strong than her irritation with Rose's father. He was, in the first place, a man—grand distinction, half contemptuous, half respectful, with which women of Mrs. Damerel's age (I don't say young women often do it, at least consciously—except in the case of their fathers and brothers) account for and make up their minds to so many things. I am not attempting to account for this sentiment, which is so similar to that with which men in their turn regard women; I only acknowledge its existence. He was a man, brought up as all men are (I still quote Mrs. Damerel's thoughts, to which she seldom or never gave expression), to think of themselves first, and expect everything to give in to them. But Rose had none of these privileges. What her mother as a woman had to take upon her, Rose had an equal right to take too. Mrs. Damerel herself could not forget, though everybody else did, that she had been a Rose too, in her proper person; the time even since that miraculous period was not so far off to her as to the others; but before she was Rose's age she had been married, and had already become, to some extent, Mr. Damerel's shield and buckler against the world and its annoyances. And here was Rose growing up as if she, instead of being a woman as nature made her, was herself one of the privileged class, to whom women are the ministers. This annoyed Mrs. Damerel more, perhaps, than the facts justified; it gave her a sense of injured virtue as well as feeling. It would be the ruin of the girl—it was wrong to let her get into such ways. The mother was angry, which is always painful and aggravates everything. She was too proud to struggle with her daughter, or to exact help which was not freely given; for Rose was no longer a child to be sent hither and thither and directed what to do. And Mrs. Damerel was no more perfect than Rose was—she had her own difficulties of temper like other people. This was one of them—that she drew back within herself when she felt her appeal refused or even left without response. She went in with a little scorn, a little pride, a good deal of anger and more of mortification. "I must do everything myself, it appears," she said, with a swelling of the heart which was very natural, I think. After the sun on the lawn, it was very warm indoors and the schoolroom was very noisy indeed by the time she had got rid of the applicants in the hall, one of whom (most respectful and indeed obsequious, and perfectly willing to accept her excuses, but yet a dun notwithstanding) had come to say that he had many heavy payments to make up, &c.—and if Mrs. Damerel could oblige him—? Mrs. Damerel could not oblige him, but he was very civil and full of apologies for troubling her. I do not, by any

means, intend to say that the Rector's wife was tortured by perpetual struggling with her creditors. It was not so bad as that. The difficulty was rather to keep going, to be not too much in debt to any one, to pay soon enough to preserve her credit, and yet get as long a day as possible. Mrs. Damerel had come by long practice to have the finest intuition in such matters. She knew exactly how long a tailor or a wine merchant would wait for his money without acerbation of temper, and would seize that crowning moment to have him paid by hook or by crook. But by thus making a fine art of her bills, she added infinitely to her mental burdens —for a woman must never forget anything or neglect anything when she holds her tradespeople so very delicately in hand.

The schoolroom, as I have just said, was very noisy, not to say uproarious, when she got back to it, and it was hard not to remember that Rose ought to have been there. There were five children in it, of various ages and sizes. The two big boys were both at Eton. The eldest, Bertie, who was bright and clever, was "on the foundation," and therefore did not cost his parents much; the second had his expenses paid by a relation—thus these two were off their mother's hands. The eldest in the schoolroom was Agatha, aged fourteen, who taught the two little ones; but who, during her mother's absence, ought to have been playing "her scales," and had conscientiously tried to do so for ten minutes, at the end of which time she had been obliged to resign the music in order to rescue these same two little ones, her special charge, from the hands of Dick, aged ten, who was subjecting them to unknown tortures, which caused the babes to howl unmercifully. Patty, the next girl to Agatha, aided and abetted Dick; and what with the laughter of these two pickles, and the screams of the small ones, and poor Agatha's remonstrances, the scene was Pandemonium itself, and almost as hot; for the room was on the sunny side of the house, and blazing, notwithstanding the drawn blinds. The children were all languid and irritable with the heat, hating their confinement indoors; and, indeed, if Rose had come, she would have made a very poor exchange. Agatha's music had tumbled down from the piano, the old red cover was half drawn off the table, and threatened at any moment a clean sweep of copybooks, inkbottles, and slates. Dick stood among his books, all tumbled on the floor, his heels crushing the cover of one, while Patty sat upon the open dictionary, doubling down half the leaves with her weight. Such a scene for a bothered mother to come into! Mr. Damerel himself heard some faint rumour of the noise, and his fine brow had begun to draw itself into lines, and a resolution to "speak to their mother" formed itself within his mind. Poor mother! She could have cried when she went in out of all her other troubles; but that was a mere momentary weakness, and the rebels were soon reduced to order, Agatha sent back to her scales, and Dick and Patty to their copybooks. "You two little ones may go," Mrs. Damerel said, and with a shriek of delight the babies toddled out and made their way to the hayfield behind the house, where they were perfectly happy, and liable to

no more danger than that of being carried off in a load of fragrant hay. When Mr. Nolan, the Curate, came in to talk about parish business, Agatha's "scales," not badly played, were trilling through the place, and Patty and Dick, very deep in ink, and leaning all their weight upon their respective pens, were busy with their writing; and calm, the calm of deep awe, prevailed.

"Shall I disturb you if I come in here?" asked the Curate, with a mellow sound in his voice which was not brogue—or at least he thought it was not, and was ingenuously surprised when he was recognised as an Irishman. ("It will be my name, to be sure," he would say on such occasions, somewhat puzzled.) He was a bony man, loosely put together, in a long coat, with rather a wisp of a white tie; for, indeed, it was very hot and dusty on the roads, and where the rector is an elegant man of very refined mind, the curate, like the wife, has generally a good deal to do.

"Indeed the lessons have been so much disturbed as it is, that it does not much matter," said Mrs. Damerel. "On Monday morning there are so many things to call me away."

"How selfish of me!" said the Curate. "Monday morning is just the time I've little or nothing to do, except when there's sickness. What a brute I was not to offer meself,—and, indeed, that's just what I've come to speak about."

"No, no, you are too kind, and do too much already," said Mrs. Damerel, looking at him with a grateful smile, but shaking her head. "And, indeed," she added, the cloud coming over her face again, "Rose ought to come and relieve me; but her father has to be attended to, and that takes up so much of her time."

"To be sure," said the Curate cheerily, "and reason good. Besides, it would be wearing work for one like her—whereas the like o' me is made for it. Look here, Dick, my boy, will you promise to learn your lessons like a brick to-morrow if I ask the mother for a holiday to-day?"

"Oh, hurrah!" cried Dick, delighted.

"Oh, mamma, like twenty bricks," cried Patty, "though how a brick can learn lessons——. It's so hot, and one keeps thinking of the hayfield."

"Then be off wi' you all," cried the Curate. "Don't you see the mother smile? and Agatha too. I'm going to talk business. Sure you don't mind for one day?"

"Oh, mind!" said poor Mrs. Damerel, with a half smile; then waiting till they were all out of hearing, an exit speedily accomplished, "if it were not for duty, how glad I should be to give it up altogether!—but they could not go on with Miss Hunt," she added, with a quick glance at the Curate to see whether by chance he understood her. Good Curate, he could be very stolid on occasion, though I hope he was not fool enough to be taken in by Mrs. Damerel's pretences; though it was true enough that Miss Hunt was impracticable. She could not afford a better; this was what she really meant.

"Out of the question," said Mr. Nolan; "and I'm no scholar my-

self to speak of, notwithstanding what I'm going to have the presumption to say to you. It's just this—I don't do much visiting of mornings; they don't like it. It takes them all in a mess as it were before they've had time to get tidy, and these mornings hang heavy on my hands. I want you to let me have the three big ones. I might get them on a bit; and time, as I tell you, my dear lady, hangs heavy on my hands."

"How can you tell me such a fib?" said Mrs. Damerel, half crying, half laughing. "Oh you are too good, too good; but, Mr. Nolan, I can't take anything more from you. Rose must help me, it is her duty; it is bad for her to be left so much to herself; why I was married and had all the troubles of life on my head at her age."

"And so she'll have, before you know where you are," said the good Curate, which will show the reader at once that he entertained no absorbing passion for Miss Rose, though I am aware it is a curate's duty so to do. "So she'll have; she'll be marrying some great grandee or other. She looks like a princess, and that's what she'll be."

"She has no right to be a princess," said the mother, overwrought and irritable, "and duty is better than ease surely. You, I know, think so."

"For the like of me, yes," said the Curate; "for her, I don't know."

"I was once very much like her, though you would not think it," said the mother, with the slightest tinge of bitterness, "but that is not the question—no, no, we must not trouble you."

"When I tell you the mornings hang on my hands! I don't know what to do with my mornings. There's Tuesday I'm due at the schools, but the rest of the week I do nothing but idle. And idling's a great temptation. A cigar comes natural when you've nothing to do. You don't like a man smoking in the morning; I've heard you say so. So you see the young ones will save me from a —— no, I won't say cigar—worse than that—cigars are too dear for a Curate, me dear lady; from a pipe."

"Mr. Nolan, you are too good for this world," said poor Mrs. Damerel, affected to tears; "but I must first try what can be done at home," she added after a pause—"no, no, you weigh me down under your kindness. What would the parish be but for you?"

"It would be just the same if I were dead and buried," said the Curate, shrugging his shoulders. "Ah, that's the worst of it; try for a little bit of a corner of work like a child's lessons, and you may be of service; but try to mend the world, even a bit of a parish, and you're nowhere. They don't think half as much of me as they do of the Rector?" he added, with a curious smile, which the Rector's wife only half understood. Was it satirical? or could it be possible that the Curate was surprised that the people thought more of the Rector than of himself? Mrs. Damerel was aware, no one better, of her husband's faults. Many a time she was ready to say in bitterness (to herself) that he was wearing her to death; but nevertheless she looked at long, loosely-built, snub-nosed Mr. Nolan, with mingled amusement and surprise. Was it possible that he could entertain any hopes of rivalling her husband? Of course a

visit from the Rector was an honour to any one, for Mr. Damerel was a man who, notwithstanding a little human weakness, was the very picture and model of a gentleman; and the idea of comparing him with good Mr. Nolan was too absurd. "Yes, no doubt they are pleased to see him," she said: "poor people are very quick to recognize high breeding; but I am sure, my dear Mr. Nolan, that they are all very fond of you."

The Curate made no immediate answer. I am not sure that he had not in his private heart something of the same feeling with which his present companion had been thinking of her daughter, a feeling less intense in so far as it was much more indifferent to him, yet in a way stronger because untempered by affection. The Rector was of his own kind, the ornamental and useless specimen, while he was the worker whom nobody thought of; but these secret feelings neither of the two confided to the other. Mr. Nolan would have been horrified had he detected in Mrs. Damerel that slight bitterness about Rose, which indeed would have shocked herself as deeply had she paused to identify the sentiment, and she would have been, and was, to some slight extent—suspecting the existence of the feeling—contemptuous and indignant of Nolan's "jealousy," as I fear she would have called it. They returned, however, to the educational question, which did not involve anything painful, and after considerable discussion it was settled that he should give the elder children lessons in the morning "if their papa approved." It is impossible to say what a relief this decision was to the mother, who had felt these lessons to be the last straw which proverbially breaks the camel's back. She was glad of the chat with a sympathizing friend, who understood, without saying anything about, her troubles—and doubly glad of the holiday exacted from her by his means—and gladder still to get rid of him and return to her many other occupations; for it was Monday, as has already been mentioned, and there was the laundress to look after, and a thousand other things awaiting her. The Curate went out by the garden door when he left her, out upon the lawn, where he paused to look at as charming a scene as could be found in England: a fair country spreading out for miles, its trees and fields and soft undulations under a summer sky, which was pale with excess of light, and ran into faint lines of misty distance almost colourless in heat and haze. Here and there the sunshine caught in a bend of the river, and brought out a startling gleam as from a piece of silver. The world was still with noon and distance, no sound in the air but the rustle of the leaves, the hum of insects; the landscape was all the sweeter that there was no remarkable feature in it, nothing but breadth and space, and undulating lines, and light, everywhere light; and to make up for its broad soft vagueness, how distinct, like a picture, was the little group in the foreground—the lime trees in their silken green, the soft rippling shadows on the grass, the picturesque figure in the chair, and the beautiful girl! The beauty of the sight charmed good Mr. Nolan. Had it been put to him at that moment, I believe he would have protested that his Rector should never do anything in his life except recline with languid limbs outstretched,

and his poetical head bent over his book, under the sweet shadow of the trees. And if this was true even in respect to Mr. Damerel, how much more true was it with Rose?

"Well, Nolan," said Mr. Damerel, suavely, as the bony Curate and his shadow came stalking across the sunshine; "well, worrying yourself to death as usual in this hot weather? My wife and you are congenial souls."

"That is true, and it's a great honour for me," said Nolan. "*She* is worrying herself to death with the children, and one thing and another. As for me, in the mornings, as I tell her, I've next to nothing to do."

Rose looked up hastily as he spoke. How angry she felt! If her mother chose to worry herself to death, who had anything to do with that? was it not her own pleasure? A hot flush came over the girl's face. Mr. Nolan thought it was the quick ingenuous shame which is so beautiful in youth; but it was a totally different sentiment.

"Mamma does nothing she does not choose to do," she cried; then blushed more hotly, perceiving vaguely that there was something of self-defence in the heat with which she spoke.

Mr. Nolan was not graceful in his manners, like Mr. Damerel, but he had that good breeding which comes from the heart, and he changed the subject instantly, and began to talk to the Rector of parish business, over which Mr. Damerel yawned with evident weariness. "Excuse me; the heat makes one languid," he said; "you have my full sanction, Nolan. You know how entirely I trust to your discretion; indeed I feel that you understand the people in some respects better than I do. Don't trouble yourself to enter into details."

Mr. Nolan withdrew from these refined precincts with an odd smile upon his face, which was not half so handsome as Mr. Damerel's. He had the parish in his hands, and the Rector did not care to be troubled with details; but the Rector had all the advantages of the position, all the income, and even so much the moral superiority over his Curate, that even *they* (by which pronoun Mr. Nolan indicated his poorer parishioners) felt much more deeply honoured by a chance word from the Rector than they did by his constant ministrations and kindness. What an odd, unequal world this is! he was thinking to himself—not ruled by justice, or even a pretence at justice, but by circumstances alone and external appearances. This did not make him bitter, for he had a kind of placid philosophy in him, and was of the kind of man who takes things very easily, as people say; but the curious force of the contrast made him smile.

CHAPTER III.

Rose Damerel's life had, up to this time, been spent altogether in the sunshine. She had been too young when she went to school to ponder much over anything that went on at home, and had concluded during her

holidays that home, which was so dainty, so pleasant, so sweet, was a kind of Paradise on earth, infinitely more delightful than any of the other homes, of which she heard from her schoolfellows. None of them had a father so delightful, a mother so kind; and in these holiday times as everybody indulged and petted her, the private shadows—I will not say skeletons—in the house were never divined by her. She had, as sometimes happens to the eldest of a large family, much more care taken of her education and training than her sisters were likely to meet with. The burden had not begun to be so heavily felt when the eldest girl grew into bright intelligence, to her parents' pride. The others were still too young to demand or even to suggest the expense that would be involved in their education—and nothing was spared upon Rose. She had returned from school not much more than a year before the time of which I treat, and had gone on for some time in her delightful youthful confidence that everything around her was exactly as it ought to be. But shadows had begun to flit vaguely across the picture before that memorable day in the garden, which henceforward became a turning point in her thoughts. This was the first moment at which she fully identified the occasional clouds upon her mother's face, and learned that Mrs. Damerel was not merely a little cross—that easy and rapid solution with which a child settles all problems concerning its parents—but had a distinct cause for the little irritabilities which she tried so carefully to restrain. Perhaps it was in the very nature of things that Rose should be more attracted by the gentle indulgence and indolent perfection of her father than by her mother's stronger character. Mr. Damerel, had he been very rich, and free of all occasion to think of his children's future, would have been a model father to grown-up and well-behaved sons and daughters. He could not bear any roughness, coarseness, or disorderliness, therefore the schoolboys were but little congenial to him, and he was never sorry when the holidays were over. And the little children were too troublesome and too noisy to please him; but Rose was the perfection of a child to such a man, and to her he was the perfection of a father. Everything in her pleased and gratified him. She was pretty, gentle, full of intelligence, eager to read with him if he would, still more eager to hear him talk, yet quick to perceive when he was disinclined to talk, and regarding all his moods with religious respect.

She would sit by him for hours together, like a charming piece of still life, when he pleased, and was ready to converse or to listen, to walk, to sing, to follow his lead in everything, as only a woman-child, full of the beautiful enthusiasm of youthful admiration, can do. Nothing, except perhaps the devotion of a young wife, when she really loves the man much older than herself, whom she has married, can equal the devotion of a girl to her father. She admired everything about him—his beautiful refined head, his fine voice, his grace and high breeding, his sermons, and what she called his genius. To find this faultless father to be anything less than a demi-god was terrible to Rose. I do not mean to say that she got within a hundred

miles of this discovery all at once; nay, the first result of the vague and dreamy doubts that stole into her mind was rather an increase of enthusiasm for her father, an instinctive making-up to her own ideal for the sense of failure in him, of which she was vaguely conscious. Rose loved her mother after a totally different fashion, in an ordinary and matter-of-fact way, but she had no romance of feeling towards her; and then her whole little world began, as it were, to sway upon its axis, to yield beneath her feet, as if it might swing round altogether in space, turning what she had supposed the brighter side into shadow, and elevating that which she had held lowly enough, she, poor girl, grew giddy with this strange and sickening sensation. She was at the age, too, when everything is apt to reel about the young experimentalist taking her first steps in life. She was vaguely conscious of being now a free agent, consulted as to her own movements, no longer told curtly to do this and that, but exercising personal choice as to what she should do. This change is of itself sufficiently bewildering. Nature makes, as it were, a pause at this first crisis of personal life. The child, wondering, half-delighted and half-troubled to have no longer its duties clearly and sharply indicated, falls into a partial trance, and neglects many things for sheer want of use and knowledge how to act for itself. This was Rose's position. Between the mother, who, a little mortified and hurt at her child's want of sympathy with her, did not give her orders, but only suggested employment, and the father, who said, "Never mind, let her alone," she stood, not knowing how to settle the question, but inclining naturally to the side on which she was most indulged and smiled upon, though with a secret uneasiness which she could not shake off, and moral sense of a false situation which grew upon her day by day.

Rose had lovers, too, in this new miraculous life upon which she had entered—two lovers, not yet declared, but very evident to all knowing eyes; and in the village there were many keen observers. One of these suitors was the most wealthy proprietor in the neighbourhood—a man much above her own age, yet not old, and perfectly qualified to please a lady's eye; and the other, a young naval lieutenant without a penny, the son of Mrs. Wodehouse, who lived on the Green, and had nothing in the world but her pension as an officer's widow. Of course I do not need to say that it was the poor man whom Rose preferred. She was not in love with him—far from it; but she was so completely on the verge of universal awakening, that a word or touch might be enough to arouse her whole being at any moment — might open her eyes to her own position and that of her parents, and show her the nature of her individual sentiments, as by a sudden gleam of light. Rose, however, was not the least in the world aware of this; and at the present moment she was no further advanced than was consistent with saying frankly that she liked Wodehouse very much—and feeling (but of this she said nothing) more glad when she saw him coming than about any other event in her simple days.

Dinglefield is a sociable place, and there is something in a soft summ evening after a very hot, blazing summer day which fosters a dispositi to stroll about and interchange greetings with your neighbours. As began to darken upon the evening of this particular day, various people the houses about stepped out of their wide open windows after dinner a tempted by the beauty of twilight, strayed along the road or over the Gr to the rectory garden, which was by universal acknowledgment "the m perfect spot" in the village. Much has been said about the charms of t light, but little, I think, of its peculiar English beauty, which is not magical as the momentary interval between light and dark in the south, the lingering prolonged silvery and ineffable dimness of those northern t lights which last half the night; but has a dusky softness altogether pe culiar to itself, like the shadowing of downy wings. The air was delicio fresh after the hot day, yet so warm as to make wrappings quite unnec sary. The sky, still somewhat pale in its blue after the languor of t heat, looked down faint yet friendly, as if glad to see again a little moveme and sense of life. A few subdued stars peeped out here and there, a the wide stretch of country lay dim underneath, revealing itself in lo soft lines of grey, till it struck into a higher tone of blue on the horiz where earth and heaven met. All the Damerels who were out of bed wa in the garden, and the neighbours, who had made this pleasant terra the end of their walk, were scattered about in various groups. Mr Incledon, who was Rose's wealthy lover, came late and stood talking with Mrs. Damerel, watching with wistful eyes her appropriation by his rival, young Wodehouse—whose mother, hooded in the white Shetland shawl, which she had thrown over her cap to come out, sat on a garden-chair with her feet upon the Rector's Persian rug, listening to him while he talked, with the devout admiration which became a member of his flock. The Rector was talking politics with General Peronnet, and Mrs. Wode house thought it was beautiful to see how thoroughly he understood a subject which was so much out of his way as the abolition of purchase in the army. "If he had been in Parliament now!" she said to the General's wife, who thought her husband was the object of the eulogy. There were two or three other members of this group listening to the Rector's brilliant talk, saying a few words, wise or foolish, as occasion served. Others were walking about upon the lawn, and one lady, with her dress lifted, was hastening off the grass which she had just discovered to be wet with dew. Upon none of them, however, did Mr. Incledon's attention turn. He followed with his eyes a pair whose young figures grew less and less in the distance, half lost in the darkness. The persistence with which he watched them seemed a reproach to the mother, with whom he talked by fits and starts, and whose anxiety was not at all awakened by the fact that Rose was almost out of sight. "I am afraid Rose is not so careful as she ought to be about the dew on the grass," she said, half apologetically, half smiling, in reply to his look.

"Shall I go and tell her you think so?" said Mr. Incledon,

hastily. He was a man of about five-and-thirty, good looking, sensible, nd well dispositioned; a personage thoroughly *comme il faut*. He was he sort of suitor whom proper parents love to see approaching a favourite hild. He could give his wife everything a woman could desire. Provide r her handsomely, surround her with luxury, fill her life with pleasures nd prettinesses, and give her an excellent position. And the man imself was free of cranks and crotchets, full of good sense, well educated, ood tempered. Where are girls' eyes, that they do not perceive such dvantages? Mrs. Damerel hesitated a moment between sympathy with r child and sympathy with this admirable man. There was a struggle n her mind which was to have the predominance. At length some leam of recollection or association struck her, and moved the balance in ose's favour, who she felt sure did not want Mr. Incledon just at that oment.

"Never mind," she said, tranquilly, "it will not hurt her;" and esumed a conversation about the music in the church, which was poor. Mr. Incledon was very musical, but he had no more heart for anthems t that moment than had he never sung a note.

Rose had strayed a little way down the slope with Edward Wodehouse. hey were not talking much, and what they did say was about nothing in articular—the garden, the wild flowers among the grass on this less olished and less cultured lawn which sloped down the little hill. At the oment when the elder suitor's glances had directed Mrs. Damerel's ttention towards them they were standing under a gnarled old hawthorn ee, round which was a little platform of soft turf.

"We lose the view lower down," said Rose; and there they stopped ccordingly, neither of them caring to turn back. The soft plain tretched away in long lines before them into the haze and distance like he sea. And as they stood there, the young moon, which had been idden behind a clump of high trees, suddenly glinted out upon them with hat soft dewy glimmer which makes the growing crescent so doubly sweet. hey were both a little taken aback, as if they had been surprised by ome one suddenly meeting and looking at them—though indeed there was ot a syllable of their simple talk that all the world might not have heard. oth made a step on as if to return again after this surprise, and then hey both laughed, with a little innocent embarrassment, and turned back o the view.

"What a lovely night!" said Rose, with a faint little sigh. She had lready said these not remarkable words two or three times at least, and he had nothing in the world to sigh about, but was in fact happier than sual; though a little sad, she knew not why.

"Look at those lights down below there," said young Wodehouse; "how they shine out among the trees!"

"Yes, that is from Ankermead," said Rose; "you know it?—the prettiest little house."

"When we are away, we poor mariners," he said, with a little laugh

which was more affected than real; "that is, I think, the thing that go to our hearts most."

"What?"

"The lights in the windows—of course I don't mean at sea," sa young Wodehouse; "but when we are cruising about a strange coast, f instance, just one of those twinkles shining out of the darkness—you c see lights a long way off—gives a fellow a stab, and makes him think home."

"But it is pleasant to think of home," said Rose. "Oh, what am saying? I beg your pardon, Mr. Wodehouse. To be sure, I know wh you mean. When I was at school something used to come in my thro when I remembered—Many a time I have stood at the window, and pre tended I was looking out, and cried."

"Ah!" said Wodehouse, half sympathetic, half smiling, "but the you know it would not do if I looked over the ship's side and cried- though I have had a great mind to do it sometimes in my midshipm days."

"To cry is a comfort," said Rose: "what do you men do, instead?"

"We smoke, Miss Damerel; and think. How often I shall think this night and of the lights yonder, and mix up this sweet evening wi an interior, perhaps, sweeter still!"

"I don't think so," said Rose, with a soft laugh, in which there wa however, a shade of embarrassment which somewhat surprised herself "The room is rather stuffy, and the lamps not bright, if you were ne enough; and two old people half dozing over the tea-table, one with the newspaper, one with her worsted-work. It is very humdrum, and not sweet at all inside."

"Well, perhaps they are all the fonder of each other for bein humdrum; and it must have been sweet when they were young."

"They were never young," said Rose, with a silvery peal of laughter turning to go back to the lawn. "See what tricks imagination plays. You would not like to spend an evening there, though the lights are so pretty outside."

"Imagination will play many a trick with me before I forget it," said young Wodehouse in subdued tones. Rose's heart fluttered a little—a very little—with the softest preliminary sensations of mingled happiness and alarm. She did not understand the flutter, but somehow felt it right to fly from it, tripping back to the serenity of society on the lawn. As for the young man, he had a great longing to say something more, but a feeling which was mingled of reverence for her youth and dread of frighten- ening her by a premature declaration kept him silent. He followed her into the hum of friendly talk, and then across the lawn to the house, where the neighbours streamed in for tea. The bright lights in the rectory drawing-room dazzled them both—the windows were wide open; crowds of moths were flickering in and out, dashing themselves, poor suicides, against the circle of light; and all the charmed dimness

grew more magical as the sky deepened into night, and the moon rose higher and began to throw long shadows across the lawn. "On such a night" lovers once prattled in Shakespeare's sweetest vein. All that they said, and a great deal more, came into young Wodehouse's charmed heart and stole it away. He heard himself saying the words, and wondered how it was that he himself was so entirely happy and sad, and thought how he might perhaps soon say them to himself as his ship rustled through the water, and the moonlight slept broad and level, and uninterrupted by any poetry of shadows upon the sea. To think of that filled his heart with a soft, unspeakable pang; and yet the very pain had a sweetness in it, and sense of exaltation. "There are the lights still," he said, standing over her where she had seated herself near the window. "I shall always remember them, though you will not allow of any romance——"

"Romance! oh no," said Rose lightly; "only two old people. We have not any romance here."

Mr. Incledon, who had been watching his opportunity so long, now came forward with a cup of tea. Poor Edward was too much abstracted in his thoughts and in her, and with the confusion of a little crisis of sentiment, to think of the usual attentions of society which he owed to her. He started and blushed when he saw how negligent he had been, and almost stumbled over her chair in his anxiety to retrieve his carelessness. "My dear Wodehouse, Miss Damerel cannot drink more than one cup of tea at a time," said the elder suitor, with that air of indulgent pity for his vagaries which so irritates a young man: and he mounted guard over Rose for the rest of the evening. The good neighbours began to go home when they had taken their tea, and the Rector and his daughter went with them to the gate, when there was a soft babble and commotion of good-nights, and every two people repeated to each other, "What a lovely moon!" and "What a glorious night!" As for poor Wodehouse, in his climax of youth and love, his very heart was melted within him. Twice he turned back, murmuring to his mother some inarticulate explanation that he had forgotten something—that he wanted to speak to the Rector—and twice went back to her solemnly saying it did not matter. "No, no," he said to himself, "he must not be premature."

Rose took another turn round the lawn with her father before they went in. Mrs. Damerel was visible inside, sending the tray away, putting stray books in their places, and stray bits of work in the work-basket, before the bell should ring for prayers. Mr. Damerel looked in as he passed with an indulgent smile.

"She calleth her maidens about her," he said, "though it is not to spin, Rose, but to pray. Somehow it enhances the luxury of our stroll to see your mother there, putting everything in order with that careful and troubled face—eh, child, don't you think with me?"

"But does it enhance her luxury to have us walking and talking

while she has everything to lay by ? " said Rose with an uncomfortable sense that her own work and several books which she had left about, were among those which her mother was putting away.

" Ah, you have found out there are two sides to a question," said her father, patting her on the cheek, with his gentle habitual smile; but he gave no answer to her question; and then the maids became visible trooping in, in their white caps and aprons, and the Rector, with a sigh and a last look at the midnight and the dim dewy landscape, went in to domesticity and duty, which he did not like so well.

Rose went to her room that night with a thrill of all her gentle being which she could not explain. She looked out from her window among the honeysuckles, and was so disappointed as almost to cry when she found the lights out, and the little cottage on Ankermead lost in the darkness. She could have cried, and yet but for that fanciful trouble, how happy the child was ! Everything embraced her—the clinging tendrils of the honeysuckle, so laden with dew and sweetness ; the shadows of the trees, which held out their arms to her; the soft caressing moon which touched her face and surrounded it with a pale glory. Nothing but good and happiness was around, behind, before her, and a trembling of happiness to come, even sweeter than anything she had ever known, whispered over her in soft indefinite murmurs, like the summer air in the petals of a flower. She opened her bosom to it, with a delicious half-consciousness fresh as any rose that lets its leaves be touched by the sweet south. This Rose in June expanded, grew richer, and of a more damask roseiness, but could not tell why.



"I FEEL—ALMOST—TOO MUCH—TO THINK," HE SAID.

THE

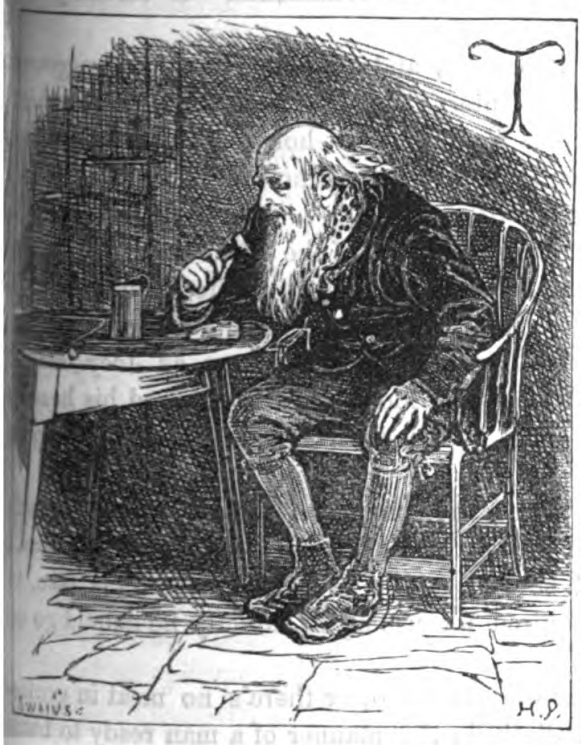
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1874.

Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER XV.

A Morning Meeting: The Letter again.



THE scarlet and orange light outside the malthouse did not penetrate to its interior, which was, as usual, lighted by a rival glow of similar hue, radiating from the hearth.

The maltster, after having lain down in his clothes for a few hours, was now sitting beside a three-legged table, breakfasting off bread and bacon. This was eaten on the plateless system, which is performed by placing a slice of bread upon the table, the meat flat upon the bread, a mustard plaster upon the meat, and a pinch of salt upon the whole, then cutting them vertically downwards with a large pocket-knife till wood is reached, when the severed lump is impaled on the knife, elevated, and sent the proper way of food. The maltster's lack of teeth appeared not to sensibly diminish his powers as a mill. He had

been without them for so many years that toothlessness was felt less t be a defect than hard gums an acquisition. Indeed, he seemed to ap proach the grave as a hyperbolic curve approaches a line—sheering o as he got nearer, till it was doubtful if he would ever reach it at all.

In the ashpit was a heap of potatoes roasting, and a boiling pipkin c charred bread, called "coffee," for the benefit of whomsoever should cal for Warren's was a sort of village clubhouse, there being no inn in th place.

"I say, says I, we get a fine day, and then down comes a snapper a night," was a remark now suddenly heard spreading into the malthous from the door, which had been opened the previous moment, and the form of Henery Fray advanced to the fire, stamping the snow from his boot when about half-way there. The speech and entry had not seemed to b at all an abrupt beginning to the maltster, introductory matter being ofte omitted in this neighbourhood, both from word and deed, and the maltste having the same latitude allowed him, did not hurry to reply. He picked up a fragment of cheese, by pecking upon it with his knife, as a butcher picks up skewers.

Henery appeared in a drab kerseymere great-coat, buttoned over his smockfrock, the white skirts of the latter being visible to the distance of about a foot below the coat-tails, which, when you got used to the style of dress, looked natural enough, and even ornamental—it certainly was comfortable.

Matthew Moon, Joseph Poorgrass, and other carters and waggoners followed at his heels, with great lanterns dangling from their hands, which showed that they had just come from the cart-horse stables, where they had been busily engaged since four o'clock that morning.

"And how is she getting on without a baily?" the maltster enquired.

Henery shook his head, and smiled one of the bitter smiles, dragging all the flesh of his forehead into a corrugated heap in the centre.

"She'll rue it—surely, surely!" he said. "Benjy Pennyways was not a true man or an honest baily—as big a betrayer as Joey Iscariot himself. But to think she can manage alone!" He allowed his head to swing laterally three or four times in silence. "Never in all my creeping up—never!"

This was recognised by all as the conclusion of some gloomy speech which had been expressed in thought alone during the shake of the head; Henery meanwhile retained several marks of despair upon his face, to imply that they would be required for use again directly he should go on speaking.

"All will be ruined, and ourselves too, or there's no meat in gentlemen's houses!" said Mark Clark, in the manner of a man ready to burst all links of habit.

"A headstrong maid, that's what she is—and won't listen to no advice at all. Pride and vanity have ruined many a cobbler's dog. Dear, dear, when I think of it, I sorrows like a man in travel!"

"True, Henery, you do, I've heard ye," said Joseph Poorgrass, in a ice of thorough attestation, and with a wire-drawn smile of misery.

"'Twould do a martel man no harm to have what's under her bonnet," id Billy Smallbury, who had just entered, bearing his one tooth before m. "She can spaik real language, and must have some sense somehere. Do ye conceive me?"

"I do, I do; but no baily—I deserved that place," wailed Henery, gnifying wasted genius by gazing blankly at visions of a high destiny parently visible to him on Billy Smallbury's smockfrock. "There, was to be, I suppose. Your lot is your lot, and Scripture is nothing; if you do good you don't get rewarded according to your works, but e cheated in some mean way out of your recompense."

"No, no; I don't agree with'ee there," said Mark Clark, decisively. God's a perfect gentleman in that respect."

"Good works good pay, so to speak it," attested Joseph Poorgrass.

A short pause ensued, and as a sort of *entr'acte* Henery turned and ew out the lanterns, which the increase of daylight rendered no longer cessary even in the malthouse, with its one pane of glass.

"I wonder what a farmer-woman can want with a harpsichord, dulmer, pianner, or whatever 'tis they d'call it," said the maltster. "Liddy ith she've a new one."

"Got a pianner?"

"Ay. Seems her old uncle's things were not good enough for her. e've bought all but everything new. There's heavy chairs for the ut, weak and wiry ones for the slender; great watches getting on to size of clocks, to stand upon the chimbley-piece."

"Pictures, for the most part wonderful frames."

"Long horse-hair settles for the drunk, with horse-hair pillows at each l."

"Looking-glasses for the pretty."

"Lying books for the wicked."

A firm loud tread was now heard stamping outside; the door was ened about six inches, and somebody on the other side exclaimed—

"Neighbours, have ye got room for a few new-born lambs?"

"Ay, sure, shepherd," said the conclave.

The door was flung back till it kicked the wall and trembled from to bottom with the blow. Mr. Oak appeared in the entry with a aming face, hay-bands wound about his ankles to keep out the snow, leather strap round his waist outside the smock-frock, and looking ogether an epitome of the world's health and vigour. Four lambs hung various embarrassing attitudes over his shoulders, and the dog George, ich Gabriel had contrived to fetch from Norcombe, stalked solemnly hind.

"Well, Shepherd Oak, and how's lambing this year, if I may say it?" quired Joseph Poorgrass.

"Terrible trying," said Oak. "I've been wet through twice a-day,

either in snow or rain, this last fortnight. Cainy and I haven't tin our eyes to-night."

"A good few twins, too, I hear, so to speak it?"

"Too many by half. Yes, 'tis a very queer lambing this year. V shan't have done by Lady Day."

"And last year 'twer all over by Sexagessamine Sunday," Josep remarked.

"Bring on the rest, Cain," said Gabriel, "and then run back to th ewes. I'll follow you soon."

Cainy Ball—a cherry-faced young lad, with a small circular orifice t way of mouth, advanced and deposited two others, and retired as he wa bidden. Oak lowered the lambs from their unnatural elevation, wrappe them in hay, and placed them round the fire.

"We've no lambing-hut here, as I used to have at Norcombe," sai Gabriel, "and 'tis such a plague to bring the weakly ones to a house If 'twasn't for your place here, maltster, I don't know what I should do this keen weather. And how is it with you to-day, maltster?"

"O, neither sick nor sorry, shepherd; but no younger."

"Ay—I understand."

"Sit down, Shepherd Oak," continued the ancient man of malt. "And how was the old place at Norcombe when ye went for your dog? I should like to see the old familiar spot; but faith, I shouldn't know a soul there now."

"I suppose you wouldn't. 'Tis altered very much."

"Is it true that Dicky Hill's wooden cider-house is pulled down?"

"O yes—years ago, and Dicky's cottage just above it."

"Well, to be sure!"

"Yes; and Tompkins's old apple-tree is rooted that used to bear two hogsheads of cider with its own apples, and no help from other trees."

"Rooted?—you don't say it! Ah! stirring times we live in—stirring times."

"And you can mind the old well that used to be in the middle of the place? That's turned into a solid iron pump with a large stone trough, and all complete."

"Dear, dear—how the face of nations alter, and what great revolu- tions we live to see now-a-days! Yes—and 'tis the same here. They've been talking but now of the mis'ess's strange doings."

"What have you been saying about her?" inquired Oak, sharply, turning to the rest, and getting very warm.

"These middle-aged men have been pulling her over the coals for pride and vanity," said Mark Clark; "but I say, let her have rope enough. Bless her pretty face—shouldn't I like to do so—— upon her cherry lips!" The gallant Mark Clark here made a peculiar and well-known sound with his own.

"Mark," said Gabriel, sternly, "now you mind this: none of that

dalliance-talk — that philandering way — that dandle-smack-and-coddle style of yours—about Miss Everdene. I don't allow it. Do you hear?"

"With all my heart, as the old woman said," replied Mr. Clark, heartily.

"I suppose you've been speaking against her?" said Oak, turning to Joseph Poorgrass with a very grim look.

"No, no—not a word I—'tis a real joyful thing that she's no worse, that's what I say," said Joseph, trembling and blushing with terror. "Matthew just said ——"

"Matthew Moon, what have you been saying?" asked Oak.

"I? Why ye know I wouldn't harm a worm—no, not one underground worm!" said Matthew Moon, looking very uneasy.

"Well, somebody has—and look here, neighbours." Gabriel, though one of the quietest and most gentle men on earth, rose to the occasion, with martial promptness and vigour. "That's my fist." Here he placed his fist, rather smaller in size than a common loaf, in the mathematical centre of the maltster's little table, and with it gave a bump or two thereon, as if to ensure that their eyes all thoroughly took in the idea of fistiness before he went further. "Now—the first man in the parish that I hear prophesying bad of our mistress, why"—(here the fist was raised and let fall, as Thor might have done with his hammer in assaying it)—"he'll smell and taste that—or I'm a Dutchman."

All earnestly expressed by their features that their minds did not wander to Holland for a moment on account of this statement, well knowing it was but a powerful form of speech; but were deploring the difference which gave rise to the figure; and Mark Clark cried "Hear, hear, as the undertaker said." The dog George looked up at the same time after the shepherd's menace, and though he understood English but imperfectly, began to growl.

"Now, don't ye take on so, shepherd, and sit down!" said Henery, with a deprecating peacefulness equal to anything of the kind in Christianity.

"We hear that ye be a extraordinary good and clever man, shepherd," said Joseph Poorgrass with considerable anxiety from behind the maltster's bedstead, whither he had retired for safety. "'Tis a great thing to be clever, I'm sure," he added, making small movements associated with states of mind rather than body; "we wish we were, don't we, neighbours?"

"Ay, that we do, sure," said Matthew Moon, with a small anxious laugh towards Oak, to show how very friendly disposed he was likewise.

"Who's been telling you I'm clever?" said Oak.

"'Tis blowed about from pillar to post quite common," said Matthew. "We hear that ye can tell the time as well by the stars as we can by the sun and moon, shepherd."

"Yes, I can do a little that way," said Gabriel, as a man of medium sentiments on the subject.

"And that ye can make sun-dials, and prent folks' names upon their waggons almost like copper-plate, with beautiful flourishes, and great long tails. A excellent fine thing for ye to be such a clever man, shepherd. Joseph Poorgrass used to prent to Farmer James Everdene's waggons before you came, and 'a could never mind which way to turn the J's and E's—could ye, Joseph?" Joseph shook his head to express how absolute was the fact that he couldn't. "And so you used to do 'em the wrong way, like this, didn't ye, Joseph?" Matthew marked on the dusty floor with his whip-handle

SAMES.

"And how Farmer James would cuss, and call thee a fool, wouldn't he, Joseph, when 'a seed his name looking so inside-out-like?" continued Matthew Moon, with feeling.

"Ay—'a would," said Joseph, meekly. "But, you see, I wasn't so much to blame, for them J's and E's are such trying sons of dogs for the memory to mind whether they face backward or forward; and I always had such a forgetful memory, too."

"'Tis a very bad affliction for ye, Joseph Poorgrass—being such a man of calamity in other ways."

"Well, 'tis; but a happy providence ordered that it should be no worse, and I feel my thanks. As to shepherd, there, I'm sure mis'ess ought to have made ye her baily—such a fitting man for't as you be."

"I don't mind owning that I expected it," said Oak, frankly. "Indeed I hoped for the place. At the same time Miss Everdene has a right to be her own baily if she chooses—and to keep me down to be a common shepherd only." Oak drew a slow breath, looked sadly into the bright ashpit, and seemed lost in thoughts not of the most hopeful hue.

The genial warmth of the fire now began to stimulate the nearly lifeless lambs to bleat and move their limbs briskly upon the hay, and to recognise for the first time the fact that they were born. Their noise increased to a chorus of baas, upon which Oak pulled the milk-can from before the fire, and taking a small teapot from the pocket of his smockfrock, filled it with milk, and taught those of the helpless creatures which were not to be restored to their dams how to drink from the spout—a trick they acquired with astonishing aptitude.

"And she don't even let ye have the skins of the dead lambs, I hear?" resumed Joseph Poorgrass, his eyes lingering on the operations of Oak with the necessary melancholy.

"I don't have them," said Gabriel.

"Ye be very badly used, shepherd," hazarded Joseph again, in the hope of getting Oak as an ally in lamentation after all. "I think she's took against ye—that I do."

"O, no—not at all," replied Gabriel, hastily, and a sigh escaped him, which the deprivation of lamb skins could hardly have caused.

Before any further remark had been added a shade darkened the door,

and Boldwood entered the malthouse, bestowing around upon each a nod, of a quality between friendliness and condescension.

"Ah! Oak, I thought you were here," he said. "I met the mail-cart ten minutes ago, and a letter was put into my hand, which I opened, without reading the address. I believe it is yours. You must excuse the accident, please."

"O, yes—not a bit of difference, Mr. Boldwood—not a bit," said Gabriel, readily. He had not a correspondent on earth, nor was there a possible letter coming to him, whose contents the whole parish would not have been welcome to peruse.

Oak stepped aside, and read the following in an unknown hand:—

"DEAR FRIEND,—I do not know your name, but I think these few lines will reach you, which I write to thank you for your kindness to me the night I left Weatherbury in a reckless way. I also return the money I owe you, which you will excuse my not keeping as a gift. All has ended well, and I am happy to say I am going to be married to the young man who has courted me for some time—Sergeant Troy, of the 11th Dragoon Guards, now quartered in Melchester. He would, I know, object to my having received anything except as a loan, being a man of great respectability and high honour—indeed, a nobleman by blood.

"I should be much obliged to you if you would keep the contents of this letter a secret for the present, dear friend. We mean to surprise Weatherbury by coming there soon as husband and wife, though I blush to state it to one nearly a stranger. The sergeant grew up in Weatherbury. Thanking you again for your kindness,

"I am, your sincere well-wisher,

"FANNY ROBIN."

"Have you read it, Mr. Boldwood?" said Gabriel; "if not, you had better do so. I know you are interested in Fanny Robin."

Boldwood read the letter and looked grieved.

"Fanny—poor Fanny! the end she is so confident of has not yet come, she should remember—and may never come."

"What sort of a man is this Sergeant Troy?" said Gabriel.

"H'm—I am afraid not one to build much hope upon in such a case as this," the farmer murmured, "though he's a clever fellow, and up to everything. A slight romance attaches to him, too. His mother, a French governess, was married to a poor medical man, and while money was forthcoming all went on well. Unfortunately for the boy, his best friends died; and he got then a situation as second clerk at a lawyer's in Casterbridge. He stayed there for some time, and might have worked himself into a dignified position of some sort had he not indulged in the wild freak of enlisting. I have much doubt if ever little Fanny will surprise us in the way she mentions—very much doubt. A silly girl—silly girl!"

The door was hurriedly burst open again, and in came running Cainy Ball out of breath, mouth red and open, like the bell of a penny trumpet, and coughing with noisy vigour and great distension of face.

"Now, Cain Ball," said Oak, sternly, "why will you run so fast and lose your breath so? I'm always telling you of it."

"O—I—A puff of mee breath—went—the wrong way, please, Mister Oak, and made me cough—hok—hok—hok!"

"Well—what have you come for?"

"I've run to tell ye," said the junior shepherd, supporting his exhausted youthful frame against the doorpost, "that you must come directly. Two more ewes have twinned—that's what's the matter, Shepherd Oak."

"O, that's it," said Oak, jumping up, and dismissing for the present his thoughts on poor Fanny. "You are a good boy to run and tell me, Cain, and you shall smell a large plum-pudding some day as a treat. But, before we go, Cainy, bring the tarpot, and we'll mark this lot and have done with 'em."

Oak took from his illimitable pockets a marking iron, dipped it into the pot, and imprinted on the buttocks of the infant sheep the initials of her he delighted to muse on—"B. E.," which signified to all the region round that thenceforth the lambs belonged to Farmer Bathsheba Everdene, and to no one else.

"Now, Cainy, shoulder your two, and off. Good morning, Mr. Boldwood." The shepherd lifted the sixteen large legs and four small bodies he had himself brought, and vanished with them in the direction of the lambing field hard by—their frames being now in a sleek and hopeful state, pleasantly contrasting with their death's-door plight of half-an-hour before.

Boldwood followed him a little way up the field, hesitated, and turned back. He followed him again with a last resolve, annihilating return. On approaching the nook in which the fold was constructed, the farmer drew out his pocket-book, unfastened it, and allowed it to lie open on his hand. A letter was revealed—Bathsheba's.

"I was going to ask you, Oak," he said, with unreal carelessness, "if you know whose writing this is?"

Oak glanced into the book, and replied instantly, with a flushed face, "Miss Everdene's."

Oak had coloured simply at the consciousness of sounding her name. He now felt a strangely distressing qualm from a new thought. The letter could of course be no other than anonymous, or the inquiry would not have been necessary.

Boldwood mistook his confusion: sensitive persons are always ready with their "Is it I?" in preference to objective reasoning.

"The question was perfectly fair," he returned—and there was something incongruous in the serious earnestness with which he applied himself to an argument on a valentine. "You know it is always expected that

privy inquiries will be made: that's where the—fun lies." If the word "fun" had been "torture," it could not have been uttered with a more constrained and restless countenance than was Boldwood's then.

Soon parting from Gabriel, the lonely and reserved man returned to his house to breakfast—feeling twinges of shame and regret at having so far exposed his mood by those fevered questions to a stranger. He again placed the letter on the mantelpiece, and sat down to think of the circumstances attending it by the light of Gabriel's information.

CHAPTER XVI.

All Saints' and All Souls'.

On a week-day morning a small congregation, consisting mainly of women and girls, rose from its knees in the mouldy nave of All Saints' Church, Melchester, at the end of a service without a sermon. They were about to disperse, when a smart footstep, entering the porch and coming up the central passage, arrested their attention. The step echoed with a ring unusual in a church; it was the clink of spurs. Everybody looked. A young cavalry soldier in a red uniform, with the three chevrons of a sergeant upon his sleeve, strode up the aisle, with an embarrassment which was only the more accented by the intense vigour of his step, and by the determination upon his face to show none. A slight flush had mounted his cheek by the time he had run the gauntlet between these females; but, passing on through the chancel arch, he never paused till he came close to the altar railing. Here for a moment he stood alone.

The officiating curate, who had not yet doffed his surplice, perceived the new-comer and followed him to the communion-space. He whispered to the soldier, and then beckoned to the clerk, who in his turn whispered to an elderly woman, apparently his wife, and they also went up the chancel steps.

"'Tis a wedding!" murmured some of the women, brightening. "Let's wait!"

The majority again sat down.

There was a creaking of machinery behind, and some of the young ones turned their heads. From the interior face of the west wall of the tower projected a little canopy with a quarter-jack and small bell beneath it, the automaton being driven by the same clock machinery that struck the large bell in the tower. Between the tower and the church was a close screen, the door of which was kept shut during services, hiding this grotesque clockwork from sight. At present, however, the door was open, and the egress of the jack, the blows on the bell, and the mannikin's retreat into the nook again, were visible to many, and audible throughout the church.

The jack had struck half-past eleven.

"Where's the woman?" whispered some of the spectators.

The young sergeant stood still with the abnormal rigidity of the old pillars around. He faced the south-east, and was as silent as he was still.

The silence grew to be a noticeable thing as the minutes went on, and nobody else appeared, and not a soul moved. The rattle of the quarter-jack again from its niche, its blows for three-quarters, its fussy retreat, were almost painfully abrupt, and caused many of the congregation to start palpably.

"I wonder where the woman is!" a voice whispered again.

There began now that slight shifting of feet, that artificial coughing among several, which betrays a nervous suspense. At length there was a titter. But the soldier never moved. There he stood, his face to the south-east, upright as a column, his cap in his hand.

The clock ticked on. The women threw off their nervousness, and titters and gigglings became more frequent. Then came a dead silence. Everyone was waiting for the end. Some persons may have noticed how extraordinarily the striking of quarters seems to quicken the flight of time. It was hardly credible that the jack had not got wrong with the minutes when the rattle began again, the puppet emerged, and the four quarters were struck fitfully as before. One could almost be positive that there was a malicious leer upon the hideous creature's face, and a mischievous delight in its twitchings. Then followed the dull and remote resonance of the twelve heavy strokes in the tower above. The women were impressed, and there was no giggle this time.

The clergyman glided into the vestry, and the clerk vanished. The sergeant had not yet turned; every woman in the church was waiting to see his face, and he appeared to know it. At last he did turn, and stalked resolutely down the nave, braving them all, with a compressed lip. Two bowed and toothless old almsmen then looked at each other and chuckled, innocently enough; but the sound had a strange weird effect in that place.

Opposite to the church was a paved square, around which several overhanging wood buildings of old time cast a picturesque shade. The young man on leaving the door went to cross the square, when, in the middle, he met a little woman. The expression of her face, which had been one of intense anxiety, sank at the sight of his nearly to terror.

"Well?" he said, in a suppressed passion, without looking at her.

"O, Frank—I made a mistake! I thought that church with the spire was All Saints', and I was at the door at half-past eleven to a minute, as you said. I waited till a quarter to twelve, and found then that I was in All Souls'. But I wasn't much frightened, for I thought it could be to-morrow as well."

"You fool, for so fooling me! But say no more."

"Shall it be to-morrow, Frank?" she asked blankly.

"To-morrow!" and he gave vent to a hoarse laugh. "I don't go through that experience again for some time, I warrant you!"

"But after all," she expostulated in a trembling voice, "the mistake was not such a terrible thing! Now, dear Frank, when shall it be?"

"Ah, when? God knows!" he said, with a light irony, and turning from her walked rapidly away.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

ON Saturday Boldwood was in the Market-House as usual, when the disturber of his dreams entered, and became visible to him. Adam had awakened from his deep sleep; and, behold, there was Eve. The farmer took courage, and, for the first time, really looked at her.

Emotional causes and effects are not proportionable equations to all. The result from capital employed in the production of any movement of a mental nature is sometimes as tremendous as the cause itself is absurdly minute. When women are in a freakish mood, their usual intuition, either from carelessness or inherent defect, seemingly fails to teach them this, and hence it was that Bathsheba was fated to be astonished to-day.

Boldwood looked at her—not slily, critically, or understandingly, but blankly at gaze, in the way a reaper looks up at a passing train—as something foreign to his element, and but dimly understood. To Boldwood women had been remote phenomena rather than necessary complements—comets of such uncertain aspect, movement, and permanence, that whether their orbits were as geometrical, unchangeable, and as subject to laws as his own, or as absolutely erratic as they superficially appeared, he had not deemed it his duty to consider.

He saw her black hair, her correct facial curves and profile, and the roundness of her chin and throat. He saw then the side of her eyelids, eyes, and lashes, and the shape of her ear. Next he noticed her figure, her skirt, and the very soles of her shoes.

Boldwood thought her beautiful, but wondered whether he was right in his thought, for it seemed impossible that this romance in the flesh, if so sweet as he imagined, could have been going on long without creating a commotion of delight among men, and provoking more enquiry than Bathsheba had done, even though that was not a little. To the best of his judgment neither nature nor art could improve this perfect one of an imperfect many. His heart began to move within him. Boldwood, it must be remembered, though forty years of age, had never before inspected a woman with the very centre and force of his glance; they had struck upon all his senses at wide angles.

Was she really beautiful? He could not assure himself that his opinion was true even now. He furtively said to a neighbour, "Is Miss Everdene considered handsome?"

"Oh, yes; she was a good deal noticed the first time she came, if you remember. A very handsome girl indeed."

A man is never more credulous than in receiving favourable opinions on the beauty of a woman he is half, or quite, in love with: a mere child's word on the point has the weight of an R.A.'s. Boldwood was satisfied now.

And this charming woman had in effect said to him "Marry me."

Why should she have done that strange thing? Boldwood's blindness to the difference between approving of what circumstances suggest, and originating what they do not suggest, was well matched by Bathsheba's insensibility to the possibly great issues of little beginnings.

She was at this moment coolly dealing with a dashing young farmer, adding up accounts with him as indifferently as if his face had been the pages of a ledger. It was evident that such a nature as his had no attraction for a woman of Bathsheba's taste. But Boldwood grew hot down to his hands with an incipient jealousy; he trod for the first time the threshold of "the injured lover's hell." His first impulse was to go and thrust himself between them. This could be done, but only in one way—by asking to see a sample of her corn. Boldwood renounced the idea. He could not make the request; it was debasing loveliness to ask it to buy and sell, and jarred with his conceptions of her.

All this time Bathsheba was conscious of having broken into that dignified stronghold at last. His eyes, she knew, were following her everywhere. This was a triumph; and had it come naturally, such a triumph would have been the sweeter to her for this piquing delay. But it had been brought about by misdirected ingenuity, and she valued it only as she valued an artificial flower or a wax fruit.

Being a woman with some good sense in reasoning on subjects wherein her heart was not involved, Bathsheba genuinely repented that a freak which had owed its existence as much to Liddy as to herself, should ever have been undertaken, to disturb the placidity of a man she respected too highly to deliberately tease.

She that day nearly formed the intention of begging his pardon on the very next occasion of their meeting. The worst features of this arrangement were that, if he thought she ridiculed him, an apology would increase the offence by being disbelieved; and if he thought she wanted him, it would read like additional evidence of her forwardness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BOLDWOOD IN MEDITATION: A VISIT.

BOLDWOOD was tenant of what was called the Lower Farm, and his person was the nearest approach to aristocracy that this remoter quarter of Weatherbury could boast of. Genteel strangers, whose god was their town, who might happen to be compelled to linger about this nook for a day, heard the sound of light wheels, and prayed to see good society, to the degree of a solitary lord, or squire at the very least, but it was only Mr. Boldwood going out for the day. They heard the sound of wheels yet once more, and were re-animated to expectancy: it was only Mr. Boldwood coming home again.

His house stood recessed from the road, and the stables, which are to

a farm what a fireplace is to a house, were behind, their lower portions being lost amid bushes of laurel. Inside the blue door, open half-way down, were to be seen at this time the backs and tails of half-a-dozen warm and contented horses standing in their stalls; and thus viewed, presenting alternations of roan and bay, in shapes like a Moorish arch, the tail being a streak down the midst of each. Over these, and lost to the eye gazing in from the outer light, the mouths of the same animals could be heard busily sustaining the above-named warmth and plumpness by quantities of oats and hay. The restless and shadowy figure of a colt wandered up and down a loose-box at the end, whilst the steady grind of all the eaters was occasionally diversified by the rattle of a rope or the stamp of a foot.

Pacing up and down at the heels of the animals was Farmer Boldwood himself. This place was his almonry and cloister in one: here, after looking to the feeding of his four-footed dependents, the celibate would walk and meditate of an evening till the moon's rays streamed in through the cobwebbed windows, or total darkness enveloped the scene.

His square-framed perpendicularity showed more fully now than in the crowd and bustle of the market-house. In this meditative walk his foot met the floor with heel and toe simultaneously, and his fine, reddish-fleshed face was bent downward just enough to render obscure the still mouth and the well-rounded though rather prominent and broad chin. A few clear and thread-like horizontal lines were the only interruption to the otherwise smooth surface of his large forehead.

The phases of Boldwood's life were ordinary enough, but his was not an ordinary nature. Spiritually and mentally, no less than socially, a commonplace general condition is no conclusive proof that a man has not potentialities above that level.

In all cases this state may be either the mediocrity of inadequacy, as was Oak's, or what we will venture to call the mediocrity of counterpoise, as was Boldwood's. The quiet mean to which we originally found him adhering, and in which, with few exceptions, he had continually moved, was that of neutralization: it was not structural at all. That stillness, which struck casual observers more than anything else in his character and habit, and seemed so precisely like the rest of inanition, may have been the perfect balance of enormous antagonistic forces—positives and negatives in fine adjustment. His equilibrium disturbed, he was in extremity at once.

Boldwood was thus either hot or cold. If an emotion possessed him at all, it ruled him; a feeling not mastering him was entirely latent. Stagnant or rapid, it was never slow. He was always hit mortally, or he was missed. The shallows in the characters of ordinary men were sterile strands in his, but his depths were so profound as to be practically bottomless.

He had no light and careless touches in his constitution, either for good or for evil. Stern in the outlines of action, mild in the details, he

was serious throughout all. He saw no absurd side to the follies of life, and thus, though not quite companionable in the eyes of merry men and scoffers, and those to whom all things show life as a jest, he was not intolerable to the earnest and those acquainted with grief. Being a man who read all the dramas of life seriously, if he failed to please when they were comedies, there was no frivolous treatment to reproach him for when they chanced to end tragically.

Bathsheba was far from dreaming that the dark and silent shape upon which she had so carelessly thrown a seed was a hotbed of tropic intensity. Had she known Boldwood's moods, her blame would have been fearful, and the stain upon her heart ineradicable. Moreover, had she known her present power for good or evil over this man, she would have trembled at her responsibility. Luckily for her present, unluckily for her future tranquillity, her understanding had not yet told her what Boldwood was. Nobody knew entirely; for though it was possible to form guesses concerning his spirited capabilities from old flood-marks faintly visible, he had never been seen at the high tides which caused them.

Farmer Boldwood came to the stable-door, and looked forth across the level fields. Beyond the first enclosure was a hedge, and on the other side of this a meadow, belonging to Bathsheba's farm.

It was now early spring—the time of going to grass with the sheep, when they have the first feed of the meadows, before these are laid up for mowing. The wind, which had been blowing east for several weeks, had veered to the southward, and the middle of spring had come abruptly—almost without a beginning. It was that period in the vernal quarter when we may suppose the Dryads to be waking for the season. The vegetable world begins to move and swell and the saps to rise, till in the completest silence of lone gardens and trackless plantations, where everything seems helpless and still after the bond and slavery of frost, there are bustlings, strainings, united thrusts, and pulls-altogether, in comparison with which the powerful tugs of cranes and pulleys in a noisy city are but pigmy efforts.

Boldwood, looking into the distant meadows, saw there three figures. They were those of Miss Everdene, Shepherd Oak, and Cainy Ball.

When Bathsheba's figure shone upon the farmer's eyes, it lighted him up as a little moon lights up a great tower. A man's body is as the shell, or the tablet, of his soul, as he is reserved or ingenuous, overflowing or self-contained. There was a change in Boldwood's exterior from its former impassibleness; and his face showed that he was now living outside his defences for the first time, and with a fearful sense of exposure. It is the usual experience of strong natures when they love.

At last he arrived at a conclusion. It was to go across and enquire boldly of her.

The insulation of his heart by his reserve during these many years, without a duct of any kind for disposable emotion, had worked its effect. It has been observed more than once that the causes of love are chiefly

subjective, and Boldwood was a living testimony to the truth of the proposition. No mother existed to absorb his devotion, no sister for his tenderness, no idle ties for sense. He became surcharged with the compound, which was genuine lover's love.

He approached the gate of the meadow. Beyond it the ground was melodious with ripples, and the sky with larks; the low bleating of the flock mingling with both. Mistress and man were engaged in the operation of making a lamb "take," which is performed whenever an ewe has lost her own offspring, one of the twins of another ewe being given her as a substitute. Gabriel had skinned the dead lamb, and was tying the skin over the body of the live lamb, in the customary manner, whilst Bathsheba was holding open a little pen of four hurdles, into which the mother and foisted lamb were driven, where they would remain till the old sheep conceived an affection for the young one.

Bathsheba looked up at the completion of the manœuvre, and saw the farmer by the gate, where he was overhung by a willow tree in full bloom. Gabriel, to whom her face was as the uncertain glory of an April day, ever regardful of its faintest changes, instantly discerned thereon the mark of some influence from without, in the form of a keenly self-conscious reddening. He also turned and beheld Boldwood.

At once connecting these signs with the letter Boldwood had shown him, Gabriel suspected her of some coquettish procedure begun by that means, and carried on since he knew not how.

Farmer Boldwood had read the pantomime denoting that they were conscious of his presence, and the perception was as too much light turned upon his new sensibility. He was still in the road, and by moving on he hoped that neither would recognise that he had originally intended to enter the field. He passed by with an utter and overwhelming sensation of ignorance, shyness, and doubt. Perhaps in her manner there were signs that she wished to see him—perhaps not—he could not read a woman. The cabala of this erotic philosophy seemed to consist of the subtlest meanings, expressed in misleading ways. Every turn, look, word, and accent contained a mystery quite distinct from its obvious import, and not one had ever been pondered by him until now.

As for Bathsheba, she was not deceived into the belief that Farmer Boldwood had walked by on business or in idleness. She collected the probabilities of the case, and concluded that she was herself responsible for Boldwood's appearance there. It troubled her much to see what a great flame a little wildfire was likely to kindle. Bathsheba was no schemer for marriage, nor was she deliberately a trifler with the affections of men, and a censor's experience on seeing an actual flirt after observing her would have been a feeling of surprise that Bathsheba could be so different from such a one, and yet so like what a flirt is supposed to be.

She resolved never again, by look or by sign, to interrupt the steady flow of this man's life. But a resolution to avoid an evil is seldom framed till the evil is so far advanced as to make avoidance impossible.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SHEEP-WASHING: THE OFFER.

BOLDWOOD did eventually call upon her. She was not at home. "Of course not," he murmured. In contemplating Bathsheba as a woman, he had forgotten the accidents of her position as an agriculturist—that being as much of a farmer, and as extensive a farmer, as himself, her probable whereabouts was out-of-doors at this time of the year. This, and the other oversights Boldwood was guilty of, were natural to the mood, and still more natural to the circumstances. The great aids to idealisation in love were present here: occasional observation of her from a distance, and the absence of social intercourse with her—visual familiarity, oral strangeness. The smaller human elements were kept out of sight; the pettinesses that enter so largely into all earthly living and doing were disguised by the accident of lover and loved-one not being on visiting terms, and there was hardly awakened a thought in Boldwood that sorry household realities appertained to her, or that she, like all others, had moments of commonplace, when to be least plainly seen was to be most prettily remembered. Thus a mild sort of apotheosis took place in his fancy, whilst she still lived and breathed within his own horizon, a troubled creature like himself.

It was the end of May when the farmer determined to be no longer repulsed by trivialities or distracted by suspense. He had by this time grown used to being in love; the passion now startled him less even when it tortured him more, and he felt himself adequate to the situation. On enquiring for her at her house they had told him she was at the sheep-washing, and he went off to seek her there.

The sheep-washing pool was a perfectly circular basin of stonework in the meadows, full of the clearest water. To birds on the wing its glassy surface, reflecting the light sky, must have been visible for miles round as a glistening Cyclop's eye in a green face. The grass about the margin at this season was a sight to remember long—in a minor sort of way. Its activity in sucking the moisture from the rich damp sod was almost a process observable by the eye. The outskirts of this level water-meadow were diversified by rounded and hollow pastures, where just now everything that was not a buttercup was a daisy, losing this character somewhat as they sank to the verge of the intervening river. It slid along noiselessly as a shade, the swelling reeds and sedge forming a flexible palisade along its moist brink. To the north of the mead were trees, the leaves of which were new, soft, moist, and flexible, not yet having stiffened and darkened under summer sun and drought, their colour being yellow beside a green, green beside a yellow. From the recesses of this knot of foliage the loud notes of three cuckoos were resounding through the still air.

Boldwood went meditating down the slopes with his eyes on his boots, which the yellow pollen from the buttercups had bronzed in

rtistic gradations. A tributary of the main stream flowed through the asin of the pool by means of an inlet and outlet at opposite points of its liameter. Shepherd Oak, Jan Coggan, Moon, Poorgrass, Cain Ball, and everal others were assembled here, all dripping wet to the very roots f their hair, and Bathsheba was standing by in a new riding-habit —the most elegant she had ever worn—the reins of her horse being oped over her arm. Flagons of cider were rolling about upon the green. he meek sheep were pushed into the pool by Coggan and Matthew loon, who stood by the lower hatch, immersed to their waists; then abriel, who stood on the brink, thrust them under as they swam long, with an instrument like a crutch, formed for the purpose, and lso for assisting the exhausted animals when the wool became saturated nd they began to sink. They were then let out against the stream, nd through the upper opening, all impurities thus flowing away below —Cainy Ball and Joseph, who performed this latter operation, being if possible wetter than the rest; they resembled dolphins under a fountain, every protuberance and angle of their clothes dribbling forth a small rill.

Boldwood came close and bid her good morning, with such constraint that she could not but think he had stepped across to the washing for its own sake, hoping not to find her there; more, she fancied his brow severe and his eye slighting. Bathsheba immediately contrived to withdraw, and glided along by the river till she was a stone's throw off: she heard footsteps brushing the grass, and had a consciousness that love was encircling her like a perfume. Instead of turning or waiting, Bathsheba went further among the high sedges, but Boldwood seemed determined, and pressed on till they were completely past the bend of the river. Here, without being seen, they could hear the splashing and shouts of the washers above.

"Miss Everdene!" said the farmer.

She trembled, turned, and said "Good morning." His tone was so utterly removed from all she had expected as a beginning. It was lowness and quiet accented: an emphasis of deep meanings, their form, at the same time, being scarcely expressed. Silence has sometimes a remarkable power of showing itself as the disembodied soul of feeling wandering without its carcase, and it is then more impressive than speech. In the same way, to say a little is often to tell more than to say a great deal. Boldwood told everything in that word.

As the consciousness expands on learning that what was fancied to be the rumble of wheels is the reverberation of thunder, so did Bathsheba's at her intuitive conviction.

"I feel—almost—too much—to think," he said, with a solemn simplicity, "I have come to speak to you without preface. My life is not my own since I have beheld you clearly, Miss Everdene—I come to make you an offer of marriage."

Bathsheba tried to preserve an absolutely neutral countenance, and

all the motion she made was that of closing lips which had previously been a little parted.

"I am now forty-one years old," he went on. "I may have been called a confirmed bachelor, and I was a confirmed bachelor. I had never any views of myself as a husband in my earlier days, nor have I made any calculation on the subject since I have been older. But we all change, and my change, in this matter, came with seeing you. I have felt lately more and more, that my present way of living is bad in every respect. Beyond all things, I want you as my wife."

"I feel, Mr. Boldwood, that though I respect you much, I do not feel —what would justify me to—in accepting your offer," she stammered.

This giving back of dignity for dignity seemed to open the sluices of feeling that Boldwood had as yet kept closed.

"My life is a burden without you," he exclaimed, in a low voice. "I want you—I want you to let me say I love you again and again!"

Bathsheba answered nothing, and the horse upon her arm seemed so impressed, that instead of cropping the herbage it looked up.

"I think and hope you care enough for me to listen to what I have to tell!"

Bathsheba's momentary impulse at hearing this was to ask why he thought that, till she remembered that, far from being a conceited assumption on Boldwood's part, it was but the natural conclusion of serious reflection based on deceptive premises of her own offering.

"I wish I could say courteous flatteries to you," the farmer continued in an easier tone, "and put my rugged feeling into a graceful shape; but I have neither power nor patience to learn such things. I want you for my wife—so wildly that no other feeling can abide in me; but I should not have spoken out had I not been led to hope."

"The valentine again! O that valentine!" she said to herself, but not a word to him.

"If you can love me, say so, Miss Everdene. If not—don't say no."

"Mr. Boldwood, it is painful to have to say I am surprised, so that I don't know how to answer you with propriety and respect—but am only just able to speak out my feeling—I mean my meaning; that I am afraid I can't marry you, much as I respect you. You are too dignified for me to suit you, sir."

"But, Miss Everdene!"

"I—I didn't—I know I ought never to have dreamt of sending that valentine—forgive me, sir—it was a wanton thing which no woman with any self-respect should have done. If you will only pardon my thoughtlessness, I promise never to——"

"No, no, no. Don't say thoughtlessness! Make me think it was something more—that it was a sort of prophetic instinct—the beginning of a feeling that you would like me. You torture me to say it was done in thoughtlessness—I never thought of it in that light, and I can't endure it. Ah! I wish I knew how to win you! but that I can't do—I can only

sk if I have already got you. If I have not, and it is not true that you ave come unwittingly to me as I have to you, I can say no more."

"I have not fallen in love with you, Mr. Boldwood—certainly I may y that." She allowed a very small smile to creep for the first time over r serious face in saying this, and the white row of upper teeth, and enly cut lips already noticed, suggested an idea of heartlessness, which as immediately contradicted by the pleasant eyes.

"But you will just think—in kindness and condescension think—if ou cannot bear with me as a husband! I fear I am too old for you, but elieve me I will take more care of you than would many a man of your n age. I will protect and cherish you with all my strength—I will in-ed. You shall have no cares—be worried by no household affairs, and e quite at ease, Miss Everdene. The dairy superintendence shall be ne by a man—I can afford it well—you shall never have so much as to ok out of doors at hay-making time, or to think of weather in the harvest. rather cling to the chaise, because it is the same my poor father and ther drove, but if you don't like it I will sell it, and you shall have pony-carriage of your own. I cannot say how far above every other ea and object on earth you seem to me—nobody knows—God only nows—how much you are to me!"

Bathsheba's heart was young, and it swelled with sympathy for the ep-natured man who spoke so simply.

"Don't say it: don't! I cannot bear you to feel so much, and me o feel nothing. And I am afraid they will notice us, Mr. Boldwood. Will you let the matter rest now? I cannot think collectedly. I did not know you were going to say this to me. Oh I am wicked to have made you suffer so!" She was frightened as well as agitated at his vehemence.

"Say then, that you don't absolutely refuse. Do not quite refuse!"

"I can do nothing. I cannot answer."

"I may speak to you again on the subject?"

"Yes."

"I may think of you?"

"Yes, I suppose you may think of me."

"And hope to obtain you?"

"No—do not hope! Let us go on."

"I will call upon you again to-morrow."

"No—please not. Give me time."

"Yes—I will give you any time," he said earnestly and gratefully. "I am happier now."

"No—I beg you! Don't be happier if happiness only comes from my agreeing. Be neutral, Mr. Boldwood! I must think."

"I will wait," he said.

And then she turned away. Boldwood dropped his eyes to the ground, and stood long like a man who did not know where he was. Realities then returned upon him like the pain of a wound received in an excitement which eclipses it, and he, too, then went on.

CHAPTER XX.

PERPLEXITY: GRINDING THE SHEARS: A QUARREL.

"HE is so disinterested and kind to offer me all that I can desire," Bathsheba said, musingly.

Yet Farmer Boldwood, whether by nature kind or the reverse to kind, did not exercise kindness here. The rarest offerings of the purest loves are but a self-indulgence, and no generosity at all.

Bathsheba, not being the least in love with him, was eventually able to look calmly at his offer. It was one which many women of her own station in the neighbourhood, and not a few of higher rank, would have been wild to accept and proud to publish. In every point of view, ranging from politic to passionate, it was desirable that she, a lonely girl, should marry, and marry this earnest, well-to-do, and respected man. He was close to her doors: his standing was sufficient: his qualities were even supererogatory. Had she felt, which she did not, any wish whatever for the married state in the abstract, she could not reasonably have rejected him as a woman who frequently appealed to her understanding for deliverance from her whims. Boldwood as a means to marriage was unexceptionable: she esteemed and liked him: yet she did not want him. It appears that men take wives because possession is not possible without marriage, and that women accept husbands because marriage is not possible without possession; with totally differing aims the method is the same on both sides. But the understood incentive on the woman's part was wanting here. Besides, Bathsheba's position as absolute mistress of a farm and house was a novel one, and the novelty had not yet begun to wear off.

But a disquiet filled her which was somewhat to her credit, for it would have affected few. Beyond the mentioned reasons with which she combated her objections, she had a strong feeling that having been the one who began the game she ought in honesty to accept the consequences. Still the reluctance remained. She said in the same breath that it would be ungenerous not to marry Boldwood, and that she couldn't do it to save her life.

Bathsheba's was an impulsive nature under a deliberative aspect. An Elizabeth in brain and a Mary Stuart in spirit, she often performed actions of the greatest temerity with a manner of extreme discretion. Many of her thoughts were perfect syllogisms; unluckily they always remained thoughts. Only a few were irrational assumptions; but, unfortunately, they were the ones which most frequently grew into deeds.

The next day to that of the declaration, she found Gabriel Oak at the bottom of her garden, grinding his shears for the sheep-shearing. All the surrounding cottages were more or less scenes of the same operation; the scurr of whetting spread into the sky from all parts of the village as from an armoury previous to a campaign. Peace and war kiss each other at their hours of preparation, sickles, scythes, shears, and pruning-hooks

mingling with swords, bayonets, and lances, in their common necessity for point and edge.

Cainy Ball turned the handle of Gabriel's grindstone, his head performing a melancholy see-saw up and down with each turn of the wheel. Oak stood somewhat as Eros is represented when in the act of sharpening his arrows: his figure slightly bent, the weight of his body thrown over on the shears, and his head balanced sideways, with a critical compression of the lips and contraction of the eyelids to crown the attitude.

His mistress came up and looked upon them in silence for a minute or two; then she said,—

"Cain, go to the lower mead and catch the bay mare. I'll turn the winch of the grindstone. I want to speak to you, Gabriel."

Cain departed, and Bathsheba took the handle. Gabriel had glanced up in intense surprise, quelled its expression, and looked down again. Bathsheba turned the winch, and Gabriel applied the shears.

The peculiar motion involved in turning a wheel has a wonderful tendency to benumb the mind. It is a sort of attenuated variety of Ixion's punishment, and contributes a dismal chapter to the history of gaols. The brain gets muddled, the head grows heavy, and the body's centre of gravity seems to settle by degrees in a leaden lump somewhere between the eyebrows and the crown. Bathsheba felt the unpleasant symptoms after two or three dozen turns.

"Will you turn, Gabriel, and let me hold the shears?" she said. "My head is in a whirl, and I can't talk."

Gabriel turned. Bathsheba then began, with some awkwardness, allowing her thoughts to stray occasionally from her story to attend to the shears, which required a little nicety in sharpening.

"I wanted to ask you if the men made any observations on my going behind the sedge with Mr. Boldwood yesterday?"

"Yes, they did," said Gabriel. "You don't hold the shears right, Miss—I knew you wouldn't know the way—hold like this."

He relinquished the winch, and enclosing her two hands completely in his own (taking each as we sometimes clasp a child's hand in teaching him to write), grasped the shears with her. "Incline the edge so," he said.

Hands and shears were inclined to suit the words, and held thus for a peculiarly long time by the instructor as he spoke.

"That will do," exclaimed Bathsheba. "Loose my hands. I won't have them held! Turn the winch."

Gabriel freed her hands quietly, retired to his handle, and the grinding went on.

"Did the men think it odd?" she said again.

"Odd was not the idea, Miss."

"What did they say?"

"That Farmer Boldwood's name and your own were likely to be flung over pulpit together before the year was out."

"I thought so by the look of them! Why, there's nothing in it. A more foolish remark was never made, and I want you to contradict it: that's what I came for."

Gabriel looked incredulous and sad, but between his movements of incredulity, relieved.

"They must have heard our conversation," she continued.

"Well, then, Bathsheba!" said Oak, stopping the handle, and gazing into her face with astonishment.

"Miss Everdene, you mean," she said, with dignity.

"I mean this, that if Mr. Boldwood really spoke of marriage, I am not going to tell a story and say he didn't to please you. I have already tried to please you too much for my own good."

Bathsheba regarded him with round-eyed perplexity. She did not know whether to pity him for disappointed love of her, or to be angry with him for having got over it—his tone being ambiguous.

"I said I wanted you just to mention that it was not true I was going to be married to him," she murmured, with a slight decline in her assurance.

"I can say that to them if you wish, Miss Everdene. And I could likewise give an opinion to you on what you have done."

"I daresay. But I don't want your opinion."

"I suppose not," said Gabriel bitterly, and going on with his turning, his words rising and falling in a regular swell and cadence as he stooped or rose with the winch, which directed them, according to his position, perpendicularly into the earth, or horizontally along the garden, his eyes being fixed on a leaf upon the ground.

With Bathsheba a hastened act was a rash act; but, as does not always happen, time gained was prudence ensured. It must be added, however, that time was very seldom gained. At this period the single opinion in the parish on herself and her doings that she valued as sounder than her own was Gabriel Oak's. And the outspoken honesty of his character was such that on any subject, even that of her love for, or marriage with, another man, the same disinterestedness of opinion might be calculated on, and be had for the asking. Thoroughly convinced of the impossibility of his own suit, a high resolve constrained him not to injure that of another. This is a lover's most stoical virtue, as the lack of it is a lover's most venial sin. Knowing he would reply truly, she asked the question, painful as she must have known the subject would be. Such is the selfishness of some charming women. Perhaps it was some excuse for her thus torturing honesty to her own advantage, that she had absolutely no other sound judgment within easy reach.

"Well, what is your opinion of my conduct?" she said, quietly.

"That it is unworthy of any thoughtful, and meek, and comely woman."

In an instant Bathsheba's face coloured with the angry crimson of a Danby sunset. But she forbore to utter this feeling, and the reticence of her tongue only made the loquacity of her face the more noticeable.

The next thing Gabriel did was to make a mistake.

"Perhaps you don't like the rudeness of my reprimanding you, for I ow it is rudeness; but I thought it would do good."

She instantly replied sarcastically,

"On the contrary, my opinion of you is so low that I see in your ise the praise of discerning people."

"I am glad you don't mind it, for I said it honestly, and with every ious meaning."

"I see. But, unfortunately, when you try not to speak in jest you amusing—just as when you wish to avoid seriousness you sometimes a sensible word."

It was a hard hit, but Bathsheba had unmistakeably lost her temper, d on that account Gabriel had never in his life kept his own better. He id nothing. She then broke out,

"I may ask, I suppose, where in particular my unworthiness lies? In y not marrying you, perhaps!"

"Not by any means," said Gabriel quietly. "I have long given up inking of that matter."

"Or wishing it, I suppose," she said, and it was apparent that she pected an unhesitating denial of this supposition.

Whatever Gabriel felt, he coolly echoed her words—

"Or wishing it either."

A woman may be treated with a bitterness which is sweet to her, and ith a rudeness which is not offensive. Bathsheba would have submitted an indignant chastisement for her levity had Gabriel protested that he as loving her at the same time; the impetuosity of passion unrequited is earable, even if it stings and anathematizes—there is a triumph in the umiliation, and a tenderness in the strife. This was what she had been xpecting, and what she had not got. To be lectured because the lecturer aw her in the cold morning light of open-shuttered disillusion was xasperating. He had not finished, either. He continued in a more gitated voice:

"My opinion is (since you ask it) that you are greatly to blame for laying pranks upon a man like Mr. Boldwood, merely as a pastime. eading on a man you don't care for is not a praiseworthy action. And ven, Miss Everdene, if you seriously inclined towards him, you might ave let him discover it in some way of true loving-kindness, and not by ending him a valentine's letter."

Bathsheba laid down the shears.

"I cannot allow any man to—to criticise my private conduct!" she exclaimed. "Nor will I for a minute. So you'll please leave the farm at he end of the week!"

It may have been a peculiarity—at any rate it was a fact—that when Bathsheba was swayed by an emotion of an earthly sort her lower lip trembled: when by a refined emotion, her upper or heavenward one. Her nether lip quivered now.

"Very well, so I will," said Gabriel, calmly. He had been hel her by a beautiful thread which it pained him to spoil by breaking, ra than by a chain he could not break. "I should be even better please go at once," he added.

"Go at once then, in Heaven's name!" said she, her eyes flashin his, though never meeting them. "Don't let me see your face more."

"Very well, Miss Everdene—so it shall be."

And he took his shears and went away from her in placid dignity Moses left the presence of Pharaoh.

Livingstone.

The death of Dr. Livingstone was not unexpected; for by those who knew him it had long been feared that, with no less self-estimation, he had far less power than of yore, and that he would become the victim of his own indomitable will. Except for the sake of his family and friends, it can scarcely be regretted that his death should have been in harmony with the course of his life. Without Africa, Livingstone might not have been famous; without Livingstone, Africa might still have been comparatively unknown to us: considering, therefore, what he had done for it, and it had done for him, it was fitting that, instead of fretting away the remainder of life in England, he should have made his last effort, and spent his last breath, in the land with which his name will be for ever identified.

The position which Livingstone occupied in the public estimation is remarkable. Other travellers have been the heroes of a season; their reputation then waned, and they became almost forgotten. Not so with Livingstone. On his return from Africa in 1856 he captivated the public admiration; and though it cannot be said that his subsequent efforts equalled his first great achievement, he continued to hold his place in the estimation of the public; and when the news of his death reached England, and that his body was being brought down to Zanzibar, and would be brought to England, the proposal that he should be buried in Westminster Abbey gave expression to the national feeling. Generally the public instinct in such cases is right; was it so in the case of Livingstone?

Of Livingstone's early days the world knew nothing until he told the story of his life in his first book. Looking at him at this period of his career from one point of view, there is nothing to distinguish him from other lads who, while gaining daily bread by the labour of their hands, seek after knowledge that shall raise them from obscurity. There are many such. We rub shoulders every day with men who have risen to eminence in one form or another, who began life hampered with the same sort of disadvantage that beset Livingstone. But from another point of view he is found to differ widely from most who have thus risen. It is rarely we find in them the same unselfish aim that we find in Livingstone, the same desire to forego the pleasures of youth, and to devote to hard study the hours that naturally belong to recreation and rest, that the fruit of all this self-denial and self-imposed toil might be employed for the benefit of others. Livingstone must have known of men in Glasgow and

its neighbourhood who had risen from poverty to affluence, and of oth who by self-culture had made for themselves a great position in the wo of science or art; and with such powers as he possessed, of which h was not unconscious, he must have felt that what they had done he co do. For by the time he had attained to manhood's estate, he had, whi maintaining himself by the work of his own hands, and without cost of penny to any of his friends, acquired a good knowledge of Latin and Gree had laid the foundations of sound knowledge in several important branch of natural science, and had become a Licentiate of the Faculty of Phys and Surgery. But if ever he had dreams of wealth and position in his ow country, he put them aside, and resolved to devote all the powers he ha and by the exercise of which he had risen to what he then was, to th service of God and his fellow-men as a missionary to the heathen.

It is supposed that other than highest motives frequently lead men t become missionaries. This may be true of some of the meaner sort, bu as a rule men do not give themselves to a profession that necessitate abnegation, and may lead to martyrdom and death, in the hope of a qui *pro quo* in this world or the next. There is doubtless a compensation f all who surrender themselves to the promptings of that divine element o self-sacrifice which is latent in every soul, but it comes unsought for The tendency of a pure and heroic life is to kindle highest aspirations; and with such a life it would be most unjust not to credit the young man Livingstone.

At the outset of his missionary career Livingstone had no predilection for Africa. He wished to go to China; but a way for him to that land not being open, he, in 1840, went to South Africa, and became the co-adjutor of the Rev. R. Moffat, at Kuruman. Of his first experience as a missionary we know but little; but we do know that, in order to acquire the language of the natives to whom he was to minister, he shut himself out from all direct intercourse with other than natives, and that he afterwards lived with them, not simply as their teacher, but as their brother man. By these means he became familiar, not only with their language, but with their wants, their habits of thought, their ways of feeling, and all that made them what they were. It was his experience as a missionary which enabled him, as a traveller, to gain the confidence of the various tribes he met with. There is with them, as with ourselves, an endless variety of individual characteristic; but, having gained the power of understanding one tribe, much is done towards gaining the sympathy of all others. From Kuruman, after his marriage with a daughter of Mr. Moffat, he moved northwards, to the country near the south-eastern boundary of the Great Kalahari Desert, which was occupied by the Bakwain, a tribe of whom Sechele was the chief, and made his station at Kolebeng, where he remained until the year 1852.

It is not my intention, however, to go into details of Livingstone's career either as a missionary or a traveller, but to indicate certain features of his life and character which seem to me to show what the man really

s, and to account for the high favour with which he was regarded by countrymen.

There can be no doubt that a large measure of his popularity in gland was at first due to the fact that he was a Nonconformist mis-ary. Thousands of people, who really knew nothing of the services had rendered to science and humanity, sang his praise simply because y believed him to be identified with their religious views. In every senting pulpit, and on every Dissenting platform, he was magnified as Nonconformist hero. But though a Nonconformist, Livingstone was hout sectarian prejudice. He believed in the good wrought by a Jesuit st quite as firmly as in that accomplished by a brother Independent. o not think that he was the disciple of any theological system. He the most unsophisticated Bible Christian that I have ever met with. read his Bible, and from it, and no other book, drew forth his religious inions. He believed that the Gospel was the great cure for human woe, d that it was the duty of every honest Christian man to strive according his ability to obey his Divine Master's command, to make Christians of nations. It was this belief which led him to become a missionary; and offered his services to the London Missionary Society because, as it seemed him, it took a less sectarian view of Christianity than any other with ich he was acquainted, and not because he had any sympathy with the clusive spirit which characterises Nonconformists generally. His appeal the Church of England in 1857 to enter upon the field which his dis-veries had opened out startled and displeased many of his religious sociates. But in so doing he was quite consistent with himself. I ked him one day why he did it, and he replied: "Not because I had y preference for the doctrines of the Church, for I did not know much out them; but because I saw that there was as much good in Church ople as in Nonconformists, and that most of the influential people in gland belonged to the Church. I wished to do the best I could for rica, and I believed that a mission taken up by the Church of England uld be better supported than by Nonconformists."

But though he gained popularity as a Nonconformist missionary, his as upon mission work were far in advance of those usually entertained those who were regarded as his co-religionists. He had no sympathy ith the notion that a missionary had nothing to do but walk about with a ible under his arm, and preach sermons to the natives. He maintained at in Africa he must be the pioneer of civilisation as well as of religion; ust teach the natives by the arts, and industries, and commerce of civil-ed life how to live in this world, as well as prepare them by religious struction for the next. This was the course he advocated for the Uni-ersities' Mission, and, whatever may be the ideas of those who are now esponsible for it, its original object was in perfect harmony with his views. The enunciation of these ideas, while it won for him as a missionary the igh esteem of some who do not as a rule regard missionaries with much favour, shocked others. There are still many good people in existence

whose first impressions of missions were probably derived from a pi of a missionary, in proper clerical costume, standing under a palm holding forth with uplifted eyes and extended arms to a crowd of s savages, who cling to these impressions of their childhood, and fanc other mode of proceeding unspiritual; ignorant of the fact that the which Livingstone promulgated, and made popular, had been upon by those grand old missionaries who converted the Saxon an Celt.

But while such as these are passing away, others are beco numerous who maintain that commerce, and all the material advan which spring from it, must of necessity precede Christianity; that missionary will only spend his energies in vain striving against the ob ness of savage hordes in Africa, unless such agencies of civilisation have sway. The course of Christianity, it is true, in ancient times al invariably lay along the roads marked out by trade, and during the pre century the great commercial schemes which have drawn all the end the world together have led to some of the most remarkable efforts in cause of missions that the world has ever seen; yet to keep Christia in the background, while commerce, and all that is now commonly as ciated with it, break up the old state of things, is, as experience shown, to oppose obstacles in the way of Christianity which are well n insuperable. It is perhaps impossible for a Christian people to rem savages, but there is an abundance of evidence to prove that you may i prove the material condition of a savage people, and yet make it almo impossible for them to become Christians. Judging from his own expe rience, and from an intimate knowledge of the character and needs of the Africans, Livingstone declared that Christianity and commerce shoul ever be inseparable. He spoke not as a mere theorist; for while he kne from actual observation that the "Bible under the arm" style was ineffi cient, the results which had been obtained by himself at Kolebeng, and b Mr. Moffat at Kuruman, showed conclusively that while Christianity direct the body through the soul, commerce influences the soul through the body and that united their beneficial influence with barbarous races is irresis tible. In illustration of the truth of this, it is only necessary to produce the results of Mr. Moffat's pastorate of fifty years. The Bechuanas, when he first went to them, were of all the tribes around the most degraded. When he left Kuruman, they had been raised to a comparatively high standard of religious and social life, and their exports to Cape Town were of the annual value of not less than 10,000*l*. When prejudice and stu pidity are less powerful in such matters than now, the widespread appli cation of Livingstone's views on missions will be more honourable to his memory than even his reputation as a traveller.

At Kolebeng Livingstone, while working as a missionary, prepared himself for his future career as a traveller. His first considerable excursions were made in the company of Mr. Oswell, and others, who for purposes of sport were in the land, and frequently made his station their

l-quarters. In 1849 he for the first time crossed the Kalahari Desert, visited the Lake Ngami. In 1850 he made another northern journey reached the river Zambesi. This led to one of the important events of life, for on this occasion he made the personal acquaintance of Sebitu-, the chief of the Makololo. Two men greatly influenced Livingstone's nnes—Sebituane and Sir Roderick Murchison: the one made his first t achievement in Africa possible; the other, more than anyone else, le his position in England. Sebituane, in the estimation of Livingstone, the most remarkable African he had ever met. He was a warrior, a slator, a poet, and a musician. As a warrior, he conquered the regions nd about Linyanti, and thus prepared the way for a safe exploration of n by Livingstone. As a legislator, he governed wisely the tribe that had made great, and showed much originality and power in correcting abuses which are incidental to a barbarous people that has achieved litary renown. Of his skill as a musician, if not of his capacity as a et, I can speak from having heard one of his compositions sung by the kololo who were with Livingstone in 1861. We were in the River ruma. It was evening. The fore part of the day had been stormy, t the turbulence of the heavens had ceased, and we were all on the deck the *Pioneer*, enjoying the indescribable beauty of the sunset. At ingstone's request, Moloko, one of the Makololo, sang a song composed Sebituane, and it might well have passed for one of the grand old Latin elodies. When Livingstone first heard this song Sebituane was dying, d at his request it was sung by some hundreds of his chosen warriors, who re ranged round his hut, as his spirit left this world. Speaking of this an's death, Livingstone says: "He was decidedly the best specimen of a native chief I ever met. I never felt so much grieved by the loss of a black man before; and it was impossible not to follow him in thought into he world of which he had just heard before he was called away, and not o realise somewhat of the feelings of those who pray for the dead." ebituane had implicit trust in Livingstone, and it was this confidence hich gave him influence with his successor Sekeletu, and the tribe enerally, which enabled him therefore to secure the services of the men ho traversed the continent of Africa with him, and without whose co-peration this feat would have been impossible.

Livingstone might have remained at Kolebeng, or in its neighbourhood, as a missionary for years; for though the desire to travel was doubtless strong upon him, mission work was still his proper vocation; but an event happened which altered the whole course of his life. Many Dutch Boers had settled on the outskirts of the Bechuana country during the Kafir wars. They were more or less lawless men, inured to deeds of blood and violence. They regarded the natives as no better than slaves, and strove to reduce them to servitude. Livingstone resisted their efforts, and in revenge, while he was absent from Kolebeng, they made an onslaught upon the Bakwain, killed many of the men and women, carried off two hundred of the school children into slavery, burnt down the

mission station, and plundered and destroyed his property. The fi in which he had laboured for ten years was made desolate. All hope being able to carry on his mission any longer at Kolebeng was destroy but Livingstone was not dismayed. A great resolve took possession him. He determined to devote his life henceforth to the opening out Christianity and civilisation the regions of Africa, and especially t region wherein he had laboured and suffered wrong, that these deeds violence and oppression which have made Africa the synonym of ever thing painful and horrible, might be no longer possible.

He conducted his wife and children to Cape Town, and procured f them a passage to England. He then set to work to improve himself making scientific observations under the direction of the Royal Astronom at the Cape, and to prepare himself in every way within his means f the great work which he had set himself to do. The means which h possessed would have seemed to most men utterly inadequate to such a enterprise. But nearly twelve years of life in Africa had inured him t its climate, and reconciled him to its food—had taught him his ow power to do and endure, and had given him in the Makololo auxiliaries such as no traveller had before or is likely to have again.

After a journey from Cape Town of eleven months, he reached Lin yanti in May 1853. He readily persuaded Sekeletu to support him; the tribe was favourable to the enterprise, and anxious for honest com- merce with the "children of the sea"—the white men of the far West There was no lack of volunteers to accompany him; and, thus supported, he began his wonderful attempt to open up this part of Africa. The fin position with which he entered upon this venture is thus expressed: "The Boers, by taking possession of all my goods, had saved me the trouble of making a will; and, considering the light heart now left in my bosom, and some faint efforts to perform the duty of Christian forgiveness, I felt that it was better to be one of the plundered party than one of the plun- derers."

Thus commenced that marvellous geographical feat which has never been surpassed, if ever equalled, and upon which his fame as a traveller will most certainly rest. He did not, it is true, succeed in immediately accomplishing his object—the throwing open the interior of Central South Africa to the influence of commerce and Christianity; but the high motives which suggested this enterprise, the boldness which enabled him to conceive it—the hardihood which led him, without chance of aid in case of failure or accident, to face the dangers of such a venture—and the perseverance with which he surmounted all the difficulties he had to encounter, placed him far above the rank of ordinary travellers, and justified his countrymen in looking upon him as the worthiest representa- tive of that high spirit of enterprise which has made England great.

Upon the physical and scientific results of this expedition I do not dwell; yet it is impossible not to bring into prominence a discovery which gave him high rank with scientific men, and secured for him the affec-

ate esteem of his great friend, Sir Roderick Murchison. Various ories had been propounded with regard to the physical formation of ica, all of which, as Livingstone by actual observation proved, failed to icate the true nature of the case. He was the first traveller to ertain that the great physical feature of South Central Africa was its asin-shaped structure." But, unknown to him, Sir Roderick Murchison demonstrated this in an address to the Geographical Society, in 2. The following is the passage which contains the exposition of this arkable inductive feat: "Such as South Africa is now, such have n her main features during countless past ages anterior to the creation the human race; for the old rocks which form her outer fringe questionably circled round an interior marshy or lacustrine country, in ich the Dicynodon flourished, and at a time when not a single animal s similar to any living thing which now inhabits the surface of the be. The present central and meridian zone of waters, whether lakes marshes, extending from Lake Chad to Lake Ngami, with hippopotami their banks, are therefore but the great modern residual geographical enomena of those of a mesozoic age. The differences, however, between geological past of Africa and her present state are enormous. Since at primeval time the lands have been much elevated above the sea-level, ıptive rocks piercing in parts through them; deep rents and defiles ve been suddenly formed in the subtending ridges through which some rers escape outwards. Travellers will eventually ascertain whether the sin-shaped structure which is here announced as having been the great ature of the most ancient, as it is of the actual, geography of South frica (*i.e.* from primeval times to the present day) does or does not tend into Northern Africa. Looking at that much broader portion of ıe continent, we have some reason to surmise that the higher mountains so form, in a general sense, its flanks only."

Livingstone was at Linyanti, after his return from Loanda, when he rst heard that what he had discovered to be true of the physical geo- aphy of Africa by walking across it, Sir Roderick Murchison had evolved om geological data in his arm-chair. This foreshadowing of a great ortion of the discoveries which he subsequently made, must, for the ıoment, have been a sore trial to Livingstone; but it ultimately led to friendship between these two distinguished men which was cordial nd life-long. The enthusiastic regard which Sir Roderick had for ivingstone was one of the marked features of the latter part of his life. Ie manifested it on all occasions when it was possible to exhibit it. Not ong before he died, while staying with some friends in Sussex, he stonished the company assembled at dinner by making a speech in praise of Livingstone, prophesying that he would be home before the approaching Christmas, and inviting all present to the dinner which he should give to celebrate his splendid success.

This enthusiasm was not confined to Sir Roderick; for when Living- stone returned to England, in 1856, it soon became common to all classes

of his countrymen. The *Missionary Travels* had much to do with this; for though you did not meet with many who had read this book through, or who realised the vast amount and variety of information which it contained, yet the strange incidents and startling novelties which it disclosed made his name a household word throughout the land. His influence became no less extraordinary than his popularity. His simplicity of manner and modesty of speech won for him the confidence of the least credulous. On all subjects relating to Africa his word became law; and on many other things which properly lay beyond the sphere of his experience his opinion was sought. Learned Societies elected him to membership. Great cities and towns presented him with their freedom. Substantial gifts poured upon him. The Society with which he had been connected as a missionary, acting upon his information, sent a mission to the Makololos. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge responded to his appeal by making an effort, unprecedented in their history, in favour of missions. He was made the British Consul for Tete, Sena, and Quillimane. On the eve of his departure for Africa, in 1858, more than three hundred gentlemen, the most illustrious in rank, science, and art, assembled to do him honour at a banquet given under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society; and, as a crowning mark of distinction, her Majesty the Queen gave him an audience.

I do not say Livingstone was spoilt by this success; I do not think he was. But he would have been something more than human, taking his antecedents into consideration, not to have been in some degree injuriously influenced by it. That he was so influenced I have no doubt. The praise which was bestowed upon him, the honours which were accumulated upon him, were no more than his rightful meed, but one would have thought, not less. Yet he left England not altogether satisfied with the recognition which his merits had received. There are some who credited him with the attributes of a demi-god, and say that he was utterly indifferent to personal distinction. Had he been so, he would have shown a magnanimity such as few have possessed. I feel sure that the hope of such distinction had nothing whatever to do in urging him to perform heroic deeds, but after he had performed them he was no more insensible to their conventional reward than other men. Barth, the German traveller, who found his way to Timbuctoo, and published one of the best illustrated, but most unreadable books of African travel, was knighted; and Livingstone found it hard to forgive that distinction. So strong was his feeling upon this matter, that the subject of it became personally obnoxious to him. The late Hydrographer of the Navy, Admiral Washington, brought these two men together at his own house, thinking they would like to know one another. Sir Henry Barth was anxious for friendly intercourse with his brother traveller, but so far from reciprocating his sentiments, Livingstone made his antipathy to the man who, in the Royal favour, had been preferred before him, so abundantly plain, that Barth, who was eminently a man of peace, withdrew from him in confusion. Livingstone, had not

Barth received it, may not have coveted knighthood, but its being withheld from him, while granted to that other, he long continued to resent as an injustice.

Unhappily the experience of the Zambesi Expedition was not calculated to do away with vexation of spirit. The object of that expedition was, as Livingstone put it—"To extend the knowledge already attained of the geography and mineral resources of Eastern and Central Africa; to improve our acquaintance with the inhabitants, and to endeavour to engage them to apply themselves to industrial pursuits, and to the cultivation of their lands, with a view to the production of raw material to be exported to England in return for British manufactures; and it was hoped that, by encouraging the natives to occupy themselves in the development of the resources of the country, a considerable advance might be made towards the extinction of the slave trade." A noble object truly—one that reflects honour upon the man who suggested it, and upon the Government that adopted and supported it. No expedition set forth with brighter hopes or nobler purposes. It had all the aid that the influence and support of the Government, backed by public opinion, could give it. It was supplied with a staff of officers whose acquisitions in botany, geology, and art were calculated to shed upon it that lustre which scientific knowledge and pictorial illustration give to all human ventures. No expense was spared to ensure success; it is estimated that from first to last the expedition cost nearly 100,000*l*. Three steam-vessels in the course of six years were placed at Livingstone's disposal for the purposes of the expedition, and continual assistance was afforded by the men-of-war that constituted the East Coast squadron. Yet, despite all these advantages, it is impossible to read Livingstone's own account of this expedition without feeling that it is a record of continued disappointments and comparative failure.

It was proposed, in order to carry out the objects of the expedition, that a depôt should be established on the Zambesi highlands above Tete, which should serve as a base of operations from whence scientific observations might be carried on, and a road opened to the country beyond, where indigo and other raw material might be obtained, as Livingstone thought, to any amount. But it was found that the Kebrabasa Rapids opposed an insurmountable obstacle to the success of this scheme. Livingstone was not at once convinced of this, for though it was evident that the *Ma Robert*, the steam-launch which he took with him from England, was incapable of navigating these rapids, he imagined that a stronger vessel might be able to do so, and wrote home for one. Before the *Pioneer* arrived he had become convinced that even she would fail in the attempt to pass this obstruction, and the proposed settlement was abandoned. The Kebrabasa Rapids showed that Livingstone's frequently expressed conviction that the Zambesi was navigable from the coast to the Victoria Falls was not founded upon reliable data; and the subsequent fortunes of the expedition made it more apparent that, though his statements of facts, in so far as they related to his actual experience, were to

be implicitly relied on, it was not safe to trust his inferences. Unable to carry out the original intention of the expedition, Livingstone explored the River Shire, which enters the Zambesi at about one hundred miles from the coast, and discovered the Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa. He must be credited with the honour of discovering the Nyassa; for though the Germans claim it for Dr. Roscher, who was afterwards killed on its shores, he did not reach it until some days after Livingstone had arrived at it. Great hopes were raised by these discoveries. The Shire was said to be a splendid stream for steam navigation, and the Shire valley and highlands were described as of boundless fertility—the future rice and cotton fields for the world.

Encouraged by these descriptions, and in answer to Livingstone's invitation, the Universities' Mission left England, its destination being the neighbourhood of the Lake Nyassa, *viâ* the Zambesi and the Shire. But when, in February 1861, Bishop Mackenzie and his companions (one of whom I had the honour to be) arrived off the Zambesi, Livingstone, who had lately returned from taking the remnant that was left of the Makololo who accompanied him eastwards in 1855 back to Linyanti, was not willing that they should proceed to their proposed destination by the rivers of which he had said such favourable things. He wished to explore the Rovuma, a river five hundred miles north of the Zambesi, which, as a highway into the interior, he was inclined to give up, because, amongst other reasons, the Portuguese refused to open it to the ships of all nations. Whether the Zambesi possessed the capacities which Livingstone claimed for it is open to question, but there can be no question that the Portuguese, in refusing to throw it open to all comers, were acting within their right. At the commencement of his enterprise Livingstone did not take the Portuguese sufficiently into account. He was no diplomatist, and by his proceedings he led them to imagine that the expedition was political in its aims, rather than scientific and philanthropic; that it was, in fact, the first movement on the part of Great Britain towards depriving them of their East African possessions. That the presence of the Portuguese in these parts of Africa is a misfortune for the country, and a curse to the natives, I have endeavoured to show in a paper (*The Portuguese in Africa*) which had the honour of appearing in *The Cornhill*; but that they have the right to the coast from Cape Delgado to Delagoa Bay, and an undefined authority over the country lying inland, is unquestionable. Without their concurrence we have no more right to occupy their coasts and rivers than they have to occupy our possessions from Natal southwards. Livingstone seems to have ignored this fact until the Portuguese Government urged it on his attention, and then he turned his back for the time being on the Zambesi and its tributaries, in the hope of finding a river entrance into the Lake regions north of the Portuguese territory. It was at this juncture Bishop Mackenzie met him, and being entirely dependent on Livingstone for an introduction to the country, he had, of course, to defer to his plans. He and I went with Livingstone to the

Rovuma; the rest of the Mission party awaited the result at Johanna. But the Rovuma exploration proved a failure, and Livingstone then took he entire Mission party back to the Zambesi, and finally deposited hem on the Shire highlands, in the neighbourhood of the Lake Shirwa.

The Story of that Mission is before the world, and all I would say of it ere is, that while those who were connected with it had, and have, no ish to avoid the responsibility of their own acts and shortcomings, its ortunes were influenced in a very large degree by the exigencies of the xpedition, which contributed greatly to its failure. I said as much as his when Livingstone was alive, and, in justice to myself and others, I annot on this occasion by silence imply otherwise now that he is dead.

I did not find the Shire the splendid stream for steam navigation hich Livingstone had imagined. Sandbanks crop up everywhere after he first seventy miles, and the *Pioneer* was eighty days in doing a istance which he calculated at 200 miles. With a suitable boat this river nay, without doubt, be satisfactorily navigated at any season of the year. Ir. Young, when in command of the Livingstone Search Expedition, did, n a boat designed to suit the capacity of the river, the same distance in welve days, and could have done it in ten. The Valley of the Shire at no ime seemed to me so fertile as had been described, nor could I discover that otton was so abundant as Livingstone thought it. With all his exertions e was not successful in getting more than half a bale, for which, be it aid, he had to pay a price greater than it commanded at Liverpool. The ighlands, however, were magnificent, and the region of Lake Nyassa is, ithout doubt, deserving of Livingstone's commendation, though it would robably take many years to bring its produce up to the standard which e at once credited it with. Its possibilities for the future are great; ut at the best of times its present products cannot be but small.

After Livingstone left the missionaries on the Shire highlands he evisited the Lake Nyassa; then he made a wearisome descent of the Shire, being longer in going down than in coming up. At the mouth of the Zambesi he found Mrs. Livingstone, who, unused to the pestiferous regions of Africa, shortly afterwards died of fever at Shupanga. With her came his third steamship, the *Lady Nyassa*, which was brought out in sections, and was intended for the navigation of the Lake Nyassa. But this dream—and it was an audacious dream—was never fulfilled. Finding it impracticable to take up the sections of his new ship on the *Pioneer* to the Shire Cataracts, it was put together at Shupanga in order that it might be towed to the highest navigable point of the river, then taken to pieces, and carried sixty miles overland, and when reconstructed finally floated on to the Lake. While the work at Shupanga was going on, the Rovuma was revisited; but the result was not encouraging, and all idea of using it as an entrance into the country was abandoned. Then the *Lady Nyassa* was towed up to the cataracts, but was not taken to pieces. Under the most favourable circumstances the probability of getting the ship on to the Lake seemed to all but Livingstone himself very

remote; but the country was smitten with famine; the people were dying of hunger by thousands; and there was no possibility of securing that aid from the natives, as carriers and road-makers, which alone would have enabled him to accomplish his purpose. This was the last great effort made by the expedition.

With the exception of the visits to the Lake Nyassa, which occupied but a short time comparatively, the journey to Linyanti, and the two attempts on the Rovuma, it will be seen from the foregoing brief sketch that the expedition was employed in seemingly profitless, and certainly long-delayed and wearisome, voyages up and down the Zambesi and Shire rivers. In comparison with Livingstone's former achievements, no great exploration was made; the knowledge of the natural products of Eastern and Central Africa was not much enlarged; and the field of commerce in that part of the world was not opened.

The fact is, though Dr. Livingstone was a great traveller, he was scarcely fitted to be the leader of such an enterprise as the Zambesi Expedition. His previous experience, while it served to illustrate the noblest traits of his character, had not served to qualify him for being a leader of men, other than natives, under circumstances so foreign to his antecedents. When he performed really great deeds as a traveller, he was unfettered save by his own personal possibilities, which rarely hindered him. His associates were natives over whom he had an absolute control, and who simply reflected his will. He was compelled to exercise no more forethought on the question of ways and means than was necessary to provide for the day by day necessities of himself and followers; and for the fellows who went with him from Linyanti to Loanda, and from thence to Quillimane, such a provision was comparatively easy. They were old campaigners, and with the game they killed on the road, and the food which, from fear or favour, was forthcoming at the villages where they halted, but little more was needed. But the necessities of the expedition could not be so easily met nor its objects so readily attained. Livingstone was wanting in capacity to conceive a plan that was within the power of the expedition to accomplish. He did not know how to mould into one effective whole the various agencies which were at his disposal. He did not get on well with his coadjutors. Those who knew him best could not say,

> We knew his temper for right ruling fit,
> His genial art that charms in guiding men.

His arbitrary, not to say unjust, dismissal of some; his distrust of others, who were worthy of all confidence; and the sense of failure, and consequent vexation of spirit, which beset not only him but all others associated with him, had practically broken up the expedition before it was somewhat abruptly recalled. Had Livingstone gone into the country less heavily weighted, and with one or two congenial companions, he would have accomplished far more than he did. Knowing what he had

done, and feeling sure that he had it in him to do even more, I could not but regret that he was for so long a time tied to a position involving not only the management of ships, but the command of officers, the control of crews, and the constant provision of stores—a position for which it was impossible not to see that he was by character and previous habits of life unfitted. His last journey by himself to the Lake Nyassa, after the officers of the expedition had left him, and while he was waiting for the flood season to get his ships to the coast, was equal to his best achievements as a traveller. The heroic nature of the man had not fair play while hampered with the cares I have enumerated, though every now and then it manifested itself grandly. The sublime indifference to danger with which he assumed the command of the *Pioneer* from Johanna to the Zambesi, under circumstances that would have led experienced nautical men to hesitate, made the sense of danger seem contemptible in the estimation of those whose lot it was to accompany him; and his voyage to Bombay from Zanzibar, considering the unfitness of the ship for such a venture, and the scant capacity of himself and crew to enter upon such a voyage, was magnificent for its audacity; though I doubt if he thought he was doing anything extraordinary.

Nevertheless, the period of the expedition was the bad season in Livingstone's career, and that he was for the time being somewhat deteriorated by it is painfully evident in his second book, *The Zambesi and its Tributaries*; which is marred throughout by ungenerous reflections on individuals who had the misfortune to displease him. If he praises one, it is only to condemn another; and the pleasure which would arise from the reading of this book, which abounds with minute observations of nature, and with graphic illustrations of character, is thereby completely destroyed. Some have thought that the explanation of this, its unamiable feature, is to be found in the fact that another name beside his own is found on the title-page; but I cannot accept that explanation, for though Livingstone may have made use of the notes of that other, he himself was solely responsible for the production of the book.

The experiences of the Zambesi Expedition, and the fate which attended Baron von der Decken's no less ambitious attempt on the River Juba, are, I think, conclusive against expeditions on a large scale in East Central Africa.

Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that the Zambesi Expedition was barren of good results. Far from it; for, though it may have failed to accomplish all its avowed objects, it served to direct attention to the horrors of the slave trade, as carried on in the interior of Africa. Livingstone, by his official representations to the Government, and by his unofficial publications, re-directed public opinion to this iniquitous traffic; and with what result we know. A Parliamentary inquiry prepared the way for Sir Bartle Frere's mission to Zanzibar, and through that it has become only a question of time when the slave trade of East Africa will be abolished as surely as it has been on the Western side of the continent.

To Livingstone this is undoubtedly owing; and if in the course of his life he had done no more than this, he would be deserving of all the honour we can pay his memory.

On his return to England, in 1864, Livingstone had no reason to complain of loss of public favour. Everywhere he was received with enthusiasm; but he was conscious that he had lost ground in the estimation of some; and the feeling that he had not accomplished all that he had set himself to do was strong upon him. Added to this, he was no longer the only celebrated African traveller before the nation. Speke had won the blue riband of geographical enterprise by his discovery of the sources of the Nile. Baker was hard at work to supplement this discovery. It was not surprising, therefore, that, after a year's sojourn at home, he again set forth for Africa, determined, I have no doubt, that the high estimation in which he was held as a traveller should find an ample verification. What his nine years of additional labour may have accomplished we do not fully know. That he has manifested powers of endurance, and a determination such as belongs to no other man, we do know. The journal which Stanley brought home, when published, will tell us much; and if Chuma has secured all other papers, we shall perhaps have a solution of the mystery which for so many ages has enveloped the regions in which he so heroically passed the last years of his life.

Of Chuma I am tempted to say a few words. He was rescued from the slave-traders, either by Livingstone or by myself and friends on the Shire highlands. I adopted him; and for more than two years he slept in my hut. Of his character I need not speak; his conduct while with Livingstone declares him to be the personification of faithfulness. I was his first instructor; and amongst other things I recollect I taught him, as a punishment, be it said, as well as for future guidance, the use of his fists as a substitute for the knife. When the mission was broken up, Chuma, with some other boys, went down to Morumbala, a mountain near to the junction of the Shire with the Zambesi, and there I was compelled to leave him. When Livingstone was leaving the Shire, my friend and coadjutor, the Rev. Horace Waller, who had made himself responsible for these lads, was, with his aid, able to get them out of the country to Cape Town, with the exception of Chuma and another boy named Wekotani, who accompanied Livingstone to Bombay, and were there placed by him in Dr. Wilson's Mission School. When he went forth to his last travels, he revisited Bombay, and these two lads entered his service. Wekotani, after a time, wearied of continual travel, and arriving in the country where he was born, and meeting with people who knew him before he had been sold to the slave-traders, he remained with them. Chuma, however, was proof against all such temptation, and accompanied Livingstone wherever he went to the day of his death, and has not forsaken him even after death.

Whatever the actual geographical results of Livingstone's last efforts may be, they cannot heighten or lessen our admiration of the hardihood

nd heroism which he has manifested throughout his whole life. Such life, if I may venture to paraphrase a well-known sentence, is cer-ainly open to criticism, but it is nevertheless always above it. He ad his faults and failings, as what man has not?—they do but identify im with all mankind; but dominating all that was less than great in his ature, and raising him high above most men, was the noble self-sacri-icing motive which was the true mainspring of his life, and which urged im to deeds that give him rank with our greatest and worthiest.

As a missionary he did much to rescue from popular mockery and ibaldry a profession which, rightly viewed and worthily undertaken, is perhaps the noblest to which a man can devote himself.

As a man of broad sympathies, and keen perception of the spiritual unity which exists amongst all mankind, he, more than any other man of our time, contributed to remove that feeling of contempt with which the Africans were regarded as a race essentially inferior to ourselves.

As a large-hearted champion of the Africans, and a true friend of liberty, he dealt a blow at the African slave trade from which it will never recover.

As a traveller he has more than justified the highest estimate that had been formed of him. It was lately said, by the Secretary of the Berlin Geographical Society, that "The importance of his discoveries, and the perseverance of his labours, have placed him in the rank of the most remarkable travellers of all times and all nations. England may be proud of having given birth to Livingstone, and of having supported him in his labours."

This was well and truly said. England is proud, and justly proud, of the man who has set forth to the world one of the great features which constitute our national strength; and when his body finds its last resting-place in Westminster Abbey—that splendid sepulchre for all that is mortal of her greatest sons—England, with one voice, will say—"It is well done!"

HENRY ROWLEY.

The White Cat.

I.

Some years are profitless when we look back to them, others seem like treasuries to which we turn again and again when our store is spent out—treasuries of sunny mornings, green things, birds piping, friends greeting, voices of children at play. How happy and busy they are as they heap up their stores! Golden chaff, crimson tints, chesnuts, silver lights—it is all put away for future use; and years hence they will look back to it, and the lights of their past will reach them as starlight reaches us, clear, sweet, vivid, and entire, travelling through time and space.

Our children have never ceased to speak of the delights of a certain August that some of us once spent in a Presbytery with thick piled walls and deep cut windows and an old enclosed court-yard. The walls and windows were hung with ancient clematis hangings, green, and starred with fragrant flowers. They were dropping from the stones where the monks, who once lived in the old presbytery and served the Church, had nailed them up, a century before. These sweet tangled hangings swayed when the sea-wind blew village-wards; sometimes a bird would start from some hidden chink, and send the white petals flying into the room where we were sitting at the open window, or upon the children's yellow heads, as they played in their shady corner of the courtyard. Played at endless games—at knights, kings and queens, sleeping beauties, fashionable ladies, owls in ivy towers, beggars and giants. Tiny Dodo and baby Francis are the giants, and Marjory and Binnie are the rescuing knights, and little Anne is the captive maiden with a daisy in her hat.

We have all been children at more or less distance of time, and we can all remember the wonderful long games, the roses and daisies of early youth—their sweet overpowering beauty. Once upon a time there was a great French cabbage rose at the end of a garden pathway, hanging to a wall behind which the sun always set. A little girl, a great many years ago, used to fly to that rose for silent consolation, and after half a lifetime, being still in need of consolation, came back to look for the rose—and found it. The rose was still hanging to the wall, scenting the air in conscious, sweet flush of dignity. The charm was still there. Something of the same aspect seemed to cling to the straight poplar roads, to the west and the east of that wide and tranquil land—where the lights broke into clearer changes day by day, where a family party had assembled after long separation. The elders and the children had come from two ends of the world; H. and I arrived first, then came Major Frank and

is wife, with their Indian boxes, H. scarcely believing in her own tender eart's happiness as she clasped her son once more. Its happiness had een hardly earned by many a long hour of anxious watch; by many a uel pang of terrified parting. But she may rest now for a time. ence bats, owls, apprehensions, newts' tongues, evil things!—come eace, innocent pleasures, good coffee, and fine weather, golden content, iends meeting, and peaceful hours in the old Presbytery, which has pened its creaking gates to us.

There is a courtyard in front of the house, enclosed by crumbling alls, wreathed, as I have said, with clematis and straggling vines, in eglectful profusion. Outside our great gate the village passes by, n blouses, in cotton nightcaps and cart wheels, in chattering voices, hat reach us, with the sound of bells from the Norman tower of the hurch. We can hear them from the garden at the back of the house, vhich Madame Valentin, our landlady, used to cultivate herself, with the ssistance of her cook. Madame was to be seen opening her shutters in ier camisole and nightcap, to the sound of many early chirrupings and singings, in the light of morning dewdrops and rainbows. The old Presbytery garden of a morning seemed all strung with crisp crystals. They broke from the mossy apple trees, flashed from the spiky gooseberry bushes, hung from trailing vine branches that the monks had nailed up against the grey stone. It was almost a pity the monks were gone and had given place to the very unpoetic and untidy old lady, whom we used to see clipping her lettuces from the Prior's room.

The children had never been abroad before, and to them (as to their elders, indeed) the commonest daily commonplaces of life in the little seaport were treats and novelties. The white caps, the French talk, the country-women and vegetables in the market-place, the swaddling babies, the fishermen coming up from the sea, with their brown bare legs and red caps, carrying great shining fish with curly tails. Madame Valentin, our landlady, herself was a treat to our children, though I must confess that their mother and H. and I all fled before her. There was also a certain Madame Baton next door who kept a poultry yard, and who for Marjory and Binnie, and the rest of them, seemed to be a person of rare talent and accomplishment. She milked a cow (she kept it in a room opening out of her kitchen); she made lace on a cushion; she was enormously rich—so the bathing woman had said in the water. She clacked about in her wooden shoes for hours before the children were up, drove a cart, and had rabbits in a hutch. She wore a great white cotton nightcap, with a tassel at the end, which seemed to possess some strange attraction for little Binnie especially. One day I found the little girl standing alone with the old peasant woman in the courtyard, quietly facing Madame Baton, with little folded hands, and asking endless questions in her sweet whistle, to which Madame Baton answered in the gruffest French, while the cow stood by listening and nodding its stupid head. Binnie could not understand what Madame Baton was saying, but she invented it as she went

along, and thought it was grandmamma's story (so she told us afterwards) about the cotton nightcaps. "Would the cow and the farm fly away if Madame Baton took off hers?" said little Binnie; "O I wish, I wish she would try!" H. and I used to tell the children a story about enchanted caps and hard-working peasant people, who prospered so long as they kept to their caps and laboured in their fields; but who lost all their prosperity when they threw off their homely head-gear and went away in fine feathers and ribbons to walk in the streets of the neighbouring towns. Then came the sprites to clear their stores, to ruin their farms, to suck their eggs and milk their cows, and the hens ceased to lay, and the crops dwindled and dwindled, and the fish failed in the nets. It was a very self-evident little apologue, but Binnie and little Anne firmly believed in it. Marjory, who was older, had her doubts. Meanwhile, we all took to calling the place "White Cotton Nightcap Country." . . . They are playing at ogres in the courtyard in front of the house to-day. H. and I sit listening to the happy little voices that reach us in a cool, green-lighted room, which the priests once used as a refectory, and whence we hear all the choir, of flutes and dulcimers, of sweet childish prattling and piping in the sunny court. Our landlady looks out, in her camisole, from a bowery shutter; the priest, who is lodging in the empty wing of the house, crosses in the sunshine, with a long shadow zigzagging after him. The little golden-headed ogres stop short in their game to watch him go by. As he pushes at the great gateway, a lean, black-robed figure thrusting at the rusty bar, the swinging bell begins to ring, the great gates suddenly fly open, the priest starts away, and a stranger walks in quickly.

He carries no breviary in his hand, but a newspaper under his arm. He wears a straw hat, no black robes flap about him; but as he comes towards us, walking straight and quickly across the yard, H. and I, who from long habit guess at one another's thought, glance at the retreating priest, and then look at each other and think of the preachers who, coming in commonest garb, teach true things to true men; preach the love that endures truth; preach with living voice and clear-eyed looks, scorn for oppression and for the mean surrender of the strong; preach help and wisdom for the weak; preach forbearance to the impatient; preach sacred endeavour; men, standing on the high step of a mighty altar, whose voices we of the great congregation listen to, day by day, as their noble words

> touch enough
> The verge of vastness to inform our soul.

This friend has walked five miles from his village "best loved of sea-coast nook-full Normandy" to welcome us. There is a little gooseberry and pear-tree orchard at the back of the house, where the vines are tangling green. Albinia and her husband have been sitting there for hours past on Madame Valentin's green bench. Kind H. carries off our friend to see her new-come children, who have travelled so many Indian miles to

old her hand once more, and our visitor has surely earned a broken chair nd a cup of Angele's good coffee, after his hot and tiring walk. He must est for an hour in the shade, while the day is burning on and ripening mong the mossy things; the golden flames are in the pears hanging verhead, in the great dahlias blazing in gloomy splendour; the birds eem on fire as they flash past us; the clouds in heaven are tinted; he children come up in unwearied procession—they are fairies now, hey say—except Francis, who is tired, and wants always to be an ogre. Then the bell begins to swing from the Norman tower.

Angele comes out and brings cups of milk and hunches of bread, and pinafores to match, and immediately the fairies become little children again, and quite ready for their tea. And meanwhile we elders sit in this apple-tree bower, talking over one thing and another. As we talk on, of Angele with her wooden shoes and flapping cap, of the flat country, of the evening light, the quiet seaside place, that we like we know not why, the people living near; the poet puts a meaning into homely words, and touches us with his wings, as poets do, and out of common talk and of discordant things his genius strikes the key-note dominating all.

II.

Long after our guest had taken leave and walked home by the sands, we sat on in our garden. Madame Valentin came mysteriously through the twilight, carrying a lettuce for her supper; she also had a letter in her hand, which she was scanning in the moonlight.

"That gentleman who had been here; did he expect a letter?" she asked. "Was his name Hug. Gourlé?" The postman, knowing we were English, had sent the letter by the miller's wife. Madame Valentin explained he was gone home, his aunt was ill; and then she showed a letter, addressed, in a commercial hand, to "Mr. Hugh Gourlay, Chateau de Latouche, Joyeux, Calvados."

"But why do you not send it to the Chateau?" said H.; "it is not for us." Madame Valentin thought this a good suggestion; she had forgotten for the moment that they had English relations at the Chateau. Mademoiselle Blanche's mamma was an English Protestant; Mademoiselle was a good Catholic, notwithstanding. She was to make her profession next month. "Next month?" asked H.

Certainly, it was true, said Madame Valentin. There were those who, with Madame, think it a pity, but she was not one of them. Mademoiselle de Latouche the elder was a saintly woman, and would never force her niece's inclinations. . . . H. had heard a different version.

The crimes that people commit are not all done in a minute; they seem to come into existence, little by little—one by one—small selfish considerations, jars, vanities, indolences, they do not even come to a climax always. It is not a consoling reflection that the sum of the evil done by a respectable and easy-going life may be greater in the end perhaps than that of many a disastrous career. Notwithstanding Madame

Valentin's opinion, it seemed to me that old Mademoiselle de Latouche put all her vanities, her selfishness, love of domination, into her religion. No wonder it was fervent. She kept herself from the world because she was lazy, and loved her own comfort better than anything else. She let the widows and orphans come and see her, or wait at her door till it was convenient to her to admit them; it rather amused her to dole out her small benevolences, and to hear their unreserved thanks. She certainly denied herself to, but not for, others.

She had made up her mind that Blanche was to edify the religious world of Joyeux and St. Rambert. The sturdy Chatelaine did not feel that her health was equal to the rigid rule of a conventual life; but Blanche was younger, and of a less nervous temperament.

When any one spoke of a different fate for the little thing, Mademoiselle replied placidly that Blanche herself had decided upon entering the cloister, and that it was a subject she did not care to discuss. It was her hour for repose or meditation, and she must beg leave to retire.

There were few people more difficult of access than Mademoiselle de Latouche, who, between her excessive pieties and vanities and long hours of slumber and refreshment, found life well filled, and scarcely sufficing to its enjoyments; above all, to its necessary repose. Woe betide the household if Mademoiselle was awakened suddenly! It is possible that there may have been a little sameness in Mademoiselle's life which was so entirely devoted to one person, and that person *so* disagreeable a one, as H. once said. But I think H. scarcely did the Chatelaine justice. Many people had thought her charming in her youth. She had a curious power of influencing people, of impressing her own opinions upon them, and leading them her own way. So few people have a will, that it does not require any great amount to make a great effect. She was handsome still. Little Blanche thought her perfectly beautiful. She could talk agreeably when she liked, be generous on occasions; M. le Curé de St. Rambert seemed as if he had scarcely words to utter the benediction which flowed from his heart as he left her room the day we did ourselves the honour of calling upon the Chatelaine. . . "You will not receive him, most dear, most generous friend," I heard the Curé saying as we came into the room. "You must control your too generous impulses; promise me that you will not receive him." He was a tall, lean man, standing in an attitude, over the old lady, who accepted his homage very placidly; but he rather over-did his warnings.

"It must depend upon my state of health," murmured Mademoiselle de Latouche. "I suffer greatly; do I not, Mathilde?"

"A martyrdom," murmured the Curé.

"Yes; Mademoiselle has great courage," said Mathilde. (She was the companion; a little lean, delicate woman, a great contrast to Mademoiselle, who was stout and flushed, with curly red hair, scarcely streaked with grey.) "She is scarcely strong enough to receive a visitor. Perhaps these ladies may know the name—M. Gourlay—out of the Yorkshire."

H., who always remembers names, said she had once known a Mr. Gourlay, a manufacturer: "an elderly respectable man," said H.

M. le Curé de St. Rambert all this time was standing in the window, blankly benevolent, with his hands meekly slipped into his sleeves. Little Mathilde had subsided into a chair near the door of an inner room. What a comfortable interior it was, rich and warm, with the prosperous lady tucked up in her satin dressing-gown by the fire, with clocks of every century ticking and pointing to the hour! . . "This is Mademoiselle's hour for receiving, they seemed to say—three o'clock, three o'clock." They seemed to be as obsequious as the rest of the household. Mademoiselle went on to explain—

"This gentleman, not knowing of my poor brother's death, has written to him on the subject of a machine, that I confess we had put away without much idea of future use. I have invited him to come over and examine it for himself. He makes me an offer for it which I consider sufficient, for my dear brother had initiated me into his affairs. A large offer. So much the better for your poor, M. le Curé," she said, archly, speaking in the sing-song voice which is so much used by the extra good in common conversation. (At one time of my life I was inclined to respect this tacit profession of superiority, but I now doubt whether anything which is not in itself superiority is of much use, either to the impressor or to the impressed.)

"My poor will pray for you day and night," said the Curé. "Chère Mademoiselle, I have not yet seen our dear child!"

"She is in the next room, M. le Curé; Mathilde will call her, if you wish to see her. You will find her very happy, very firm in her determination. It is very beautiful," she said, turning to us; "I have two sisters in convents, and this dear child, orphan daughter of my brother, is now about to profess. She has come home to bid us farewell—a sweet farewell for her—but for me the sacrifice is terrible—is it not, Mathilde?"

"Oh, yes, Mademoiselle! I tell her it is too much;" said Mathilde, nervously; and, appealing to the Curé: "Monsieur, persuade them to defer this beautiful sacrifice. Mademoiselle needs the society of her niece. She often tells me that it is a new life to her."

The Curé, I thought, looked slightly puzzled; he was about to speak, when the door from the inner room opened, and the "Blanche" of whom they had been speaking came in. She was dressed in a white dress of some loose and soft material; she wore a big white apron, and her long sleeves fell over her hand, so that nothing showed but five little pink finger-tips. She came gently into the room, looked round, and then, seeing the Curé, deliberately turned away again, passed back into the room from which she had just come, and softly closed the door. It was all so gentle, so sudden, that we none of us knew what to say, until the Curé suggested "timidité" after her long seclusion. Mademoiselle laughed, showing a row of white dazzling teeth. H. flushed up, and said it was time to go.

"I hope," she said, as she took leave, "that you may be able to make up your mind to keep your niece with you. I quite understand your feelings; a child with the gift of life and with years of happiness and usefulness before her—it is a fearful responsibility that you take when you put her away from it all." H. stood looking into the old lady's face, with kind, constraining eyes.

"Oh, yes, indeed, madame!" said Mademoiselle, solemnly—and indeed she spoke with some emotion. "But who would dare to go against a true vocation? Blanche is not the first in our family to give herself up to this holy service of love; and I, who am the last of the Latouches, must not shrink from my share of the sacrifice."

H. could not trust herself to speak; she was almost crying, and quite overcome, and I was glad to get her away. There were all sorts of stories about the family at the Chateau. Madame Valentin, our landlady, worshipped "the grande Mademoiselle," as some of the people in the place used to call her. She was one of the privileged admitted to her presence. The castle was left jointly to Mademoiselle and to Blanche—so she told us. "At Mademoiselle's death everything would go to Blanche. Some people thought it strange that the father should have made such a will; but he knew with what a saint he had to deal," said Madame Valentin. "Look at this dress. It was hers, and she gave it to me."

"A saint! Why does she not go into a convent herself?" said H., still trembling. "That poor child is to be robbed of her life—of God's life—which is her right; she is told that it will please Him that she should spend her strength and youth in valueless dreams and prayers and repetitions. It makes my heart ache to think of it. . . . I have had sorrows enough, but oh! would I give up one of them, one parting, one pang of love, to have loved less——"

My dearest H.! I comforted her as well as I could, and then Frank came in, and we told him of our interview. "I shall go up and call when this Gourlay is there," said the sociable Major; "perhaps we may find out some way of rescuing your nun, mother. You shall give me an introduction to him. I have always heard he was a very respectable man."

III.

What is a respectable man? Joseph Gourlay, of Gill Mills and Gilwick Manor, was a respectable man, very much looked up to in his own neighbourhood, of which indeed many acres belonged to him. Acres enclosing the handsome stone-fronted house in which he lived, in which his wife had died, in which his three sons had been born. All his life and his fortune seemed to be enclosed in the Yorkshire valley which you might see from the dining-room window, flooded with green, while sudden smoke-volleys burst from the tall chimneys of the mill. The valley is crossed again and again by the stream that comes dashing from its source in the distant hills, straight to the mills at the foot of the great crag. Wick Gill sparkles with the fortunes of the Gourlays, dashing over rocks and ridges a limpid and

rainbow-tinted torrent, well fit, as Mr. Gourlay had foreseen long ago, to turn the creaking cogs of his water-wheels, to boil up his steam-engines, to wash and purify his cotton in many waters, while the threads of his fortune spun on their thousand bobbins, glistening as they whirled, drawing wealth with every turn of the quivering line. Hugh, the youngest son, as he sat in the little counting-house, could hear the family fortunes beating time over head as they passed from the mountain gill and the raw cotton heaps to the Gilwick wharfs and bank in family credit, and in the close packed bales of which his two brothers were so proud. Bathurst and Ben were soon to be admitted partners in the business. Hugh's turn was yet to come, but meanwhile he had perhaps found for himself another more absorbing interest undreamt of by Joseph and his elder sons. It was not one that Hugh could share with any one. The habit of the house, the steady reserve, the north country mistrust of fine speaking and flimsy sentiment, had influenced the younger brother as well as his elders.

More than once old Gourlay had found Hugh leaning back, absorbed and forgetful, with a pile of unanswered letters on the desk beside him. The old man would tap him on the shoulder, point significantly at the heap, frown and stump off to his own well-worn desk in the inner room. What was there breeding in Hugh's mind? Often of late he had seemed scarcely himself, and answered vaguely. Was he getting impatient? was he like other young men? did he want to grasp more power in his hands? Old Gourlay had a morbid horror of giving up one shred of his hard-earned rule. He would suspect others of doing that which he himself would have done unto them. He was both true and unjust in many of his dealings. He remembered his own early impatience of all authority. He had laboured hard to earn his own living and his children's. Now, he thought uneasily, the day was come when they were children no longer, but young men nearly as capable as he had been at their age. Sometimes old Gourlay would throw out gloomy hints of giving up work altogether, and look sharply into the young men's faces to catch their expression. Ben never had any expression at all in his round pink cheeks: Bathurst, who knew his father, and was not afraid of him, would burst out laughing: "Yes, father, that would just suit you," he would say. "You might walk about with your hands in your pockets all day long; or you might take to croquet. Ben would give you some lessons." Hugh sometimes flushed up, and a curious questioning look would come into his eyes, when his father talked of a change. It was this look his father could not understand. "Well, Hugh," he would cry impatiently, "can't ye speak?" But Hugh would walk on in stolid silence; he was not so much at ease with his father as Bathurst, and he shut himself more and more away from him. Ben, who had nothing to shut up, might keep the talk going if he chose. Poor Hugh had reached one of the flat stages of existence. Life is scarcely to be compared to the inclined plane that people describe it, but to something in the shape of a pyramid, with intervals of steps between

each effort. Hugh had made a great effort of late. He was not without the family good sense and determination, and he could see as plainly as his father or his brothers the advantage of a definite career and occupation. What he had within him might as well be expressed in the intervals of business as of leisure, but at the same time this strange feeling was swelling within him. An impatience and distaste for all he had been used to, a longing for fresh air, for expression, for better things than money-making. It is in vain some people lead monotonous lives. Events without form or sound, mental catastrophes, great sweeps of feeling and opinion, who is to guard against these silent, irresistible powers? He had tried to make friends with the mill hands, but he had tried wrongly, perhaps; anyhow, some discontent was set to his interference, and Mr. Gourlay had angrily forbidden anything of the sort in future.

There had been some words at the time. Hugh had walked over Gill Crag, feeling as if he could bear this slavery no longer. He envied the very birds their freedom as they flew across the path. He forgot that to be condemned to freedom from all care, restraint, internal effort, is, perhaps, the greatest bondage of all. But as yet I have said it was not for nothing that Hugh Gourlay had been born a Yorkshireman; he was sensible and clear-headed for all his impressionable poet's nature. He had begun a book which he finished in after years, and published at his own expense; a sort of story embodying a system of practical philosophy.

Mr. Gourlay might have been relieved if he could have read his younger son's mind as clearly as the debit and credit figures in the books in his counting-house. It was not his father's power that Hugh envied and would have grasped. It was something very far distant from old Gourlay's horizon, a voice coming he traced not whence that haunted him as an evil spirit, "You are wasting your life, it is wasting, wasting, wasting." The turning wheels had seemed to say so, the torrent had seemed to say so, every event of the day and every dream of the night had only seemed to repeat it. Minor poets, people born with a certain fervour and sensibility which does not amount to genius, are often haunted by this vague want. They require the domination of the unforeseen, the touch of greater minds to raise them from themselves. They have the gift of imposing their own personality upon the things around them, upon the inanimate sights they see, upon the people they live with; and then they weary of it—common life only repeats their own moods to them, instead of carrying them away from themselves. Great poets are different; they are like Nature herself—supreme, indifferent. Their moods may be storms or mighty calms, or the broad stream of daylight falling upon common things, but they are masters all the while, not servants; and yet even servants faithfully working need not be ashamed, either of their work or of the impulse which urges them on and tells them they are unprofitable at best.

After church on Sundays (Mr. Gourlay was very particular about attendance in the church) it was the family habit to walk straight to the

back yard and let the dogs out of their kennels, and to march round and round the grounds until the dinner bell rang. Family discussions often take place on Sundays. This family usually walked in silence with the dogs yelping and leaping at its heels. The garden was very green and very black, as these north country places are. Tall chimneys showed above the golden birch trees; iron hurdles fenced off the green clipped lawn; the beds were bordered with some patent zinc ornament; geraniums were blooming in leaden pots. In one place there was an iron fountain with a statue, in another a tin pavilion. A grass-cutting machine stood in one corner of the lawn, with a hose for watering the plants; doubled-locked greenhouses were built along the western walls, with alternate domes and weathercocks for ornament. There was a croquet lawn planned by Ben, who was the sociable member of the party; and beyond the garden and the mill and the sheds lay the valley, wide and romantic as Yorkshire valleys are, with rocks enclosing, with rising turfy crags, leading to widening moors, and the sound of water and the cry of birds coming clear in the Sunday silence. Ben was whistling as he walked along. Hugh was trying to get up his courage to make a certain request he had at heart. Bathurst was leaping the iron fence, followed by two of the dogs. "Hi, Ju! well leaped," cried Mr. Gourlay, who was always very fond of his dogs. "First the mill, then the dogs. I don't know where we come in," Bathurst used to say to his brothers. Mr. Gourlay was not so absorbed in Ju's performance as to forget his sons entirely. He looked round uneasily—

"Where is Hugh? Look up, Hugh. What is the matter with him, Ben? he seems always moping."

Hugh had stopped short, and was looking at the gravel path in a dreamy, dazed sort of fashion. Hearing himself called, he looked up. "Father," he said, suddenly, "I—I have been wishing to speak to you for some time; I may as well speak now. I want a change. I—Will you let me go to college for a couple of years? You said yesterday that you would make me an allowance. Will you give me two years at college?"

There was a dead silence. Ben, as usual, began to whistle; Bathurst came back with a leap over the hurdle. Then the old man spoke—"No, that I will not do," said Mr. Gourlay, growing very red and looking Hugh full in the face, and striking one of the iron fences sharply with his stick. "College! what has put such d—— stuff into your head, Hugh? Who wants college here? I am a plain man of business. Have I been to college? But I have made my own fortune and yours by my own brains; d'ye think they will teach you brains at those places? What the devil is it ye want? Is it to fine-gentleman-it over your brothers and father?" Old Mr. Gourlay was working himself up as he went on more and more vehemently. "Two years—just when you are beginning to understand the business. Is this your gratitude for all that's been done for you? Look at me, sir; you know as well as I do what I am worth; if I choose to give up work this day, I could

leave off and not change one shilling's worth in our way of living. Here I am, an honest man and respected in all the place: have I gone off with quirks and fancies in my head? No; I have stuck to my work like a man, and paid my way, and given in charity too upwards——"

Here Bathurst, who was devoted to his younger brother, tried to stem the storm. "Father, he hasn't your head for business, not even mine, but he has something I have not got. He can see what is amiss, and bring a new light to it, while I am only trying to set things straight with the help of the old one. Hugh saved us 1,500*l.* last year by that alteration in the spinning mules. There is that Frenchman's patent he was speaking of last night, for spinning the finest yarns; it would be the very thing now we are getting in the new machinery."

"Hollo! Bat," said Mr. Gourlay, recovering his temper and wheeling round suddenly; "it was not college learning put that into your head. Come now, let us make terms. Hugh wants a change, does he? let him go over and travel for a bit, and see about the Frenchman's patent; I remember it. I'll write him a line. He left me his address, and Hugh shall go and see it. We will put by our savings to pay for it, hey? against the time he brings me home a daughter-in-law to help to spend the profits. Will that satisfy ye, Hugh?" And so it came about that Hugh Gourlay started one summer's day for Normandy with full instructions as to the address of the ingenious Frenchman, who was to add to their fortunes. His father had given him one other commission. He was to bring home a French poodle. Mr. Gourlay had long wished for one.

IV.

Hugh tried some short cut from the great seaport where he landed to Joyeux, the little fishing village to which he was going, and the short cut turned into a long belated journey, leading him by closing shadows and rough country ways, by high cliffs, into a windy darkness, through which he travelled on hour after hour, listening, as he jolted on in the little country cart, to the sudden bursts of a wild storm chorus, shrieking above the angry moan of the not distant sea. The sea note changed sometimes with the wind that blew the pipes of this giant music; but the rain dropped monotonously all the while, and the jolts and creaks of the wheels turning upon stones, and the muttering of the driver, did not vary very much. The driver was drenched, notwithstanding his striped woollen blanket; he was an old man, and he seemed to have accumulated many oaths in the course of a long life. The horses were patient, struggling and stumbling. Hugh had pulled his wideawake well over his eyes, and sat contentedly enough watching the solitary storm overhead, listening to the thunder of breakers, and the onslaught of wind and water. It all seemed to take him out of himself, and he felt as if he could breathe again for the first time for many days.

"If I had known, I should not have come out with my horses on such a night," said the driver. "Poor people have to go thro' all sorts of

ruelties to please the rich. Heu! Eu! Who knows?" he went on rumbling; "if the truth were told, we many of us have got as much redit at the bank as those who call themselves masters. There is Madame Baton—devil take me, I wish the horses were in her stable now—he has 10,000 francs of income, and more than that. Heu! Eu! . . He does not understand one word—imbecile Englishman." . . Poor ld Pierre might be forgiven a little ill-humour under the circumstances. His was not a morbid nature. For him the storm only brought rheumatism. He did not aspire to anything beyond a good feed of corn for the horses, a glass of hot wine and a pipe for himself, and a supper off garlick-stew hat Madame Baton was famous for concocting. For him the inner voice nly said, eat, smoke, drink, Peter Bonvin, and to-morrow when you die M. le Curé will see to the candles for the altar of the Virgin, and get you nto Paradise, by his knowledge of the prayers and the saints. Pierre was ot without hope that there might be as good wine in Paradise as at Madame Baton's. Why not?

"Chateau Latouche," says Pierre, as they shook and clattered under a dripping beech avenue that led to the village. "It is the house opposite the church," and as he spoke in the darkness they seemed to pass between sudden walls and the swaying of trees at night. Was that booming the sea or the wind among the church bells? Chill mistful night-spirits seemed about, a stir, a scent of leaves and clematis—old Pierre began to swear once more by many R's and S's, he could not find his way one bit, and the wind was rising—again the church clock struck ten, and everything seemed asleep. The children were asleep in the little room out of mine, and a night-light burned dimly in the window. I could just see the two little yellow heads lying on the pillow, and the great black crucifix hanging to the wall. Everything was silent in the great overgrown garden except for the sudden gusts of wind and rain. A mouse ran across the room as I sat reading, the lamp spluttered, and suddenly the surly bell in the courtyard began to ring. It startled us all. Frank was away. Albinia had gone to bed early. H., who was sitting talking to her by her bedside, came running into mine, and found me on my way downstairs. "Can it be the Major," she said; "is he come back?"

I said I would see, and as I got into the yard the bell rang again, and a sudden fury of wind put out my lamp.

Old Pierre's voice sounded from without, growling and grumbling, and then a younger and pleasanter sound came on the wind.

"Is this the Chateau Latouche; are we expected?"

Poor things! I was sorry to send them on their way through the storm for another half-mile along the road; but what could I do? It was impossible to take in old Pierre, to say nothing of the horses and the strangers.

Now-a-days suppers scarcely exist except at the play in Alfred de Musset's poems. Mademoiselle de la Touche had supped in her youth, and still more in her old age did she persistently cling to the good old

custom. She was never hungry at dinner-time, she said, and the evenings seemed long at the Castle, and Mathilde liked supping cosily by the fire in the little dining-room. Sometimes M. le Curé de Joyeux would join the ladies on these occasions; sometimes M. le Curé de St. Dives (St. Dives was another little fishing village on the coast, of which the road ran past the gates of the pretty old Castle). How pretty it looked when the grove of chestnut trees rustled, and the moon dropped behind the pointed roofs and the towerets, with their Normandy caps; and the lights were shining from one window and another—from Mademoiselle's dressing-room, from the great hall and the little saloon, in Léonie's tower over the door-way, in Mathilde's modest garret!

He was looking for the entrance when a sudden flash of lightning illuminated the whole front of the old house—out of blackness shone a fairy palace. The window-panes, the gilt gateway, the very nails on the front door, wet with rain, shone like jewels and enamel; the roses and creepers clustering from the balcony overhead bloomed into sudden life. Each tiny star and flower was fragrant and dropping a diamond drop. Hugh's hand was wet with flowery dew as he let go the iron bell. The flash was gone, and everything was dark again.

He did not, however, have long to wait. The doors were opened by some string or pulley from within, and old Pierre made a sign implying that he was to enter. The Castle was a curious mixture of various tastes and fancies that had crossed the minds of its different inhabitants. The hall was large and empty; a Louis Quinze interior, with old-fashioned chairs and shining boards; a great fire burnt at one end, in a tall chimney-piece; a great clock ticked upon a bracket of which the hands pointed to ten; the family arms were fixed at intervals along the walls. These consisted of hands with "Tenir," the motto of the Latouches, and each held a light. Hugh was rather bewildered by this sudden blaze, and if old Pierre had not given him a push from behind, might have hesitated to cross the threshold. There was not only light to dazzle, but a confusing sound of music coming from some inner room, and a very sweet and melancholy voice singing to the accompaniment of a piano, singing to rocking measure: it went running on in his head for many days after:—

Mais de vous en souvenir
Prendrez vous la peine,
Mais de vous en souvenir
Et d'y revenir——

A minor chord, and a melodious little flourish.

A Saint Blaize à la Zuecca
Dans les prés fleuris cueillir la verveine.

A door opened, the voice ceased singing, an old man-servant came out with a white respectful head, followed by a little woman in a grey dress, carrying a lamp. She seemed to pat or drift across the floor, so lightly made and pale and slim was she. Was it possible that this could have

een the songstress ? She spoke in a little flute-like voice that was scarcely bove a whisper. Old Peter undertook to be master of the ceremonies.

"He does not understand one word of French," he said, pointing to Hugh. "Madame expects him. It is all right. I am going to put the horses in the stable."

The little grey lady evidently expected her guest. She bowed, whispered a few words to the man-servant, and gave him the lamp, and the old man beckoned to the young traveller and led the way across the black and white marble pavement of the hall to a side door opening into a great drawing-room, brilliantly lighted, decorated with panelling, hung with white and brown damask. Everywhere stood lovely old china, and ticking clocks (Madame de Latouche had a fancy for clocks), but there was no one to wind them up; their hands pointed to every possible hour and in every direction. The place seemed enchanted to Hugh after his long dark journey, dazzling and unexpected. The piano was open, but the musician was gone; a pair of gloves lay upon the floor by a little table, upon which stood, along with some slight refection of finger-biscuits, a scarcely touched glass of wine. Hugh, who was hungry after his long expedition, cast a glance at this little table; but his guide beckoned him on, and presently led him through a small boudoir into a bedroom on the ground floor, opening into a comfortable set of rooms, in one of which his luggage was displayed, and from whence the grey lady suddenly issued, bowing in her list slippers. She had been to see that all was in order—the last match in the matchbox; the pink soap and water in the cruet-like washstand; the eider-down floating on the natty little chintz bed.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more unlike the steady four-post respectability of Hugh Gourlay's own home than this little chintzified nest which had been prepared for him, with a small sofa to recline upon, a blue glass inkstand, a little cup of holy water over the bed, the glazed and painted portraits of one or two amiable-looking young saints, the sugar and water apparatus on the smart walnut drawers, and a neat little square mat for his feet. Hugh imagined his brothers' expression at seeing him thus installed, but no Bathurst was there with sarcastic jeers, nor Ben with ill-suppressed fits of laughter.

"I hope you will find all you want," murmured the lady. "The supper will be ready immediately, if you will take the trouble to come down."

As she spoke, a girl in a Normandy cap came in with a jug of hot water; the old servant rolled up a comfortable arm-chair; a second man, who had come in, rapidly unpacked Hugh's portmanteau.

"Has Monsieur got everything?" asked the girl in a loud shrill voice. The lady put her fingers to her lips: "Hush, Madame sleeps!" she said.

Hugh could understand just so much. The servants now seemed to creep about with redoubled care. The house was perfectly still, with a faint aromatic perfume that Hugh associated with it ever after, but not without confusion.

Hugh was not many minutes dressing and drying his wet hair and

hands, and he was only just ready when some one came tapping at the door, and a hungry man with a less knowledge of the language might have understood the meaning of the word *souper*, which some one uttered in the same whisper as the others.

Hugh's agreeable speculations as to his company were disappointed. Nobody supped except himself. There were two places laid, but the little grey woman came in and motioned to the young man to begin, and Hugh sat down to a solitary meal. The grey woman was in and out of the room attending to his wants with the greatest kindness and assiduity, but whenever he had attempted to speak, she smilingly placed a finger on her lips and pointed to the adjoining room. What she meant he could not conceive; but meanwhile he went on with his meal, and did ample justice to the excellent food that was set before him in white *soupières*, *marinières*, and fruit-dishes and hot plates, all of foreign and unusual shape. An omelette came in leaping in the dish; there was even a slice of melon, and some champagne in a long-necked bottle. Hugh finished off one dish after another, not a little surprised and amused by his adventure, and looking often to the door in hopes of seeing it open. When he had quite done, the little housekeeper came creeping in once more in her list slippers, carrying a little tray with coffee and with liqueurs. Then she crossed and softly opened the door into the adjoining room, and the mystery was explained. Hugh saw a large and well-furnished drawing-room. A lamp burnt dimly in one corner, casting its circling green light all round about. The rays fell upon polished floors and furniture of ancient date. There were bookcases and cabinets, brass locks and shadows; an old looking-glass repeating the scene; an ancient bureau, open and heaped with paper, against the wall. The windows were still closed and safely barred against the storm. On one side of the table stood a great arm-chair, and in the chair reclined a sleeping figure. The housekeeper crept with a noiseless tread across the room; behind the nodding head she gently placed a pillow, and then returned as swiftly as she had entered. But Hugh had time to see his hostess. The light fell full upon Mademoiselle de Latouche's profile. Even in her sleep she seemed to hold her own and to reign from her slumbers.

When Hugh turned round he found that he was no longer alone. A young lady, dressed in white, had come in by another door—a beautiful person—who advanced part of the way towards him with an undulating movement, and then stopped short, looking back towards the door. Hugh thought at first that she was going to run away.

"Are you there, Mathilde?" she said; and then the little grey woman stepped forward from behind and said something in French, and once more the lady turned towards her guest.

"My aunt has taken her sleeping draught," said the lady, in a natural voice. "We need not be afraid of awakening her." Then, turning to Hugh. "You must be fatigued after voyaging all day," she said; "you must repose and refresh yourself. Will you not sit?"

Hugh had started respectfully to his feet. Could this be the real lady f the house after all? Was this beautiful young creature Madame de atouche? She was a very young lady, although her costume was scarcely uitable to a girl, for the dress was of some sort of white stuff, trimmed ith swan-down; her beautiful little head was set softly into a thick lace uffle; she had an innocent round face with two wondering and tender yes. Her soft brown hair was smoothly parted in a Madonna line. he came forward very gently, hesitating, with soft footsteps and burning heeks. When she spoke to Hugh her voice seemed to vibrate with a eculiar tone; but then, she was speaking English, and carefully con-idering her words; when she turned to Mathilde and to French again, he plaintive voice struck into another key.

She did the honours very prettily, with a gentle hesitation and swift recision. Coffee was now served. There was not much talk, but a clinket f cups and silver spoons, and somehow, when all was over, Hugh seemed o have made his hostess's acquaintance. He had been rather afraid of er at first, and had scarcely known what to say; but she once asked him o give her some milk, and then suddenly looked up with eyes that inno-ently asked for confidence; and he began to feel as if he knew her somehow upon the strength of that one enquiring glance. The hands of the clock were now pointing to eleven, and the old man began to clear away the belated little meal.

"Good-night," said the lady, in her pretty English. "I hope my aunt will be well enough to receive you in the morning; I am sorry that I shall have to leave home for the day."

"Oh, Mademoiselle!" remonstrated the companion.

The young lady gave her a little pat on the cheek. "Will you be quiet, Mathilde?" she said.

Hugh held out his hand, English fashion. She half put hers out—then pulled it back again; and, as she did so, he saw that a gold bracelet was fastened to her arm, to which hung a tiny gold locket with a picture.

The lady had told Hugh her name before they parted; she was Blanche de Latouche, she said; her aunt was the real lady of the house. Hugh went to bed dreaming of his hostess.

V.

The courtyard opened upon the high road, the high road led to the village, where everybody was up, and awake and excited. For hours past the church bells had been jangling, and a gun had been going off at intervals. It woke up Hugh Gourlay at the same minute as M. le Maire, and old Mademoiselle de Latouche in her warm bed. In the Presbytery the children were jumping about in great excitement. It was pretty to see the little cluster in the courtyard—the babies in front, the little elder girls, in their broad hats, peeping at M. le Curé and his assistant, as they passed and re-passed through the gateway. H., who never can resist the children's voices, was also there, with a lace veil over her head. Madame

Valentin was discoursing to the tobacconist out of her bedroom window as usual. He had stepped into the court in his wooden shoes to borrow an umbrella. "Ah! you will all want umbrellas," says Madame Valentin sagely. "My son started an hour ago. He is not in the procession; he goes to receive the Archbishop with the other gentlemen."

All this time a procession had been forming, rain and mud notwithstanding—talkative, excited. French people certainly have a special art for holding umbrellas, tidily defying the elements; their starch keeps stiff, their garments are dry, their spirits undamped, at times when an English temper would be drenched. Perhaps in the long run the English temper might best withstand the onslaught of adverse circumstances; but certainly for brief adversities we have little patience. The procession started at last, to the peal of bells, to the barking of dogs—windows opened, the church porch was crowded, people joining in from every doorway, late recruits following as fast as they could go. The women wore clean white skirts and starched white caps with satin ribbons; the men were dressed in their usual Sunday best—flagbearers had the additional glory of a green rosette. Monsieur le Curé and Monsieur le Vicaire were both there, encouraging and marshalling their troops. They had their breviaries under their arms, they wore their beautiful muslin stoles, their octagonal caps. The choristers were also in full dress, and the church beadle, in his long flapping gown, came away from the bell which he had been ringing uninterruptedly since four o'clock in the morning.

A few cap-strings joined still hot from the ironing-board where Madame Wachtel had been standing uninterruptedly labouring for twenty-four hours. Poor woman, she now sank down exhausted. She had counted upon going herself; there was her own jupe all ready, but she was too tired to move—tired! she was broken, there was no other word. Ah! there goes Mademoiselle de Latouche; is it possible that she walks on foot when she might drive in her aunt's carriage?

Hugh, who had dressed and come out to see what was going on, now appeared in the market-place. He had seen Blanche pass his window, which was just about four feet from the ground, and on a level with people's heads. Mathilde, of the night before, was following with a waterproof, and expostulating as she went. "You will catch cold," he heard her say; "your aunt—the carriage——," and then Blanche's sweet shrill "Do you suppose that in the convent?" . . . and so they passed on.

The whole thing seemed to Hugh like some sort of fantastic continuation of his dreams. Still more so when he found himself, an hour later, steadily plodding in the wake of the retreating procession that was rapidly disappearing beyond the horizon of the sloping field. He had remained a little behind, talking to H., with whom he had stiffly claimed acquaintance as she stood in the gateway, on the strength of the night before; and, as usually happened in such cases, in return for his stiff excuse, she had

harmed him by her kind manner and sweetness of greeting. That pale nd tremulous H. has a gentle genius quite her own. It is not only ympathy, not only kind-heartedness, it is a peculiar instinct (springing in ruth from a kind heart and a quick and delicate intellect), which teaches er to understand the silent language of the people she meets, as well as heir spoken words. Some persons can play the piano; others, with a look, an tune a far nobler instrument. I often envy H. her gift, dearly as she ays for it. We can most of us sympathise, but to understand is a ubtler quality. Unselfish sympathy, that forgets itself and does not obrude, is the sweetest and rarest of all. Sometimes as she comes in, in er black dress and mourning garb, I look into H.'s pale face, with its weet pensive lines; old and worn as it is, it seems to me fairer than nany a young and brilliant beauty; its sudden smile is more tender and adiant. Some bright tempers are a little oblivious, carried away by heir own excitement; H. is not so; she is hopeful and quietly pleased, ecause her heart is humble and full of love, and by her example she eaches us to practise this happiness of gentleness and faith, and to elieve in it, even though it may not always be for us.

Hugh promised to come and see us again, and then walked off cross the field in pursuit of the procession, that was now rapidly lisappearing beyond the horizon. In order to save time he had tried nother of his short cuts, and wandered into the boggy centre of a turnipfield, and was glad to scramble out of it into the pathway again. The land was monotonous enough, plains on every side, here and there a village crowding, white against the sky overhead mountains and valleys were tossing, and a storm was still impending, although the sun had come out bright for the present, and as it gleamed from the mountainous clouds above to the flat plains below, Hugh could see the little village, and the spire of the castle a couple of miles away.

Sometimes some tune comes haunting one, one knows not why, and to-day a wild Hungarian dance music, that Hugh had once heard by chance, seemed to him to be ringing in his mind, and echoing from across the plains, and from the distant line of breakers. Then some soft burst of wind would catch it up and carry it into the drifting clouds, and then a light would seem to break out suddenly and repeat the tune in another key. People have odd waking dreams at times. All this grey light and swiftness overhead, all this desolation under foot, over which the slippery lights were flickering; the sea-birds flying upon the wind; the excitement and strangeness of the scene, seemed best expressed by this tune that was haunting him, and which he associated ever after with that morning's chase. He caught the procession up at last, and as he did so the tune died away. One or two stragglers had already fallen out of the ranks. There was Madeleine Mathieu, the baker's daughter, carefully holding her white petticoats out of the mud, and naturally too much engrossed by this occupation to think of much else. Hugh soon discovered Mademoiselle de Latouche struggling with the flapping tongue of the village flag, to which

a piece of ribbon had been tied, and which it was her duty to hold. She was dressed in white, as were the others; she wore a little white bonnet, tied under her chin.

"I fear you are tired, my child," said M. le Curé, coming up. He was walking along the ranks and encouraging his starched flock. "Madeleine, if you come here, Mademoiselle will be able to rest."

They had come out from the fields by this time into the highway, which was growing more and more crowded every minute. Mademoiselle de Latouche recognised Hugh as she passed him, and nodded kindly; but she seemed tired, and there was no spirit in her greeting. The sight itself was amusing enough—a quaint scene of genuine country life. Here was a group of peasant-women, proudly striding along side of the soutane, the glory of the family. The brother, the Priest, walked with his thick shoes and flapping skirts, the proud old mother by his side in her old-fashioned Normandy cap and kerchief: the modernised sisters in cheap white satin quillings. Then some little children and some nuns went hurrying by to one of the convents in the town; a little farther, some recruits, who had been very tipsy the day before, were still parading in their ribbons; and with it all came an eager cheerful hum and chatter of voices, to which every moment brought additional notes; through every gate of the little town to which the procession was bound, the people were pouring.

The choir of Joyeux rang shrill and loud, the rain had ceased, the hedgerows and willow-trees were fresh in the narrow field ways, the feet of the many pilgrims had worn a streaming track as they passed, plodding peacefully through the nineteenth century to worship at the shrine of three hundred years before. There goes Femme Roulet, the farmer's wife, in her great-grandmother's earrings; there goes a priest from the seminary, who was born twenty years ago, perhaps, but who is living with St. Benedict and others, the life of their day. The way is long, the path is wet and slippery. Poor little Blanche had stumbled many a time before she finished her long three miles; she was unused to such fatigue, and could scarcely drag her tired feet along; the crowd bewildered her; she clung to her ribbon, and tried to think of the hymn that the country girls were singing as they marched along. This was what she had hoped, to find herself one of a goodly company pressing onward to the true burning shrine of religion; but she was tired; her spirits flagged; her attention wandered from the words of the psalm; she found herself mechanically counting the jerks of the flagstaff as it crossed and recrossed the priest's little black velvet cap. Suddenly, as she clung in her dismay to the green ribbon of the flag, the great prop and mainmast itself seemed to give way — there was a shriek. Something had struck her shoulder. . . .

Barriers had been put up round about the chapel, but just outside the barriers Hugh thought things looked a little uncomfortable. It was all good-natured enough, and the people were only pushing in fun; but with so many girls and children in the crowd, it was certainly dangerous fun.

ıere was a sudden cry that the bishop's carriage was at hand, a sudden ave, and somehow, before any one knew why, a wave passed through crowd, some women screamed, a little pale and fainting figure almost l into Hugh's arms. Madeleine, the banner-bearer, slipped and fell: ıuise the washerwoman sprawled over her. There might have been a ious accident if M. le Curé, who was a strong man, and Hugh, who s active and ready, had not sprung forward together and made a sort rampart against the surging crowd. Hugh would not have been atly concerned for Madeleine, who was well able to bear any ount of pushing, or for Louise, who was loudly bewailing herself— t he still held up the almost senseless little lady of the castle; it had en his fate to rescue her; and he was relieved when the pressure sub- led, and he found himself in a quiet corner of the great place outside e barrier.

Blanche revived in a minute, smoothed her hair out of her eyes, and t on a step trembling a little and silent, and biting her lips. She did t even say "Thank you;" that wild sea of heads and struggling arms as still about her.

Then she heard Hugh asking if she felt better, and found that she as safe and once more able to breathe; and in one moment she was her- lf again, shaking out her crumpled lace and smoothing her dress.

"You will have to go home now," said Hugh, in a tone of some tisfaction. "What induced you to come to such a place, mademoiselle? t is all very well for those peasant women, but for you——." The nocent eyes looked up.

"For me? Why should I not do as they do?" said Blanche, turning ale again at the very thought. "Oh, how wet I am! Is it not disagree- ble to be wetted? Is that a carriage? Perhaps.—Ah! here is Monsieur e Curé."

Monsieur le Curé emerged with Madeleine, who was all over mud, and nxious to return to a clothes-brush. Hugh had hoped to be allowed o escort his hostess back to the Castle; but this was not according to French etiquette.

"I shall not thank you," said Blanche, as she took leave of Hugh. "You saved my life, but it was scarcely worth the trouble. Remember that my aunt dines at six."

A little carriage happened to be passing (it had been setting down some farmers from Vitry, a couple of miles off), and into the carriage Mademoiselle de Latouche and Madeleine were assisted, and they drove off together, mutually condoling, two white women under the green avenue. M. le Curé hurried after his flock; Hugh (who had had no breakfast), made his way into the town; all sorts of refreshments were being prepared for the use of the pilgrims. Such pious excursions should give good appetite.

Hugh felt somewhat remiss as he walked home to dinner that evening. He feared that he had neglected his duties as a guest; but in truth he had

been so well amused, that he had forgotten all about the unseen lady, who might probably be expecting him.

A sort of Scriptural gleam was upon the sea, in the air, upon the little village lying on the sea-shore; a sort of Bethlehem-like star was peering from the eddying heights; two women were standing by a well not far from the castle garden talking together as they pulled the iron handle of the crank. They were still in their white dresses and white frilled caps. "It has been the day of Heaven," said one to the other. "We crossed the field singing in choir. Mademoiselle Blanche led the hymn. What a pity that she was so frightened in the crowd! It was nothing coming back. M. le Curé found the dryest, nicest way. Look, I am not weary, and yet I have been on my feet since three o'clock this morning. Ah! our Curé is a good man. I would not exchange for him of St. Rambert, though he drove in the Bishop's carriage."

"Well, make haste," said the other in a low, satisfied voice. "Here is the storm again." And, as she spoke once more, the clouds seemed to gather swiftly from every quarter, from the sea, from the plains, heaping dark clouds. The summer storm burst over the village, where there was a great frying and clatter; all the bathers were enjoying their evening meal at open doors and windows; with kitchens in full play, with great talking and discussion. Some had brought their tables out into the street itself, for the heat was excessive, and the lodgings for the most part close and overcrowded. There was a general shriek and flight: children scampered; careful *ménagères* remained to clear the board; a great peal of thunder shook the air, and a swift whirlwind came eddying up with fierce dust and furious onslaught.

The storm did not last very long, and when it was over the sky cleared as suddenly as it had overclouded; the cloud-banks sank away, and the sunset, which had been tranquilly going on through all the clatter and excitement, came once more blazing gorgeously through the broken clouds and flooding the evening world. The drops of rain on the clematis that overhung the garden door reflected this splendid light; every stone was radiant. The very clapper sounded sweet and most musical in the clear and fragrant calm that followed the crash of angry clouds and storm. If the very wall was beautiful, the garden too was transfigured as Hugh walked in, admitted by Denise with her apron over her head.

"Here you are! What a storm!" says she; "were you caught in it? Mademoiselle has told us how you saved her. We have been frightened. Mademoiselle our mistress has had a nervous attack. That poor Casimir had to go out in all the rain for the doctor. Ah, we poor servants! we are the same as our masters. Thunder disagrees with me just as much as with our mistress. See how I tremble. And as for little Marie, the kitchenmaid, she is in the back cupboard. She won't come out."

Hugh might have shown more sympathy if he could have spoken more French; with some satisfaction he gathered, however, that he had

t been missed. He nodded, and Denise took it for granted he agreed in she said. The prince in the fairy tale is conducted from chamber to amber through jewelled and incandescent halls; my prince was only l under the vine trellis. But what jewelled galleries could be more autiful than these green and garlanded loggias, through which the burn- ; evening garden was shining in clear, invigorating life? As he came from der the vines, he saw a common monthly rose-tree, from every thorn of ich a rainbow seemed to break and flash as Denise swept by with her avy cloth skirt. There was one rose of which the colours seemed to ow beyond light, deeper and dearer, and more splendid than any words. ie flower burnt on, and Hugh stopped in admiration; Denise, however, inted to the stable clock.

"Make haste," she said, "dinner will be ready;" and the young man derstood that he was to lose no time. Denise hurried on quickly to her tchen, past rose perfume and sweet verbena and geranium leaves. ademoiselle, however, did not come down to dinner, and Blanche ain did the honours.

VI.

Mademoiselle de Latouche was reported still indisposed next day. nly Mathilde and Blanche were there when Hugh, who had risen early, alked into the breakfast-room from the garden. He had been down to ie village, bathed, reconnoitred the place.

Early as it was, all the bathers were already out on the sands; nd a strange and motley crowd assembled. Roman figures standing raped, enjoying the horizon, reading the paper, and contemplating the ea before casting their long white togas aside and venturing into the water. adies in sandalled feet, closely garbed in woollen stuffs, banded and illeted like any Tullias and Cornelias out of a gallery of statues; little oisy boys and girls playing on the shore or capering down from the athing boxes, our own children piling their castle. It is all present as I write, the heave of the crisp horizon, the flash of brine, the faint sparkle f distant promontories. People talk of being misunderstood; surely here are moments when every grain of sand, every gleam of light, seems o respond to the uttermost need of one's being, and to complete and to satisfy.

The cheerfulness and clatter of it all first struck our friend Hugh; and, for the first time, he understood that besides one's life and one's habits there is such a thing as the state of mind in which people and their neighbours habitually live. It is quite independent of circumstances, and represents the measure from which they start. Whether one state of mind is more desirable than another was not the question he asked himself. He had been used to look with something like scorn upon anything that was good-humoured and temporary: a stern realisation of the terrors of life, and a heavy plod along its pitfalls, had always seemed to him the most reasonable aspect to contemplate. It had been his mother's and his father's, it was his brothers'.

Under all these cheerful influences he came back to the chateau whistling, with his hands in his pockets, and prepared to eat, drink coffee, and transact business; he passed old Pierre with clean straw in his sabots, cracking a cheerful morning whip.

The breakfast was set out on the oil-skin table-cover, a dish of piled-up fruit in the centre, bowls of coffee, and a loaf three feet long, from which Mathilde was cutting liberal hunches. Blanche was breakfasting in the sunshine; she was sitting just where the light fell upon the oak parquet, she was still dressed in white, demurely sipping her bowl of milk. She looked a little pale, even younger than the night before.

"Here is the English gentleman!" said Mathilde, looking up, and she opened the window to let their visitor in. As she did so, all the morning aureole, birds' songs, light, fresh and renovating, rushed in. Mathilde shivered, but enjoyed; and, being cold, went off to get a shawl for Blanche, while the young lady answered Hugh's inquiries.

"Here is your aunt's little fur tippet for you, my child," said the kind creature, coming back with some swansdown.

"Thank you, Mathilde," said Blanche; "Mr. Gourlay will not believe that I am no longer frightened; but give us something more to eat quickly, for this is a fast-day, and I am hungry. I should like some more cream."

Mademoiselle Mathilde hurried off enchanted. Fast-day or feast-day, she never ate anything herself, but her pleasure was to provide for others; and this little Blanche was very near her heart. Who could help loving her? a soft, little wilful creature, with sudden spirits flaming up, silent deep suppressions, all following one another so rapidly that it was hard to say which of all these sunshines and tempests was Blanche herself.

Then the little grey woman took some crumbs from the table and scattered them over the garden path that crossed the window. A sparrow immediately appeared ready to grapple with an enormous block of bread.

"Are you fond of birds?" said Blanche; "I am," watching Hugh as he went on with his breakfast. "There are thrushes in the garden of the convent where I was brought up at, and a nightingale sings in June. I watch him under the tree. It is so pretty; one night we tried to steal out to listen to it, but the good mother punished us all next day."

"How glad you must be to be at home!" said Hugh, who had finished his coffee. "Now you will be able to listen to nightingales as long as you like."

Blanche did not answer: she crimsoned up and then became very pale; even her pretty red lips seemed to turn white for a moment. "Don't you know," she began, then faltered. She was always gentle, and generally deliberate in her movements, but on this occasion some sudden impulse made her start from her chair, spring swiftly to the window and out into the garden; the birds in front of the window flew away frightened.

Mathilde started; Blanche had vanished. Hugh Gourlay was a little puzzled; he looked at his companion, wondering what he had said

miss. The diligent little woman was still clearing away the breakfast, nd brushing the crumbs off the oilskin cover of the table. She seemed) avoid his glance. When Hugh got up and walked into the garden, he aw Blanche, in her swansdown tippet, sitting in the sunshine as quietly s if nothing had happened.

Benches alternated with orange trees along the terrace, and Blanche ad chosen the sunniest. She sat quite still with her hands linked into er sleeves, in the way she had learnt from the nuns. She was looking ıtently at the swaying branch of a tree, from which some lilac dropping 'esterias were hanging. Her shadow never stirred upon the gravel 'alk. Beyond the terrace, in the great meadow, the cows were standing ı their sombre coats; beyond the cows, the old iron gates were closed gainst the world—"jaunting by the highway." It all looked secure and eaceful enough. As Hugh came up, the young Chatelaine moved ever so ttle and made a place for him on the bench beside her.

"Tell me," she said, suddenly, "why did you come here?"

"I came on business," said Hugh.

"What business?" said Blanche, still looking at the westeria branch, vhere a little sparrow was swinging and swaying to a tune in his own brain.

"I have to find a particular sort of machine," said Hugh, "for vhich your father has left a model, I understand, and I have to find a)oodle for my father. He thinks that is most important of all, but I am ery anxious to get the machine."

"A machine! A poodle!" said Blanche, looking at him with her wise yet innocent eyes. "Have you come all this way for a poodle? I hink I can help you; there is a poor woman in the village who has one to dispose of. His name is Bismarck. He is a very big dog: I will have him brought here for you. I cannot think how anyone can like dogs. We cannot endure dogs in this house. There are none at the Convent; that is something gained."

Then he began telling her one dog story after another; he spoke of colleys and terriers and sheep dogs, warming to his subject as he went on; he brought a whole new world into his talk—a world of moors and of liberty, of adventure, a world of nature.

Never in the course of her short existence had little Blanche heard any one speak in such a voice as this or heard such a hymn to natural things. She had heard of miracles, of ecstacies, of preserves and embroidery; she had heard of pictures, of incense, of self-infliction and devotion; but of winds and life and liberty and labour, free, enduring—she had never heard any one speak in this way before. She tried to realise Hugh's stories as they followed; listening with averted eyes. Once she raised them with a look that made him almost cease to speak, it was so constraining in its veiled appeal. "Don't tell me any more," it seemed to say.

"I shall never hear such things again," she said at last, in her slow English. "I shall soon be gone from here, I think, but I shall remember

it all." Then she sighed and moved uneasily, and then folded her hands once more, but he could see her little tender fingers trembling.

"Are you going to a pretty part of the country?" asked young Gourlay, in his most matter of fact tones.

Hugh scouted emotion and avoided it as Blanche avoided poodles, and his tone at once froze her confidence.

"It is pretty enough," she said, dryly, "but that will make little difference to me. The place I am going to is . . . . "—she stopped—"would not interest you," she said.

"One can never tell," said Hugh, "what will interest another person, any more than one can tell what may be about to happen to oneself."

"I know very well what is before me," said Mademoiselle de Latouche; and Hugh vaguely smiled and surmised.

"I could tell you every day of all my life to come as long as I live if I chose," continued the girl, with a sad quiver in her slow voice; "when you go back to your moors, to your dogs, to your free life, I shall be in my convent, at peace and safe from the world and its temptations." She raised her wistful, magnetic eyes, as she spoke, with some wild yet mystical look in them that Hugh never forgot again.

"What do you mean?" he asked, in a different tone.

"I am going to enter the Convent of the Sisters of the Holy Pilgrims," said little Blanche, in a low voice. Then she said no more, but sat smoothing the fluff upon her tippet, mechanically stroking it down with her little fingers.

The bewildered Englishman remained on the bench beside her—watching her in surprise and painful interest. He began presently to question. Contrary to her wont, she answered all his questions with the greatest readiness and simplicity. Yes, it was of her own free-will she was going in. Her aunt wished it, and so did M. le Curé, and her father wished it, so they said; and what else could she do? Once she had thought of marrying a young man her father had approved, but he died: she had only seen him twice, but she always wore his portrait, and she pointed to the locket on her arm. He was something like—she stopped again and went on to speak of the convent. She loved the sisters; they were kinder than anybody else except poor Mathilde.

"And it is a beautiful life," said the little thing seriously, "to pray, to sing in the chapel, to be good and loved by all the saints, and to spend one's life for the good of others, praying for them. Perhaps," she said, clasping her hands thoughtfully, "some other girl will profit by my prayers and find happiness—my happiness."

Hugh was too much shocked and frightened to know what to say at the moment, and before he could make up his mind Mathilde came flying out upon the terrace. Mademoiselle desired to see him, she said; would he please come at once?—she did not like waiting. The Curé de St. Rambert was expected, and she was already vexed by his delay.

M. le Curé de St. Rambert took a special interest in the fate of little Blanche. The little thing would probably inherit her aunt's fortune as

well as her father's possessions: let them beware of scheming fortune-hunters, ready to devour the poor innocent; let them accept with a good heart the safe protection that the Church extends to those holy women who are filled with noble aspirations, and turn to her for safety and refuge. Blanche had been sent to the convent, by his advice, for her education. She seemed to have a vocation; let them beware how they discouraged it! This was St. Rambert's advice.

The Curé de St. Joyeux had nearly been denied the house in disgrace for having shown so little sympathy when his advice was asked concerning Blanche's future. "Marry her, Madame," he had been churlish enough to say; "find some good young fellow to make a home for her. Hers does not seem to me a character matured for a cloister life. She has movements, sublime movements of piety and fervour; but that is a mere passing phase in her young soul. Some people are thus constituted, and I do not say that they are by any means the worst. Now, there is M. le Vicaire, if you ask me; he seems eminently cut out for religious life. He is now arranging the details of another procession next Thursday: it will be most striking."

Mademoiselle de Latouche must have been in a capricious mood that day. Mathilde led Hugh into a sort of ante-room, where she begged him to wait while she went in and announced him. The time seemed a little long, and the young man walked to the window and looked out. It was a window which opened on one of the twisted balconies, and from whence he could see the garden, and the terrace, and the orange trees all mapped out before him; and as he looked he saw that M. le Curé de St. Rambert had come up and sat down on the bench where he had been sitting. Little Blanche was still there, listening with averted face to the Curé, who was speaking with unction and much action of the hands. Then she suddenly started away, and set off running along the orange trees, and the Curé crossed towards the house. Mathilde also came out of an adjoining room, looking somewhat confused.

"Well!" said Hugh.

Mathilde shook her head. Mademoiselle had changed her mind; she could not receive him that morning.

It afterwards occurred to Hugh that this had been a little ruse of the housekeeper's to get him out of the way before the priest's arrival. Mathilde hurried him down by a different staircase to that by which she had brought him.

VII.

Until he had heard her story, Blanche had seemed to Hugh just a young lady like any other; now, when he looked out into this flower-garden all a-bloom, and watched the little thing's play and bright antics, and heard her sweet voice, some other chord was struck, and there seemed a strange meaning to it all. After that first explanation, little Blanche seemed to trouble herself no more about her fate; but what curious things meanings are! This future was like a shadow creeping over a summer

day, so Hugh thought; like the melancholy reverberation of a voice calling gaily across an empty court. The more often Blanche's laugh sounded, the more sadly this echo seemed to sound. . . .

How quickly people get used to the things that they like! Habits of tranquil intimacy are, perhaps, the most insidious of all. They seem so easy, so harmlessly absorbing, why should they not continue for ever? Great events, wonderful successes, deserving triumphs, those may be for others, but for ourselves we ask but little: the peaceful satisfaction, the person you expect, the hour you love best returning again and again. One is told of the vanity of human wishes, but people do not surely apply so grand a name to anything so unimportant as the opening of a door, the quiet daily entrance of one person or another. . . .

These two young people were thrown into a strange companionship. Mademoiselle de Latouche for once was really ill, and too much absorbed in her symptoms to trouble herself about what was going on in the house. From what H. had said, she had taken it for granted that Mr. Gourlay was an old manufacturer. Mathilde innocently answered all Mademoiselle's questions. He was quiet, gave no trouble, was out most of the day; this was all the account she gave. He was anxious to go as soon as he had been allowed to see the machine.

But Mademoiselle was firm. No, not until she had seen him and made her bargain would she consent to let Hugh go or carry off the model. Mathilde had the key; let her keep it for the present.

The days went by so peacefully that there was nothing to dwell upon. They used to spend long hours on the terrace, nothing happening except that the cows came crossing the field, or the shadow of the sun-dial travelled across the disc. One night Blanche persuaded Mathilde to come down to the beach. They walked down the great avenue, of which the trees looked so tall in the moonlight. As they reached the gate that led to the road, the two priests were passing along on their way from the church; their buckles gleamed in the moonlight. It was a lovely, vast night; that strange harmony which is not sound, which is not silence, was vibrating everywhere. The moon was slowly winning a silver victory, and conquering realm after realm of sand, and down, and sea; now the church spire itself is won, the marble step in the open door, through which you see the dim lamp burning at the altar-rail. There within all is still, mysterious, and voiceless; but without, how the sky flashes—what dimmed glory of starlight seems waiting for a signal to burst into life! H. was sitting among shadows; the husband and wife were walking slowly along the trellis wall; sometimes a star rose above its leafy line, sometimes a veil seemed to fall gently upon all this mystery. I saw the trio from the castle from my window as they passed on their way to the beach.

The sea lay quite still in the moonlight, and only streaked by some long black lines that came rolling in strangely, with a dull monotony of calm and sound. Hugh had once heard an oratorio given in the town-hall at York, and the night brought it back to his mind. He had forgotten the music, but he could remember the impression that it made the sense

of distance, the harmonious concords breaking through the modulation of vaguer notes. Here was the oratorio again. "It frightens me," said Blanche; "but how beautiful it is!" High overhead rode the pale moon, a pervading melody falling upon the waves, the cliffs darkly enclosing all, the stars shining against their crests.

Mathilde stood gazing at the black lines in the sea. "There will be a storm to-night," she said.

Blanche turned, with a low, soft sigh. "Come, there is a boat putting off. How I should like to row out into the moonlight!"

When one is young, impressions come like beautiful tunes, easy to remember, with melody caressing and entrancing. Each year adds meaning upon meaning to every feeling, accompaniment to every loving tune, and presently it is no longer one exquisite air, but a great concerted movement that carries us away; each note seems complicated and enchorded into others. Hugh and Blanche were young, uncomplicated as yet; they had not six weeks' experience between them, for Blanche in her convent had scarcely seen less of the world than Hugh among his throbbing engines. The music that was sounding in their ears, on this mysterious night, was a very sweet one.

"I think I could remain looking at the waves for years," said Blanche. "Ah! what a pity that the convent windows do not look upon the sea!"

"The convent windows will not show you much worth looking at, I should think," said Hugh, turning crossly away.

"That is the reason of it," said Blanche, stopping short. "The convent is a friend who comes to detach us from the things of this world, its vanities, its pleasures, and heartlessness." She spoke with a cold yet passionate earnestness, and waited for him to answer.

"Do you think there are no troubles in life?" said Hugh, with his hands in his pockets, muttering between his teeth. "Real troubles with some heart in them, instead of flimsy metaphors and fancy penances inflicted by old women." Blanche flushed furiously.

"I must never speak to you again, if you speak to me like that," she said. They had walked up to the boats.

At this time a boat was putting out to sea, and the two fishermen to whom it belonged were struggling with ropes and cords and fish-baskets; a boy was leaping in and out, hauling and pushing. The weird moonlight fell upon their faces; a woman with a child in her arms stood silently near, watching their progress.

"We are ready," said the elder man, coming up to where the woman was standing; "good-night, my girl; go home; there is nothing to fear." He gave her a loud kiss, and leapt into the boat; it shoved off with a dull splash, and went rapidly tossing across the black waves. The woman suddenly burst out crying, and kissed her baby again and again.

They found some one expecting them when they reached home. Blanche's poodle was sitting on the door-step. It was a present, she said, laughing. Hugh must accept it; a big white poodle dog, nicely curled and frilled, with a string tied to its muzzle. It had pink eyes, and

an innocent black nose like a button. Its wide-spread paws were ornamented with elegant little tuffs; its tail ended in a tassel. The old peasant woman who had brought it was gazing wistfully at the foolish blinking eyes that returned her glances with so much truthful affection.

The poodle slept in a corner of Hugh's bed-room all that night; about two o'clock in the morning, to the consternation of the household, he roused the whole place with his howls. Hugh quieted him as best he could, but the consequences were serious. Mademoiselle had been awakened; her indignation was not to be described.

When Hugh came down to breakfast he found Mathilde pale, with red eyes, as red as Bismarck's own. Blanche nervous, uneasy, starting at every sound. No one could describe the scene that Mademoiselle had given them. M. le Curé had been sent for. They had been up all night.

"Oh! sir!" said Mathilde, giving him his coffee with a trembling hand; "how am I to tell you?"

"I will tell him," said little Blanche, coming up. "My aunt is cruel: she says that you must not stay, that you must take Bismarck, and that I am never to see you again," said the girl in a cold, dull voice.

"Nonsense," said Hugh. "Of course I must go if your aunt wishes it. I shall go home with Bismarck: for many reasons it is the best thing I can do. But if you will let me come back," he said, looking at her steadily . . . "I will come this day week . . . ."

Blanche's eyes were cast down: she flushed up, said something unintelligible, and ran out of the room, as the priest entered with blandest politeness. Mademoiselle de Latouche's indisposition was so grave, that she regretted being obliged to inform her friend that she should not be able to transact the business upon which he had come. "The coach leaves at three, I believe," said the Curé.

Hugh got up and bowed very stiffly.

"I had already made up my mind to leave the chateau," said he. "Perhaps, as you pass the village, you would kindly secure my place."

"With the greatest pleasure," said the Abbé.

While Hugh was travelling back to his home, little Blanche was flitting away under the trees towards the meadow; she was pacing restlessly on and on, no longer lingering in the autumnal sunshine, scarcely taking pains to hold up her long white dress as it flowed upon the ground. But the place was so trim and crisply kept that there was but little to soil her skirt. She was not herself somehow, less to-day than she had ever been; its radiance and peaceful completeness seemed a long way from her; some sudden revulsion of feeling had filled her grey eyes with tears; she seemed to belong to the place as she had never belonged to it before, to feel that she had never been conscious enough of all the beautiful things, the memories, the childish hopes which had come to her there. Yes, there in that hollow she had once come with her father, holding his hand, and she could remember him standing in the gateway and calling to her. It was his wish that she was following now. M. le Curé de St. Rambert

had told her so. How could she judge? A poor girl who has known nothing of life, who has seen no one, been nowhere; "and yet they might have waited," said little Blanche bitterly to herself. "My aunt is unhappy at parting from me; she is too good to care for mere personal feeling; but it will be terrible for Mathilde when I am gone." Then she began to think about the convent; she could see it all quite plain, and hear the nuns' voices through the rustling of the trees, and the novices' parlour with its two or three books, the altar to the Virgin, the cupboards, the straw chairs, and the window into the passage.

"Good-bye!" sister Marie Alba had said, the morning she came away, in her melancholy voice; "have you seen the good mother and taken leave?"

Then three novices had come in and sister Angelique, with a long flying veil, all saying farewell. "We shall see you again, my beloved, and then you will stay with us," the two nuns had said.

Sister Françoise had been putting linen in the cupboard, great heavy sheets with blue lines, the doors were open with the crosses on the corner panels. Françoise had turned her pale nose ("Will mine look like that?" wondered Blanche): "Before you go, dear angel, your eyes are so clear, look at my silver ring, tell me whether it is bent. I showed it to Sister Catherine, but she cannot see anything amiss, and yet, by holding it to the light, does it not appear somewhat flattened, just by the silver heart?"

Blanche had taken the ring and the chain with its mythical symbols of hearts and flames into her hand. "What does it signify whether it is bent or not, Sister Françoise?" she asked.

"It matters—it matters a great deal; why the good mother herself—I shall ask M. le Curé next time he comes. Dear child, you are not going away in the convent dress?"

"She has leave to wear it," said the sister Angelique. "It is a special grace, for her own clothes are not come from the dress-maker's. . . ."

So it all came back to her, Blanche thought, with a sting of self-reproach: how familiar and kind those worn faces were! Perhaps that was why Mathilde, with her worn looks, seemed more like home to her than her aunt, herself comfortable and handsome in that well-appointed room; and then Blanche thought of a life devoted, of highest impulse on earth leading to glorious reward in heaven, so they told her, so the Curé had told her just now; but would there not still be time in another year? she wanted to wait for the fête next month; she wanted leave to keep a dog in the convent; she wanted—what did she want? She thought of the fisherman's wife the night before, of the sea, of the moonlight: everything seemed to hurt, to tear her in every direction; she need not determine yet, not yet—not yet.

The Curé was still on the terrace, but she brushed past him without speaking.

This much Blanche felt that she must do, she must see him again, to say good-bye to her friend, and give him the thing that he wished for: this much was her right. She had not talked to Hugh all those long hours

without being somehow carried away from her old boundaries, never to return to them, never again.

Had Blanche chosen? She knew not what she had chosen. She was in a miserable state of doubt and indecision. She felt herself watched; Denise was for ever in her way; the Curé of St. Rambert was always there.

One day Bismarck's former owner, who had been hovering about the terrace for some time, came up to Blanche as she passed on her way from mass. Denise sharply told her to make way, but Madame Roullot persisted. The gentleman who had bought the dog was come back, and had he brought good news of poor Bibi?

Blanche had sent a message to our children to come up and walk in the garden of the chateau whenever they liked; they were English—that was enough to make them her friends. One day the whole company straggled up along the dusty road, Albinia flitting a-head with her Binnie clinging to her skirts. The Major carried the little one, and Marjory and Anne proudly bore their provisions in their little baskets; the homeliest fare, short bread and rolls, and milk in a stone jug. They found a tea-table, an old leaf-besprinkled bench among crisp autumnal avenues; they made a centre-piece of daisies in a saucer. A few brown leaves dropped into their cups, but they rendered them all the more intoxicating. Children love open air, they love play, and they love their elders to look on at their gambols. As we all sate round, resting after our hot toil, we saw a figure advancing along the avenue; it came out of an old shed which had been built against the wall not far from where we were sitting.

"Who is it?" said H. "Is it a nun or a peasant woman?"

It was some one dressed in a coiffe and a long white floating veil over a grey serge dress; this person, whoever it was, advanced a little way, then went back, then came forward again . . . .

The pupils in the convents of the sisters of the order of the Holy Pilgrims wear a very singular and unbecoming dress; it is made of grey merinos, plainly cut, with loose long sleeves falling upon their hands. Their young faces are enclosed in white caps with narrow frills, to which are attached black floating veils, which give them somewhat the appearance of nuns themselves. This dress is not becoming, but there are those for whom the quaint sobriety only serves as a foil. Blanche de Latouche was certainly one of these. Neither caps, nor veils, nor prim grey robes could shade her sudden beauty; the soft eyes pierced through quills of any depth, and veils far thicker than the gauze that was floating along the garden pathway. The veiled apparition was not a nun—it was Blanche, in her convent school-girl dress. Some feeling had made her put it on to-day. She knew that Hugh would be coming. This was the day he had promised to come. All day long she had been expecting him; all day long she had been making up her mind quietly, with gentle perversity, that she would help him to get what he wanted; that her farewell gift to him should be this model, upon which he had set his heart. It was *hers*—her father had left it her; this much she knew, she had a right to her

own as yet. It was for that she had taken the key from the shelf where it lay in Mathilde's cupboard neatly docketed with the others. She had come down to assure herself that all was right—that the lock would turn. She feared she knew not what. She half expected the Archbishop, armed with all the thunders of the Church, to appear, and carry it off under his arm. Suddenly she saw the little conclave looking on with wide, open eyes. She had never spoken to us before, but as she came forward gently towards us, skirting the path as a child might have done—

Albinia went to meet her. "I am glad to welcome you," Blanche said prettily in English. "I hope M. Gourlay gave you our message. Any time my aunt will be glad to see you at the chateau. Have you enough milk? Can we send you anything from the house? Will not the children like to play upon the terrace?—there is a fine prospect."

She said it all so kindly, and with such cordial grace, that we could not refuse; and so it happened that when Hugh Gourlay came walking up from the inn to the château, after his week's absence, he found us all comfortably installed in the meadow in front of the house. The children were playing a game—Marjory, Anne, Dodo, and Binnie—at their four corners of the world. Blanche stood in the centre, gleeful, clapping her hands as she darted from one side to another. The children laughed, and flew with all their hearts in the game, holding hands, capering here and there.

They were all in the midst of their play when Hugh came up. I saw him look very strange, and hurry suddenly across the grass; the children began to shout and to cry out that he must join them.

"Blanche is puss! Blanche is puss! Take care!" cried little Dodo, tumbling across his path. Some spirit seemed to set them all flying and capering across the meadow, and Blanche suddenly darted ahead, in and out, and round from tree to tree, from bush to bush. The light figure flew; the children followed in the hottest, happiest excitement.

Mathilde appeared upon the terrace. I saw Mademoiselle herself, with one of her priests, was looking out of her tower windows.

As Blanche started off she passed close to Hugh. "I want you," she said; then Hugh, with a child on his shoulder, set off running too, and the whole party vanished under the nut trees. We could hear their voices ringing on long after they had disappeared.

Blanche led the way by the covered path towards the shed; there she suddenly stopped short, and all the children surrounded her, calling out that she was caught.

She turned to Hugh, panting, and blushing, and breathless; "I knew you would come. Here," she said, "take this key—it is the key of this shed, where the model is kept; I want you to have it. It is a farewell gift from a friend—a true, true friend. You can bring two men to-night and carry the machine away. It is mine; I may still give it to you."

"Still give it!" said Hugh, very pale. "What does this mean? What is this veil? Blanche" . . . . he could scarcely speak the words.

"It is my old school dress," said Blanche, smiling, and still breath-

less. I am not yet a nun. I have asked for delay. The Curé of Joyeux posted my letters. My aunt's director will be angry, but that I cannot help."

Once more she would have started off shyly. "Ah! I am caught!" she cried. A straggling thorny rose hung over the roof of the shed; her long flying veil was twisted in the branch. She was a prisoner, for her veil was securely fastened to her cap and her thick coils of hair.

Hugh tried in vain to disentangle it. All his fingers were trembling still; he had feared he had come too late.

"If Mathilde were here, she could untie the string," said Blanche.

"Make haste! make haste!" "Here is the Curé running after us," cried the children, excitedly.

"Cut it!" cried Blanche, impatiently; "cut the string; it fastens the cap and the veil too."

Hugh pulled out his big knife, and in an instant had snipped the cap-string, and with the string the veil gave way, and Blanche, springing free once more, shook all her beautiful sunshine of hair in a glistening mist over her shoulders; then she turned, laughing and blushing, to thank him. The cap lay on the ground in the sunshine.

"Mademoiselle Bla-an-an-anche;" sang Mathilde in the distance, calling, "your aunt wants you."

"O, she is a fairy princess," sang Binnie, dancing about madly, and clapping his hands.

The two looked at each other. They had forgotten the children's presence. "O, think well of it!" he was saying. "Leave all this behind. Come with me—come home to your home in England. I will take care of you." He spoke in a voice that seemed to carry Blanche away by its reality—by its natural might of tender protection. "Do you hear me? You frightened me dreadfully," said Hugh. "Speak, Blanche. Give me your hand."

As if in a dream, she put her hand in his. The children had begun a new song and set off dancing along the avenue; the two, still hand-in-hand, walked on, following unconsciously. Little Marjory dropped all the daisies out of her nosegay in their path as she ran; little Dodo picked up a pretty golden leaf and threw it at Blanche's white skirt. They all turned down a side alley. The Curé de St. Rambert, coming up to the place where they had been standing, only found the cap lying in the sunshine, and the long veil still floating from a branch.

In those days marriages between Catholics and Protestants were not so strictly forbidden as now. Hugh had a battle to fight, but we all know what happened when the Prince drew his sword.

My hero won his bride. Blanche married him as soon as she came of age. Old Mr. Gourlay was enchanted. Ben and Bathurst both married also, soon after Hugh.

Blanche is very happy at Gilwick. She is far the sweetest of the three brides. She is a great favourite with her father-in-law, and since her coming Bismarck has ceased to regret Normandy.

The Music of the Spheres.

To ——.

An oval moon floats low and pale
  Beneath a sky of matchless stars;
Heaven's warriors close their ranks of mail,
  And almost clash their shining cars!

The chorus of those conquering hosts—
  The songs their marching legions raise—
Were heard as far as Earth's dim coasts,
  'Tis said, by men of ancient days.

For us that music sounds no more.
  We long and listen—all in vain!
And Life would be a silent shore,
  But for one witching, mortal strain.

I hear it now! for Love's bright heaven
  Reigns cloudless in my breast to-night.
Sweet thoughts of thee, like starbeams, leaven
  The darkness through and through with light.

Proud hopes and memories shine and roll
  O'er coming and o'er bygone years,
"Still quiring" to my listening soul
  A very music of the spheres!

Ah! how they multiply their beams,
  Till night becomes as bright as day;
Their glorious heaven, how close it seems!
  How real is each reflected ray!

Yet Love's own planet is not there;
  Her Venus, large, and close, and clear,
Will only bless the earth and air,
  Will only rise—when thou art near.

When thy dear eyes, like gentle stars,
  Shine through my happy, happy tears;
When thy sweet-sounding voice unbars
  Its prisoned music in mine ears;

When at thy softly-murmuring lips,
  And on thy breathing, beating, breast,
I drink the enchanted cup that dips
  The draught which lays the heart to rest.

F. NAPIER BROOME.

On the Side of the Mistresses.

"I ALSO am a woman;" though, on the whole, I ought simply to say "I am a woman," for only one of those whom old-fashioned grammarians describe as belonging to the worthier gender could have written as one lately did in this Magazine "On the Side of the Maids." I am sure it cannot be that one who is familiar with the woes of the gentler sex can have thus overlooked the sorrows of the mistresses of the day. The writer must be one of those inexperienced young men who go up and down the country, upsetting all that has been held sacred as to the duty of women to stay at home and manage their households, and avoid politics, and take care that their husbands are pleased in all things. We know to what lengths these theorists are now going in trying to turn women into what women can never be. Did not I read, the other day, in the columns of a respectable newspaper, an announcement that in a "College Chapel" in the East-end of London a certain "Reverend" would commence his ministry by preaching in the morning of a certain Sunday, and that in the evening his wife would preach? What a *bouleversement* of all one's old ideas of propriety and good sense! Conceive such an arrangement at Oxford or Cambridge—the head of the College preaching to the undergraduates in the morning and his wife in the evening! I read once in a book "by an ex-Quaker" a story about some person who remonstrated with a Quakeress on the permission given to Quakeresses to preach, on the ground that St. Paul had forbidden preaching to women. "Ah," replied she, "but thee knows Paul was not partial to females!"

But, leaving the Quakers alone, I will maintain that none but a mistress can know the sufferings of a mistress, or can realise what it is that women are now suffering at the hands of those who are technically called our servants. Men should not write about them, because they do not understand them, just as they should not write about babies. So I say about politics; they are a fit subject for men to have votes upon, because it is a subject which they understand. Of course I do not say that all men understand them. If they did, would they not all vote on the same side? But what I say is this, that men's interests lie in general matters, in public matters—that is, in things taken on a large scale. For instance, they can understand how we ought to legislate about butchers and bakers and fishmongers; that is, about the rearing of bullocks, and the corn-laws, and the protecting of rivers and fish. How thankful I am to that Mr. Frank Buckland for bringing down the price of salmon to what it is this

year! But could they settle their actual butchers' and bakers' bills as women can? Could Mr. Frank Buckland himself buy a few pounds of salmon as economically as the mistress of a family? So, too, men can do pretty well about the police, and wars, and treaties, and affairs on a grand scale; it is only the King of Dahomey who makes women into soldiers; and I wonder that some of those gentlemen who wish to make us women think ourselves miserable when we don't feel so have not proposed that Queen Victoria should have a body-guard of pretty girl-soldiers. But could any man keep a nursery in proper discipline? To those who will have it that there is no ineradicable difference between men and women I put this plain question—Could men manage babies? And as they cannot manage nurseries, so they cannot manage households. Is there, as a rule, anything more deplorable than a bachelor's management of his women servants, when he pretends to keep a house of his own? Then I say that none but a woman can understand the case between maids and mistresses, or is to be accepted as an exponent of the sufferings of the mistresses of this year 1874.

Men judge from what they call the *à priori* point of view, which appears to me to be very much like making their theories first, and then inventing a number of facts to suit those theories. This is particularly the case with the writer who has made this late onslaught upon the unfortunate mistresses of the period. He fancies that because the relations of masters and servants are no longer patriarchal, therefore mistresses have lost all fellow-feeling for their maids. Now what is all this that we occasionally hear about the patriarchal state of things in England long ago? When was there any relation between the master and the servant which did not make the servant perfectly well aware that he was the servant, and not his master's equal, and that a practically different life must be his lot as compared with his master's? There never was such a time of domestic bliss and equality, just as there never was a time when shepherds and shepherdesses wore the pretty little pink and blue and gilt clothes which they wear in Dresden China. I never could get at any proof of the actual existence of this happy state from any of our advanced young aristocratic democrats, or from the ultra-Tories who believe in the golden age, who come to my house or whom I meet elsewhere. They say that women always judge by their emotions, and that they dislike mathematics because it is impossible to extract any sentiment out of Euclid. But I find that men are just as unwilling to be brought to book about their favourite theories concerning the past and the future.

Here, for instance, when I ask for facts from past history to prove that our maids are an ill-used race, and that I ought to let my cook have a pianoforte in the kitchen; or when I examine the historical incidents, or the plays, or the poems, of the real past, I find nothing but illustrations of the greater familiarity that existed between mistress and maid, and between master and man; but that there was any more truly human feeling between the two I can hear of no proofs whatsoever. They associated

more freely, especially at meals, just as the negro slaves in America associated more freely with their masters and mistresses. But there was at the same time a hard element of serfdom in all the domestic relations of our ancestors which was rarely unfelt.

They were familiar, also, because they were all more or less uneducated, up to a recent period. There is always more or less outward equality when mistress and maid are not separated by that culture which, to a certain extent, affects the tastes and feelings of everybody who can pretend to be what we mean by a lady. All this was natural enough, and so far as it is now changed, the change can no more be laid to the charge of the mistress as a fault, than rich folks can be blamed for having their kitchens under ground in town houses, where land is dear, while they are above ground in the country, where land is cheap. This same necessary position of the offices is, in truth, one of the sins which are brought against the unlucky mistress. But how is it to be helped? If you live in a town, where the houses are built in rows, there is no possibility of giving servants the same airy offices and bedrooms which are possible when the house stands on its good-sized plot of ground. Does our advocate of the down-trodden maids suppose that in patriarchal days town servants were better lodged than they are to-day? They always lived below the level of the soil, and slept in cramped little rooms immediately under the roof. I am not saying that offices might not be healthier than they are now, and that there is no room for improvement in the ventilation of the bedrooms, not only of the maids, but of the mistresses also. But to run away with the notion that it is only now that these uncommonly smart young women, who condescend to take our wages, are the victims of an inhuman tyranny in respect to the rooms they inhabit, and where they store their brilliant Sunday costumes, is to sacrifice facts to sensationalism.

It must be remembered, too, what are the homes from which these miserable maids first come; what are the rooms in which they have been used to live ever since they were born. Has our censor the smallest knowledge of the bedrooms of the labourers' cottages; or of the living and bed rooms in cities in which our unfortunate servants have passed their days before they entered upon this degrading servitude? If he has, he must know that he is manufacturing sentimental sorrows of which the objects of his compassion have no knowledge themselves. When we contrast the condition of our maids with some ideal state, in which every detail of life shall be regulated by the dictates of an elevated humanity, we must not forget the details of that domestic life from which our servants emerge, or that in every possible respect, except that of freedom (which they are paid to give up), their personal comforts are greater than they have been accustomed to from their childhood. If the misery of their habitation was what I am here told that it is, why is it that maids never inquire as to the rooms they are to sleep in, or as to the comfort of the offices, when they inquire as to the conditions of the situation

for which they offer themselves. Among the endless reasons, true or false, which they assign for "giving notice to leave," how is it that the kitchen and the bedroom are never the cause that is mentioned, if they are really as sensitive on these points as their advocate would have us think? In reality, our modern sensitiveness in these matters of health and comfort has not yet descended to the level of the servant-maid. We might as reasonably pretend that the odours of a stable are as intolerable to the nostrils of coachmen and their families, who live in a London mews, as they are to the nostrils of their masters.

I remember a little urchin who lived in the East-end of London who was one day sent by his master with a parcel to a place beyond the Belgravian district, and on his way passed through Belgrave and other squares and streets around. "Well!" said his master, on his return, thinking that he would have been deeply impressed with the grandeur of that paradise of the wealthy, "what did you think of all those houses and squares?" "Shouldn't like to live there at no price," said the boy, contemptuously; "why they're all like big, ugly City warehouses!" Just so with the women whom we are charged with lodging in a fashion most distressing to their highly sensitive souls. Our love for ventilation, for fair prospects, for all the dainty things for which our own immediate ancestors cared little or nothing, has not yet reached the hard-working and miserably-lodged multitude from whom our servants are taken; and our dismal grandeur would be to them simply dreariness. "The fresh air and the expanse of her old surroundings" are to the ordinary girl who leaves the country village for London service synonymous with dulness and the absence of all amusement, save horse-play and rough love-making. To the middle-aged and elderly country labourer and his wife, a transportation to London life would be as odious as to his daughters it is delightful. And if it is not delightful, how is it that one sister or cousin after another takes the recommendation of the first of a family who has tried London service, and follows her to this abode of barbarous servitude?

For this is the gist of the charge which our censor brings against the mistress (whom he would always have us imagine to be a "lady") of this present day; that we treat our maids with barbarity. "Take," he says, "the list of what is denied in an *ordinary well-conducted* house." (The italics are mine.) "No followers; no friends in the kitchen; no laughing to be heard upstairs; no romping for young girls, to whom romping is an instinct all the same as with lambs and kittens; no cessation of work, save at meal-times; no getting out for half an hour into the bright sunshine, save on the sly, or after the not always pleasant process of asking leave; and, above all, no education for the fancy or the intellect beyond a dull magazine for Sunday reading, which is held quite sufficient recreation for lonely Betty, moping in the dreary kitchen on the afternoon of her Sunday in." This is only one of the counts in the indictment against us, but it may serve as a specimen of that barbarity of feeling of which the mistresses of to-day are guilty, as compared with the mistresses of the various patriarchal periods now gone by.

Yet, if we want to know what is the degree of tenderness or fellow-feeling with which the affairs of domestic life were conducted in those blissful days, surely our only safe guide is to be found in what we know as to the public legislation concerning the poorer classes. Think then of the old political risings of the multitude, stimulated by the cruel feudal tyrannies. In every instance where we can learn the real causes of the old popular rebellions, it is plain that the social condition of the people was intolerable, and that the relation between rich and poor, which of course included that of mistresses and maids, was as far from any ideal friendliness and hearty good feeling as the most theoretical of young reformers can fancy he misses in the domestic relationships of to-day. Nothing is easier than to imagine the reality of this same patriarchal relationship, until we come to try its possibility in practice or by past history. But we want something more than fancy sketches; and the unhappy truth remains, that feudalism involved the practice of domestic tyranny; and that even till a few years ago, the criminal law of England, directed especially against the offences committed by the lower grades of society, was horrible and bloodthirsty to the last degree. And nothing will ever persuade me that when men and women were hanged and tormented for those offences to which the poor are specially tempted, the legislation of private households was conducted on any more merciful principles.

It is only, in truth, within the last one or two generations that we have learnt this doctrine of the common humanity of masters and servants, and of the comfortable and the suffering classes, and have begun to consider what we are to another. Now, indeed, all over England there is scarcely a town, or a village, or a parish, where this new care for the poor and sick, and this regard for the rights of those who labour with their hands, is not more or less altering the inner constitution of English society. That such an age should also be conspicuous for its harsh treatment of women-servants, old and young, is a notion which could never be maintained by anyone who is conversant with the facts of the case. Indeed it is difficult seriously to reason with a writer who thus concludes his list of the miseries of his hypothetical clients:—"All grinding work and claustral monotony, with the world seen only through the gratings of the area window as the holiday folks flock to and fro—this is English domestic service. And then we wonder that our maids, touched by the fever of this ardent, restless Present, revolt against it, and think their condition hard."

There is an old story about Lord Kenyon, of judicial celebrity, which this picture of our household affairs brings at once to my recollection. He was a very gouty old gentleman, and one day a thief stole his gouty shoes. "Well!" he exlaimed, "the only harm I wish the rascal is that the shoes may fit him." So, too, the only harm I wish this advocate of the maids is that he should be transformed into one of the mistresses, and have the realities of a household cast upon his hands. He would speedily learn, if

he would emerge from his bachelor chambers, and associate with the ladies whom he indiscriminately censures, that he has been making fancy sketches, which have not even the merit of caricatures. "No lady," he tells us, "feels herself degraded by the use of harsh language to her servants, just as no slave-holding lady feels herself degraded if she strikes her slave or orders her out to be flogged." This comes of living in chambers and being waited on by that singular form of womanhood described as a "laundress." Our critic should know that no lady does use harsh language to her servants, and that if in a moment of provocation (for maids are sometimes most grievously irritating) she speaks too harshly, she does feel some sense of shame. To compare the feelings of English *ladies* towards their maids with those of slave-holders towards their slaves is just one of those extravagances which none but the ignorance of a volunteer reformer would have ventured on.

Our censor has clearly gone to some inferior lodging-house-keeper, and has asked her for *her* notions of the way that servants ought to be treated and how they are treated "in an ordinary well-conducted house," and then he has worked up that valuable and trustworthy information into a sensational paper. How otherwise could he have come to the conclusion that in gentlemen's houses of the professional and aristocratic classes, where the mistress may be assumed to be a "lady," those terrible sufferings are endured? "No followers are allowed!" this is the first-named of their lamentable woes. For my part, I hardly ever heard of a house where "followers" were not allowed, unless where the mistress was one of those exceptionable beings who are rigorous to everybody except themselves. Would our Utopian himself like to preside over a household where the maids were permitted an unlimited number of visitors of the male sex? Few ladies that I ever knew have strictly forbidden the visits of "followers" who were engaged to be married at some future time to their maids. And nothing more is possible. Our Utopian does not seem to be aware that it is the custom with English maids to be on friendly terms with two classes of young men, the "walker" and the "follower." The "walker" is simply a recognized companion out of doors, and his vocation is considered perfectly respectable. The recognition of a man as a "follower," on the other hand, implies definite matrimonial intentions. The penny post has now created a third variety of "friend," that is, a correspondent. Young men and servants are now taking to write to one another with no "intentions" whatsoever, but simply for the pleasure of the writing.

"No friends in the kitchen," again, is supposed to be the rule in an "ordinary well-conducted house." For what really "well-conducted house" does such a rule exist; of course with the proviso that they are female friends and respectable friends? For the fact remains that both in town and country not a few servants' "friends" are the very reverse of respectable. That indiscriminate freedom which our reformer recommends is simply an impossibility. Work is work, and not play, and

involves restrictions which are of absolute necessity, and the proof that the maids of English middle and upper society are not the down-trodden creatures whom their patron imagines is to be found in their faces and their appearance. I have been often quite astonished at the number of pretty and cheerful and smiling countenances which one meets with in the servants of families spending (let me say) from five hundred to a couple of thousands a year; and I have heard of such things as very plain servants lamenting over their ugliness to their mistresses on the avowed ground that nobody would want to marry them. To suppose that all these young women are the victims of a grinding tyranny, breaking their hearts because they are forbidden all healthy laughter and out-door exercise, is to make a demand upon our credulity which can scarcely be admitted.

The funniest part, however, of the sins with which we are charged is that which is set down as the worst of them. "Above all," it is said, "we allow no education for the fancy or the intellect beyond a dull magazine for the Sunday reading" of these miserable beings who "have left their friends and associates, their early affections, their treasured memories." "Suppose, for a moment," the indictment goes on, "that Betty was detected in any endeavours after improvement beyond the three R's. Suppose she set herself to learn French or German, to play the piano, to try her skill in paint or crayons. Would it be allowed? I think not. Some employers, and these are by no means the minority, lament that servants are taught even to write. They maintain that the more ignorant the more likely the machine." And no doubt there are many people, not lodging-house keepers, but ladies, who do believe in the virtue of profound ignorance, and even think that servants would be the better if they could neither read nor write. But such persons think precisely the same about all women. They are as cordial in their dislike of the better education of their own daughters in the drawing-room as that of this imaginary Betty in the kitchen. Girls have no business to think, they hold. "It was not so when I was young," they say; "and the freedom of young ladies to-day is perfectly scandalous." But setting aside the dreadful severity with which ladies like these regard anything like the cultivation of their servants' brains, is it not the fact that the value of education, as a means for enabling men and women to accomplish the ordinary work of daily life well, has now spread widely in all the better ranks of English life; and that it is chiefly in the sham genteel that this vulgar jealousy of the education of domestic servants still thrives in all its old coarse luxuriance? But the conception which our critic has formed of what is desirable or possible is ludicrous. "Suppose Betty set herself to learn French or German, to play the piano, to try her skill in paint and crayons." That she would be forbidden to play the piano is certain, but by whom? By her fellow-servants quite as much as by her mistress; they would hold the noise to be intolerable, as unquestionably it would be. But the notion is a dream and not worth serious attention. I am sure that our censor cannot play the pianoforte himself, or he would

realise in some degree the conditions under which Betty would practise, and the fearful and futile process which he advocates. Whether the typical tyrant who makes her life a burden to her would turn her away if she took to learning French or German, and to painting and drawing, is a question which may be left unanswered until we see some signs of a linguistic or æsthetic epidemic among our cooks and housemaids. Only, if by any chance our reformer should hear of the existence of an aspiring soul, bent upon grammars and drawing-books, instead of ribbons and brooches, I do entreat him to let me know of her address, that I may straightway communicate with such a jewel, being satisfied that she would have better brains, and therefore be a better servant, than ninety-nine out of every hundred of those extremely non-literary and unæsthetic damsels who now condescend to work for us for ever-increasing wages.

In fact, the gentleman who has kindly undertaken to admonish the mistresses of England has clearly not made the laws of political economy an element in his studies. It is quite true that there is a degree of coldness of manner, and a deficiency of personal interest, in some English households between the employers and the employed, in some families not of the lodging-house type. This is a fault which can only be mended by a change in the relations and manners of all classes of English life. It is partly the result of that political freedom which none would give up in exchange for the most pleasant of all continental varieties of social intercourse. English political liberty is a compound of singular and apparently contradictory elements, which is known nowhere else in the world. We are democratic, aristocratic, and royalist all in one. Everybody wants to rise, many do rise; our riches are enormous and our poverty terrible. The practical effect has been, united with the effects of our depressing climate, to create a general jealousy among classes, among coteries, and among religious bodies, which chills the free intercourse of one with another. And that wall of mingled shyness, and hauteur, and independence, which exists between master and man, is found standing between mistresses and maids in household affairs as it is everywhere else. In a word, everybody is afraid of being "familiar" with anybody else, lest the inferior should "take advantage" and presume to be offensive.

And when Cato, in his wanderings, leaves his chambers in the Temple, and takes up his abode in some highly respectable boarding or lodging house, in order to gather materials for exposing the miseries of English "serfdom," as he calls it, he mistakes the habits, and manners, and language of the "lady" who keeps his lodging or boarding house for those of the genuine English lady whom she affects to represent. "Quite the lady," is the favourite term which she applies to those with whom she herself associates, and who speak of her also as being "quite the lady." It is, indeed, from persons who are "quite the lady" that this fancy picture of "the mistresses" is sketched. And that it generally applies to those who are "quite the lady" I do not pretend to deny.

But, as I have said, our Cato has not learnt his elements of political

economy, or he would have known that the present scarcity of good maids does not arise from the "revolt" of their class from the "serfdom" under which they groan, but from the growing scarcity of their numbers in proportion to the increase of demand for a supply. It is not that the buxom girls of our country villages cannot wean themselves from the tender affections of home-life, or give up the sweet breezes of the cottage garden, with its open sewer and the neighbouring pond. They are more eager than ever to quit the rural for city life, for servants are scarcer in the country than they are in London itself. It is simply this; that the supply of maids is less than it was wont to be, and that the mistresses who need their services are more numerous than ever. The country population is absolutely diminishing through the absorption of small holdings into large properties, while modern farming, through the use of machinery, requires a diminished supply of labour, and indeed can only prove a paying species of manufacture through resort to the engineer. Country girls, therefore, enter domestic service in fewer numbers than before, and undoubtedly the diminution will go on from year to year as agriculture advances.

Then, again, there is now an ever-increasing variety of openings for young women's labour which were unknown to our fathers. Women are now engaged in many kinds of "trades" to a vast extent, and the jealousy of the men in the same trades is less violent than before. And all those girls employed as shop-accountants, as bookinders, as tailoresses, as telegraph clerks, as upholsterers, as paper-makers, to say nothing of the multitudes which fill the gigantic factories of the North, are just so many maids withdrawn from household service. They do not fly to other employments because they are pining for the pianos and paint-boxes, or are denied the sweet delights of French and German grammars, or because "followers" are not allowed in indiscriminate profusion in the kitchen, but because the wages paid in trades are very good, and they like to be their own mistresses while they are very young. In these cases, the work is quite as hard as in any gentleman's household, and lasts all day, and the rooms the women live in are worse than the kitchens and the attics to which our wicked exclusiveness condemns the wretched cook and housemaid. The real attractiveness is the freedom of the evening, which means the freedom to go out anywhere and everywhere, and in what company it may please them. Bachelor critics, living in chambers and waited on by laundresses, must surely know enough of the life of the London streets and places of amusement to know that freedom such as this is the very worst license that can be imagined for women of the ordinary age and character of domestic servants.

All the while the demand for the maids is increasing in every part of England.* Let us face this fact, that every new house that is built to

* In a late number of the *Guardian*, that most aristocratic of clerical newspapers, in which the clergywomen of England advertise their needs, there were no less than thirty-six ladies' advertisements for cooks, and not one advertisement inserted by a cook wanting a situation.

pay 60*l.* or 70*l.* a year, means a demand for, on the average, two maids in addition to those already at work. In larger houses, the fresh demand is proportionally larger. Here and there, it is true, as the "respectability" or fashionableness of a district fades, there is a diminution in the number of servants that are kept: but this is more than counterbalanced by the increasing luxuriousness of living among the upper middle and professional classes, involving the employment of a number of women-servants which the past generation entirely dispensed with. All this is, in fact, the natural consequence of the gigantic expansion of our national wealth. There are more people than ever in comfortable circumstances, and those who were wealthy are wealthier than before. The practical effect is, that the scarcity in maid-servants is becoming a serious difficulty, and this difficulty is not confined to families whose incomes are small. People raise the wages they offer: but the spell has lost its power. The servants that are at liberty demand the increase; but, to make a guess, those who are willing to engage themselves are not half in number to what they were thirty or forty years ago. It is just as it is with beef and mutton. Every year the nation wants more and more meat, and the increase in supply bears no proportion to the demand. Of course the breeders ask more for their sheep and oxen, and of course they get what they ask.

What is to be the effect upon the household arrangements of English life, it is impossible to foresee. The remedies proposed by our critic are as visionary as the miseries which he supposes to have driven our unhappy maids to "revolt." Not because they are pining for German irregular verbs, or for scales upon the pianoforte, or for the warm and comfortable bedrooms of their cottage homes, but solely because they feel themselves more and more in demand, shall we, the mistresses, find our servants asking more wages, dressing with more and more outrageous smartness, and altogether putting us to our wit's end in order to live as we have hitherto lived. I have no nostrums of my own to recommend for the cure of the evil. I can only entreat everybody to keep as few women-servants as possible, in order that there may be more of them in the market for hiring. Such schemes as those put forth by our reforming bachelor may take their place among other Laputan speculations, being in fact the most comical of all the communist and socialist speculations of the day. If he can do anything in that direction, let him lessen the numbers and the flaunting attractiveness of the innumerable public-houses which make drunkards of nearly half the cooks in England, in various degrees of inveterateness. But, above all, let him not take the lodging or boarding house keeper as a type of the "mistresses" of England.

A Suffering Mistress.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

WHAT are the essential attributes of the Poet's art which cause him to be adorned with the noblest crown it is in the power of humanity to confer? From the period when "the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle" thundered that music which was to reverberate through all time, along the swift revolving centuries, even to our own somewhat prosaic day, we witness an unbroken succession of kings of song, whose thrones have been more permanent than those of the Pharaohs and the Cæsars. What allegiance do we bear, or what sworn fealty have we kept, truer than that which we own towards those who have touched into activity the secret springs of our sensibility? All the grandeurs of birth, and dignities which have blossomed at the touch of monarchs, fail to move our admiration as compared with the simple majesty of genius, which has its rise in higher soil, and whose fruition is not dependent upon the smile of human potentates. One has somewhat bitterly said of good princes, that all their names might be graven within the gem of one ring. The same cannot be said of the royal race of poets. Theirs is not the accidental title to reverence which, with the majority of princes, ceases with the yielding up of life. There is nothing perishable with the poet but that clay which has hemmed him in, and restricted the flights of his burning and ever-aspiring spirit. His soul is immortal in his verse. And he possesses the gift beyond all others of transferring his mind and his heart into his effusions. But a momentary consideration will demonstrate the fact that the poet must, of necessity, have the largest fellowship with humanity. He it is who converses with our veritable selves, and not with our shadows; other men affect us at a point somewhere on the surface—by varied means, but all failing to reach the chord that has its root in the heart's blood, and which vibrates whenever the true singer touches his fellow-man. What matters it whether the poet begs his bread through opulent cities, as the godlike Homer is affirmed to have done, or wields a powerful sceptre like that of David, "the sweet singer of Israel?" The ultimate glory of all is the same, the difference one of degree only. Posterity gives the crown which cannot wither. Again, the poet appears before mankind not only as the most independent teacher, but the most sympathetic—apparently a contradiction in terms. While the least biassed of all teachers who instruct us, he has also the extraordinary power of reaching to the profoundest depths of our nature. We should regard the matter with comparative unconcern if we witnessed the world moved from its orbit beneath the lever of an Archimedes, provided our own gravity were preserved; the astounding achievement would excite little or no

emotion in us; but when the poet gives birth to a new idea, or when he revivifies old ones by the plastic and life-giving touch of his genius, the world is ready with something better than its applause—it reverences and it loves. It is not our intention here to magnify the Poet's office; the unanimous verdict of men, from the remotest ages, has raised him to the highest pinnacle of fame, and in the great Valhalla of the universe there are no dead so illustrious as those in whom was perfected the divine melody of song. The poet is enthroned of man by virtue of a nobility which comes from God. His mission is to show us that to feel nobly is to be great, and to insist, with a lofty eloquence and in an impassioned strain, upon the importance and sacred character of truth, beauty, and virtue. We are not of those who restrict the scope of poetry, and consider it chiefly as a refinement and a delight; that is to do wrong to its majestic spirit, whose wings touch the earth, but whose glorious eyes look into heaven.

All true poets themselves have felt that their marvellous gift meant infinitely more than the mere utterance of melodious numbers. The outer music is but the shadow of that deeper soul-music which originated with the apprehension of a new truth, or a new phase of beauty. He is not a poet who does not possess this strange insight, which distinctly marks off the real singer from that adventitious writer, who, in a happy moment, may throw off verses which a simply cursory examination might induce men to accept as the genuine presentment of poetry. It was the neglect to take due account of this matter which led the supporters of Pope to assume a much higher ground in the famous controversy upon his merits than his claims warranted. Soul, and not criticism, is desiderated in poetry. The foibles of humanity are excellent things as marks for the shafts of novelists and satirists; but the man who would assure us of his divine mission in poetry takes a nobler range than that. He is for ever in search of, and thirsting for, the beauty of the universe, that he may interpret it to others. He brings it to us from the humblest places and in the humblest guises; but his contact, while placing it before our vision, has glorified it, and shown that within it of whose existence we had never dreamed. Has Pope, or any other man who taught us how to think in measured cadence, and delighted us with rhyming intellectualism—ever got beyond didactic assertions, and seized that fire which the real Prometheus of song invariably gains? The poet has impulses, gigantic and irresistible; he has also love, ever operative and inextinguishable. His rhyme is an accident; his poetry is eternal. He finds his divine manna everywhere; he is the high-priest of nature and of God. He sings not so much because it is pleasant, or to direct attention to his own great and wondrous ability, but because he must. While he lives, he cannot avoid it. And the strange faculty of diving into the mystery of things extends to everything he sees around him. From no path where intuition can be of avail is he shut out. In this respect poets might well appropriate to themselves those lines of delightful old George Herbert, who himself possessed some share of the mystic gift:—

For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;
Nothing we see, but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

Now the main charge against the poetry of the Victorian age, if we read it rightly, is this—that however admirable much of it may be as regards finish, it is insignificant in conception. Emerson, who is unable to find any poetic genius in his own country to satisfy him, thus asks despairingly of England—"Shall I find my heavenly bread in the reigning poets? Where is great design in modern English poetry? The English have lost sight of the fact that poetry exists to speak the spiritual law, and that no wealth of description or of fancy is yet essentially new, and out of the limits of prose, until this conviction is reached. Therefore the grave old poets, like the Greek artists, heeded their designs, and less considered the finish. It was their office to lead to the divine sources, out of which all this, and much more, readily springs; and if this religion is in the poetry, it raises us to some purpose, and we can well afford some staidness, or hardness, or want of popular tune in the verses." To say that the standard aimed at by this language is high, is a very inadequate description of it. Emerson's ideal is evidently one that is only reached every five hundred years. He would appear to look for a Homer or an Æschylus with every generation of humanity; forgetting that we are not gods, but only summed up into one with the fulness of time—as Shakspeare succeeds to the great ancients after the lapse of centuries of mediocrity. But is it true that the age has exhibited no design in poetry? Did not Wordsworth exhibit any, in spite of his stuttering articulation—a helplessness probably partly induced by his excess of spiritual vision? Are Browning's grapplings with magnificent subjects to be accounted altogether as failures? As for Tennyson, he has, it must be owned, never failed in anything, for he has never overweighted himself. He is the perfect singer of the time. Yet he would fall under the reproach of Emerson—if it be a reproach—that he gives the age what it asks for, instead of striving after loftier ideas. Sympathizing, however, to a certain extent with the position assumed by the distinguished American essayist, we must admit that what we want is not so much the laborious poet as the emotional. Tennyson is undoubtedly both, but by no means in the same degree. His melody is stately and rich, but not overwhelming. He delights by grace, but never swells by passion. The light of consummate art gleams forth from all he does, but his moments of high exaltation of soul are very rare.

The contrary is the case with regard to the poet whose name is prefixed to this article. She, at any rate, has demonstrated what emotional poetry really means, in contradistinction to the poetry of simple art; and it cannot be said, either, that she has altogether come short in the matter of design—the design which stamps the greatest poets. Sensibility and

intuition, those endowments of supereminent importance to individuals whose greatness is to grow in proportion to their understanding and interpretation of human life, were in her united in a degree seldom witnessed. Her history, sparse as it is in facts as yet given to the world, is one of intense interest. It is well known how that existence with her was almost one long round of continuous suffering. Her retired life sent her more closely to the companionship of the dead, though she had naturally an eager and insatiable thirst after knowledge. Her own sufferings could never daunt her in the pursuit of learning, and accordingly we find that as a scholar she was distinguished for the ripest erudition. Her account of the Greek Christian poets will serve to show in what direction a large portion of her studies lay; and it is in this work, we imagine, that we discern what was her own ideal of the true nineteenth-century poet. "We want the touch of Christ's hand upon our literature," she says, "as it touched other dead things; we want the sense of the saturation of Christ's blood upon the souls of our poets, that it may cry *through* them in answer to the ceaseless wail of the Sphinx of our humanity, expounding agony into renovation. Something of this has been perceived in art when its glory was at the fullest. Something of a yearning after this may be seen among the Greek Christian poets, something which would have been much with a stronger faculty." This idea recurs again and again in different forms through her works. She yearns for poetry to be sanctified, to be made holy. This is how it was with the grand old Greeks, and how it should be now. It is because poetry is losing its sense of its intimate relations to God that it is in danger of dying out. And how is the sacredness of poetry to be truly apprehended? By the method which Mrs. Browning adopted, of looking boldly into the human heart, and reading it fearlessly and trustfully. "Foole, saide my muse to mee, looke in thine hearte, and write." And poetry thus produced is that which preserves an everlasting freshness and fragrance. The human heart first, and Nature afterwards, were the teachers at whose feet our poet learned the deep lessons she subsequently transmitted to her species. By these were fostered in her a tenderness which breathes through all her writings, and whose spirit is mirrored therein as the blue sky mirrors itself upon the bosom of the deep.

To her, also, it may be said that poetry brought "its own exceeding great reward." In the company of the deep-browed poets, the monarchs of all the ages, she found consolation as well as intellectual life. With the fellowship of Æschylus, and Pindar, and Plato, and Sophocles, and Euripides, of the olden world, and Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspeare, of the modern, the burden of existence, that would otherwise have been insupportable, became comparatively light with her. When but a girl she was able to read in the original some of the greatest masterpieces of antiquity; and indeed almost her first work was an excellent translation of the *Prometheus* of her great favourite amongst the poets. Her introduction to and intimate acquaintance with Greek literature was in a large

measure due to the influence of her well appreciated and cherished tutor, Boyd, the blind author of a work upon the Greek Fathers, to whom she addresses some of the best of her Sonnets. But though the Greek was the language which afforded her the most delight, her acquaintance was not confined to this, her knowledge of the Hebrew being also most intimate, whilst the Bible in that language was amongst her most continuous studies. Little would men suspect in meeting her for the first time that within that slight and spiritual frame burned so much of the celestial fire. It was, perhaps, in consequence of the chance introduction of some literary question, that it was discovered how much learning existed beneath so unpretending an exterior. She was like those branches which hang nearest the ground because of the prodigious crop of luscious fruit which is not always at first apparent to the eye. The love of knowledge, however, deep and lasting though it remained, never subdued or modified in her that great gift of the poet, a burning earnestness or enthusiasm. At the last, as at the beginning of life, the flame shone brightly. It was no flickering, artificial light, kept alive because the poet must simulate an earnestness that is not possessed; but it left an impress and a character upon her work which could not be mistaken. Her song resembled that which fable has associated with the name of Sappho—a living voice, eloquent with passion. Something of her own intensity of feeling breathes in the lines when she speaks of

> Electric Pindar, quick as fear,
> With race-dust on his cheeks, and clear
> Slant startled eyes that seem to hear
>
> The chariot rounding the last goal,
> To hurtle past it in his soul.
> And Sappho, with that gloriole
>
> Of ebon hair on calmëd brows—
> O poet-woman! none foregoes
> The leap, attaining the repose.

Had song been less to her than indissolubly bound up with her life, one thinks she must have wavered in her devotion to it. But in truth her appetite grew by what it fed on, and the weakness of the body only led to a further development of soul. We like to think of her as accepted amongst the gods for her power over the divine art, and yet dear in her human relations for the exercise of a tenderness and a sympathy associated with the sex which make home a second paradise.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was born in London, in the year 1809, and was the daughter of Mr. Barrett, an English country gentleman. At a very early age she had written much that was worthy of living, though it was kept from all eyes save those of her father, whom she mentions in the first collected edition of her poems as "my public and my critic." Miss Mitford has described her as a "slight, delicate figure, with a shower of dark curls falling on each side of a most expressive face, large tender eyes, richly fringed by dark eye-lashes, and a smile like a sunbeam."

She possessed a grace and delicacy which almost defied representation. With so perfect a mental and spiritual organization it was not given to her to be equally blessed in the physical. Always frail, it was her misfortune further to endanger her existence in 1837 by the bursting of a blood-vessel on the lungs. The extremest care preserved her life, though the incident was succeeded by a long period of weakness and suffering. Two years afterwards, before she had quite recovered, she was again assailed by misfortune, experiencing the keenest anguish on witnessing the death of her favourite brother, who was drowned at Torquay. A long period of danger followed this catastrophe, and when she was at length able to be removed to her father's house, it was only to become an invalid, with the prospect of a life couch-ridden to its close. For seven long years this period of seclusion lasted; but during that time Miss Barrett devoured all the books she could bring within her reach, and cultivated the art which was afterwards to bring her immortality. In 1846, that is, when she was in her thirty-seventh year, came the principal event of her life—viz. her marriage with Mr. Browning. He bore her away to Italy, where softer skies brought back that health which had so long forsaken her in her native land. The union was most felicitous, and the influence upon Mrs. Browning's genius must have been great. On this influence, however, we cannot now enlarge, for the husband of the author of *Aurora Leigh* still lives. Mrs. Browning died in Florence in 1861, after testifying, in some of the noblest strains ever penned, her extraordinary devotion to the land of her adoption.

One beneficial result of the comparative seclusion of Mrs. Browning's life was the habit of introspection which it induced, and which, fortunately for posterity, led to the production of some of the finest subjective poetry extant. We can understand to some extent her admiration for Wordsworth, after noticing the tenor of her own existence, which ran in somewhat similar grooves. Where would have been all that wealth of ancient lore which, while not destroying the freshness of her poetry, has added to it a classic grace and a finish most admirable and remarkable? The excellent balancing of her faculties and acquirements had a most happy effect on her work, which is always good in conception, however defective it may occasionally be in expression. Her intellect was keen and comprehensive, not deficient even in masculinity; and it was only in her theories—witness, for instance, references to social questions in her greatest poem—that she occasionally failed to exhibit that solidity of judgment, or practicality of judgment rather, which is generally associated with the opposite sex. As a poet she undoubtedly looked at men and things from the intensely personal view, in the sense, we mean, of individuality. Instead of taking a broad sweep as Dante—whom we conceive as being merged in the mighty conceptions of his spirit—she had rather that other gift of the poet, of making herself, the individual, apparent in all her writings. It is this quality which adds so greatly to the force of her lyrical effusions—indeed, without this quality no poet had better attempt the writing of lyrics. So far as we take this form of poetry, we under-

stand its force and value to be that it is an appeal from one individual mind to another; and the most successful lyrics have been those which have excited in us a particular, and not a general, interest. A momentary reflection upon the lyrics of Burns and Béranger will attest the truth of this assertion. It was a portion of Mrs. Browning's strength—and by no means an unimportant one—that she was able to achieve this result. Who will not continually feel indebted to her for many of her shorter poems, which have revealed so much of the human heart in them, and awakened impulses and sensations which have delighted and cheered the spirit? That was a happy observation passed upon her by one critic, who described her as Shakspeare's daughter. The same large-heartedness which pertained to the great dramatist is shown by the later poet. The benevolent eye looks out on men and nature with the same imperishable love. If the world has at any time possessed its ideal poets, she is worthy to be counted one of them.

From her earliest years, as will, indeed, have been discovered already, Mrs. Browning appears to have had the passion for books—a passion which is referred to more than once in *Aurora Leigh*—and her studious habits, as well as that of writing, were encouraged by her father. Her early years are a reproach to any who, with stronger health and equal opportunities, take no heed to the storing and assimilation of knowledge. In all that we read of her subsequent works, the value of those early habits of insatiable study is apparent. Knowledge has made the full mind, and the richness of the stores is not without effect upon her original compositions. How must her fragile frame have thrilled when, in the course of her reading, as she says—

> Because the time was ripe,
> I chanced upon the poets.

Doubtless, the slumbering possibilities in her nature were touched by this, and it must have been with wonder that the lights of the great bards first flashed across her vision: something, it would have appeared to her, of the nature of coming into a priceless inheritance. And the time arrived when all that she had acquired became of real moment to her. Let those who would despise erudition in a poet place Mrs. Browning beside other female poets, and see how they lose by comparison—not only in that original power in which she was undoubtedly stronger. The poet cannot gain one fact too many; the poorest and commonest coinage which he receives from other mints may be transmuted into the purest gold in his own. The best minds have recognised this, and have laboured diligently after the perfection of knowledge, feeling that none are so gifted, even the gods, but that they may learn somewhat from men.

To attempt to pass in review all that Elizabeth Barrett Browning has left as her legacy for future ages is not our intention. We purpose, however, to examine some of her works individually before offering any criticisms of a general character upon her genius. *A Drama of Exile*, which was a comparatively early production, is acknowledged to possess great

sublimity in its ideas, though the conception as a whole is asserted to be a failure. For ourselves we were struck with the poetic wealth which it displays, and failure as applied to it must be taken in the comparative form. There are those whom the majestic Milton has not satisfied by his *chef-d'œuvre*; but the most fastidious will admit that if he has not touched the highest heavens he has come very near them. Of course, it is not pretended for a moment that the *Drama of Exile* stands forth as magnificent a conception as *Paradise Lost*, which Mrs. Browning's poem compels us to bring to memory, being upon the same subject; neither can it be said to be perfectly original, coming after that epic: but in the later poem we find much in point of sustained language which reminds us of Milton's work. Milton's feet were more firmly set, and he has the stately march of a conqueror. Mrs. Browning can only in this work show her possibilities, not her ultimate perfection. This is an excellent touch, due, probably, partly to the fact that it was written by a woman; Gabriel, addressing Lucifer, says:—

> If thou hadst gazed upon the face of God
> This morning for a moment, thou hadst known
> That only pity fitly can chastise:
> Hate but avenges.

These lines, put into the mouth of Adam, are also exquisite:—

> The Highest being the Holy and the Glad,
> Whoever rises must approach delight
> And sanctity in the act.

But for a passage of unfaltering eloquence, and one instinct with true poetic fire, take the address of Adam to Eve after the twain have left Paradise. To demonstrate Mrs. Browning's power over blank verse, we cannot refrain from citing a portion of it:—

> Raise the majesties
> Of thy disconsolate brows, O well-beloved,
> And front with level eyelids the To come,
> And all the dark o' the world!
> * * * * *
> Thy love
> Shall chant itself its own beatitudes
> After its own life-working. A child's kiss,
> Set on thy sighing lips, shall make thee glad;
> A poor man served by thee, shall make thee rich;
> A sick man helped by thee, shall make thee strong;
> Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
> Of service which thou renderest. Such a crown
> I set upon thy head,—Christ witnessing
> With looks of prompting love—to keep thee clear
> Of all reproach against the sin foregone,
> From all the generations which succeed.
> Thy hand, which plucked the apple, I clasp close,
> Thy lips, which spake wrong counsel, I kiss close,
> I bless thee in the name of Paradise,
> And by the memory of Edenic joys

Forfeit and lost,—by that last cypress tree
Green at the gate, which thrilled as we came out,—
And by the blessed nightingale which threw
Its melancholy music after us,—
And by the flowers, whose spirits full of smells,
Did follow softly, plucking us behind
Back to the gradual banks and vernal bowers
And fourfold river-courses—By all these,
I bless thee to the contraries of these,
I bless thee to the desert and the thorns,
To the elemental change and turbulence,
And to the roar of the estranged beasts,
And to the solemn dignities of grief,—
To each one of these ends,—and to their END
Of Death and the Hereafter.

It will be apparent that for one who had not yet attained the full maturity of her powers to write like this there must have been a great future in store. Whatever deductions might have to be made as regards the want of stupendousness in her conceptions, there was still sufficient breadth in her earlier work to prove that there were scarcely any heights to which she might not subsequently attain. In the chorus of Eden spirits which comes into the *Drama of Exile* there is an abundance of lyrical music and power, given in metres which have since been most successfully adopted by other poets. In another poem, *The Seraphim*, we observe the same noble moral glow which pervaded the drama to which we have just alluded. The time of the poem is that of the Crucifixion, and the sublime tragedy is handled with a delicacy and at the same time a force as nearly befitting so lofty a subject as we can well imagine. The deep religious spirit which pervaded Mrs. Browning led her frequently to the choice of topics in some way connected with the great verities of the Christian religion, in which she had a profound and intense belief, as will have been gathered, not only from repute, but from the attitude assumed in her works, by anyone who has made acquaintance with them. The faults which are principally to be noted in her earliest poems are those related to art, a knowledge of which rarely comes at the outset to the most precocious. Before art can be exhibited, there must not only be capacity, but work accomplished—work compared with previous work, and each stage showing an advance upon that which went before. Although Mrs. Browning was never at any period of her career as distinguished for finish as she was for other and more important qualities, there is yet a considerable difference in this respect between her first effusions and her later lyrics. Her strength and pathos, however, generally overwhelm all other considerations in the reader's mind, whose attention is seized and retained by personal influence. It is the poet who does not throw himself entirely into his creations who is mostly eminent for finish. The value of the diamond to him consists in the way in which it is set, and he would prefer a stone of inferior water if it exhibited excess of polish to one much more massive if some touches of the rough still adhered to it. Yet, we are by no means contending that

great poets are not also great in art. We are speaking only of finish, which is but a portion of art, and that not the most important. In art are combined the larger qualities of fitness, proportion, and truth, which are the masters of finish the world over. In all these three points Mrs. Browning was the successful artist; and he who objected to her because he discovered here and there a false rhyme or a defective line, would have lost sight of the towering mountain ahead in stumbling over a molehill. Having said thus much, let us at the same time frankly admit that the sense of adequateness is not strongly perceived in the lengthy poems to which we have adverted. We discover it in the highest degree in *Paradise Lost*, and ought, of course, to find it in all work which is the matured result of a grand imagination—work that has attained solidity by frequent communing with and lifelong study of the bases on which it was grounded. So, had these poems of Mrs. Browning's been written at a later stage the beneficial result would have been apparent, in this one point at any rate upon which we are insisting. The unevenness in her execution would also have been considerably diminished, a matter of no small importance in conceptions of that nature. But take the poem and the drama as they stand, with all their faults, and we repeat there is still room for a feeling of genuine admiration over the result achieved.

Mrs. Browning's chosen field of study was the one productive of her first work of great importance, viz., her rendering of the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus. She had most probably been incited to this work by the companion, before mentioned, of her studies in Greek. It is a deed of no small magnitude for a young lady to accomplish this at all, and might well daunt even deeper students; but she had a profound appreciation of the old poet, and brought her love for his sublime tragedy to bear upon the task. It was scarcely to be expected that she would obtain a complete success, and she herself admitted that the translation was defective. She accordingly recast it, substantially changing the form of many passages. Though on reading it we gain the impression that it is a considerably Anglicised Greek drama, the vigour exhibited, and the true poetical fervour which is thrown around it, make it very welcome. The vocabulary of passion employed is rich and varied, whilst the rhythm affords scope for considerable poetic effects. In this, as in her other translations, she desired it to be understood that her one great idea was to catch the spirit of the original. The choruses are excellent, and possess, in addition to much music, all the fire which is essential should burn in poems which have for their aim the depicting of the ecstasies and the writhings of passion. *A Lament for Adonis*, from Bion, is very happy and full of a warm imagery, and indicates, besides, the instinct and apprehension of the original poet.

The genius of Mrs. Browning had two sides—the lyric and the dramatic: she had little special gift for either the idyllic or the epic. For the idyllic she was not either sufficiently didactic or intransitively calm; for the epic her emotions were too keen and her sensibilities too quick and

lively. Her longest poem has nothing of the epic about it, being in fact neither more nor less than a series of dramatic scenes. It does not profess to give the triumphant progress of a hero or a heroine, but to unfold to us the inner life of its principal character. In a word, it is an Autobiography in verse.

Considering first her lyrical capabilities—for it is really by means of these that her immortality is most secured—we are bound to say that they are of the highest order. Campbell was a great artist, but on reading his lyrics we are struck with the fact that they are in a large measure the product of a skilled mind rather than of a real singer. He has been succeeded by Tennyson in verbal perfection; but to our mind neither of these true poets is the equal of Mrs. Browning in the matter of the lyric. Yet so high is our estimate of the authors of *Hohenlinden* and *Locksley Hall* that no other poets in these later times, save the subject of this article and two others, can be put into comparison with them for real lyrical power. One of the two latter is Shelley, the other Burns, who is the superior of Shelley, and indubitably at the head of his race: and for this reason, that he put more of his heart into his verse. Soul, not culture, thus gave us the best of our lyric poets. It is on the ground assigned in regard to Burns that we should give Mrs. Browning the next place amongst the moderns for lyrical genius, though these two poets were as wide asunder as the poles in all other respects. Let the reader dispassionately compare the lyrics which have been written by our principal singers during the past two or three generations. He will find, we think, that the position we have assumed is one which can be maintained. Shelley undoubtedly exhibits the true lyrical fire, but his poems are not so varied as those of Mrs. Browning; while her pathos is deeper than his and that of all his compeers. His imagination was, perhaps, somewhat higher, and he soared into cloud-land more frequently; but the heart, which gave Burns his power, was the strength of Mrs. Browning. Shelley was almost too ethereal, too spiritual, and the consequence was that the human was somewhat overshadowed. His sensibility was of the keenest description, and many of his lyrics bear testimony to the truth of his averment that

> Most men
> Are cradled into poetry by wrong;
> They learn in suffering what they teach in song.

One cannot help thinking that Shelley's natural place in the world would be that of a spiritualized Spenser; and if that calm could have come to him which alone can furnish the poet with the opportunity he ought to have, there is no knowing but he might have given us a work rich enough to justify this fancy of him. As it is, between writhings and groanings, the paroxysms of a much-tried spirit, he wrote those exquisite lyrics and poems, which we should be indeed loth to lose from our literature. Mrs. Browning had not the intense naturalness of Burns, and though both felt acutely, yet in character and temperament they had nothing in common.

But, as we have said, the mainspring of the power of both was in the heart. They worked upon different principles and under different circumstances. Burns was moved to joy or sorrow by the impressions he drew from outward nature; Mrs. Browning, on the contrary, found that nature received a tinge of melancholy or happiness from her own emotions. They are thus perfect contrasts in everything except the one great endowment of genius. And if the word epigrammatic may be used to denote that power which Burns had of describing an object in nature or a human emotion, Mrs. Browning was certainly not so epigrammatic as the northern singer. Leigh Hunt once referred to our poet as the sister of Alfred Tennyson, but the relation does not strike us as of the happiest. It does not set in the proper light either relatively to the other. In the first place, there is a good deal that is feminine (in the best sense) about the genius of Tennyson, whilst occasionally there is that in Mrs. Browning's poetry more masculine than anything to be found in the Poet Laureate. In truth, we do not see much good in these comparisons at all; the happiest expression yet given utterance to is the one previously mentioned, which describes her as Shakspeare's daughter. We are able to see some meaning in this; we can feel that her genius stands in the same relation to that of the transcendent poet of the world as does a daughter to her parent. The lesser is the true miniature representation of the greater.

The precise order in which Mrs. Browning's lyrics were written has never been stated, and it is not possible to arrive at a correct chronology with regard to them by internal evidence. The dates of several, however, are well known: and amongst the earliest of her productions was that entitled *A Vision of Poets*, written in a very attractive, though unusual metre. This vision of men of "foreheads royal with the truth," as beheld in the magnificent temple of poetry, is one of her most successful as well as most graphic conceptions. No words are wasted in painting the portraits; to each of the world-famous men are appropriated but a few lines, yet how telling these are!—

> Shakspeare, on whose forehead climb
> The crowns o' the world: O eyes sublime
> With tears and laughters for all time!

The national poet's eminence was never more felicitously indicated than in these simple words—that is, more of him can be grasped than pages of criticism could accomplish, though the poet's description is by no means exhaustive. Other excellent touches are those devoted to Euripides, Lucretius, "nobler than his mood," Goethe, Chaucer, Milton, Schiller,—

> And Burns, with pungent passionings
> Set in his eyes: deep lyric springs
> Are of the fire-mount's issuings.
>
> And poor, proud Byron, sad as grave
> And salt as life; forlornly brave,
> And quiv'ring with the dart he drave.

And the lesson—it is worthy of the *Vision*. Is it well for the poet to

be born to suffer, and to die unrecognised and unrewarded? Verily so; he has lived for truth and beauty—scarcely two as the author tells us—and should therefore be content. His experience has been, after all, better than that of the lower man, with lower pains and less transporting pleasures. He will be crowned, but crowned with no ordinary crown. His highest glory is to *know*, however the end is gained. And after death he will have two lives—one in the Beyond and one in the Past, in the songs he has left behind him. Thus the end of the whole matter is reached, the conclusion being that "Knowledge by suffering entereth, and Life is perfected by Death." The lesson in some of its applications is not new; the martyrs to truth in whatever shape have always taught it, but now the poet-martyrs teach it. For they are martyrs too frequently; and that is not martyrdom simply which affects or destroys the body. The spirituality of Mrs. Browning's nature shines in this poem; she affords some clue as to her ideal. It is a strain singularly pure and lofty, and shows a developing imagination which augured powerfully and well for succeeding work. Its burden is more cheerful than that of *The Two Voices*, a poem cast in the same mould, and to which the thought of the reader inevitably reverts while reading the *Vision*. Its meaning is not to be restricted alone to the class of beings with whom it deals upon the surface, for the conclusion is a triumphant one for the whole of the human race, whose ends of life are also made sacred by the same method. Having read this poem, one rises with a more hopeful heart to engage in the world's conflict.

We pass on from such poems as *The Romaunt of Margret* and *Isobel's Child* with reluctance, for there is much in them both of concentrated strength and music which we could wish to have pointed out. Some have chosen them as well nigh the happiest efforts of the poet, and they certainly are amongst the most beautiful notes of her lyre. Even the rhymes seem to possess a melancholy befitting the subjects, whilst the mere repetition of the words "Margret, Margret," attains to real pathos in the cunning hands of the writer in the former poem. A singular affection for subjects which have in them the deepest anguish and suffering was early apparent in Mrs. Browning. The spirit very seldom danced, though when it did, the music was as true and fitting as the funeral dirge, which she more frequently gives us. Wandering amongst her poems is like standing in the forest alone, with the wailing wind and the flying rain as the only assurances of an existence sublimer than our own. But the profoundest depth of our heart is reached thereby. We would there had been no need for the lament and the sorrow, and yet we would not have lost those mysterious thrills of the soul which her power has evoked. We must follow the poet in her quest of truth, follow her wherever she leads us, for by these means shall we emerge out of the thick folds of darkness into the broad light of day. This is one reason why we have such an admiration for, and attachment to her genius. Wherever she leads us, it is to make us better. Does she show us the

poor whom we too often oppress? It is that we may know wherein we have erred, and that in the future our hands may be washed clean from oppression and cruelty. Does she sometimes apparently darken the spirit? It is only to make it reflect so that it may endeavour to grope through the mysteries of life and nature up to God. Intellectual doubts are frequently disposed of in a very summary method, and one which has at sundry times in the world's history been most effective; she sees their lowering forms gradually attenuate and disperse before the calm eye of Faith. Whatever of evil was rampant in the world, this could not be crushed out of her. To her, it was not always necessary to understand all the wrong that she beheld; she saw it, and hated it. She has helped men by her writings to do something towards making an end of it. She has been a mouthpiece for the poor and miserable; the light of love beams on her forehead and dwells in her eyes; the Divine feeling of compassion has swelled in her bosom, and for this reason, as for others, she has her place with those who are beloved of the human race.

In proceeding to indicate what we consider some of Mrs. Browning's most admirable lyrics, we must decidedly name among the chief, *The Rhyme of the Duchess May*. This ballad has in it not only a quaintness which conveys us back to the days of chivalry, but a strength of expression which is generally absent in the productions of that period. It bears unquestionably the stamp of genius. The poet for the time has completely forgotten herself, projecting her thoughts so far into the subject as to realise a most intense and tragic phase of human existence. There is the ring of melancholy in the lines, which is deepened by the constant recurrence of the allusion to the passing bell. The whole conception is well worked out, and the powers of the writer are not frittered away before the close of the poem, as is too frequently the case with lyrics of similar length. The perfection of what is touching is reached in *Bertha in the Lane*, where the dying maiden tells with simple pathos the incident which has led to her own heart's breaking. There is nothing forced here; indeed, the language in some passages does not rise higher than that of actual conversation, the only adventitious poetical aid given to the setting of the story being that of the rhyme, which again is well chosen. The author has wisely avoided the slightest straining after effect, leaving the natural pathos in the story to accomplish the end which she desires. *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* is a romance which almost necessarily challenges comparison with *Locksley Hall*, and what is strange about the two, Mrs. Browning has, in our judgment, most truthfully drawn the male characters, while Tennyson has been the happier in all else in his poem. The poet who loved Lady Geraldine has many excellences, but his vocation has not properly imbued him with the kingly spirit, and he fails in the strength and robustness which we should expect. Besides, we quickly grow indignant that he should be so slow in reading that which should have been patent to his eyes. The character of the Earl is well drawn, his natural dignity being caught for us in the few lines devoted to his limning—

Just a good man made a proud man,—as the sandy rocks that border
A wild coast, by circumstances, in a regnant ebb and flow.

The old story of love springing where it listeth, unforced and unexpected, is once more dilated upon, and brought in this instance to a satisfactory consummation.

But let us pass on to *The Cry of the Children*, one of the noblest remonstrances against the greed and oppression of mankind which have ever been uttered. Its intense pathos could only surely spring from a woman's heart, wounded in its love for the human by deeds enough to make the heavens blush. We have heard something of the sorrows of the factory children, but these lines have brought them close to us, and compelled us to feel that the poorest and weakest are our brethren and sisters. When was the anguish of a young spirit grasped so clearly as in the following lines, which are supposed to be spoken by the little workers amongst the iron wheels—those wheels which roll on ruthlessly, scarcely giving time for rest?—

Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight's hour of harm,
"Our Father," looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly, for a charm.
We know no other words except "Our Father,"
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within His right hand, which is strong.
"Our Father!" If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
"Come and rest with Me, my child."

England has cleared herself from something of the reproach contained in the poem from whence these lines are taken, and by God's grace she will be, perhaps, wholly free from stain in the (let us hope not far distant) future. There are other poems which exhibit the same large sympathetic heart as the one founded upon the miseries of the factory children, such as *Mother and Poet*, and *The Cry of the Human*, which latter reminds the world how many

Lips say, "God be pitiful,"
Who ne'er said, "God be praised!"

She felt as did that other poet of the poor, of whom we are proud, for all who are in any way crushed or bruised by the pressure of society and of social distinctions, or of social misfortunes. To be despised or to be sad was the way to be sure of her deepest interest. This is a trait which will serve to keep her memory green, for who among us will willingly let die the names of our philanthropists—those who have been genuine in the active and written expressions of their sympathy? One likes to linger over the point how lofty genius stops down with more sincerity from its high estate to acknowledge fellowship with the mean and the wretched, than do the *quasi*-philanthropists who consider that

the claims of humanity are met by the doling out of a pittance to any who may appeal to their condescension. Not always, yet very often, the great intellect is the index to the generous and simple spirit.

To mark the range of our author's powers, compare such poems as *A Child's Thought of God* with those on Napoleon, or *Casa Guidi Windows*. How sweetly and beautifully the first-named closes!—

> God is so good, He wears a fold
> Of heaven and earth across His face,
> Like secrets kept, for love, untold.
>
> But still I feel that His embrace
> Slides down by thrills, through all things made,
> Through sight and sound of every place:
>
> As if my tender mother laid
> On my shut lips her kisses' pressure,
> Half waking me at night, and said,
> "Who kiss'd you through the dark, dear guesser?"

This is better theology than the orthodox damnation with which we were terrified in our youth by narrow-minded bigots, who have probably ruined many a soul by preaching that God is powerful and vindictive, instead of God is love. We want more of the teaching which we get in the pages of this woman-poet. Then note how from these sweet and happy thoughts we can turn to matter more bold and striking, as in *The Dead Pan*, which has a truly musical ring with it; *Cowper's Grave*, an immortal tribute to a suffering singer; *Crowned and Buried*, an appreciation of the great and deathless Napoleon; but, above all, in this class of effort, to *Casa Guidi Windows*. This poem exhibits Mrs. Browning in her greatest intellectual strength. The fabric is solid and enduring; the poem as sustained as anything which she has written, and more perfect than her remaining longer one. Clearly her feeling was in this work as well as her imagination, and the combined powers have given us something which cannot fail to live.

Everyone who knows anything at all of the poet is familiar with her great love for Italy, one of the strongest passions of her life. It is in this poem that she chiefly unfolds to the world her feelings with regard to the emancipation of that country. From the Casa Guidi windows at Florence, her favourite city, she watched the struggle for liberty in which Italy engaged against Austria, and the assistance rendered towards this object by Napoleon III., without whom probably it would never have been accomplished. It was in praise of this champion that she wrote some of her most impassioned strains. She knew the deceased Emperor at his best, when there seemed strongly upon him an enthusiasm for the cause which he had espoused that would be sure to go straight to the heart of the generous and impulsive poet; and in her utterances, therefore, she was lavish and unrestrained. To many in England this over-warmth of feeling will seem strange, but till we have felt all the bitterness which she felt for a degraded nation, and have seen the conqueror arise to lift her from

the dust, we cannot say how deep our gratitude might be to such conqueror, his subsequent career notwithstanding. Our concern, however, is with the poems, including those entitled *Poems before Congress*, in which Mrs. Browning set forth that patriotism which, to be true, she claimed, should not be manifested in behalf of one's own country alone. In *Casa Guidi Windows* the imagery is rich and the language flowing, worthy partners of the idea which engrossed the mind. In the course of the poem beautiful legends of Savonarola and Michael Angelo are laid under contribution to heighten the charms of the song of their country; and the closing pages of the poem contain a charming episode in relation to the poet's infant son, whom she calls her young Florentine, he having been born in that city. She has thus connected her native land and that of her adoption more closely together, and claims nearer relationship to Italy than she ever felt before, through the link furnished in her child. It is impossible to do more than refer to the extraordinary wealth and strength of imagery which the poem contains; but as some justification for the high opinion we have expressed concerning it, we cannot refrain from extracting the passage in which, as before mentioned, the poet addresses her son:—

> The sun strikes through the windows, up the floor;
> Stand out in it, my own young Florentine,
> Not two years old, and let me see thee more!
> It grows along thy amber curls, to shine
> Brighter than elsewhere. Now, look straight before,
> And fix thy brave blue English eyes on mine,
> And from thy soul, which fronts the future so,
> With unabashed and unabated gaze,
> Teach me to hope for, what the angels know
> When they smile clear as thou dost. Down God's ways,
> With just alighted feet, between the snow
> And snowdrops, where a little lamb may graze,
> Thou hast no fear, my lamb, about the road;
> Albeit in our vain-glory we assume
> That, less than we have, thou hast learnt of God.
> Stand out, my blue-eyed prophet!—thou, to whom
> The earliest world-day light that ever flowed,
> Through Casa Guidi windows chanced to come!
> Now shake the glittering nimbus of thy hair,
> And be God's witness that the elemental
> New springs of life are gushing everywhere.

It is, we imagine, almost universally accepted that to write the Sonnet excellently is about the most difficult performance in the domain of poetry. At any rate, it is the one branch of the art least frequently successfully achieved. It is questionable whether we have more than three or four English poets who can be credited with the highest execution in this respect. But to these three or four must be added the name of Mrs. Browning. After Shakspeare, we should be inclined to maintain that she is the equal of any. For proof of this, let the reader turn to her

Sonnets from the Portuguese, which, under a disguised name, are her own sonnets. To us they seem to fulfil all the requisites of the sonnet, including strength, imagery, sweetness, proportion or art, and massiveness. They are certainly equal to all of Wordsworth's and most of Milton's. The sonnet, with the great poets, has been generally most successful when personal to themselves. They appear to have caught their passion and confined it within bounds, so that the sonnet, in master hands, becomes, as it were, "foursquare to all the winds that blow." There is no weak corner—all is solid and compact.

These sonnets by Mrs. Browning bear upon them her own very distinct individuality, and, as a means of setting her truly before her readers, are more explanatory than any other of her writings. Let us study them for a moment. In the first, the poet presents us with a picture of her mind at the period when she looked for Death as the release from a mortal imprisonment, whose shadow was laid deeply athwart her. The sonnet is exceedingly fine, and is as follows :—

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young ;
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair ;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove :—
"Guess now who holds thee?" "Death," I said. But there,
The silver answer rang, "Not Death, but Love!"

Then comes a description of love, whose power nothing can conquer, and which man is helpless to destroy. Spirits "but vow the faster for the stars." Yet, following on, we come to a declaration of her own unworthiness, on the part of the singer, to be thus discovered and made blessed. The gloom is still too heavy about her, and will not be dispersed. She is fain to cry—

What hast *thou* to do,
With looking from thy lattice lights at me,
A poor, tired, wand'ring singer, singing through
The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree ?
The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the dew,—
And Death must dig the level where these agree.

How beautiful and how pathetic are these lines! And the strain is continued, with no diminution of sadness, through several succeeding sonnets. The soul has found its counterpart, yet bids it begone ; the proffered happiness is too great for it ; it must not be. "Go from me!" is now the cry ; but the spirit is evidently yielding to the conqueror, for it adds :

The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine,
With pulses that beat double.

The record of life progresses, and the great argument is discussed, "Can it be right to give what I can give?" Witness the seventh and immediately subsequent sonnets, for their dissection of the love passion, as it thrills through and permeates the being. Truly autobiographical, indeed, are these confessions; the seal of genuine experience is upon each one with its alternating hopes and fears, and its unfolding of a woman's heart. Surely finer subjective poetry than this was never written. The poet speaks to us without veils, and we listen eagerly to the revelation. From the sadness and gloom we emerge at length into daylight; the cypress has yielded to the rose. Love is justified; it asks for and gives all. Troths are exchanged, and the singer has given up the grave for the sake of him who is now to be her life. We then see the plan of the whole work. First, we had the soul expecting death, then Life revivified by Love; then the grave put behind the soul; and lastly, comes the sequel, the marriage of those whose history has been traced in the series of poems now about to conclude. Thus the poet muses, as she stands midway in her existence—the past behind her, the blissful future immediately in view:—

"My future will not copy my fair past."
I wrote that once; and, thinking at my side
My ministering life-angel justified
The word by his appealing look upcast
To the white throne of God, I turned at last,
And there, instead, saw thee, not unallied
To angels in thy soul! Then I, long tried
By natural ills, received the comfort fast,
While budding, at thy sight, my pilgrim's staff
Gave out green leaves, with morning dews impearled.
I seek no copy now of life's first half:
Leave here the pages with long musing curled,
And write me new my future's epigraph,
New angel mine, unhoped for in the world!

But to show what the wonderful depth of woman's love is, and to reach what seems the absolute fulness of human expression, we have the following triumphant song at the close of this personal history we have been examining:—

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after Death.

We have thus glanced briefly through this remarkable series of psychological poems, one of the most precious bequests which a poet can leave us, revealing, as they do so clearly, the inner life of the writer. After their perusal, just as in the case of a study of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, we feel that we have done more towards grasping the character of the poet than we are able to do by an intimate acquaintance with all her other works. The unity of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* is precise and definite; no link in the chain can be withdrawn, without destroying the value of the whole. There is no hesitancy in the utterance; we here see Mrs. Browning at her highest, when she has passed through the noviciate of her art, and risen to the perfection of song. The sonnets glow with rapture, are exquisite in expression, and perfect in form. Taken collectively, and in the light of the one passion which they trace, from its inception to its culmination, we know nothing anywhere to compare with them. Intellect and passion are combined in them in an equal degree, and together fused into wondrous music.

The love poetry from the hand which wrote thus passionately—and including compositions other than the sonnets—would in itself, and in its entirety, form a complete study, for its variety, sweetness, and pathos. But there yet remain to us some remarks on the work upon which, chiefly, the author's fame is conceded to rest—*Aurora Leigh*. A wide diversity of opinion exists with regard to its merits, and to the position which it ought to occupy in modern literature. The writer herself, in inscribing it to her cousin, described it as the most mature of all her works, and the one into which her "highest convictions upon Life and Art have entered." Our own view of it is that, as a whole, it is somewhat inconsequent; it lacks unity, for a poem of such magnitude; but even in these higher respects, though not perfect, it is equal to anything produced this generation. When we come to regard it in other aspects, however, our praise is almost necessarily unbounded. It is a poem which we could imagine Shakspeare dropping a tear over for its humanity. Its intense subjectivity will exempt its influence on men from decay. Were we not amazed with the beauty and fulness of its poetry, we should be struck with its philosophy. The following lines might almost be taken as a digest of the whole teaching of Carlyle:—

Get leave to work
In this world—'tis the best you get at all;
For God, in cursing, gives us better gifts
Than men in benediction. God says "Sweat
For foreheads," men say "crowns," and so we are crowned,
Ay, gashed by some tormenting circle of steel
Which snaps with a secret spring. Get work, get work;
Be sure 'tis better than what you work to get.

The author's views on Art are set forth with some fulness. Art, we

presume, notwithstanding all the darkness which has been cast around it by much speaking, means (if we are bound to describe it as concisely as possible) the closest and most perfect realization of the various forms of Truth which it is in the power of man to attain. Some such idea as this certainly possessed the mind of Mrs. Browning; and it was her opinion that that was real art which assisted in any degree to lead back the soul to contemplate God, the supreme Artist of the universe. Yet Art, even with her, was not the highest, the ultimate—

> Art is much, but Love is more!
> O Art, my Art, thou'rt much, but Love is more!
> Art symbolises heaven, but Love is God
> And makes heaven.

As a solution for many of the problems of social life *Aurora Leigh* must be pronounced a failure. It exhibits a wonderful sensitiveness to the evils resulting from the imperfect conditions of society, but it shows no powers of reconstruction. Its principal attraction, after its poetry, which stands supremely first therein, lies in the series of pictures of human life, in its varied phases, which it presents, and also in its power of analysis of the human heart. Sincerity is also a prominent characteristic of the revelations which it makes; it is an autobiography in which nothing is kept back, and the inner workings of a woman's heart were never more clearly transcribed. Unevenness characterises the narrative, but daring speculation and rich thought are embraced within the lines. There are more passages of lofty and impassioned poetry within the covers of this one book than are contained in any single lengthy modern poem of which we have knowledge. From the level of occasional mediocrity we pass on to sublime imaginative heights. In this poem we have a vantage ground from which we survey the panorama of human life, illumined by the sun of genius. To attempt to extract its beauties would be futile; it is a garden in which every flower of sweetness blooms. Its aroma is amongst the most fragrant in literature. Or again, to change the figure, the poem is like a mine which yields more and more as the human digger presses it. When he first enters into possession he beholds the faint yellow streaks which betoken the golden treasure, but it is the subsequent labour which brings to light the actual El Dorado.

One grand result of Mrs. Browning's literary career has been to disprove the assertion that women cannot write true poetry. Such a taunt may be considered as disposed of for ever. If we are to believe tradition, Sappho wrote the finest lyrics the world has seen; but our own generation has beheld woman's genius take even a wider range. No woman, as yet, has written a great epic, or dramatic poetry of the highest order; but how restricted is the number of men who have done this! What there is in the nature of woman, however, to forbid her rivalling even the highest we do not know; all we can say is, that genius, the dower of the gods, in its most transcendent manifestation, has, up to the present, been bestowed upon man. It may be, nevertheless, that we shall yet see the

female complement of our great men—only, it cannot be obtained unless woman have a wider personal sphere. Still, it is most interesting to note that, in this nineteenth century, she has demonstrated the possibility of a future equality. What novelist, for instance, has more conclusively made good his claim to rank almost with the highest, than George Eliot? How many of our artists have excelled Rosa Bonheur in her own special gifts? What writer has exhibited a greater breadth of imagination and power than Georges Sand? Lastly, where is the poetry which can be considered superior to Mrs. Browning's? In poetry, fiction, and art, at any rate, man has little supremacy to boast of for the last forty or fifty years. We do not mean that his genius may not have over-topped, in individual cases, that of woman, but the difference has not been so perceptible as in past ages. Woman is now more abreast of man. Her altitude is no longer, when compared with him, that of Mont Blanc beside Chimborazo. It is more than probable that we shall never behold a female Homer, Plato, or Shakspeare; but anything short of these woman may, and most probably will, become. Her passion is as deep, if her ambition be not so great, as man's. As her sympathies widen and she bears more of that burden of the world, experience—which, in its greatest depths and most extended scope, has hitherto largely pertained to man—she will produce work which shall be as potent and beautiful as his, and possess the same inherent powers of immortality.

Meanwhile, let us be just to what she has already accomplished. A dispassionate examination of the poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning can, we maintain, only lead to this result—that she is the equal of any poet of our time in genius. In particular qualities she may appear inferior to some who could be cited, and whose names will irresistibly suggest themselves; but in others she is as indubitably their superior; and, until we can decide who is greater, Byron or Wordsworth, Shelley or Coleridge, Homer or Shakspeare, we care not to assign her precise position. One thing is certain, however, her immortality is assured—she stands already crowned. As long as one human heart throbs for another she will be held in high esteem. Her poetry is that which refines, chastens, and elevates. We could think that with herself, as with one of her characters, "some grand blind Love came down, and groped her out, and clasped her with a kiss; she learnt God that way." And who were her teachers? Can we ask that of one who said, "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God?" The emerald beauty of a thousand valleys, embroidered by the silver threads of meandering rivers; the grandeur of the everlasting hills with their lofty and majestic calm; the terrible rolling of the restless and unsatisfied sea; the stars that at midnight shine, looking down upon us like the eyes of those we love; above all, the whisper of God as it thrills through the human heart—these were her informers and teachers, the sources of her eminent inspiration. She sang of all these that men might be nobler, freer, and purer. Her apotheosis follows of Divine right with that of all the leaders of mankind: God endowed her, and we exalt her. G. B. S.



THE GIRL STOOD MOTIONLESS, SUBDUED BY IT.

A Rose in June.

CHAPTER IV.



MRS. DAMEREL thought it her duty, a few nights after this, to speak to her husband of Rose's suitors. "Mr. Incledon has spoken so plainly to me that I can't mistake him," she said; "and in case you should not have noticed it yourself, Herbert——"

"I notice it!" he said, with a smile; "what chance is there that I should notice it? So my Rose in June is woman enough to have lovers of her own!"

"I was married before I was Rose's age," said Mrs. Damerel.

"So you were, Martha. I had forgotten the progress of time, and that summer once attained is a long step towards autumn. Well, if it must be, it must be. Incledon is not a bad fellow, as men go."

"But, I think—there is another, Herbert."

"Another!" said the Rector, leaning back in his chair with gentle laughter. "Why, this is too good; and who may he be, the No. 2?"

"It is young Wodehouse, the sailor——"

"The widow's son on the Green! Come now, Martha, once for all this is absurd," said Mr. Damerel, suddenly rousing himself up. "This

is out of the question. I say nothing against Incledon; but if you have been so foolishly romantic as to encourage a beggar like young Wodehouse——"

"I have not encouraged him. I disapprove of it as much as you can do," said Mrs Damerel, with a flush on her cheek; "but whether Rose will agree with us I dare not say."

"Oh, Rose!" said her husband, dropping into his easy tone; "Rose is a child; she will follow whatever lead is given to her. I am not afraid of Rose. You must speak to her, and show her which way you intend her mind to go; be very plain and unequivocal; an unawakened mind always should be treated in the plainest and most distinct way."

"But, Herbert—you have more influence than I have ever had over her. Rose is more your companion than mine. I am not sure that it is the best thing for her, so far as practical life is concerned——"

"My dear," said Mr. Damerel, benignly, "Rose has nothing to do with practical life. You women are always excessive, even in your virtues. I do not mean to throw any doubt upon your qualities as the most excellent of wives; but you have not the discrimination to perceive that duties which suit you admirably would be quite out of place in her. It is a matter of natural fitness. The practical is adapted to forty, but not to nineteen. Let the child alone, my love, to enjoy her youth."

"I think you argue like a Jesuit, Herbert," said Mrs. Damerel; "but whether you are right or wrong on this point does not affect what I ask—which is, that you would speak to her. She is much more likely to attend to you than to me."

"Who—I?" said Mr. Damerel, with a fretful line in his fine forehead. "It is totally out of the question, Martha. *I* speak to Rose about her lovers! It would be quite indelicate, in the first place; and in the second, it would be most disagreeable to me."

"But, still, we have a duty to our child, even if it is disagreeable," said his wife, not willing to give up her object without a struggle.

"My dear Martha, spare me! I knew you would say something about duty. You are very didactic, my love, by nature; but this, you must remember, is rather a reversal of positions between you and me. Let Rose see," he continued, once more relaxing in tone, "that her path is quite clear before her. Incledon is a very good fellow; he will be of use to me in many ways. Nothing could be more desirable. There is a new box of books which I must look over, Martha; do not let me detain you. You will manage the matter admirably, I am sure, in your own sensible way."

And the Rector lighted his wife's candle, and opened the door for her with a suavity and almost gallantry which would have brought tears to the eyes of the parish had they been there to see. "How perfect Mr. Damerel's behaviour is to that rather commonplace wife!" Such was the kind of thing people said. He went to look over his box of books from the London library after his talk with much amusement in his mind as to

Rose's lovers. He thought his child perfect as a child; but the idea that a serious man like Incledon should think of her in the serious position of a wife, tickled the Rector's fancy. He thought over the matter as he glanced at the books which had been unpacked for him, leaving nothing for his delicate ivory hands to do but turn the volumes over. There was an agreeable and a disagreeable side to it. Incledon, for one thing, would be a capable referee in all money matters, and would help to arrange about the boys and get them on in the world, which was a great relief to think of; for ere now Mr. Damerel had felt the painful reflection thrust upon him that some time or other he must do something about the boys. The other side of the question was, that he would lose the society of his Rose in June, his pretty companion, whose ornamental presence lent a new charm to his pretty house. He shrugged his shoulders a little over this, saying to himself that it must be sooner or later, and that, after all, he had done without Rose for many years, and had been much of a sufferer in consequence. It was the way of the world; and then he smiled again at the thought of Rose in the serious position of Mr. Incledon's wife.

Mrs. Damerel had very different feelings on the subject as she went upstairs with the candle he had so politely lighted for her, in her hand. I am afraid she was not so softened as she ought to have been by his charming politeness, which made her slightly angry, and she was deeply disturbed by the task he had thrown back upon her. Mrs. Damerel knew that girls were not so easily moulded as their fathers sometimes think. She felt by instinct that, according to all precedent, Wodehouse, who was young and gay and penniless, must be the favourite. She knew, too, that to endeavour to turn the current in favour of the other was almost enough to decide matters against him; and, beyond all this, Mrs. Damerel felt it hard that everything that was painful and disagreeable should be left on her shoulders. Rose was separated from her; she was her father's companion; she was being trained to prefer refined but useless leisure with him to the aid and sympathy which her mother had a right to look for; yet, when it came to be needful to do any disagreeable duty for Rose, it was the mother who had to put herself in the breach. It was hard upon Mrs. Damerel. All the reproof, the unpleasant suggestions of duty, the disagreeable advice, the apparent exactions to come from her side; while nothing but indulgence, petting, and fondness, and unlimited compliance with every desire she had, should be apparent on the side of the father. I think Mrs. Damerel was right, and that hers was a very hard case indeed.

The Wodehouses came hastily to the Rectory the very next day to intimate the sad news of Edward's approaching departure. His mother fairly broke down, and cried bitterly. "I hoped to have had him with me so much longer," she said; "and now he must go off about this slave trade. Oh! why should we take it upon us to look after everybody, when they don't want to be looked after? If those poor African wretches cared as much for it as we suppose, wouldn't they take better care of themselves?

What have we to do, always interfering? When I think of my boy, who is all I have in the world, going out to that dreadful coast to risk his life, for the sake of some one he never saw or heard of——"

"My dear lady, we cannot be altogether guided by private motives," said the Rector; "we must take principle for something. Were we to permit the slave trade, we should depart from all our traditions. England has always been the guardian of freedom."

"Oh, Mr. Damerel!" said the poor lady, with tears in her eyes, "freedom is all very well to talk about, and I suppose it's a great thing to have; but what is freedom to these poor savages, that it should cost me and other women our boys?"

"It will not cost you your boy," said Mrs. Damerel; "he will come back. Don't take the gloomiest view of the question. He has been there before, and it did not hurt him; why should it now?"

"Ah! who can tell that?" said poor Mrs. Wodehouse, drying her eyes. She was a woman who liked the darker side of all human affairs, and she felt it almost an insult to her when any one prognosticated happiness. Her son was doing all he could to bear up under the depressing influence of her predictions and his regret at leaving her, and disappointment in having his holiday shortened—along with a deeper reason still which he said nothing about. He tried to be as cheerful as he could; but when he turned to Rose and met the one piteous look the girl gave him, and saw her lip quiver—though he did not know whether it was out of sympathy with his mother, or from any personal feeling of her own—he very nearly broke down. He had still ten days to make his preparations for leaving, and before that time he thought to himself he must surely find out whether Rose cared anything for him more than she did for the others whom she had known like him almost all her life. He looked anxiously into her face when he shook hands with her; but Rose, feeling, she could not tell why, more inclined to cry than she had ever been before, without any reason, as she said, would not meet his looks. "This is not my farewell visit," he said, with an attempt at a laugh. "I don't know why I should feel so dismal about it; I shall see you all again."

"Oh, many times, I hope!" said Mrs. Damerel, who could not help feeling kindly towards the poor young fellow, notwithstanding her conspiracy against his interests. The Rector did not commit himself in this foolish way, but took leave of the young sailor solemnly. "However that may be," he said, "God bless you, Edward; I am sure you will do your duty, and be a credit to all that wish you well."

This address chilled poor Wodehouse more and more. Was it his dismissal? He tried to bear up against that too, talking of the garden party he was coming to on Wednesday, and of the repeated visits he still hoped for; but, somehow, from the moment he received the Rector's blessing he believed in these farewell visits, and the explanations they might give rise to, no more. When he went away with his mother, Rose ran upstairs on some pretext, and her father and mother were left alone.

"Martha," said the Rector, "your usual careful solicitude failed you just now. You as good as asked him to come back; and what could possibly be so bad for Rose?"

"How could I help it?" she said. "Poor boy, he must come again, at least to say good-bye."

"I don't see the necessity. It will only make mischief. Rose is quite cast down, whether from sympathy or from feeling. We should take care not to be at home when he calls again."

Mr. Damerel said this in so even a voice that it was delightful to hear him speak, and he went out and took his seat under the lime-trees as a man should who has discharged all his duties and is at peace and in favour with both God and man. Rose did not venture to face her mother with eyes which she felt were heavy, and therefore stole out of doors direct and went to her father, who was always indulgent. How good and tender he was, never finding fault! If perhaps, as Rose was beginning to fear, it must be confessed that he was deficient in energy—a gentle accusation which the fondest partisan might allow—yet, to balance this, how good he was, how feeling, how tender! No one need be afraid to go to him. He was always ready to hear one's story, to forgive one's mistakes. Rose, who did not want to be catechised, stole across the lawn and sat down on the grass without a word. She did not care to meet anybody's look just at that moment. She had not cried; but the tears were so very near the surface, that any chance encounter of looks might have been more than she could bear.

Mr. Damerel did not speak all at once. He took time, the more cunningly to betray her; and then he entered upon one of his usual conversations, to which poor Rose gave but little heed. After a while her monosyllabic answers seemed to attract his curiosity all at once.

"You are not well," he said; "or sorry, is it? Sorry for poor Mrs. Wodehouse, who is going to lose her son?"

"Oh yes, papa! Poor old lady—she will be so lonely when he is away."

"She is not so very old," he said, amused; "not so old as I am, and I don't feel myself a Methuselah. It is very good of you to be so sympathising, my dear."

"Oh, papa, who could help it?" said Rose, almost feeling as if her father would approve the shedding of those tears which made her eyes so hot and heavy. She plucked a handful of grass and played with it, her head held down and the large drops gathering; and her heart, poor child, for the moment, in the fulness of this first trouble, felt more heavy than her eyes.

"Yes, it is a pity for Mrs. Wodehouse," said Mr. Damerel, reflectively; "but, on the other hand, it would be very selfish to regret it for Edward. He has not a penny, poor fellow, and not much influence that I know of. He can only get his promotion by service, and in this point of view his friends ought to be glad he is going. Look across Ankermead, Rose; how

soft the shadows are!—the most delicate grey with silvery lights. If you were a little more ambitious as an artist, you might get your sketch-book and try that effect."

Rose smiled a wan little smile in answer to this invitation, and looking down upon the landscape, as he told her to do, saw nothing but a bluish-green and yellow mist through the prismatic medium of the big tear, which next moment, to her terror and misery, came down, a huge unconcealable wet blot, upon her light summer dress. She was herself so struck by consternation at the sight that, instead of making any attempt to conceal it, she looked up at him, her lips falling apart, her eyes growing larger and larger with fright and wonder, half appealing to him to know what it could mean, half defying observation. Mr. Damerel saw that it was necessary to abandon his usual rule of indulgence.

"You are too sympathetic, my dear," he said. "If any one but me saw this, they might say such feeling was too strong to be lavished on Mrs. Wodehouse. Don't let us hear any more of it. Have you finished *Balaustion*? You have no book with you to-day."

"No, papa—I came out—the other way ——"

"What does that mean? Not through the drawing-room, where you left it, and where your mother was? I think you were right, Rose," said Mr. Damerel, dropping back in his chair with his easy smile; "your mother has little patience with Mrs. Wodehouse's despairs and miseries. You had better keep your sympathy to yourself in her presence. Look here; I want this read aloud. My eyes ache; I was up late last night."

Rose took the book obediently, and read. She saw the white page and letters clear without any prismatic lights. Her tears were all driven away, forced back upon her heart as if by a strong wind. She read, as Milton's daughters might have read his Latin, if they did not understand it, as some people say—not missing a word nor seeing any meaning in one; going on as in a dream, with a consciousness of herself, and the scene, and her father's look, and not a notion what she was reading about. It was very good mental discipline, but so sharp that this poor soft child, utterly unused to it, not knowing why she should suddenly be subjected to such fierce repression, wretched and sick at heart, and sorry and ashamed, never forgot it all her life. She read thus for about an hour, till her father stopped her to make some notes upon the margin of the book; for he was one of those elegantly studious persons who weave themselves through the books they read, and leave volumes of notes on every possible subject behind them. He had been entering into every word, though Rose had not understood a syllable; and he smiled and discoursed to her about it, while she kept silent, terrified lest he should ask some question which would betray her inattention. Rose had been learning smilingly, with happy bewilderment, for some months back, to consider herself an independent individual. She felt and realised it without any difficulty to-day. She stood quite alone in all that bright scene, apart from the real world and the ideal both—neither the lawn, nor the book, nor the landscape,

nor her father's talk having power to move her; frightened at herself—still more frightened for him, and for the tone, half sarcastic, half reproving, which for the first time in her life she had heard in his voice; and without even the satisfaction of realising the new sentiment which had come into her mind. She realised nothing except that sudden dismay had come over her; that it had been checked summarily; that her tears, driven back, were filling her head and her heart with confusing pain; that there was something wrong in the strange new emotion that was at work within her—and this without even the melancholy sweetness of knowing what it was.

Poor Rose in June! It was the first storm that had ever disturbed her perfect blossom. She began to get better after a while, as at her age it is easy to do, and gradually came out of her mist and was restored to partial consciousness. By the evening of that day she was nearly herself again, though much subdued, remembering that she had been very unhappy, as she might have remembered a very bad headache, with great content yet wonder, that it should be gone or almost gone. The cessation of the active pain gave her a kind of subdued happiness once more, as relief always does—which the heart never feels to be negative, but positive. What a thing ease is, after we are once conscious of having lost it even for an hour! This brought Rose's colour back, and her smile. All mental pain, I suppose, is spasmodic; and the first fit, when not too well defined nor hopeless in character, is often as brief as it is violent. Rose got better; her mind accustomed itself to the shadow which for one short interval had covered it with blackness. She began to perceive that it did not fill all earth and heaven, as she had at first supposed.

CHAPTER V.

Rose grew very much better, almost quite well, next day. There was still a little thrill about her of the pain past, but in the meantime nothing had yet happened, no blank had been made in the circle of neighbours; and though she was still as sorry as ever, she said to herself, for poor Mrs. Wodehouse (which was the only reason she had ever given to herself for that *serrement de cœur*), yet there were evident consolations in that poor lady's lot if she could but see them. Edward would come back again; she would get letters from him; she would have him still, though he was away. She was his inalienably, whatever distance there might be between them. This seemed a strong argument to Rose in favour of a brighter view of the subject, though I do not think it would have assisted Mrs. Wodehouse; and, besides, there were still ten days, which—as a day is eternity to a child—was as good as a year at least to Rose. So she took comfort, and preened herself like a bird, and came again forth to the day in all her sweet bloom, her tears got rid of in the natural way, her eyes no longer hot and heavy. She scarcely observed even, or at least did not make any mental

note of the fact, that she did not see Edward Wodehouse for some days thereafter. "How sorry I am to have missed them!" her mother said, on hearing that the young man and his mother had called in her absence; and Rose was sorry too, but honestly took the fact for an accident. During the ensuing days there was little doubt that an unusual amount of occupation poured upon her. She went with her father to town one morning to see the pictures in the exhibitions. Another day she was taken by the same delightful companion to the other side of the county to a garden party, which was the most beautiful vision of fine dresses and fine people Rose had ever seen. I cannot quite describe what the girl's feelings were while she was going through these unexpected pleasures. She liked them, and was pleased and flattered; but at the same time a kind of giddy sense of something being done to her which she could not make out—some force being put upon her, she could not tell what, or for why, was in her mind. For the first time in her life she was jealous and curious, suspecting some unseen motive, though she could not tell what it might be.

On the fourth day her father and mother both together took her with them to Mr. Incledon's, to see, they said, a new picture which he had just bought—a Perugino, or, it might be, an early Raphael. "He wants my opinion—and I want yours, Rose," said her father, flattering, as he always did, his favourite child.

"And Mr. Incledon wants hers, too," said Mrs. Damerel. "I don't know what has made him think you a judge, Rose."

"Oh! how can I give an opinion—what do I know?" said Rose, bewildered; but she was pleased, as what girl would not be pleased? To have her opinion prized was pleasant, even though she felt that it was a subject upon which she could pass no opinion. "I have never seen any but the Raphaels in the National Gallery," she said, with alarmed youthful conscientiousness, as they went along, "and what can I know?"

"You can tell him if you like it; and that will please him as much as if you were the first art critic in England," said the Rector. These words gave Rose a little thrill of suspicion—for why should Mr. Incledon care for her opinion?—and perplexed her thoughts much as she walked up the leafy road to the gate of Whitton Park, which was Mr. Incledon's grand house. Her father expatiated upon the beauty of the place as they went in; her mother looked preoccupied and anxious; and Rose herself grew more and more suspicious, though she was surprised into some exclamations of pleasure at the beauty and greenness of the park.

"I wonder I have never been here before," she said; "how could it be? I thought we had been everywhere when we were children, the boys and I."

"Mr. Incledon did not care for children's visits," said her mother.

"And he was in the right, my dear. Children have no eye for beauty; what they want is space to tumble about in, and trees to climb. This lovely bit of woodland would be lost on boys and girls. Be thankful you did not see it when you were incapable of appreciating it, Rose."

"It is very odd, though," she said. "Do you think it is nice of Mr.

Incledon to shut up so pretty a place from his neighbours—from his friends?—for, as we have always lived so near, we are his friends, I suppose."

"Undoubtedly," said the Rector; but his wife said nothing. I do not think her directer mind cared for this way of influencing her daughter. She was anxious for the same object, but she would have attained it in a different way.

Here, however, Mr. Incledon himself appeared with as much demonstration of delight to see them as was compatible with the supposed accidental character of the visit. Mr. Incledon was one of those men of whom you feel infallibly certain that they must have been "good," even in their nurse's arms. He was slim and tall, and looked younger than he really was. He had a good expression, dark eyes, and his features, though not at all remarkable, were good enough to give him the general aspect of a handsome man. Whether he was strictly handsome or not was a frequent subject of discussion on the Green, where unpleasant things had been said about his chin and his eyebrows, but where the majority was distinctly in his favour. His face was long, his complexion rather dark, and his general appearance "interesting." Nobody that I know of had ever called him commonplace. He was interesting—a word which often stands high in the rank of descriptive adjectives. He was the sort of man of whom imaginative persons might suppose that he had been the hero of a story. Indeed, there were many theories on the subject; and ingenious observers, chiefly ladies, found a great many symptoms of this in his appearance and demeanour, and concluded that a man so well off and so well looking would not have remained unmarried so long had there not been some reason for it. But this phase of his existence was over, so far as his own will was concerned. If he had ever had any reason for remaining unmarried, that obstacle must have been removed; for he was now anxious to marry, and had fully made up his mind to do so at as early a date as possible. I do not know whether it could be truly said that he was, what foolish young people call, "very much in love" with Rose Damerel; but he had decided that she was the wife for him, and meant to spare neither pains nor patience in winning her. He had haunted the Rectory for some time, with a readiness to accept all invitations which was entirely unlike his former habits; for up to the time when he had seen and made up his mind about Rose, Mr. Incledon had been almost a recluse, appearing little in the tranquil society of the Green, spending much of his time abroad, and when at home holding only a reserved and distant intercourse with his neighbours. He gave them a handsome heavy dinner two or three times a year, and accepted the solemn return which society requires; but no one at Dinglefield had seen more of his house than the reception rooms, or of himself than those grave festivities exhibited. The change upon him now was marked enough to enlighten the most careless looker-on; and the Perugino, which they were invited to see, was in fact a pretence which the Rector and his wife saw

through very easily, to make them acquainted with his handsome house and all its advantages. He took them all over it and showed the glory of it with mingled complacency and submission to their opinion. Rose had never been within its walls before. She had never sat down familiarly in rooms so splendid. The master of the house had given himself up to furniture and decorations as only a rich man can do; and the subdued grace of everything about them, the wealth of artistic ornament, the size and space which always impress people who are accustomed to small houses, had no inconsiderable effect at least upon the ladies of the party. Mr. Damerel was not awed, but he enjoyed the largeness and the luxury with the satisfaction of a man who felt himself in his right sphere; and Mr. Incledon showed himself, as well as his house, at his best, and, conscious that he was doing so, looked, Mrs. Damerel thought, younger, handsomer, and more attractive than he had ever looked before. Rose felt it, too, vaguely. She felt that she was herself somehow the centre of all—the centre, perhaps, of a plot, the nature of which perplexed and confused her; but the plot was not yet sufficiently advanced to give her any strong sensation of discomfort or fear. All that it did up to the present moment was to convey that sense of importance and pleasant consciousness of being the first and most flatteringly considered, which is always sweet to youth. Thus they were all pleased, and, being pleased, became more and more pleasant to each other. Rose, I think, forgot poor Mrs. Wodehouse altogether for the moment, and was as gay as if she had never been sad.

The house was a handsome house, raised on a slightly higher elevation than the Rectory, surrounded by a pretty though not very extensive park, and commanding the same landscape as that which it was the pride of the Damerels to possess from their windows. It was the same, but with a difference; or, rather, it was like a view of the same subject painted by a different artist, dashed in in bolder lines, with heavier massing of foliage, and one broad reach of the river giving a great centre of light and shadow, instead of the dreamy revelations here and there of the winding water as seen from the Rectory. Rose gave an involuntary cry of delight when she was taken out to the green terrace before the house, and first saw the landscape from it, though she never would confess afterwards that she liked it half so well as the shadowy distance and softer sweep of country visible from her old home. Mr. Incledon was as grateful to her for her admiration as if the Thames and the trees had been of his making, and ventured to draw near confidentially and say how much he hoped she would like his Perugino—or, perhaps, Raphael. "You must give me your opinion frankly," he said.

"But I never saw any Raphaels except those in the National Gallery," said Rose, blushing with pleasure, and shamefacedness, and conscientious difficulty. It did not occur to the girl that her opinion could be thus gravely asked for by a man fully aware of its complete worthlessness as criticism. She thought he must have formed some mistaken idea of her knowledge or power; "and I don't—love them—very much," she added,

with a little hesitation and a deeper blush, feeling that his momentary good opinion of her must now perish for ever.

"What does that mean?" said Mr. Incledon. He was walking on with her through, as she thought, an interminable vista of rooms, one opening into the other, towards the shrine in which he had placed his picture. "There is something more in it than meets the ear. It does not mean that you don't like them——"

"It means—that I love the photograph of the San Sisto, that papa gave me on my birthday," said Rose.

"Ah! I perceive; you are a young critic to judge so closely. We have nothing like that, have we? How I should like to show you the San Sisto picture! Photographs and engravings give no idea of the original."

"Oh, please don't say so!" said Rose, "for so many people never can see the original. I wish I might some time. The pictures in the National Gallery do not give me at all the same feeling; and, of course, never having seen but these, I cannot be a judge; indeed, I should not dare to say anything at all. Ah, ah!——"

Rose stopped and put her hands together, as she suddenly perceived before her, hung upon a modest grey-green wall with no other ornament near, one of those very youthful, heavenly faces, surrounded by tints as softly bright as their own looks, which belong to that place and period in which Perugino taught and Raphael learned—an ineffable sweet ideal of holiness, tenderness, simplicity, and youth. The girl stood motionless, subdued by it, conscious of nothing but the picture. It was doubly framed by the doorway of the little room in which it kept court. Before even she entered that sacred chamber the young worshipper was struck dumb with adoration. The doorway was hung with silken curtains of the same grey green as the wall, and there was not visible, either in this soft surrounding framework, or in the picture itself, any impertinent accessory to distract the attention. The face so tenderly abstract, so heavenly human, looked at Rose as at the world, but with a deeper, stronger appeal; for was not Mary such a one as she? The girl could not explain the emotion which seized her. She felt disposed to kneel down, and she felt disposed to weep; but did neither, only stood there, with her lips apart, her eyes abstract yet wistful, like those in the picture, and her soft hands clasped and held unconsciously, with that dramatic instinct common to all emotion, somewhere near her heart.

"You *have* said something," said Mr. Incledon, softly, in her ear, "more eloquent than I ever heard before. I am satisfied that it is a Raphael now."

"Why?" said Rose, awakening with great surprise out of her momentary trance, and shrinking back, her face covered with blushes, to let the others pass who were behind. He did not answer her except by a look, which troubled the poor girl mightily, suddenly revealing to her the meaning of it all. When the rest of the party went into the room, Rose shrank behind her mother, cowed and ashamed, and, instead of looking at

the picture, stole aside to the window and looked out mechanically to conceal her troubled countenance. As it happened, the first spot on which her eye fell was the little cottage at Ankermead, upon which just the other evening she had looked with Edward Wodehouse. All he said came back to her, and the evening scene in which he said it, and the soft, indescribable happiness and sweetness that had dropped upon her like the falling dew. Rose had not time to make any question with herself as to what it meant; but her heart jumped up in her bosom and began to beat, and a sudden momentary perception of how it all was flashed over her. Such gleams of consciousness come and go when the soul is making its first experiences of life. For one second she seemed to see everything clearly as a landscape is seen when the sun suddenly breaks out; and then the light disappeared, and the clouds re-descended, and all was blurred again. Nevertheless, this strange momentary revelation agitated Rose almost more than anything that had ever happened to her before; and everything that was said after it came to her with a muffled sound, as we hear voices in a dream. A longing to get home and to be able to think took possession of her. This seemed for the moment the thing she most wanted in the world.

"If ever I have a wife," Mr. Incledon said, some time after, "this shall be her boudoir. I have always intended so; unless, indeed, she is perverse as my mother was, who disliked this side of the house altogether, and chose rooms which looked out on nothing but the park and the trees."

"I hope, as everything is ready for her, the lady will soon appear," said Mrs. Damerel; while poor little Rose suddenly felt her heart stop in its beating, and flutter and grow faint.

"Ah!" said Incledon, shaking his head, "it is easier to gild the cage than to secure the bird."

How glad she was when they were out again in the open air, walking home! How delightful it was to be going home, to get off this dangerous ground, to feel that there was a safe corner to fly to! Nobody said anything to her, fortunately for Rose, but let her walk off her excitement and the flutter of terror and dismay which had come over her. "Easier to gild the cage than to secure the bird." The poor little bird felt already as if she had been caught in some snare; as if the fowler had got his hand upon her, and all her flutterings would be of no avail. How little she had thought that this was what was meant by their flattering eagerness to have her opinion about the Perugino! She kept close to her mother till they got safely out of the park, for Mr. Incledon attended them as far as the gates, and Rose was so much startled that she did not feel safe near him. It seemed to her that the plot must be brought to perfection at once, and that there was no escape except in keeping as far off as possible. She resolved to herself as she went along that she would never approach him if she could help it, or let him speak to her. Her sensations were something like those with which a startled hare might, I suppose, contemplate from beneath her couch of fern the huntsman gathering the hounds which were to run her down. Rose had no sense of satisfaction such as an older

woman might have felt, in the love of so important a personage as Mr. Incledon. She was neither flattered nor tempted by the thought of all the good things she might have at her disposal as his wife—his beautiful house, his wealth, his consequence, even his Perugino, though that had drawn the very heart out of her breast—none of these things moved her. She was neither proud of his choice, nor dazzled by his wealth. She was simply frightened, neither more nor less—dead frightened, and eager to escape for ever out of his way.

It was now afternoon, the most languid hour of the day, and the village roads were very hot, blazing, and dusty, after the soft shade of Whitton Park. Mr. Damerel, who was not much of a pedestrian, and hated dust, and abhorred all the irritations and weariness of excessive heat, came along somewhat slowly, skirting the houses to get every scrap of shade which was possible. They were thus quite close to a row of cottages when Mr. Nolan came out from the door of one so suddenly as almost to stumble over his Rector.

"Just like a shot from a cannon is an Irishman's exit from a visit," said Mr. Damerel, peevishly, though playfully. "Nolan, you salamander, you who never feel the heat, you may at least have some pity upon me."

"You are the very man I want," said the Curate, whose brow was clouded with care. "The poor creature's dying. You'll go and say a word to her? I was going to your house, wondering would I find ye? and lo! Providence puts ye here."

"I hope I shall feel as much obliged to Providence as you do," said the Rector, still more peevishly. "What is it? Who is it? What do you want?"

"Sure it's only a poor creature dying—nothing to speak about in this dreary world," said good Mr. Nolan; "but she has a fancy to see you. I have done all I could to pacify her; but she says she knew you in her better days."

"It is old Susan Aikin," said Mrs. Damerel, in answer to her husband's enquiring look. "She has always wanted to see you; but what good could you do her? and she has had a bad fever, and it is a miserable place."

"Not that you'll think twice of that," said Nolan hurriedly, "when it's to give a bit of comfort to a dying creature that longs to see you;" though indeed it would puzzle the world to tell why, he added in his heart.

"Certainly not," said the Rector—a quantity of fine wrinkles, unseen on ordinary occasions, suddenly appearing like a network on his forehead. His voice took a slightly querulous tone, in spite of the readiness with which he replied. "You need not wait," he said, turning to his wife and daughter. "Go on gently, and perhaps I may overtake you if it is nothing important. What is it, Nolan—a case of troubled conscience? Something on her mind?"

"Nothing but a dyin' fancy," said Mr. Nolan. "She's harped on it these three days. No, she's a good soul enough; there's no story to tell;

and all her duties done, and life closing as it ought. It's but a whim; but they will all take it as a great favour," said the Curate, seeing that his superior officer looked very much in the mind to turn and fly.

"A whim!" he said, querulously. "You know I am not careless of other people's feelings—far from it, I hope; but my own organisation is peculiar, and to undergo this misery for a whim—you said a whim——"

"But the creature's dying!"

"Pah! what has dying to do with it? Death is a natural accident. It is not meritorious to die, or a thing to which every other interest should yield and bow. But, never mind," the Rector added, after this little outbreak; "it is not your fault—come, I'll go."

Rose and her mother had lingered to hear the end of this discussion; and just as the Rector yielded thus, and, putting as good a grace as possible on the unwillingly performed duty, entered, led by Mr. Nolan, the poor little cottage, the ladies were joined by Mrs. Wodehouse and her son, who had hurried up at sight of them. Mrs. Wodehouse had that reserved and solemn air which is usual to ladies who are somewhat out of temper with their friends. She was offended, and she meant to show it. She said "Good morning" to Mrs. Damerel, instead of "How do you do?" and spoke with melancholy grandeur of the weather, and the extreme heat, and how a thunderstorm must be on its way. They stood talking on these interesting topics, while Rose and Edward found themselves together. It seemed to Rose as if she were seeing him for the first time after a long absence or some great event. The colour rushed to her face in an overwhelming flood, and a tide of emotions as warm, as tumultuous, as bewildering, rushed into her heart. She scarcely ventured to lift her eyes when she spoke to him. It seemed to her that she understood now every glance he gave her, every tone of his voice.

"I almost feared we were not to meet again," he said, hurriedly; "and these last days run through one's fingers so fast. Are you going out to-night?"

"I do not think so," said Rose, half afraid to pledge herself, and still more afraid lest her mother should hear and interpose, saying, "Yes, they were engaged."

"Then let me come to-night. I have only four days more. You will not refuse to bid a poor sailor good-bye, Miss Damerel? You will not let them shut me out to-night?"

"No one can wish to shut you out," said Rose, raising her eyes to his face for one brief second.

I do not think Edward Wodehouse was so handsome as Mr. Incledon. His manners were not nearly so perfect; he could not have stood comparison with him in any respect except youth, in which he had the better of his rival; but oh, how different he seemed to Rose! She could not look full at him; only cast a momentary glance at his honest, eager eyes; his face, which glowed and shone with meaning. And now she knew what the meaning was.

"So long as *you* don't!—" he said, eagerly, yet below his breath; and just at this moment Mrs. Damerel put forth her hand and took her daughter by the arm.

"We have had a long walk, and I am tired," she said. "We have been to Whitton to see a new picture, and Mr. Incledon has so many beautiful things. Come, Rose. Mr. Wodehouse, I hope we shall see you before you go away."

"Oh, yes, I hope so," the young sailor faltered, feeling himself suddenly cast down from heaven to earth. He said nothing to her about that evening; but I suppose Mrs. Damerel's ears were quick enough to hear the important appointment that had been made.

"My dear Rose, girls do not give invitations to young men, nor make appointments with them, generally, in that way."

"I, mamma?"

"Don't be frightened. I am not blaming you. It was merely an accident; but, my dear, it was not the right kind of thing to do."

"Must I not speak to Mr. Wodehouse?" she asked, half tremblingly, half (as she meant it) satirically. But poor Rose's little effusion of (what she intended for) gall took no effect whatever. Mrs. Damerel did not perceive that any satire was meant.

"Oh, you may speak to him! You may bid him good-bye, certainly; but I—your papa—in short, we have heard something of Mr. Wodehouse which—we do not quite like. I do not wish for any more intimacy with them, especially just now."

"Do you mean you have heard some harm of him?" said Rose, opening her eyes with a sudden start.

"Well, perhaps not any harm: I cannot quite tell what it was; but something which made your papa decide—in short, I don't want to take too much notice of the Wodehouses as a family. They do not suit your papa."

Rose walked on with her mother to the Rectory gate, silent, with her heart swelling full. She did not believe that her father had anything to do with it. It was not he was to blame, whatever Mrs. Damerel might say.

CHAPTER VI.

Nature took sides against Love on that evening, and made Mrs. Damerel's warning unnecessary, and all the anticipations of the young persons of no avail. Instead of the evening stroll about the darkling garden which Wodehouse at least had proposed to himself, the party were shut up in the drawing-room by the sudden outbreak of that expected thunderstorm on which Mrs. Wodehouse and Mrs. Damerel had discussed so earnestly. The ladies had both felt that it must come, and the young sailor I suppose ought to have been more clearly aware of what was impending; but there

are, no doubt, states of the mind which make a man totally indifferent to, and unobservant of, the changes of the atmosphere. Anyhow, though he arrived in the sweet beginning of the twilight, when all was still, poor Edward had not only to stay indoors, but to take a seat next to Mrs. Damerel in the drawing-room; while Rose, who was somewhat nervous about the thunder, retired into a dark corner to which he dared not follow her boldly under the very eyes of her father and her mother. He did what he could, poor fellow: he tried very hard to persuade her to come to the other end of the room and watch the storm which was raging gloriously on the plain below, lighting up the whole landscape in sudden brilliant gleams; for one of the windows had been left uncurtained, and Mr. Damerel himself placed his chair within reach of it to enjoy the wonderful spectacle. Rose at one time longed so much to venture that her desire overmastered her fears; but the Rector, who was somewhat fretful that evening, presumably on account of the storm which affected his fine sensibilities, sent her away hurriedly. "No, no, Rose—what have you to do with storms?" he said; "go back to your mother." When she obeyed, there was silence in the room; and though the elders did not care very much for it, I think the sharp disappointment of these two—a pang, perhaps, more keen and delicate than anything we can feel when the first freshness of youth is over—made itself spiritually felt somehow in the atmosphere of the place.

"Roses have nothing to do out of the rose garden," said Mr. Damerel, with an attempt to overcome his own fretfulness, and perhaps a compunction over the suffering he caused. He was not in a humour for talking, and when this was the case he seldom gave himself the trouble to talk; but some covert feeling or other made him willing to attempt a diversion, for the moment at least. "I wish people had a more general conception of the fitness of things. Your namesakes out of doors take no pleasure in the storm. Poor roses, how it will batter and beat them down, and strew their poor helpless petals about!"

"I do not find fault with Rose for being timid," said her mother; "but your craze about her name is fantastic, Herbert. She will have a good many storms to brave which she cannot escape from if she is to do her duty in life."

"Then I hope she will not do her duty," said the Rector—"don't, my Rose in June. I had rather see you sweet and fresh, with your rose heart unruffled, than draggled and battered with the rain. I'll take the moral risk upon my own head."

Mrs. Damerel uttered an impatient little exclamation under her breath. She turned to Wodehouse with an arbitrary and sudden change of the subject. "Do you expect to be long away?" she said.

"Two years at the very least," said the young man, piteously, looking at her with such imploring eyes that she felt his look, though her own eyes were fixed upon her work, and neither could nor would see. She felt it; and as she was but a woman, though stern in purpose, she winced a little

and was sorry for him, though she would not help him. Her voice softened as she replied—

"I am very sorry for your poor mother. How she will miss you! We must do our best to keep her cheerful while you are away."

"The storm is going off," said the Rector; "did you ever remark, Wodehouse, how seldom we have a complete thunderstorm to ourselves here? There have been three going on to-night—one towards London, one northwards, the other east. We never have more than the tail of a storm, which is somewhat humbling when you come to think of it. I suppose it has something to do with the *lie* of the ground as you call it—eh?"

Edward answered something, he did not know what, while his opponent regarded him with amused observation. Now that the matter was tolerably safe in his own hands, Mr. Damerel was not without a certain enjoyment in the study of character thus afforded him. It was to him like what I suppose vivisection is to an enterprising physiologist. He had just enough realisation of the pain he was inflicting to give interest to the throbbing nerves upon which he experimented. He was not old enough to have quite forgotten some few pangs of a similar kind which he had experienced in his day; but he was old enough to regard the recollection with some degree of amusement and a sense of the absolute folly of the whole which neutralised that sense of pain. He liked, rather, to hold the young man in talk about scientific facts, while he knew that the young man was longing to escape, and watching, with dismay and despair, every hope disappearing of another kind of conversation which seemed like the balance of life and death to the foolish youth. Mr. Damerel saw all these symptoms of torture, and his sense of humour was tickled. He was almost sorry when at length, the rain still continuing to fall in torrents and the storm roaring and groaning in the distance, young Wodehouse rose to go away. "I will not give you my blessing again," he said, smiling, "as I was rash enough to do before; for I daresay we shall meet again, one way or another, before you go away."

"Oh, I shall call when the last moment, the absolute good-bye, comes!" said poor Edward, trying to smile.

Rose put out a timid little hand to him, rising from her chair when he came up to her. She had grown bewildered again, and disconcerted, and had fallen far from the light and illumination which had flashed over her in the afternoon. The storm had frightened her; something malign seemed in the air; and she was disappointed and mortified, she scarcely could have told why. Was this to be the end of the evening to which they had both looked forward? Alas! such clouds will drop over even the brightest skies. I think both of the young people could have wept with sheer misery, disappointment, and despite, when they realised that it was over, and could not now be mended, whatever might happen. He went home, and she stole up to her room, enveloped by the mists of a suppressed excitement which seemed to wrap them round and round, and afforded no way of escape.

That, however, was the last bright day known in the Rectory for a very long time. The Rector had not been quite himself that night. His very pleasure in the torture of the poor young lovers was perhaps a sign that the fine organisation upon which he prided himself was somehow out of gear. I do not believe, though many people were of that opinion, that his hurried visit to the poor woman who was dying of fever was the reason why Mr. Damerel took the fever, and of all that followed. He could not have fallen ill so immediately if poor Susan Aikin's death-chamber had been the cause of his malady. Next day he was ill, feverish, and wretched, and was reported to have a bad cold. The next after that the village and all the houses on the Green were struck dumb by the information that the Rector had caught the same fever of which Susan Aikin died. The news caused such a sensation as few warnings of mortality produce. The whole neighbourhood was hushed and held its breath, and felt a shiver of dismay run through it. It was not because Mr. Damerel was deeply beloved. Mr. Nolan, for example, was infinitely more friendly and dear to the population generally; yet had he encountered the same fate, people would have grieved, but would not have been surprised. But the Rector! that he should fall under such a disease—that the plague which is born of squalor, and dirt, and ill nourishment, and bad air should seize upon him, the very impersonation of everything that was opposite and antagonistic to those causes which brought it forth!—this confused everybody, great and small. Comfortable people shuddered, asking themselves who was safe? and began to think of the drainage of their houses, and to ask whether any one knew if the Rectory was quite right in that respect. There was an anxious little pause of fright in the place, every one wondering whether it was likely to prove an epidemic, and neighbour enquiring of neighbour each time they met whether "more cases" had occurred; but this phase passed over, and the general security came back. The disease must "take its course," the doctor said, and nothing could be prognosticated at so early a stage. The patient was still in middle age, of unbroken constitution, and had everything in his favour—good air, good nursing, good means—so that nothing need be spared. With such words as these the anxieties of the neighbourhood were relieved—something unwillingly it must be allowed, for the world is very exigeant in this as in many other respects, and, when it is interested in an illness, likes it to run a rapid course, and come to an issue one way or other without delay. It was therefore with reluctance that the Green permitted itself to be convinced that no "change" could be looked for in the Rector's illness for some time to come. Weeks even might be consumed ere the climax, the crisis, the real dramatic point at which the patient's fate would be concluded, should come. This chilling fact composed the mind of the neighbourhood, and stilled it back into the calm of indifference after a while. I am not sure now that there was not a little adverse feeling towards the Rector, in that he left everybody in suspense, and having, as it were, invited the world to behold the always interesting spectacle of a dangerous illness, put off from

week to week the *dénouement*. Such a barbarous suggestion would have been repulsed with scorn and horror had it been put into words, but that was the feeling in most people's hearts.

Indoors, however, Mr. Damerel's illness was a very terrible matter, and affected every member of the household. Mrs. Damerel gave up everything to nurse him. There was no hesitation with her as to whether she should or should not postpone her family and cares to her husband. From the moment that the dreadful word "fever" crossed the doctor's lips she put aside the house and the schoolroom and every other interest, and took her place by the sick bed. I do not know if any foreboding was in her mind from the first, but she never paused to think. She went to the children and spoke to them, appealing to their honour and affection. She gave Dick and Patty permission to roam as they liked, and to enjoy perfect immunity from lessons and routine, so long as they would be quiet indoors, and respect the stillness that was necessary in the house; and to Agatha she gave the charge of the infants, exacting quiet only, nothing but quiet. "The house must be kept quiet," she said to them all imperatively. "The child who makes a noise I shall think no child of mine. Your papa's life may depend upon it. It will be Rose's part to see that you all do what I tell you. No noise! that is the chief thing. There must be no noise!"

The children all promised very solemnly, and even closed round her with great eyes uplifted to ask in hushed tones of awe, as if he had been dead, how papa was? The house altogether was strangely subdued all at once, as if the illness had already lasted for weeks. The drawing-room became a shut up, uninhabited place, where Rose only entered now and then to answer the enquiries of some anxious parishioners not too frightened to come and ask how the Rector was. The tide of life, of interest, of occupation, all flowed towards the sick room—everything centred in it. After a few days it would have seemed as unnatural to Rose to have gone out to the lawn, as it was at first to sit in the little ante-room, into which her father's room opened, waiting to receive her mother's commissions, to do anything she might want of her. A few days sufficed to make established habits of all these new circumstances of life. Mr. Damerel was not a bad patient. He was a little angry and annoyed when he found what his illness was, taking it for granted, as so many people did, that he had taken it from Susan Aikin. "I wish Providence had directed me anywhere else than to that cottage door at that particular moment," he said, half ruefully, half indignantly, "and put me in the way of that fanatic Nolan, who can stand everything. I knew my constitution was very different. Never mind, it was not *your* fault, Martha; and he is a good fellow. I must try to push him on. I will write to the Bishop about him when I get well."

These were heavenly dispositions, as the reader will perceive. He was a very good patient, grateful to his nurses, cheerful in his demeanour, making the best of the long struggle he had embarked upon—indeed, few people could have rallied more bravely from the first shock and discourage-

ment, or composed themselves more courageously to fill the first position which was forced upon him, and discharge all its duties such as they were. His illness came on not violently, but in the leisurely, quiet way which so often distinguishes a disease which is meant to last long. He was ill, but not very ill, on the fourth day, descending into depths of it, but going very quietly, and retaining his self-command and cheerfulness. This particular day, on which he was a little worse than he had been before, was mild and rainy and warm, very unlike the wonderful blaze of summer which had preceded it. Rose sat by the open window of the little ante-room which was now her general position. The rain fell softly outside with a subdued perpetual sound, pattering upon the leaves. The whole atmosphere was full of this soft patter. The door of the sick room was ajar, and now and then Rose heard her father move in the restlessness of his illness, or utter a low little moan of suffering, or speak to Mrs. Damerel, who was with him. Everything was hushed downstairs; and the subdued stirring of the rain outside, and the sounds of the sick-room within, were all that Rose could hear. She had a book in her hand, and read now and then; but she had come for the first time to that point in life when one's own musings are as interesting as any story, and often the book dropped on her lap, and she did nothing but think. She thought it was thinking, but I fancy that dreaming was more like it. Poor Rose! her dreaming was run through by sombre threads, and there was one shadow of wondering doubt and suspicion mingled in it. As she sat thus, one of the maids came softly to the door to say that Mrs. Wodehouse and her son were in the drawing-room, and would she tell Mrs. Damerel? Rose's heart gave a sudden leap; she hesitated a moment whether she should not run down without saying anything to her mother, as it was she, up to this moment, who had answered all enquiries; but the habit of dependence prevailed over this one eager throb of nature. She stole into the sick-room under shade of the curtains, and gave her message. The answer had invariably been, "Go you, Rose, and tell them I am very sorry, but I cannot leave your papa." She expected to hear the same words again, and stood, half-turned to the door, ready, when authorised, to rush down stairs, with her heart already throbbing, and nature preparing in her for a crisis.

"What is it?" said the patient, drowsily.

"It is Edward Wodehouse come to say good-bye," answered his wife. "Herbert, can you do without me for a moment? I ought to go."

"Yes; go, go; Rose will stay with me instead," said Mr. Damerel. He put out his hot hand and drew the girl towards him, who almost resisted, so stupefied was she. "Do not be long, Martha," he said to his wife; and before Rose could realise what had happened she found herself in her mother's chair, seated in the shaded stillness near the sick-bed, while Mrs. Damerel's step going softly along the passage outside testified to the bewildering fact that it was she who was to receive the visitors. It was so sudden, so totally different from her expectations, so cruel a disappointment to her, that the girl sat motionless, struck dumb, counting

the soft fall of her mother's steps, in the stupor that fell upon her. Her father said something, but she had not the heart to answer. It seemed incredible, impossible. After ten minutes or so, which seemed to Rose so many hours, during which she continued to sit dumb, listening to her father's stirrings in his restless bed and the pattering of the rain, the same maid came to the door again and handed in a little scrap of paper folded like a note. She opened it mechanically. It was from Mrs. Wodehouse. "Dear Rose, dearest Rose, come and bid my boy good-bye, if it is only for a moment," it said. She put it down on the table, and rose up and looked at her father. "If only for a moment,"—he was not so ill that any harm could happen to him if he were left for a moment. He did not look ill at all, as he lay there with his eyes closed. Was he asleep?—and surely, surely for that moment she might go!

While she looked at him, her heart beating wildly, and something singing and throbbing in her ears, he opened his eyes. "What is it?" he said.

"It is—oh, papa! may I go for one moment—only for a moment—I should come back directly; to bid—poor—Mr. Wodehouse good-bye?"

"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" said the Rector, with perhaps unintentional profaneness, smiling at her a smile which seemed to make Rose wild. He put out his hand again and took hers. "Never mind poor Mr. Wodehouse," he said; "he will get on very well without you. Stay with me, my Rose in June; to see you thus does me good."

"I should only stay one moment." Her heart beat so that it almost stifled her voice.

"No, my darling," he said, coaxingly; "stay with me."

And he held her hand fast. Rose stood gazing at him with a kind of desperation till he closed his eyes again, holding her tightly by the wrist. I think even then she made a little movement to get free—a movement balked by the closer clasping of his feverish fingers. Then she sat down suddenly on her mother's chair. The pulsations were in her ears like great roars of sound coming and going. "Very well, papa," she said, with a stifled voice.

I do not know how long it was before she heard steps below, for her senses were preternaturally quickened—and then the sound of the hall door closed, and then the rain again, as if nothing had happened. What had happened? Nothing, indeed, except that Mrs. Damerel herself had seen the visitors, which was a great compliment to them, as she never left her husband's side. By-and-by her soft steps came back again, approaching gradually up the stairs and the long corridor. The sound of them fell upon Rose's heart—was it all over then? ended for ever? Then her mother came in, calm and composed, and relieved her. She did not even look at Rose, as if there were anything out of the ordinary in this very simple proceeding. She told her husband quietly that she had said good-bye to young Wodehouse; that he was going early next morning; that

she was very sorry for his poor mother. "Yes, my dear; but if mothers were always to be considered, sons would never do anything. Mayn't I have something to drink?" said the patient: and thus the subject was dismissed at once and for ever.

"Go and see if Mary has made some fresh lemonade," said Mrs. Damerel. Rose obeyed mechanically. The pulses were still beating so that her blood seemed like the tide at sea beating upon a broad beach, echoing hollow and wild in huge rolling waves. She went downstairs like one in a dream and got the lemonade and carried it back again, hearing her own steps as she had heard her mother's. When this piece of business was over, and Rose found herself again in the little ante-room, all alone, with nothing but the sound of the rain to fill up the silence, and the great waves of sound in her ears beginning to die into moans and dreary sobbing echoes, what can I say of her feelings? Was it possible that all was over and ended—that she would never more see him again—that he was gone without even a good-bye? It was not only incredible to her, but it was intolerable; must she bear it? She could not bear it; yet she must. She stood at the window and looked out, and the bluish-grey world and the falling rain looked in at Rose, and no other sound came to console the aching in her heart. He was gone, and there was no hope that he would come back; and she could not, dared not, go to him. The evening went on while she sat in this train of excited feelings, wondering whether the anguish in her heart would not call for an answer somehow, and unable to believe that neither God nor man would interfere. When it was dark she broke forth from all control, and left her post, as she could not do when leaving it was of any use; but there is a point at which the intolerable cannot be borne any longer. She put a blue waterproof cloak on her, and went out into the rain and the dark; but what was poor Rose to do, even when her pain became past bearing? She strayed round the dark lawn, and looked, but in vain, for the lights of the cottage at Ankerwyke; and then she ventured to the gate, and stood there looking out helpless and wistful. But no good angel whispered to Edward Wodehouse, heartsore and wounded, what poor little watcher there was looking helplessly, piteously out upon the little gulf of distance which separated them as much as continents and oceans could have done. He was packing for his early journey, and she, poor maiden soul, could not go to him, nor could the cry of her heart reach him. When she had waited there a while, she went in again, speechless and heartbroken, feeling indeed that all was over, and that neither light nor happiness would ever return to her more.

Poor child! I don't think it occurred to her to blame those who had done it, or even to ask herself whether they knew what they were doing. Perhaps she did not believe that they had done it willingly. I do not think she asked herself any question on the subject. She had to bear it, and she could not bear it. Her mind was capable of little more.



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Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER XXI.

TROUBLES IN THE FOLD: A MESSAGE.



GABRIEL OAK had ceased to feed the Weatherbury flock for about four-and-twenty hours, when on Sunday afternoon the elderly gentlemen, Joseph Poorgrass, Matthew Moon, Fray, and half-a-dozen others came running up to the house of the mistress of the Upper Farm.

"Whatever *is* the matter, men?" she said, meeting them at the door just as she was on the point of coming out on her way to church, and ceasing in a moment from the close compression of her two red lips, with which she had accompanied the exertion of pulling on a tight glove.

"Sixty!" said Joseph Poorgrass.

"Seventy!" said Moon.

"Fifty-nine!" said Susan Tall's husband.

"— Sheep have broke fence," said Fray.

"— And got into a field of young clover," said Tall.

"— Young clover!" said Moon.

"— Clover!" said Joseph Poorgrass.

"And they be getting blasted," said Henery Fray.

"That they be," said Joseph."

"And will all die as dead as nits, if they baint got out and cured!" said Tall.

Joseph's countenance was drawn into lines and puckers by his concern. Fray's forehead was wrinkled both perpendicularly and crosswise, after the pattern of a portcullis, expressive of a double despair. Laban Tall's lips were thin, and his face was rigid. Matthew's jaws sank, and his eyes turned whichever way the strongest muscle happened to pull them.

"Yes," said Joseph, "and I was sitting at home, looking for Ephesians, and says I to myself, 'Tis nothing but Corinthians and Thessalonians in this danged Testament,' when who should come in but Henery there: 'Joseph,' he said, 'the sheep have blasted themselves——'"

With Bathsheba it was a moment when thought was speech and speech exclamation. Moreover, she had hardly recovered her equanimity since the disturbance which she had suffered from Oak's remarks.

"That's enough—that's enough!—oh, you fools!" she cried, throwing the parasol and prayer-book into the passage, and running out of doors in the direction signified. "To come to me, and not go and get them out directly! Oh, the stupid numskulls!"

Her eyes were at their darkest and brightest now. Bathsheba's beauty belonging rather to the redeemed-demonian than to the blemished-angelic school, she never looked so well as when she was angry—and particularly when the effect was heightened by a rather dashing velvet dress, carefully put on before a glass.

All the ancient men ran in a jumbled throng after her to the clover-field, Joseph sinking down in the midst when about half way, like an individual withering in a world which got more and more unstable. Having once received the stimulus that her presence always gave them, they went round among the sheep with a will. The majority of the afflicted animals were lying down, and could not be stirred. These were bodily lifted out, and the others driven into the adjoining field. Here, after the lapse of a few minutes, several more fell down, and lay helpless and livid as the rest.

Bathsheba, with a sad, bursting heart, looked at these primest specimens of her prime flock as they rolled there,

Swoln with wind and the rank mist they drew.

Many of them foamed at the mouth, their breathing being quick and short, whilst the bodies of all were fearfully distended.

"Oh, what can I do, what can I do!" said Bathsheba, helplessly. "Sheep are such unfortunate animals!—there's always something happening to them! I never knew a flock pass a year without getting into some scrape or other."

"There's only one way of saving them," said Tall.

"What way? Tell me quick!"

"They must be pierced in the side with a thing made on purpose."

"Can you do it? Can I?"

"No, ma'am. We can't, nor you neither. It must be done in a particular spot. If ye go to the right or left but an inch you stab the ewe and kill her. Not even a shepherd can do it, as a rule."

"Then they must die," she said, in a resigned tone.

"Only one man in the neighbourhood knows the way," said Joseph, now just come up. "He could cure 'em all if he were here."

"Who is he? Let's get him!"

"Shepherd Oak," said Matthew. "Ah, he's a clever man in talents!"

"Ah, that he is so!" said Joseph Poorgrass.

"True—he's the man," said Laban Tall.

"How dare you name that man in my presence!" she said, excitedly. "I've told you never to allude to him, nor shall you if you stay with me. Ah!" she added, brightening, "Farmer Boldwood knows!"

"O no, ma'am," said Matthew. "Two of his store ewes got into some vetches t'other day, and were just like these. He sent a man on horseback here posthaste for Gable, and Gable went and saved 'em. Farmer Boldwood hev got the thing they do it with. 'Tis a holler pipe, with a sharp pricker inside. Isn't it, Joseph?"

"Ay—a holler pipe," echoed Joseph. "That's what 'tis."

"Ay, sure—that's the machine," chimed in Henery Fray, reflectively, with an Oriental indifference to the flight of time.

"Well," burst out Bathsheba, "don't stand there with your ayes and your sures, talking at me! Get somebody to cure the sheep, instantly!"

All then stalked off in consternation, to get somebody as directed, without any idea of who it was to be. In a minute they had vanished through the gate, and she stood alone with the dying flock.

"Never will I send for him—never!" she said, firmly.

One of the ewes here contracted its muscles horribly, extended itself, and jumped high into the air. The leap was an astonishing one. The ewe fell heavily, and lay still.

Bathsheba went up to it. The sheep was dead.

"Oh, what shall I do—what shall I do!" she again exclaimed, wringing her hands. "I won't send for him. No, I won't!"

The most vigorous expression of a resolution does not always coincide with the greatest vigour of the resolution itself. It is often flung out as a sort of prop to support a decaying conviction which, whilst strong, required no enunciation to prove it so. The "no, I won't" of Bathsheba meant virtually "I think I must."

She followed her assistants through the gate, and lifted her hand to one of them. Laban answered to her signal.

"Where is Oak staying?"

"Across the valley at Nest Cottage."

"Jump on the bay mare, and ride across, and say he must return instantly—that I say so."

Tall scrambled off to the field, and in two minutes was on Poll, the bay, bare-backed, and with only a halter by way of rein. He diminished down the hill.

Bathsheba watched. So did all the rest. Tall cantered along the bridle-path through Sixteen Acres, Sheeplands, Middle Field, The Flats, Cappel's Piece, shrank almost to a point, crossed the bridge, and ascended from the valley through Springmead and Whitepits on the other side. The cottage to which Gabriel had retired before taking his final departure from the locality was visible as a white spot on the opposite hill, backed by blue firs. Bathsheba walked up and down. The men entered the field and endeavoured to ease the anguish of the dumb creatures by rubbing them. Nothing availed.

Bathsheba continued walking. The horse was seen descending the hill, and the wearisome series had to be repeated in reverse order: Whitepits, Springmead, Cappel's Piece, The Flats, Middle Field, Sheeplands, Sixteen Acres. She hoped Tall had had presence of mind enough to give the mare up to Gabriel, and return himself on foot. The rider neared them. It was Tall.

"O, what folly!" said Bathsheba.

Gabriel was not visible anywhere.

"Perhaps he is already gone," she said.

Tall came into the enclosure, and leapt off, his face tragic as Morton's after the Battle of Shrewsbury.

"Well?" said Bathsheba, unwilling to believe that her verbal *lettre-de-cachet* could possibly have miscarried.

"He says *beggars mustn't be choosers*," replied Laban.

"What!" said the young farmer, opening her eyes and drawing in her breath for an outburst. Joseph Poorgrass retired a few steps behind a hurdle.

"He says he shall not come unless you request him to come civilly and in a proper manner, as becomes any person begging a favour."

"O, ho, that's his answer! Where does he get his airs? Who am I, then, to be treated like that? Shall I beg to a man who has begged to me?"

Another of the flock sprang into the air, and fell dead.

The men looked grave, as if they suppressed opinion.

Bathsheba turned aside, her eyes full of tears. The strait she was in through pride and shrewishness could not be disguised longer: she burst out crying bitterly; they all saw it; and she attempted no further concealment.

"I wouldn't cry about it, Miss," said William Smallbury, compassionately. "Why not ask him softer like? I'm sure he'd come then. Gable is a true man in that way."

Bathsheba checked her grief and wiped her eyes. "O, it is a wicked

cruelty to me—it is—it is!" she murmured. "And he drives me to do what I wouldn't; yes, he does!——Tall, come indoors."

After this collapse, not very dignified for the head of an establishment, she went into the house, Tall at her heels. Here she sat down and hastily scribbled a note between the small convulsive sobs of convalescence which follow a fit of crying, as a ground-swell follows a storm. The note was none the less polite for being written in a hurry. She held it at a distance, was about to fold it, then added these words at the bottom:

"*Do not desert me, Gabriel!*"

She looked a little redder in refolding it, and closed her lips, as if thereby to suspend till too late the action of conscience in examining whether such strategy was justifiable. The note was despatched as the message had been, and Bathsheba waited indoors for the result.

It was an anxious quarter of an hour that intervened between the messenger's departure and the sound of the horse's tramp again outside. She could not watch this time, but, leaning over the old bureau at which she had written the letter, closed her eyes, as if to keep out both hope and fear.

The case, however, was a promising one. Gabriel was not angry, he was simply neutral, although her first command had been so haughty. Such imperiousness would have damned a little less beauty; and, on the other hand, such beauty would have redeemed a little less imperiousness.

She went out when the horse was heard, and looked up. A mounted figure passed between her and the sky, and went on towards the field of sheep, the rider turning his face in receding. Gabriel looked at her. It was a moment when a woman's eyes and tongue tell distinctly opposite tales. Bathsheba looked full of gratitude, and she said:

"Oh, Gabriel, how could you serve me so unkindly!"

Such a tenderly-shaped reproach for his previous delay was the one speech in the language that he could pardon for not being commendation of his readiness now.

Gabriel murmured a confused reply, and hastened on. She knew from the look which sentence in her note had brought him. Bathsheba followed to the field.

Gabriel was already among the turgid prostrate forms. He had flung off his coat, rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and taken from his pocket the instrument of salvation. It was a small tube or trochar, with a lance passing down the inside; and Gabriel began to use it with a dexterity that would have graced a hospital-surgeon. Passing his hand over the sheep's left flank, and selecting the proper point, he punctured the skin and rumen with the lance as it stood in the tube; then he suddenly withdrew the lance, retaining the tube in its place. A current of air rushed up the tube, forcible enough to have extinguished a candle held at the orifice.

It has been said that mere ease after torment is delight for a time; and the countenances of these poor creatures expressed it now. Forty-nine operations were successfully performed. Owing to the great hurry necessitated by the far-gone state of some of the flock, Gabriel missed his aim in one case, and in one only—striking wide of the mark, and inflicting a mortal blow at once upon the suffering ewe. Four had died; three recovered without an operation. The total number of sheep which had thus strayed and injured themselves so dangerously was fifty-seven.

When the love-led man had ceased from his labours, Bathsheba came and looked him in the face.

"Gabriel, will you stay on with me?" she said, smiling winningly, and not troubling to bring her lips quite together again at the end, because there was going to be another smile soon.

"I will," said Gabriel.

And she smiled on him again.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Great Barn and the Sheep shearers.

Men thin away to insignificance and oblivion quite as often by not making the most of good spirits when they have them as by lacking good spirits when they are indispensable. Gabriel lately, for the first time since his prostration by misfortune, had been independent in thought and vigorous in action to a marked extent—conditions which, powerless without an opportunity, as an opportunity without them is barren, would have given him a sure and certain lift upwards when the favourable conjunction should have occurred. But this incurable loitering beside Bathsheba Everdene stole his time ruinously. The spring tides were going by without floating him off, and the neap might soon come which could not.

It was the first day of June, and the sheep-shearing season culminated, the landscape, even to the leanest pasture, being all health and colour. Every green was young, every pore was open, and every stalk was swollen with racing currents of juice. God was palpably present in the country, and the devil had gone with the world to town. Flossy catkins of the later kinds, fern-fronds like bishops' crosiers, the square-headed moschatel, the odd cuckoo-pint—like an apoplectic saint in a niche of malachite—clean white lady's-smocks, the toothwort, approximating to human flesh, the enchanter's nightshade, and the black-petaled dolefulbells were among the quainter objects of the vegetable world in and about Weatherbury at this teeming time; and of the animal, the metamorphosed figures of Mr. Jan Coggan, the master-shearer; the second and third shearers, who travelled in the exercise of their calling and do not require definition by name; Henery Fray the fourth shearer, Susan Tall's husband the fifth, Joseph Poorgrass the sixth, young Cain Ball as assistant-shearer, and Gabriel Oak as general supervisor. None of these were clothed to

any extent worth mentioning, each appearing to have hit in the matter of raiment the decent mean between a high and low caste Hindoo. An angularity of lineament and a fixity of facial machinery in general proclaimed that serious work was the order of the day.

They sheared in the great barn, called for the nonce the Shearing Barn, which on ground plan resembled a church with transepts. It not only emulated the form of the neighbouring church of the parish, but vied with it in antiquity. Whether the barn had ever formed one of a group of conventual buildings nobody seemed to be aware; no trace of such surroundings remained. The vast porches at the sides, lofty enough to admit a waggon laden to its highest with corn in the sheaf, were spanned by heavy pointed arches of stone, broadly and boldly cut, whose very simplicity was the origin of a grandeur not apparent in erections where more ornament has been attempted. The dusky, filmed, chestnut roof, braced and tied in by huge collars, curves, and diagonals, was far nobler in design, because more wealthy in material, than nine-tenths of those in our modern churches. Along each side wall was a range of striding buttresses, throwing deep shadows on the spaces between them, which were perforated by lancet openings, combining in their proportions the precise requirements both of beauty and ventilation.

One could say about this barn, what could hardly be said of either the church or the castle, its kindred in age and style, that the purpose which had dictated its original erection was the same with that to which it was still applied. Unlike and superior to either of those two typical remnants of mediævalism, the old barn embodied practices which had suffered no mutilation at the hands of time. Here at least the spirit of the builders then was at one with the spirit of the beholder now. Standing before this abraded pile, the eye regarded its present usage; the mind dwelt upon its past history with a satisfied sense of functional continuity throughout—a feeling almost of gratitude, and quite of pride, at the permanence of the idea which had heaped it up. The fact that four centuries had neither proved it to be founded on a mistake, inspired any hatred of its purpose, nor given rise to any reaction that had battered it down, invested this simple grey effort of old minds with a repose, if not a grandeur, which a too curious reflection was apt to disturb in its ecclesiastical and military compeers. For once mediævalism and modernism had a common standpoint. The lanceolate windows, the time-eaten arch-stones and chamfers, the orientation of the axis, the misty chestnut work of the rafters, referred to no exploded fortifying art or worn-out religious creed. The defence and salvation of the body by daily bread is still a study, a religion, and a desire.

To-day the large side doors were thrown open towards the sun to admit a bountiful light to the immediate spot of the shearers' operations, which was the wood threshing-floor in the centre, formed of thick oak, black with age and polished by the beating of flails for many generations, till it had grown as slippery and as rich in hue as the state-room floors of

an Elizabethan mansion. Here the shearers knelt, the sun slanting in upon their bleached shirts, tanned arms, and the polished shears they flourished, causing them to bristle with a thousand rays strong enough to blind a weak-eyed man. Beneath them a captive sheep lay panting, increasing the rapidity of its pants as misgiving merged in terror, till it quivered like the hot landscape outside.

This picture of to-day in its frame of four hundred years ago did not produce that marked contrast between ancient and modern which is implied by the contrast of date. In comparison with cities, Weatherbury was immutable. The citizen's *Then* is the rustic's *Now*. In London, twenty or thirty years ago are old times; in Paris ten years, or five; in Weatherbury three or four score years were included in the mere present, and nothing less than a century set a mark on its face or tone. Five decades hardly modified the cut of a gaiter, the embroidery of a smock-frock, by the breadth of a hair. Ten generations failed to alter the turn of a single phrase. In these nooks the busy outsider's ancient times are only old; his old times are still new; his present is futurity.

So the barn was natural to the shearers, and the shearers were in harmony with the barn.

The spacious ends of the building, answering ecclesiastically to nave and chancel extremities, were fenced off with hurdles, the sheep being all collected in a crowd within these two enclosures; and in one angle a catching-pen was formed, in which three or four sheep were continuously kept ready for the shearers to seize without loss of time. In the background, mellowed by tawny shade, were the three women, Maryann Money, and Temperance and Soberness Miller, gathering up the fleeces and twisting ropes of wool with a wimble for tying them round. They were indifferently well assisted by the old maltster, who, when the malting season from October to April had passed, made himself useful upon any of the bordering farmsteads.

Behind all was Bathsheba, carefully watching the men to see that there was no cutting or wounding through carelessness, and that the animals were shorn close. Gabriel, who flitted and hovered under her bright eyes like a moth, did not shear continuously, half his time being spent in attending to the others and selecting the sheep for them. At the present moment he was engaged in handing round a mug of mild liquor, supplied from a barrel in the corner, and cut pieces of bread and cheese.

Bathsheba, after throwing a glance here, a caution there, and lecturing one of the younger operators who had allowed his last finished sheep to go off among the flock without re-stamping it with her initials, came again to Gabriel, as he put down the luncheon to drag a frightened ewe to his shearing-station, flinging it over upon its back with a dexterous twist of the arm. He lopped off the tresses about its head, and opened up the neck and collar, his mistress quietly looking on.

"She blushes at the insult," murmured Bathsheba, watching the pink flush which arose and overspread the neck and shoulders of the ewe

where they were left bare by the clicking shears—a flush which was enviable, for its delicacy, by many queens of the coteries, and would have been creditable, for its promptness, to any woman in the world.

Poor Gabriel's soul was fed with a luxury of content by having her over him, her eyes critically regarding his skilful shears, which apparently were going to gather up a piece of the flesh at every close, and yet never did so. Like Guildenstern, Oak was happy in that he was not over happy. He had no wish to converse with her: that his bright lady and himself formed one group, exclusively their own, and containing no others in the world, was enough.

So the chatter was all on her side. There is a loquacity that tells nothing, which was Bathsheba's; and there is a silence which says much: that was Gabriel's. Full of this dim and temperate bliss, he went on to fling the ewe over upon her other side, covering her head with his knee, gradually running the shears line after line round her dew-lap, thence about her flank and back, and finishing over the tail.

"Well done, and done quickly!" said Bathsheba, looking at her watch as the last snip resounded.

"How long, miss?" said Gabriel, wiping his brow.

"Three-and-twenty minutes and a half since you took the first lock from its forehead. It is the first time that I have ever seen one done in less than half an hour."

The clean, sleek creature arose from its fleece—how perfectly like Aphrodite rising from the foam, should have been seen to be realised—looking startled and shy at the loss of its garment, which lay on the floor in one soft cloud, united throughout, the portion visible being the inner surface only, which, never before exposed, was white as snow, and without flaw or blemish of minutest kind.

"Cain Ball!"

"Yes, Mister Oak; here I be!"

Cainy now runs forward with the tar-pot. "B. E." is newly stamped upon the shorn skin, and away the simple dam leaps, panting, over the board into the shirtless flock outside. Then up comes Maryann; throws the loose locks into the middle of the fleece, rolls it up, and carries it into the background as three-and-a-half pounds of unadulterated warmth for the winter enjoyment of persons unknown and far away, who will, however, never experience the superlative comfort derivable from the wool as it here exists, new and pure—before the unctuousness of its nature whilst in a living state has dried, stiffened, and been washed out—rendering it just now as superior to anything *woollen* as cream is superior to milk-and-water.

But heartless circumstance could not leave entire Gabriel's happiness of this morning. The rams, old ewes, and two-shear ewes had duly undergone their stripping, and the men were proceeding with the shearlings and hogs, when Oak's belief that she was going to stand pleasantly by and time him through another performance was painfully interrupted by

Farmer Boldwood's appearance in the extremest corner of the barn. Nobody seemed to have perceived his entry, but there he certainly was. Boldwood always carried with him a social atmosphere of his own, which everybody felt who came near him; and the talk, which Bathsheba's presence had somewhat repressed, was now totally suspended.

He crossed over towards Bathsheba, who turned to greet him with a carriage of perfect ease. He spoke to her in low tones, and she instinctively modulated her own to the same pitch, and her voice ultimately even caught the inflection of his. She was far from having a wish to appear mysteriously connected with him; but woman at the impressible age gravitates to the larger body not only in her choice of words, which is apparent every day, but even in her shades of tone and humour, when the influence is great.

What they conversed about was not audible to Gabriel, who was too independent to get near, though too concerned to disregard. The issue of their dialogue was the taking of her hand by the courteous farmer to help her over the spreading-board into the bright May sunlight outside. Standing beside the sheep already shorn, they went on talking again. Concerning the flock? Apparently not. Gabriel theorised, not without truth, that in quiet discussion of any matter within reach of the speakers' eyes, these are usually fixed upon it. Bathsheba demurely regarded a contemptible straw lying upon the ground, in a way which suggested less ovine criticism than womanly embarrassment. She became more or less red in the cheek, the blood wavering in uncertain flux and reflux over the sensitive space between ebb and flood. Gabriel sheared on, constrained and sad.

She left Boldwood's side, and he walked up and down alone for nearly a quarter of an hour. Then she reappeared in a new riding-habit of myrtle green, which fitted her to the waist as a rind fits its fruit; and young Bob Coggan led on her mare, Boldwood fetching his own horse from the tree under which it had been tied.

Oak's eyes could not forsake them; and in endeavouring to continue his shearing at the same time that he watched Boldwood's manner, he snipped the sheep in the groin. The animal plunged; Bathsheba instantly gazed towards it, and saw the blood.

"O Gabriel!" she exclaimed, with severe remonstrance. "You who are so strict with the other men—see what you are doing yourself!"

To an outsider there was not much to complain of in this remark; but to Oak, who knew Bathsheba to be well aware that she herself was the cause of the poor ewe's wound, because she had wounded the ewe's shearer in a still more vital part, it had a sting which the abiding sense of his inferiority to both herself and Boldwood was not calculated to heal. But a manly resolve to recognise boldly that he had no longer a lover's interest in her, helped him occasionally to conceal a feeling.

"Bottle!" he shouted, in an unmoved voice of routine. Cainy Ball ran up, the wound was anointed, and the shearing continued.

Boldwood gently tossed Bathsheba into the saddle, and before they turned away she again spoke out to Oak with the same dominative and tantalising graciousness.

"I am going now to see Mr. Boldwood's Leicesters. Take my place in the barn, Gabriel, and keep the men carefully to their work."

The horses' heads were put about, and they trotted away.

Boldwood's deep attachment was a matter of great interest among all around him; but, after having been pointed out for so many years as the perfect exemplar of thriving bachelorship, his lapse was an anticlimax, somewhat resembling that of St. John Long's death by consumption, in the midst of his proofs that it was not a fatal disease.

"That means matrimony," said Temperance Miller, following them out of sight with her eyes.

"I reckon that's the size o't," said Coggan, working along without looking up.

"Well, better wed over the mixen than over the moor," said Laban Tall, turning his sheep.

Henry Fray spoke, exhibiting miserable eyes at the same time: "I don't see why a maid should take a husband when she's bold enough to fight her own battles, and don't want a home; for 'tis keeping another woman out. But let it be, for 'tis a pity he and she should trouble two houses."

As usual with decided characters, Bathsheba invariably provoked the criticism of individuals like Henry Fray. Her emblazoned fault was to be too pronounced in her objections, and not sufficiently overt in her likings. We learn that it is not the rays which bodies absorb, but those which they reject, that give them the colours they are known by; and in the same way people are specialised by their dislikes and antagonisms, whilst their goodwill is looked upon as no attribute at all.

Henry continued in a more complaisant mood: "I once hinted my mind to her on a few things, as nearly as a battered frame dared to do so to such a froward piece. You all know, neighbours, what a man I be, and how I come down with my powerful words when my pride is boiling with indignation?"

"We do, we do, Henery."

"So I said, 'Mistress Everdene, there's places empty, and there's gifted men willing; but the spite'—no, not the spite—I didn't say spite—'but the villany of the contrarikind,' I said (meaning womankind), 'keeps 'em out.' That wasn't too strong for her, say?"

"Passably well put."

"Yes; and I would have said it, had death and salvation overtook me for it. Such is my spirit when I have a mind!"

"A true man, and proud as a lucifer."

"You see the artfulness? Why, 'twas about being baily really; but I didn't put it so plain that she could understand my meaning, so I could lay it on all the stronger. That was my depth! . . . However, let her

marry an she will. Perhaps 'tis high time. I believe Farmer Boldwood kissed her behind the spear-bed at the sheep-washing t'other day—that I do."

"What a lie!" said Gabriel.

"Ah, neighbour Oak—how'st know?" said Henery, mildly.

"Because she told me all that passed," said Oak, with a pharisaical sense that he was not as other shearers in this matter.

"Ye have a right to believe it," said Henery, with dudgeon; "a very true right. But I may see a little distance into things. To be long-headed enough for a baily's place is a poor mere trifle—yet a trifle more than nothing. However, I look round upon life quite promiscuous. Do you conceive me, neighbours? My words, though made as simple as I can, may be rather deep for some heads."

"O yes, Henery, we quite conceive ye."

"A strange old piece, goodmen—whirled about from here to yonder, as if I were nothing worth. A little warped, too. But I have my depths; ha, and even my great depths! I might close with a certain shepherd, brain to brain. But no—O no!"

"A strange old piece, ye say!" interposed the maltster, in a querulous voice. "At the same time ye be no old man worth naming—no old man at all. Yer teeth baint half gone yet; and what's a old man's standing if so be his teeth baint gone? Weren't I stale in wedlock afore ye were out of arms? 'Tis a poor thing to be sixty, when there's people far past four-score—a boast weak as water."

It was the unvarying custom in Weatherbury to sink minor differences when the maltster had to be pacified.

"Weak as water!" yes, said Jan Coggan. "Maltster, we feel ye to be a wonderful old veteran man, and nobody can gainsay it."

"Nobody," said Joseph Poorgrass. "Ye are a very rare old spectacle, maltster, and we all respect ye for that gift."

"Ay, and as a young man, when my senses were in prosperity, I was likewise liked by a good-few who knowed me," said the maltster.

"'Ithout doubt you was—'ithout doubt."

The bent and hoary man was satisfied, and so apparently was Henery Fray. That matters should continue pleasant Maryann spoke, who, what with her brown complexion, and the working wrapper of rusty linsey, had at present the mellow hue of an old sketch in oils—notably some of Nicholas Poussin's:—

"Do anybody know of a crooked man, or a lame, or any second-hand fellow at all that would do for poor me?" said Maryann. "A perfect article I don't expect to get at my time of life. If I could hear of such a thing 'twould do me more good than toast and ale."

Coggan furnished a suitable reply. Oak went on with his shearing, and said not another word. Pestilent moods had come, and teased away his quiet. Bathsheba had shown indications of anointing him above his fellows by installing him as the bailiff that the farm imperatively required.

He did not covet the post relatively to the farm: in relation to herself, as beloved by him and unmarried to another, he had coveted it. His readings of her seemed now to be vapoury and indistinct. His lecture to her was, he thought, one of the absurdest mistakes. Far from coquetting with Boldwood, she had trifled with himself in thus feigning that she had trifled with another. He was inwardly convinced that, in accordance with the anticipations of his easy-going and worse-educated comrades, that day would see Boldwood the accepted husband of Miss Everdene. Gabriel at this time of his life had outgrown the instinctive dislike which every Christian boy has for reading the Bible, perusing it now quite frequently, and he inwardly said, "'I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets!'" This was mere exclamation—the froth of the storm. He adored Bathsheba just the same.

"We workfolk shall have some lordly junketing to-night," said Cainy Ball, casting forth his thoughts in a new direction. "This morning I see 'em making the great puddens in the milking-pails—lumps of fat as big as yer thumb, Mister Oak! I've never seed such splendid large knobs of fat before in the days of my life—they never used to be bigger than a horse-bean. And there was a great black crock upon the brandise with his legs a-sticking out, but I don't know what was in within."

"And there's two bushels of biffins for apple-pies," said Maryann.

"Well, I hope to do my duty by it all," said Joseph Poorgrass, in a pleasant, masticating manner of anticipation. "Yes; victuals and drink is a cheerful thing, and gives nerves to the nerveless, if the form of words may be used. 'Tis the gospel of the body, without which he perish, so to speak it."

CHAPTER XXIII.

EVENTIDE: A SECOND DECLARATION.

FOR the shearing-supper a long table was placed on the grass-plot beside the house, the end of the table being thrust over the sill of the wide parlour-window and a foot or two into the room. Miss Everdene sat inside the window, facing down the table. She was thus at the head without mingling with the men.

This evening Bathsheba was unusually excited, her red cheeks and lips contrasting lustrously with the mazy skeins of her shadowy hair. She seemed to expect assistance, and the seat at the bottom of the table was at her request left vacant until after they had begun the meal. She then asked Gabriel to take the place and the duties appertaining to that end, which he did with great readiness.

At this moment Mr. Boldwood came in at the gate, and crossed the green to Bathsheba at the window. He apologised for his lateness: his arrival was evidently by arrangement.

"Gabriel," said she, "will you move again, please, and let Mr. Boldwood come there?"

Oak moved in silence back to his original seat.

The gentleman-farmer was dressed in cheerful style, in a new coat and white waistcoat, quite contrasting with his usual sober suits of grey. Inwardly, too, he was blithe, and consequently chatty to an exceptional degree. So also was Bathsheba now that he had come, though the uninvited presence of Pennyways, the bailiff who had been dismissed for theft, disturbed her equanimity for a while.

Supper being ended, Coggan began on his own private account, without reference to listeners:—

"I've lost my love, and I care not,
I've lost my love, and I care not;
I shall soon have another
That's better than t'other;
I've lost my love, and I care not."

This melody, when concluded, was received with a silently appreciative gaze at the table, implying that the performance, like a work by those established authors who are independent of notices in the papers, was a well-known delight which required no applause.

"Now, Master Poorgrass, your song," said Coggan.

"I be all but a shadder, and the gift is wanting in me," said Joseph, diminishing himself.

"Nonsense; wou'st never be so ungrateful, Joseph—never!" said Coggan, expressing hurt feelings by an inflection of voice. "And mistress is looking hard at ye, as much as to say, 'Sing at once, Joseph Poorgrass.'"

"Faith, so she is; well, I must suffer it! . . . How do I bear her gaze? Do I blush prodigally? Just eye my features, and see if the tell-tale blood overpowers me much, neighbours."

"No, yer blushes be quite reasonable," said Coggan.

"A very reasonable depth indeed," testified Oak.

"I always tries to keep my colours from rising when a beauty's eyes get fixed on me," said Joseph, diffidently; "but if so be 'tis willed they do, they must."

"Now, Joseph, your song, please," said Bathsheba, from the window.

"Well, really, ma'am," he replied, in a yielding tone, "I don't know what to say. It would be a poor plain ballet of my own composure."

"Hear, hear!" said the supper-party.

Poorgrass, thus assured, trilled forth a flickering yet commendable piece of sentiment, the tune of which consisted of the key-note and another, the latter being the sound chiefly dwelt upon. This was so successful that he rashly plunged into a second in the same breath, after a few false starts:—

"I sow'-ed the'-e . . . . .
I sow'-ed . . . . .
I sow'-ed the'-e seeds' of' love',
I-it was' all' i'-in the'-e spring',
I-in A'-pril', Ma'-ay, a'-nd sun'-ny' June',
When sma'-all bi'-irds they' do' sing'."

"Well put out of hand," said Coggan, at the end of the verse. "'They do sing' was a very taking paragraph."

"Ay; and there was a pretty place at 'seeds of love,' and 'twas well rehearsed. Though 'love' is a nasty high corner when a man's voice is getting crazed. Next verse, Master Poorgrass."

But during this rendering young Bob Coggan evinced one of those anomalies which will afflict little people when other persons are particularly serious, and, in trying to check his laughter, pushed down his throat as much of the table-cloth as he could get hold of, when, after continuing hermetically sealed for a short time, his mirth ultimately burst out through his nose. Joseph perceived it, and with hectic cheeks of indignation instantly ceased singing. Coggan boxed Bob's ears immediately.

"Go on, Joseph—go on, and never mind the young scamp," said Coggan. "'Tis a very catching ballet. Now then again—the next bar; I'll help ye to flourish up the shrill notes where yer wind is rather wheezy:—

"O the wi'-il-lo'-ow tree' will' twist',
And the wil'-low' tre'-ee wi'-ill twine'."

But the singer could not be set going again. Bob Coggan was sent home for his ill manners, and tranquillity was restored by Jacob Smallbury, who volunteered a ballad as inclusive and interminable as that with which the worthy toper, old Silenus, amused on a similar occasion the swains Chromis and Mnasylus, and other jolly dogs of his day.

It was still the beaming time of evening, though night was stealthily making itself visible low down upon the ground, the western lines of light raking the earth without alighting upon it to any extent, or illuminating the dead levels at all. The sun had crept round the tree as a last effort before death, and then began to sink, the shearers' lower parts becoming steeped in embrowning twilight, whilst their heads and shoulders were still enjoying day, lacquered with a yellow of self-sustained brilliancy that seemed inherent rather than acquired.

The sun went down in an ochreous mist; but they sat, and talked on, and grew as merry as the gods in Homer's heaven. Bathsheba still remained enthroned inside the window, and occupied herself in knitting, from which she sometimes looked up to view the fading scene outside. The slow twilight expanded and enveloped them completely before the signs of moving were shown.

Gabriel suddenly missed Farmer Boldwood from his place at the bottom of the table. How long he had been gone Oak did not know; but he had apparently withdrawn into the encircling dusk. Whilst he was thinking of this, Liddy brought candles into the back part of the room overlooking the shearers, and their lively new flames shone down the table and over the men, and dispersed among the green shadows behind. Bathsheba's form, still in its original position, was now again distinct between their eyes and the light, which revealed that Boldwood had gone inside the room, and was now sitting near her.

Next came the question of the evening. Would Miss Everdene sing to them the song she always sang so charmingly—"The Banks of Allan Water"—before they went home?

After a moment's consideration Bathsheba assented, beckoning to Gabriel, who hastened up into the coveted atmosphere at once.

"Have you brought your flute?" she whispered.

"Yes, miss."

"Play to my singing, then."

She stood up in the window-opening, facing the men, the candles behind her, and Gabriel on her right hand, immediately outside the sash-frame. Boldwood had drawn up on her left, within the room. Her singing was soft and rather tremulous at first, but it soon swelled to a steady clearness. Subsequent events caused one of the verses to be remembered for many months, and even years, by more than one of those who were gathered there:—

"For his bride a soldier sought her,
And a winning tongue had he:
On the banks of Allan Water
None was gay as she!"

In addition to the dulcet piping of Gabriel's flute, Boldwood supplied a bass in his customary profound voice, uttering his notes so softly, however, as to abstain entirely from making anything like an ordinary duet of the song; they rather formed a rich unexplored shadow, which threw her tones into relief. The shearers reclined against each other as at suppers in the early ages of the world, and so silent and absorbed were they that her breathing could almost be heard between the bars; and at the end of the ballad, when the last tone loitered on to an inexpressible close, there arose that buzz of pleasure which is the attar of applause.

It is scarcely necessary to state that Gabriel could not avoid noting the farmer's bearing to-night towards their entertainer. Yet there was nothing exceptional in his actions beyond what appertained to his time of performing them. It was when the rest were all looking away that Boldwood observed her; when they regarded her he turned aside; when they thanked or praised he was silent; when they were inattentive he murmured his thanks. The meaning lay in the difference between actions, none of which had any meaning of themselves; and the necessity of being jealous, which lovers are troubled with, did not lead Oak to under-estimate these signs.

Bathsheba then wished them good-night, withdrew from the window, and retired to the back part of the room, Boldwood thereupon closing the sash and the shutters, and shutting himself inside with her. Oak wandered away under the quiet and scented trees. Recovering from the softer impressions produced by Bathsheba's voice, the shearers rose to leave, Coggan turning to Pennyways as he pushed back the bench to pass out:—

"I like to give praise where praise is due, and the man deserves it—

that 'a do so," he remarked, looking at the worthy thief comprehensively, as if he were the masterpiece of some world-renowned artist.

"I'm sure I should never have believed it if we hadn't proved it, so to allude," said Joseph Poorgrass, "that every cup, every one of the best knives and forks, and every empty bottle be in their place as perfect now as at the beginning, and not one stole at all."

"I'm sure I don't deserve half the praise you give me," said the virtuous thief, grimly.

"Well, I'll say this for Pennyways," added Coggan, "that whenever he do really make up his mind to do a noble thing in the shape of a good action, as I could see by his face he did to-night afore sitting down, he's generally able to carry it out. Yes, I'm proud to say, neighbours, that he's stole nothing at all."

"Well, 'tis an honest deed, and we thank ye for it, Pennyways," said Joseph; to which opinion the remainder of the company subscribed unanimously.

At this time of departure, when nothing more was visible of the inside of the parlour than a thin and still chink of light between the shutters, a passionate scene was in course of enactment there.

Miss Everdene and Boldwood were alone. Her cheeks had lost a great deal of their healthful fire from the very seriousness of her position; but her eye was bright with the excitement of a triumph—though it was a triumph which had rather been contemplated than desired.

She was standing behind a low arm-chair, from which she had just risen, and he was kneeling in it—inclining himself over its back towards her, and holding her hand in both his own. His body moved restlessly, and it was with a too happy happiness. This unwonted abstraction by love of all dignity from a man of whom it had ever seemed the chief component, was, in its distressing incongruity, a pain to her which quenched much of the pleasure she derived from the proof that she was idolised.

"I will try to love you," she was saying, in a trembling voice quite unlike her usual self-confidence. "And if I can believe in any way that I shall make you a good wife I shall indeed be willing to marry you. But, Mr. Boldwood, hesitation on so high a matter is honourable in any woman, and I don't want to give a solemn promise to-night. I would rather ask you to wait a few weeks till I can see my situation better."

"But you have every reason to believe that *then* . . . "

"I have every reason to hope that at the end of the five or six weeks, between this time and harvest, that you say you are going to be away from home, I shall be able to promise to be your wife," she said, firmly. "But remember this distinctly, I don't promise yet."

"It is enough; I don't ask more. I can wait on those dear words. And now, Miss Everdene, good-night!"

"Good-night," she said, graciously—almost tenderly; and Boldwood withdrew with a serene smile.

Bathsheba knew more of him now; he had entirely bared his heart before her, even until he had almost worn in her eyes the sorry look of a grand bird without the feathers that make it grand. She had been awe-struck at her past temerity, and was struggling to make amends, without thinking whether the sin quite deserved the penalty she was schooling herself to pay. To have brought all this about her ears was terrible; but after a while the situation was not without a fearful joy. The facility with which even the most timid women sometimes acquire a relish for the dreadful when that is amalgamated with a little triumph, is marvellous.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SAME NIGHT: THE FIR PLANTATION.

AMONG the multifarious duties which Bathsheba had voluntarily imposed upon herself by dispensing with the services of a bailiff, was the particular one of looking round the homestead before going to bed, to see that all was right and safe for the night. Gabriel had almost constantly preceded her in this tour every evening, watching her affairs as carefully as any specially appointed officer of surveillance could have done; but this tender devotion was to a great extent unknown to his mistress, and as much as was known was somewhat thanklessly received. Women are never tired of bewailing man's fickleness in love, but they only seem to snub his constancy.

As watching is best done invisibly, she usually carried a dark lantern in her hand, and every now and then turned on the light to examine nooks and corners with the coolness of a metropolitan policeman. This coolness may have owed its existence not so much to her fearlessness of expected danger as to her freedom from the suspicion of any; her worst anticipated discovery being that a horse might not be well bedded, the fowls not all in, or a door not closed.

This night the buildings were inspected as usual, and she went round to the farm paddock. Here the only sounds disturbing the stillness were steady munchings of many mouths, and stentorian breathings from all but invisible noses, ending in snores and puffs like the blowing of bellows slowly. Then the munching would re-commence, when the lively imagination might assist the eye to discern a group of pink-white nostrils, large as caverns, and very clammy and humid on their surfaces, not exactly pleasant to the touch until one got used to them; the mouths beneath them having a great partiality for closing upon any fragment of Bathsheba's apparel which came within reach of their tongues. Above each of these a still keener vision suggested a brown forehead and two staring though not unfriendly eyes, and above all a pair of whitish crescent-shaped horns like two particularly new moons, an occasional stolid "moo!" proclaiming beyond the shade of a doubt that these phenomena were the

features and persons of Daisy, Whitefoot, Bonnylass, Jolly-O, Spot, Twinkle-eye, &c., &c.—the respectable dairy of Devon cows belonging to Bathsheba aforesaid.

Her way back to the house was by a path through a young plantation of tapering firs, which had been planted some years earlier to shelter the premises from the north wind. By reason of the density overhead of the interwoven foliage it was gloomy there at cloudless noontide, twilight in the evening, dark as midnight at dusk, and black as the ninth plague of Egypt at midnight. To describe the spot is to call it a vast, low, naturally formed hall, the plumy ceiling of which was supported by slender pillars of living wood, the floor being covered with a soft dun carpet of dead spikelets and mildewed cones, with a tuft of grass-blades here and there.

This bit of the path was always the crux of the night's ramble, though, before starting, her apprehensions of danger were not vivid enough to lead her to take a companion. Slipping along here covertly as Time, Bathsheba fancied she could hear footsteps entering the track at the opposite end. It was certainly a rustle of footsteps. Her own instantly fell as gently as snow-flakes. She reassured herself by a remembrance that the path was public, and that the traveller was probably some villager returning home, regretting, at the same time, that the meeting should be about to occur in the darkest point of her route, even though only just outside her own door.

The noise approached, came close, and a figure was apparently on the point of gliding past her when something tugged at her skirt and pinned it forcibly to the ground. The instantaneous check nearly threw Bathsheba off her balance. In recovering she struck against warm clothes and buttons.

"A rum start, upon my soul!" said a masculine voice, a foot or so above her head. "Have I hurt you, mate?"

"No," said Bathsheba, attempting to shrink away.

"We have got hitched together somehow, I think."

"Yes."

"Are you a woman?"

"Yes."

"A lady, I should have said."

"It doesn't matter."

"I am a man."

"Oh!"

Bathsheba softly tugged again, but to no purpose.

"Is that a dark lantern you have? I fancy so," said the man.

"Yes."

"If you'll allow me I'll open it, and set you free."

A hand seized the lantern, the door was opened, the rays burst out from their prison, and Bathsheba beheld her position with astonishment.

The man to whom she was hooked was brilliant in brass and scarlet.

He was a soldier. His sudden appearance was to darkness what the sound of a trumpet is to silence. Gloom, the *genius loci* at all times hitherto, was now totally overthrown, less by the lantern light than by what the lantern lighted. The contrast of this revelation with her anticipations of some sinister figure in sombre garb was so great that it had upon her the effect of a fairy transformation.

It was immediately apparent that the military man's spur had become entangled in the gimp which decorated the skirt of her dress. He caught a view of her face.

"I'll unfasten you in one moment, miss," he said, with new-born gallantry.

"O no—I can do it, thank you," she hastily replied, and stooped for the performance.

The unfastening was not such a trifling affair. The rowel of the spur had so wound itself among the gimp cords in those few moments, that separation was likely to be a matter of time.

He too stooped, and the lantern standing on the ground betwixt them threw the gleam from its open side among the fir-tree *débris* and the blades of long damp grass with the effect of a large glowworm. It radiated upwards into their faces, and sent over half the plantation gigantic shadows of both man and woman, each dusky shape becoming distorted and mangled upon the tree-trunks till it wasted to nothing.

He looked hard into her eyes when she raised them for a moment; Bathsheba looked down again, for his gaze was too strong to be received pointblank with her own. But she had obliquely noticed that he was young and slim, and that he wore three chevrons upon his sleeve.

Bathsheba pulled again.

"You are a prisoner, miss; it is no use blinking the matter," said the soldier, drily. "I must cut your dress if you are in such a hurry."

"Yes—please do!" she exclaimed, helplessly.

"It wouldn't be necessary if you could wait a moment;" and he unwound a cord from the little wheel. She withdrew her own hand, but, whether by accident or design, he touched it. Bathsheba was vexed; she hardly knew why.

His unravelling went on, but it nevertheless seemed coming to no end. She looked at him again.

"Thank you for the sight of such a beautiful face!" said the young sergeant, without ceremony.

She coloured with embarrassment. "'Twas unwillingly shown," she replied, stiffly, and with as much dignity—which was very little—as she could infuse into a position of utter captivity.

"I like you the better for that incivility, miss," he said.

"I should have liked—I wish—you had never shown yourself to me by intruding here!" She pulled again, and the gathers of her dress began to give way like lilliputian musketry.

"I deserve such a chastisement as your words give me. But why

should such a fair and dutiful girl have such an aversion to her father's sex?"

"Go on your way, please."

"What, Beauty, and drag you after me? Do but look; I never saw such a tangle!"

"O, 'tis shameful of you; you have been making it worse on purpose to keep me here—you have!"

"Indeed, I don't think so," said the sergeant, with a merry twinkle.

"I tell you you have!" she exclaimed, in high temper. "I insist upon undoing it. Now, allow me!"

"Certainly, miss; I am not of steel." He added a sigh which had as much archness in it as a sigh could possess without losing its nature altogether. "I am thankful for beauty, even when 'tis thrown to me like a bone to a dog. These moments will be over too soon!"

"Not for my pleasure," she said.

Bathsheba was revolving in her mind whether by a bold and desperate rush she could free herself at the risk of leaving a portion of her skirt bodily behind her. The thought was too dreadful. The dress—which she had put on to appear stately at the supper—was the head and front of her wardrobe; not another in her stock became her so well. And then, her appearance with half a skirt gone! What woman in Bathsheba's position, not naturally timid, and within call of her retainers, would have bought escape from a dashing soldier at so dear a price?

"All in good time; it will soon be done, I perceive," said her cool friend.

"This trifling provokes, and—and——"

"Not too cruel!"

"— Insults me!"

"It is done in order that I may have the pleasure of apologising to so charming a woman, which I straightway do most humbly, madam," he said, bowing low.

Bathsheba really knew not what to say.

"I've seen a good many women in my time," continued the young man in a murmur, and more thoughtfully than hitherto, critically regarding her bent head at the same time; "but I've never seen a woman so beautiful as you. Take it or leave it—be offended or like it—I don't care."

"Who are you, then, who can so well afford to despise opinion?"

"No stranger. Sergeant Troy. I am staying in this place.—There! it is undone at last, you see. Your light fingers were more eager than mine. I wish it had been the knot of knots, which there's no untying."

This was worse and worse. She started up, and so did he. How to decently get away from him—that was her difficulty now. She sidled off inch by inch, the lantern in her hand, till she could see the redness of his coat no longer.

"Ah, Beauty; good-bye!" he said.

She made no reply, and, reaching a distance of twenty or thirty yards, turned about, and ran indoors.

Liddy had just retired to rest. In ascending to her own chamber, Bathsheba opened the girl's door an inch or two, and said—

"Liddy, is any soldier staying in the village—Sergeant somebody—rather gentlemanly for a sergeant, and good looking—a red coat with blue facings?"

"No, miss. . . . No, I say; but really it might be Sergeant Troy home on furlough, though I have not seen him. He was here once in that way when the regiment was at Casterbridge."

"Yes—that's the name. Had he a moustache—no whiskers or beard?"

"He had."

"What kind of a person is he?"

"Oh! miss—I blush to name it—a gay man. But I know him to be very quick and trim, who might have made his thousands, like a squire. Such a clever young dand as he is! He's a doctor's son by name, which is a great deal; and he's an earl's son by nature!"

"Which is a great deal more. Fancy! Is it true?"

"Yes. And he was brought up so well, and sent to Casterbridge Grammar School for years and years. Learnt all languages while he was there; and it was said he got on so far that he could take down Chinese in shorthand; but that I don't answer for, as it was only reported. However, he wasted his gifted lot, and listed a soldier; but even then he rose to be a sergeant without trying at all. Ah! such a blessing it is to be high-born; nobility of blood will shine out even in the ranks and files. And is he really come home, miss?"

"I believe so. Good-night, Liddy."

After all, how could a cheerful wearer of skirts be permanently offended with the man? There are occasions when girls like Bathsheba will put up with a great deal of unconventional behaviour. When they want to be praised, which is often; when they want to be mastered, which is sometimes; and when they want no nonsense, which is seldom. Just now the first feeling was in the ascendant with Bathsheba, with a dash of the second. Moreover, by chance or by devilry, the ministrant was antecedently made interesting by being a handsome stranger who had evidently seen better days.

So she could not clearly decide whether it was her opinion that he had insulted her or not.

"Was ever anything so odd!" she at last exclaimed to herself, in her own room. "And was ever anything so meanly done as what I did—to skulk away like that from a man who was only civil and kind!" Clearly she did not think his barefaced praise of her person an insult now.

It was a fatal omission of Boldwood's that he had never once told her she was beautiful.

The French Press.

FOURTH PERIOD.

Newspapers during the Revolution.*

I.

The Royal decree convoking the States General to meet at Versailles on the 5th May, 1789, was issued on the 15th July, 1788, which gave France almost ten months to prepare for the most eventful parliamentary election in her annals. There can be no doubt that this long time had much to do with the thoroughness of the revolution which followed the meeting of the Assembly. The King's decree had enjoined that the deputies of the three orders—nobility, clergy, people—should ascertain clearly what were the wishes of their constituents, in order to submit them to him in writing; and this invitation to all Frenchmen to set to work constitution-making stirred up every man who could hold a pen or declaim a dozen phrases on politics. No impediments were placed in the way of free discussion. It appeared to be the sincere wish of the King to come at length to an understanding with his people; and as the nation believed in his sincerity, the tone of the press suddenly softened, and the controversies as to which was the best of political systems were carried on, not without warmth indeed, but with general loyalty towards the Crown. None of the countless elections held in France during the past eighty years have been conducted with such independence and dignity as those for the States General. The unintelligent expedient of the ballot had not yet been devised: so the electors in borough and canton voted like men who felt they were discharging a responsible trust. They were actuated by a sublime faith, for the States General had not been convoked since 1614, and it was heartily believed that the Assembly would remedy all wrongs and cause a new era to dawn for the country. Accordingly, the men who went to Versailles as representatives of the people were truly the pick of the nation.†

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* "The French Press," First, Second, and Third Periods, Cornhill Magazine, June and October, 1873; February, 1874.

† The States of 1789 were the 17th in French history. The first were summoned in 1302, by Philip IV., on the occasion of his dispute with Pope Boniface VIII. The second met in 1308, and ratified the abolition of the order of the Templars; and the third were convoked by Philip IV. in 1313, to deliberate about taxes. In 1317 and in 1328, the States assembled again for the coronation of Philip V. and Philip VI., who inherited by virtue of the Salic law, and desired to have that law confirmed and in 1356 and in 1380 the States met again to appoint regencies: on the former

How the three orders assembled each in a separate room of the Royal Palace, and how the deputies of the Third Estate were impolitically presented to Louis XVI. with ceremonies intended to humiliate them and make them feel their inferiority to the nobility and clergy; how after this the three orders walked processionally from the Church of Notre Dame de Versailles to that of St. Louis, and heard a dull inaugural sermon by the Bishop of Nancy; "who missed," as Mirabeau said, "the grandest opportunity ever afforded to man for saying something fine, or holding his tongue;" and how M. Necker, the Controller of Finances, laid before the States his lamentable report on the monetary embarrassments of the kingdom, and hinted that the deputies had been convoked solely to dispel these embarrassments, and for nothing else—all these details are well known to students of French history. Our purpose here is to show what part the Press played in the revolution; and it must be said at once that this part was a leading one. From the day when the States met, journalism entered upon a new and fiercely combative phase. The days of theorizing were past; there was a national Parliament at Versailles, whose debates had to be reported on from day to day for the enlightenment of excited readers, and anxiously criticized. The deputies of the third estate had to be encouraged and stimulated, those of the nobility and clergy to be remonstrated with, appealed to, and threatened. Daily and hourly it was urged that the Parliament should be reminded that it was no mere readjustment of taxes that the nation demanded, but reforms full and searching; and, above all, a Constitution. Mirabeau, Maret, Barrère, Brissot, Gorsas, Loustalot, Condorcet, Garet, Rabaud, St. Etienne, Louvet, Carra, Mercier, Fontanes, Chenier, Fréron, Marat, Hébert, Robespierre, Siéyès, and Babœuf—these were but a handful of the writers who plunged into the lists pen in hand, with each his

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occasion, during the captivity of King Jean in England, and in 1380, during the minority of Charles VI. It will thus be seen that the States General met seven times in the fourteenth century. The eighth meeting was in 1420, to ratify the Treaty of Troyes; the ninth in 1468, to prevent the dismemberment of Normandy in favour of the King's brother; the tenth in 1484, to recognize the majority of Charles VIII.; the eleventh, in 1506, to approve the marriage of Louis XII.'s daughter with the Duke of Angoulême (afterwards Francis I.); and the twelfth in 1560, when a code of commercial laws was drawn up, which continued in force till the Revolution. The thirteenth and fourteenth States General, known as the States of Blois, met in 1576 and 1588, and wasted much time in trying to reconcile the contendant factions of the League; and the fifteenth meeting was held in Paris in 1593 by the Leaguers, and voted to little purpose the perpetual exclusion of Henri IV. from the throne. The sixteenth States, convoked by Henri IV.'s widow, Marie de Medici, were remarkable from the fact that the representatives of the third estate made a resolute attempt to force a charter from the Queen Regent, and, had they been headed by a capable leader, they might then and there have established parliamentary government in France. As it was, they failed, but their attitude inspired so much terror to the Crown that Louis XIII. and his two next successors would listen to no proposals for re-summoning them. During 175 years taxes were levied, wars made, and treaties concluded without any national assent or ratification.

own private paper and code of opinions. As to the ruck of lesser journalists, they were innumerable, for not only every man who could write, but every man who had received the faintest smattering of education, felt himself competent to give his advice on the crisis. A period had come when brains might hope to snatch away all the posts hitherto usurped by birth and privilege. Every Frenchman thinks he has brains, so every Frenchman saw in the desired revolution—first, his own welfare, and next, that of his fellow-citizens. From 1789 to 1791 the national eruptions of discontent, ambition, patriotism, folly, and fury, gave birth to more than 1,200 new journals in Paris alone.

Foremost among journalists, as among parliamentary debaters, was Mirabeau. He was born in 1749, and had passed his youth so disreputably that his father had been obliged to shut him up for several years at Vincennes. Here he studied a good deal, wrote some immoral novels, and on his release was practised enough in penmanship to apply to M. de Calonne for a situation as Government clerk. The Minister judged him too intelligent, however, for a subordinate office, and sent him on a political mission to Prussia; but Mirabeau soon tired of diplomatic service. He visited England, and in 1786, full of ideas of liberty and constitutions, borrowed money sufficient to start a paper, which, oddly enough, he called the *Conservateur*. It was not an ordinary journal, but a weekly compilation of political extracts from ancient and modern authors, and Mirabeau avowedly launched it with the intention of earning an income, whilst he wrote pamphlets of his own on the topics of the day. But the public were not anxious to know what Cicero thought about universal suffrage, or Milton about a freedom of the Press; so the paper failed, and, after an unsuccessful attempt to obtain the editorship of the *Mercure*, Mirabeau joined with Brissot in founding *L'Analyse des Papiers Anglais*. It was characteristic of Mirabeau's thoroughly French mind, that undertaking to publish analyses of all that appeared in the London papers, he knew not a word of English, and his partnership with Brissot, who did know English, was not an idea of his own. "I heard," says Brissot, "what Mirabeau was going to do, and called on him to talk about his programme. He admitted that his English analyses were to be a mere mask under which he would discuss French affairs. 'That is,' said he, 'I shall dress up English essays so that they will seem to apply to our case.' 'But do you know English?' I asked. 'Not a syllable,' answered he; 'but no more do my readers. I daresay I shall learn in time by spelling over the papers regularly.' I then offered to assist him gratis, and he accepted, with his usual good nature. Prompt and bold in attack, he soon had some violent polemics with Mallet du Pan about the trial of Warren Hastings and the situation of the English in the East Indies, and in these my experience of England, and my knowledge of British history, stood him in good stead. I also composed against Mallet a number of letters, which were published in Mirabeau's name, and I must do our adversary the justice to own that he was well acquainted

with the subjects of which he wrote, whilst Mirabeau was on all points ignorant as a carp."

This ignorance of Mirabeau, and his cool recklessness of the fact, are points to notice, as also the peculiarity that he signed numbers of articles which he never wrote, for the same thing occurred with respect to his speeches. Mirabeau had a powerful imagination, a temperament of which the normal warmth was fever-heat, and a courage absolutely dauntless. He further possessed a great charm of manner, which attracted confidence, and many deputies of the States, who were deep thinkers but poor speakers, came to him with their written orations, which Mirabeau learned by heart, and delivered with all the fire of a zealot and the histrionic gestures of a first-rate actor. Of course, to assimilate and give force to the ideas of others is in itself a great gift, amounting almost to genius, but it is none the less true that if Mirabeau had been left to his own resources he would have made little mark either as a writer or as an orator. Thanks to Brissot and to a few other contributors of merit who were shrewd enough to link their fortunes to his, divining in him the stuff of success, the *Analyse* proved a great hit, and it was mainly owing to its influence that Mirabeau was returned to the States by the electors of Aix. The following little sketch of his election, given by Mirabeau in a letter to Brissot, will show how polling was managed in France in the solitary election of modern times that was held by open voting: —

"We were all treading on each other's heels at the door of the town-house, and I heard voices repeating ahead of me, 'Count of Mirabeau!' 'Count of Mirabeau!' They were citizens voting for me, and I beg you to believe that I had never heard music like it, not even the chinking of gold into my pocket after a successful night at *bouillotte*. I was wedged between two fat men, and I felt tempted to move the one in front of me, for he smelt of a tanner's yard, and kept one of his muscular elbows in my left eye, which is the weak one. Judge, however, of my repentance when I heard this honest, ill-odoured fellow, whom I had never seen before, bawl out my name as if he and I were tried friends! I came next after him; and the Baillie, with his two assessors, seated behind a table, with clean linen on them, and the smile of good patriots on their lips, burst out laughing, and said, 'Have you come to vote for yourself, Count?'—'No,' said I, 'but I'll vote for the citizen in front of me, if you give me his name.' At this my tanning friend turned round, and stared at me as if he were appraising my skin. 'Are you the Count of Mirabeau?'—'Yes,' I answered, hoping he was going to add, 'Then come into my arms;' but he sketched a disappointed wink, and muttered, 'I shouldn't have thought it,' which I think made us quits. He gave me his vote, but nearly poisoned me with his effluvium, and then diminished my importance by a disparaging comment; however, I was generous, and gave him my vote, too, which was the only one he had. I also smiled on him, and left him abashed."

Once elected, Mirabeau felt he would need a more serious and dignified

organ than his *Analyse*, and so started the *États Généraux*, the first number of which appeared on May 2, 1789, that is, three days before the opening of the session. It is the first French paper which promised to combine the two features of parliamentary report and long leading articles, for up to that time long articles were the exception, the French taste inclining to short paragraphs. The *États* only ran for two numbers, however, under the original title, for the first number contained so vehement a programme of the reforms which the nation expected, that the Ministry took alarm, and on May 6 suppressed the paper. This was throwing down the glove rather promptly, but the challenge was immediately caught up. The deputies of the Third Estate suspended their business and drew up a protest "in the name of freedom of thought and speech, the first of human rights;" the nobility, not to be outdone, launched a similar protest, blaming the Count of Mirabeau's "violence of language," but submitting that a free press "appeared to be one of the necessities of the times;" the clergy, with the usual caution of their order, declined protesting against the ministerial decree on the ground that they had no right to censure what was lawful; but at the same time they remarked that it would be advisable to grant deputies some liberty, "even the liberty to write rashly"—for the future. The fact is, Mirabeau's leader had not been rash or violent; it was merely an outspoken demand for all the freedom which England enjoyed, and the prohibition hurled at the paper was a foolish evidence of the panic into which the Ministry had been thrown on finding that the Third Estate were firmly resolved not to separate until they had voted a Constitution. However, when they saw what resistance was going to be offered, they retreated, and this the more readily as Mirabeau yielded in form. He suspended the *États Généraux*, but instantly brought out a new journal under the title *Letters of the Count of Mirabeau to his Constituents*, and six weeks later (that is, after the 19th *Letter*) this paper once more changed its name, and became the famous *Courrier de Provence*.

Liberty of the Press was thus struck for and obtained at the very outset of the Revolution, and it may be said of Mirabeau's papers that they are no bad samples of the lengths to which journalism may fairly be allowed to go. The *Letters* and the *Courrier de Provence* were wild according to modern notions; but they never descended to scurrility. A tone of exuberant earnestness pervades them, and Mirabeau's tendency to self-assertion is so strong that his own sayings and doings form the staple of almost every line, leading one to infer that, after the wont of a Frenchman, he looked upon the national revolution as his own unaided work. The *Courrier* was advertised to appear three times a week, and to consist of a sheet of eight octavo pages; but the editor's anxiety to see his speeches, motions, and bills reported at full length, with explanatory notes and long-winded leaders, soon drove him to issue double and quadruple supplements. Although the *Courrier* lasted but two years, its 850 numbers form a collection of seventeen volumes of 600 pages each,

some of the numbers comprising as many as eighty pages. The *Courrier* never had less than 20,000 subscribers; and one must look to it for the completest record of the debates in the National Assembly, and the stirring events out of doors that marked the first period of the Revolution.

II.

This first period closed with the death of Mirabeau on the 2nd April, 1791, and after this the post which had been filled by the *Courrier de Provence*, as leading journal of the masses, was taken up by the *Ami du Peuple*, of which J. P. Marat was editor. This denotes the great change which the death of Mirabeau occasioned in the drift of the Revolution. Mirabeau had been reckoned the extremest demagogue in the States General; but, as is well known, he entered into negotiations with the Court for several months before his death, and the last numbers of the *Courrier* which he personally superintended are filled with exhortations to concord and moderation. These exhortations were not wholly disinterested, for Mirabeau received large sums from Marie Antoinette; but they were not the less heartfelt, for the reforms accomplished within two short years were more than enough to satisfy any reasonable man. On the refusal of the nobility and clergy to sit and vote in common with the Third Estate the deputies of the latter order had resolved themselves into a "National Assembly" (17th June, 1789), and Louis XVI., perceiving that he could not withstand them, had commanded the two other orders to join the new Assembly (27th June). From this time the work of legislation had proceeded at a pace little less than furious. On the 4th August, 1789, all feudal privileges were abolished; on the 23rd and 24th August freedom of conscience and liberty of the Press were decreed; on the 12th October, the King and Court having in the meanwhile been brought to Paris by the mob, the Assembly adjourned its sittings to the capital, and on the 2nd November was passed an Act confiscating all the lands of the clergy. On the 17th December the Assembly decreed the issue of *assignats* and their forced currency; on the 15th January, 1790, it abolished the old divisions of the kingdom into provinces, and created eighty-three departments, and on the 17th March it ordered the sale of the clergy lands to the extent of 700,000,000 francs. The nobility and clergy were not sufficiently overawed, however, and on the 19th and 27th November came two crushing Acts, the former abolishing all nobiliary titles, and the latter providing that all priests who wished to retain their benefices should take the oath of allegiance to the new Constitution which was being elaborated. To several of the above changes Mirabeau had been originally opposed. He had started with no other wish than to secure for France a House of Commons, an hereditary House of Lords, a free Press and free municipalities as in England; but the obstinacy of nobles and priests had driven him to advocate violent measures, and it was only when a Constitution had been prepared, which established one single Assembly, and reduced the royal prerogative to the mere rights of grace and veto, that

he saw it was impossible to go any further without abolishing royalty itself. Whether, had he lived, the immense influence which he wielded would have been sufficient to avert other subversive changes, is open to question; but his death removed even the hope of conciliation, and was therefore in every way a catastrophe. The King, seeing no man among the reformers whom he could trust, lent himself to plots with foreign powers, and the nobles streamed out of the country and massed themselves at Coblentz, with the avowed object of invading the country with the Austrians and Prussians. Hereupon the Assembly, intent on depriving the Court of all means of corrupting waverers, or pardoning royalists who might take up arms against the Revolution, withdrew from the King his right of grace, abolished orders of knighthood, and confiscated the judicial and military patronage of the Crown, in so far as regarded appointments to the higher offices. Louis XVI., unable to endure all this, attempted to fly the country, but was captured at Varennes, and then the Assembly wound up their repeated acts of hostility by decreeing that the King should be suspended from his functions until he had sworn to maintain the Constitution. From this point, however, it was evident that unless saved by foreign interference the days of the throne were numbered, and Marat's *Ami du Peuple* began loudly to clamour for a republic, with "a Reign of Terror to frighten enemies at home and abroad."

Other papers in plenty joined in his clamour, and found impassioned readers, for the nation had by this time pretty nearly gone mad. The political changes had been so rapid, and had brought—as every general disturbance must—such widespread misery with them, that people were frantic for rest, and rest, as they understood it, could only be obtained by removing the King, who was a useless obstacle in the way of a settled liberal *régime*. These views chiefly prevailed in Paris, where trade was in stagnation, specie at a discount, bread dear, and anarchy rampant. A great many rational people, who were not fire-eaters, but who were disgusted at the insolent waywardness of the nobles, the duplicity of the King, the prospect of an invasion, and the flood of minor ills which accrue from a weak Government, were ready for any measures which should bring about the state of Republican order, brotherhood, and general felicity which newspapers pictured; and the shameless slanders which were daily printed about the Court, the higher clergy, and the *émigré* nobles, added to this revolutionary fervour. At the moment when the National Assembly made way for the newly-elected "Legislative Assembly," in October, 1791, there were more than five hundred newspapers at work in Paris; and scarcely a score of these were devoted to the Court. Most of them were published twice a week, but some four dozen appeared daily, and there was a peculiarly foul sort of print called "mural newspapers," which were not published for sale, but to be posted at night on walls and hoardings, and which circulated defamations the most filthy and villainous. Anything like an enumeration of the five hundred papers would be impossible, but it may be well to record the names of the more important

organs, edited by men who have left a name in history. First come the "Red" journals:—

L'Ami du Peuple, edited by Marat; *Les Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, by Camille Desmoulins; *L'Orateur du Peuple*, by Fréron; *L'Ami des Citoyens*, by Tallien; *La Sentinelle*, by Louvet; *Le Point du Jour*, by Barrère; *Le Défenseur de la Constitution*, by Robespierre; *Le Tribun du Peuple*, by Babœuf; and *Le Père Duchêne*, by Hébert.

The following journals professed to be Constitutional or moderate Republican:—

Le Patriote, by Brissot; the *Mercure de France*, by Mallet du Pan; the *Journal de Paris*, by Garat; the *Chronique de Paris*, by Condorcet; *Le Républicain*, by Siéyès; and the *Journal de l'Instruction Sociale*, by J. J. Noel.

The subjoined were Royalist:—

The *Actes des Apôtres*, by Rivarol; *Journal de la Cour*, by Brune; the *Lanterne Magique*, by the younger Mirabeau; the *Mémorial Historique*, by Laharpe; the *Quotidienne*, by Michaud; and *L'Ami du Roi*, by l'Abbé Royou.

A few extracts from the above papers will give some idea of the condition of France at that epoch. Writing about the King's escape, and his capture at Varennes, Babœuf's *Tribun du Peuple* says:—

When it was known that Louis Capet had been arrested in his attempt to fly and place himself at the head of his cowardly nobles, a crowd of working men gathered in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and marched to the Hôtel de Ville, singing the "*Ça ira*," and "*Death to the Tyrant.*" Mayor Bailly, afraid to meet these patriots, fled by some back door, so that the crowd, finding no one to speak to, joined themselves to another imposing array of citizens, who were flocking from the Marais quarter, and the whole mass adjourned to the Champs de Mars, gathering new recruits at every step as they went. At four in the afternoon there must have been twenty thousand citizens of both sexes and all ages assembled in the great field, and the shouts "Death to the Tyrant!" formed as it were one great cry uttered with the lips and heart of the whole city. But suddenly some uniforms appeared, the gleam of bayonets was discernible on the river banks, and clamours of welcome were raised by citizens who supposed that the soldiery had come to fraternise with them. But no, Bailly headed the soldiers! Bailly, girt with the tricolour scarf! Bailly, who once profaned the sacred name of patriot by allying it to his own! A trumpeter marched beside him, and by his orders instantly sounded three peals, between each of which the Mayor called upon the meeting to disperse. But no one stirred, because nobody could conjecture that the ridiculous summons was uttered in real earnest; and so it befel that without warning (*sic*), without preparation of any sort, the soldiers were marshalled into line and ordered to fire upon the defenceless crowd. Then uprose piercing shrieks: women caught up their children and were shot down holding them in their arms, male citizens in their panic ran towards the soldiery instead of away from them and were butchered with bayonets; the rattle of the musketry and the whistling of bullets continued to work havoc among the affrighted people, till the field was strewn with blood and corpses, and through the smoke of this scene of carnage glowed the features of Bailly, grinning like a fiend. But wait, Bailly! traitor! felon! perjurer and assassin! For every drop of that patriot blood shed shall be exacted a thousand drops from you and the tyrant hordes whose hireling you are! Wait and see!

Bailly had not long to wait, for this incident cost him his mayorship, and eighteen months later his head. We have left out of Babœuf's description a number of disgusting oaths which are untranslatable, though Babœuf's remarks are mild compared to the horrible threats which Marat vomited from the *Ami du Peuple*. Let us, however, quote some gayer extracts dealing with social aspects of the Revolution. The licence of the Press being not tasteful to everybody, a citizen whose private life had been assailed went to the office of the paper which was called *L'Ami des Pauvres*, and gave the editor a caning. Young Mirabeau, who in his *Lanterne Magique* endeavoured to be always gay, in despite of difficulties, thus describes what follows :—

The worthy man, who was a jeweller out of work—for few people buy jewellery nowadays—recognized in the editor a former apprentice of his, who had loved his daughter, but been sent about his business, because he was a rogue and lazy. The recognition diminished nothing from the vigour of the thrashing which the jeweller administered, and the victim's howls were so musical that they brought down a bevy of women, who, to the horror of the journalist, screamed in chorus : " Give it him ! We've had enough of newspapers ! " Encouraged by this, the jeweller collected a squad of kindred spirits and went with them on the morrow to the Legislative Assembly with a fine petition against the liberty of the Press. But the Assembly grows impatient at all attacks against newspaper freedom, and our poor jeweller met with a different reception to that which he had expected. An usher laid his petition on the table, but two-thirds of the deputies rose and shouted, " Take it away ! " At this moment the jeweller and his friends, thinking they had a right to speak about their case, rose in one of the public tribunes, but the deputy Dramont-Dalloy, catching up the roll of paper, clambered over the benches and flung it into the jeweller's face, crying : " Out with you, vile whiner ! " He was called to order, but the incident occasioned general hilarity and the jeweller's astonished features must have been good to see.

Here are a bunch of quotations relating to odds and ends of Parisian life :

M. Jean Paul Marat was seen dining at the Écu d'Or in the Rue Valois yesterday. Wines being bad, he mopped up the gravy in his plate with a crumb of bread which he swallowed, licking his fingers afterwards. He paid four francs for a piece of beef, some soup, and a wedge of cheese, but with his accustomed hatred for old customs omitted to give the maid anything. We wager that girl will never be a republican.—*Lanterne Magique*, August 15, 1791.

Scuffles occur every day between officers of the King's household and curs of the sort who yelp in tune with MM. Marat and Fréron. Yesterday the Queen went for a walk in the Tuileries, and was everywhere greeted with respect ; but returning to the palace, one brutal ruffian forced his way past her equerry and flung a piece of mouldy bread before her, saying : " See there. That's what we eat, thanks to you." The officer on duty knocked the man's hat off his head, telling him to uncover himself before his Sovereign, but the brute drew a bludgeon from his pocket and struck the officer so savagely on the face that he broke his cheek-bone. I do not know what will be done with the man. When there was order among us he would have been hanged, but the Queen is so good that she is likely to plead for his pardon. She went into the palace crying.—*Journal de la Cour*, January 3, 1792.

There was a scene at the Comédie Française last night during a performance of *Britannicus*. Since the Revolution theatrical managers have put a stop to the practice which allowed noblemen and other subscribers of influence to have seats on the

stage. The Marquis de Crequy-Tournolles forgetting or ignoring this new arrangement—for he has been absent for a year stowing away his valuables in England—walked on the stage as usual yesterday whilst the curtain was up. He was greeted with a hoot from all the spectators in the pit, and not understanding such a tumult, stepped to the footlights and asked the public what they wanted. "Britannicus;" to avoid a riot, caught the Marquis by the arm and drew him towards the slips, but M. de Crequy shook off the actor as if he had been a dog, and three men were needed to get him behind the scenes, where they were all heard exchanging explanations in furious voices. The pit were so excited that they wanted to compel the Marquis to come forward and apologize, but the storm was quelled by pretty Mdlle. Reinerie advancing and offering excuses in his stead: "Monsieur is of so old a family," she said, "that he has not yet had leisure to learn good manners." The apology cut both ways and everybody laughed.—*Journal de la Cour*, January 23, 1792.

Fowls are costing three francs each, bread is at eighteen sous the three-pound loaf, a decent coat has become a rarity; men are wearing high-peaked hats with a buckle in front, priests carry pistols in their pockets whilst saying mass, women dress in black, wear heelless shoes and tattle less than usual, because they are afraid of prison, boys read the news instead of going to school, all the perfumers, jewellers, and good restaurateurs are flying abroad taking the good cooks and pretty dancers with them, and either the sewers or the noxious exhalations of M. Marat are slaying scores daily with the small-pox. Let us thank heaven for its mercies and for our new constitution.—L'Abbé Royou's *Ami du Roi*.

Yesterday, August 7th, some noblemen and officers of the Swiss Guard met together at the Restaurant of the Cadran Bleu to celebrate the feast of St. Gaetan, the patron of one among them. They had invited three actresses of Mdme. Montansier's troupe to enliven the banquet, and at dessert the King's health was proposed and drunk with all honours. Probably some waiter of a revolutionary turn, or maybe the oyster-woman opening her shell-fish at the door, objected to this display of loyalty; for as the guests were standing up to toast the Queen, a stone crashed through the window and cut Mdlle. Aimée Duclos's arm open. Immediately afterwards the dining-room was invaded by a score of unwashed *canailles*, who fell upon the guests, ladies and gentlemen indiscriminately, and smashed plates, bottles, and glasses, till they discovered their antagonists were armed, when they called for help and vanished, one jostling the other. They got a few kicks as they went, but one is sorry to say none of them were killed and flung out of the window into the gutter. When will all this end?—*L'Ami du Roi*, August 8, 1792.

The end was to be very soon; for two days afterwards the Tuileries were invaded, the Swiss Guard butchered, and the King taken into custody; on the 2nd and 3rd September occurred the massacre of all the Royalists confined in the prisons, and on the 21st the National Convention, which superseded the Legislative Assembly, proclaimed the Republic and inaugurated the Reign of Terror. This brings us back to Marat.

III.

Jean Paul Marat, who is by far the most loathsome character in the Revolution, and who will live as the type incarnate of rabid journalism, was, like J. J. Rousseau, a Swiss. He was born in 1744, and it adds much to his guilt that he received a superior education and possessed natural abilities of a high order. It is fair to add, however, that his talents and learning subjected him, at the outset of his career, to cruel persecutions. After studying medicine and obtaining an appointment as

doctor to the Count of Artois's grooms, he addicted himself to researches in natural science, and published several essays on the theory of light. These papers had the honour of being reviewed and warmly praised by Voltaire, but they upset all the notions on light which were held by the Academy of Sciences, and that learned body instantly fell foul of the innovator. He was friendless, poor, and irritable; he wrote of the Academy with contempt, and, above all, his theories were the true ones. These were reasons enough to draw on him hostility of a very active kind; and the Institute of France, which was a powerful corporation, refuted him waspishly, and then set influences at work to drive him from the country. Marat was of sickly health and of sour temper; a keen private sorrow, resulting from a misplaced attachment, added to his innate moroseness, so that he was in every manner unfit to bear up serenely under persecution. He went off to England, and spent ten years in London, lodging in Fleet Street; after this he divided a couple of years between Edinburgh and Dublin, and then he visited Holland, picking up all the while a precarious sustenance as a doctor, tutor, translator, and author. In 1789, the outbreak of the Revolution brought him back to Paris, rich with the fresh stores of learning and experience he had acquired during his exile, and bent upon starting a newspaper like other clever men. Marat differed from other clever men, though, in this respect, that from the first he had a clear perception of his object, and pursued it to the last undeviatingly. His ideas of reform were never clogged by the wish to ape English constitutionalism, for he detested England. He desired a radical republic, and though his first journal, the *Publiciste Parisien* was couched in moderate terms, its logic was so trenchant, and its drift so evident, that even the most zealous deputies of the Third Estate took offence at it as going far beyond what they aspired to and as calculated to do their cause an injury. It was the distinctive trait of Marat's genius that he could not write a line but attracted attention. His scholarship was so deep, and his style consequently so pure and strong, his knowledge of the people's grievances was so thorough, and his perseverance in the aims he was pursuing so relentless, that the writings of other men paled beside his. The Ministry succeeded in suppressing the *Publiciste* by paying private persons to ruin it in libel suits; and when Marat founded *L'Ami du Peuple*, they got rid of that also for a time by the expedient of starting no less than *ten* counterfeit journals bearing the same name, and by buying up all the copies of the genuine paper which they could procure. The counterfeits were of course full of weak nonsense, and the effect of them was to discredit Marat entirely. He could not protect himself, for he had not money enough to indulge in lawsuits, and in the next place he dared not show himself in public, for there were numbers of royalist officers who had vowed to kill him like a dog wherever they might meet him. So he emigrated to London again, but this time his exile was not long, for, after the death of Mirabeau, the King grew reckless as to whether he was attacked or not, and Marat soon established

his paper as the leading journal of the people. Other papers there were which enjoyed great popularity, but Marat spoke the language which the lower classes understood, and his *Ami du Peuple* was their monitor. It is not too much to say that Marat is solely responsible for the troubles of the years 1791-2, which paved the way for the Reign of Terror. Robespierre and Danton were each potent in their way, but they would have been nothing if Marat had not been there to point to them the road they should follow, and to breathe courage into them. Day after day, for fifteen months, the indefatigable fanatic poured his murderous advice into the ears of all the famished, the ignorant, and the greedy. He repeated that the people would never be secure in possession of their rights until King, nobility, and clergy had all been crushed; and he it was—not Danton—who first wrote, "The tranquillity of the people demands that one hundred thousand heads should fall." To dispel any sentimental qualms that might linger in the breasts of his readers, Marat exerted all his talent to depict his intended victims as the basest and most depraved of mankind. Proletaries learned of him how the King and Queen, whom they had been compelled to reverence and obey, the nobles whom they had feared, and the bishops to whom they had knelt for absolutions and blessings, were creatures whose private lives reeked with crime and immorality; and there was unfortunately just enough truth in some of the aspersions to lend the semblance of fact to the remainder. One is confounded by the amount of bodily and mental labour which Marat must have gone through to bring out his paper every day unaided, and this without ever being remiss in his attendance at the Jacobin Club. He wrote all the *Ami du Peuple* himself, and dealt with every class of subjects in it, showing all the vigilance as well as the ferocity of an ubiquitous watch-dog. However, he had his reward at last. The throne was overturned, and, content with his first victory, Marat changed the title of his paper to that of *Journal de la République*—a mode of hinting that he took the new order of things under his special protection.

And now imagine France given over to the garrulous Convention, in which there was not a man who clearly knew what he wanted save this one, Marat. Forty-eight years old at this date, Marat was less than five feet high, and had a head enormously disproportionate to the size of his body. The upper part of his face was handsome, but the lower part, beginning with the nose, was that of a wild beast. The nose was flat and large, with nostrils that quivered; the mouth huge, and filled with black, jagged teeth; the chin square, and generally ill-shaved, covered with a stubble of several days' growth. Naturally unclean in his person, Marat cultivated slovenliness for the purpose of inspiring greater confidence to the dregs of the populace. He seldom wore a hat, but covered his head with a twisted handkerchief, red, yellow, and greasy. His linen was worse than dingy, his shoes stringless, his stockings torn and down at heel, and his brown coat covered with stains, ink-splashes,

and flakes of dried mud. In constant terror of his life, he never ventured out alone, but was always attended by a tattered mob of ruffians who called themselves his body-guard, and plied cudgels about them to clear him a passage through the street crowds. Women when they saw him trembled and turned their heads aside, children ran away from him; at the Convention House his entrance was the signal for a general silence, and often for a dispersion of half the numbers present. Marat, who was eaten up with bilious vanity, gloried in the universal repulsion which he excited, and he had a grim, vicious way of smiling when, fixing his eye on any member whom he disliked, he saw the man turn pale and crouch. Such was the man who by means of all the scum of Paris kept the Convention in terror, and through it governed France.

His first care was to get the guillotine "set up as a permanency." "Soldiers wear swords in peace and war," he wrote, November 1792, "and our Republic should have the guillotine constantly at her side to frighten traitors." At first he had asked for 100,000 heads; he now went minutely into statistics and declared that no tranquillity could be hoped for unless 270,000 heads were cut off. The foremost head to be sacrificed was of course the King's, and whilst Louis XVI.'s trial was impending, here are some of the things that Marat wrote in order that the prisoner might have fair play:—

I call upon the people to note the names of the false patriots, if any, who may vote for the tyrant's acquittal, or for any lesser penalty than that of instant death. It is an insult to the feelings of the nation that the descendant of a hundred vampires should have any trial at all. He should be brought manacled before the Convention and there should be but one question put, "When and where shall this man and his accursed brood be killed?" And the answer should be a unanimous shout for his immediate execution.

It becomes known that Malesherbes is to defend the King, and hereat Marat breaks out in this style:—

The man who can find excuses for a criminal makes himself an accomplice of all the crimes committed; but when the criminal is a king, and the man who defends him is a citizen, the latter betrays his cause and becomes a greater villain than the rascal who hires his advocacy. Let the people remember that the citizen Malesherbes makes himself the champion of Louis Capet: therefore he approves his acts, therefore he would have perpetrated them if he had had the chance, therefore he is an enemy to the Republic, to his country, to his brother citizens: therefore, if Capet dies, Malesherbes deserves to die with him.

Malesherbes did die on the scaffold—he and all his family—but the certainty that he would have to meet this fate did not weaken his eloquence in defending his King. Louis XVI. dead, Marat uttered a shriek of exultation, and congratulated his countrymen on having now outpassed "the hypocritical, servile English, who had but one point of superiority over us—that of having mustered courage enough one day to brain Charles Stuart. Our courage shall last longer than theirs—Capet's head is but the first among a hecatomb!" And, as if drunk with the blood he had caused to flow, Marat plunged into an orgie of denunciations,

commending to the Committee of Public Safety every man or woman whom his sanguinary guards reported to him as disaffected :—

There is a scamp who lodges Rue Babille near the Halles, over a carpet-maker's, on the second floor. He was a receiver of taxes under the tyrant, and has fattened on extortions. I give his address, in order that the people may go and exterminate him. —18th March, 1793.

There is a ci-devant noble lodging No. 15, Rue St. Denis, under the name of Dubois. I heard of him to-day, and hope to learn that justice has been done him before the week is over.—18th March, 1792.

A milliner, who is said to be pretty, and who is the more dangerous in consequence, utters seditious sentiments in the Rue des Lombards. She ridicules the Republic, and loudly expresses her sympathies for the Capets. Her tongue must be cut out of her head, or her head be knocked off her shoulders. Her name is Louise Boulnoy, and she has either a husband or a paramour who ought to be arrested with her.

Column upon column are filled with short denunciations of this sort against insignificant private persons; but when calling for the death of any prominent man, Marat used to assail him in long articles, going into all the particulars of his biography. There is no need to recall who were the men against whom he levelled his most spiteful bolts, for every one, without exception, who could be suspected of the crime of "Moderantism," was held up by him to public execration. He did not live to see the death of most of the men whom he had impeached—and notably that of the Girondins—for on the 13th July, 1793, Charlotte Corday put an end to his unhallowed career. One month before his death some members of the Convention, exasperated by his virulent calumnies, had prosecuted him, but his trial was a burlesque of justice. Armed roughs filled the court, the terrified judges pronounced a hasty acquittal, and the prisoner was escorted back in triumph to his lodgings. By these same roughs, and by all the rogues and criminals in Paris, his constant readers and admirers, his death was mourned as a public calamity, and all who had been his enemies were soon offered up as a holocaust to his memory.

IV.

Marat's papers had inherited the influence of Mirabeau's; their work was carried on by the *Père Duchêne* of Jacques Hébert, by the *Orateur du Peuple* of Louis Fréron, and by the *Révolutions de France et de Brabant* of Camille Desmoulins. All three of these journals had been flourishing since 1789, but Marat's death brought them to the front, the more so as they made it their united mission to agitate for vengeance against "the party who lurked behind Charlotte Corday." The three papers were equally violent, but there were differences in the tones of their violence, and their editors were men altogether dissimilar. Jacques Hébert, born in 1755, was a miserable uneducated person, who had been check-taker at a small theatre before 1789. He was dishonest and cantankerous, but possessed a sort of rough-and-ready talent, and made his way rapidly after the Revolution, by bringing out a paper composed in the language of the

lowest classes, and profusely sprinkled with obscene oaths. The style of the *Père Duchêne* is well known, owing to an individual of the name of Vermesch having published an exact imitation of it under the late Commune; but Hébert was a man of sterner stuff than his foolish imitator. On the proclamation of the Republic he was appointed Deputy to Chaumette, the Procurator General, but he continued to edit his paper whilst attending to his functions as purveyor of the guillotine, and after the death of Marat took to publishing daily tabular lists of persons who he thought should be put to death. So long as he confined himself to private persons he enjoyed impunity, but at the beginning of 1794, when the Terror was at its height, he denounced the whole Convention as a body of "pusillanimous curs," who had courage only to bark, and urged the people to overthrow them, and transfer all their powers to the Commune. He is said to have penned this article when intoxicated, after a dinner with Chaumette and Fouquier Tinville, and, if this be true, his wine proved expensive, for it cost him his life. Robespierre had him arrested, and Fouquier Tinville, the Public Prosecutor, with whom he had dined, had him sentenced to death. He was executed on the 24th March, 1794.

Louis Fréron was the son of Elie Fréron, Voltaire's antagonist during the Encyclopædic controversies, and it was principally because of the injustice which his father had suffered that he embraced the revolutionary cause with so much ardour. But Elie Fréron had been persecuted less by the nobility than by the philosophers, and it was accordingly against savants of all denominations that Fréron junior mostly levelled his shafts. His *Orateur du Peuple* made it a business to ferret out members of the Institute and royalist writers, and to charge them with having prostituted literature, science, and art by their servilities towards the Court. He obtained that the Institute should be closed, and on being sent as Commissary to Marseilles and Toulon, directed all his zeal to the persecution of scholars and professors, whom he sent to the scaffold by dozens. André Chenier, the poet, was one of his victims, and indeed it was enough to be a man of talent to incur the impeachment of the venomous little sheet of candle-paper, which was nicknamed *L'arracheur de cervelles*. Fréron, however, was prudent, and he took such good care to offend none of the dominant factions that he survived both the Terror and the Directorate, and on the accession of Bonaparte actually petitioned for a post under Government. The First Consul, by way of killing him politely, sent him as Sub-Prefect to St. Domingo, where the climate disposed of him in a couple of years.

Camille Desmoulins, the third of Marat's successors, was born in 1760, and was a typical young Frenchman of the violently ambitious sort. It was he who, on the 14th July, 1789, climbed on a table in the garden of the Palais Royal and incited the mob to go and attack the Bastille, though he did not join them in this gallant exploit, but watched the sight from afar. Well educated, and the son of an honourable magistrate, who deeply deplored his revolutionary excesses, and remonstrated with him continually

by letter, Camille Desmoulins wrote like a gentleman, and affected the dress and manners of a dandy. His appearance was always natty. He sported a blue coat with gilt buttons, buckskin breeches and well varnished boots, a speckless white waistcoat, white gloves, a shiny hat, and a cane with a gold nob. The portraits of him show a handsome youth with large eyes, thin lips, dapper hands, and a carefully tressed pig-tail; but singularly enough the owner of all this beauty and finery got on capitally with Marat, who often pawed his white waistcoat and said: "It's a light heart beats under this frippery, but it's a good one." At Marat's death Camille Desmoulins launched out furiously against the captive Queen, whose devoted slave he would certainly have become had she invited him to court at the outset of the Revolution. He demanded that even the infant Capet (Louis XVII.) should be poisoned before he became a danger, and he was implacable in crying for the execution of the Girondins. But subsequently to the 31st October, 1793, when the Girondins, after five months spent in prison, were at length led out to the scaffold, a sudden revulsion occurred in Camille Desmoulins' views. He was appointed to be Danton's chief secretary at the Ministry of Justice, and found himself lodged at the public expense in that grand residence on the Place Vendôme, "where," as he writes complacently to his father, "the High Chancellors of France lived before me." He had also been recently married to a lovely and gentle-hearted girl, and like many another man who has reached the top of the tree he began to pine for domestic peace, and wished to see happy faces around him. Danton, who had nothing more to expect from violence either, had got into the same sentimental mood, and seconded Desmoulins when the latter brought out a new paper, *Le Vieux Cordelier*, in which he touchingly pleaded for a cessation of bloodshed, and a "reconciliation of all parties under the tree of liberty." Robespierre, however, was not yet ready for rest. So long as Danton was alive Robespierre could not be absolute master of the Convention, and he promptly seized the occasion of *Le Vieux Cordelier's* appearance to have both Danton and Desmoulins arrested and tried for treason. There is no doubt that *Le Vieux Cordelier* was levelled against Robespierre, and that Danton and Desmoulins hoped by its means to incite the people to hatred for their rival. Had they been able to continue the publication for a few weeks longer, or had they been animated by a spark of that resolution which fired Tallien three months later to beard Robespierre and impeach him, they might have succeeded, for Paris was growing as sick of blood as they were; as it was, they let themselves be seized unresistingly, and were guillotined together on the 5th April, 1794.

Robespierre, then, reigned alone till the 27th July, when a cabal got up by the courageous Madame Tallien overturned him and put a nominal end to the Terror. But what was the condition of Paris during these last three months, when the "blood-moons" were at their apogee? The louis-d'or of twenty francs was being quoted at 1,800 francs in *assignats*, bread was at eight sous the pound, two-thirds of the shops in

the city were closed, and all the able-bodied men of the working-classes who had not been drafted into the army roamed about the streets drunk and bawling, or broke into abandoned houses and plundered them. Every afternoon at four a line of tumbrils left the Conciergerie and jolted along the streets to the Place de la Révolution with a freight of victims for the scaffold. Sometimes seventy persons would be beheaded in an afternoon. The number was seldom under twenty; and people were so sated by the sight that, excepting the relatives of the victims and a few quidnuncs who came every afternoon and stood on the terrace of the Tuileries Gardens, to bet on the time it would take Samson to execute the first or second dozen, nobody went out of his way to follow the carts. The chase after nobles and priests had ceased to be very keen, for proscripts came and gave themselves up every day. They saw nothing worth living for now, that, ruined and bereaved of their friends, they beheld the reign of blood continue without prospect of cessation; and many—especially among the women, looked upon death as a welcome relief. Meanwhile the Proconsuls sent into the provinces were spreading death and misery about them as in Paris. Carrier at Nantes, Fréron at Marseilles, Foucher (afterwards Duke of Otranto) at Bordeaux, Collot d'Herbois at Lyons, Schneider at Strasburg, reckoned their victims by the thousand, and despatched pompous reports to the Convention describing how feudal castles had been set on fire, family plate melted down, and "male and female ci-devants" sacrificed to the safety of the Republic. These reports would be received with votes of thanks and by clapping of hands from fishwives and loose women seated in the public tribunes; after which, debates in the house would proceed, with the usual windy declamations, buffoon platitudes about fraternity, and the never-varying motions to impeach somebody in the name of the Sovereign People. Fifty or sixty deputies of the Convention, feeling the knife suspended over their heads, lurked, hidden, and slept in some new place every night, and among these was Tallien, whose name was down in Robespierre's black book, and who would never have mustered courage to rebel against his doom had not his wife goaded him on. Such was the condition of things during the three months that preceded Robespierre's fall.

V.

Once this caitiff had been beheaded, the Terror did not immediately end, but it spent its dying force on those who had been Robespierre's supporters, and the press gave expression to the general yearning after repose. According to the records of the Conciergerie, no less than 834 journalists, for the most part obscure, had been guillotined in Paris in 1793 and 1794; and some thousand newspapers had collapsed in consequence. But there were plenty of journalists left, and with the Directorate there started up a crowd of light, amusing papers, intended to revive the national spirit of gaiety. The best of these were *Le Thé*, *Le Menteur*,

and *Le Journal des Rieurs*; and for some time they altogether superseded the prints which continued to treat of politics. People were surfeited with politics, they were athirst for enjoyment; and never perhaps did extravagance in eating, drinking, dressing and play-going run riot to such an extent as from 1795 to 1799. Listen to this cry of the *Journal des Rieurs* (1st January, 1795):—

> Brooms and water! Brooms and water! to sweep and wash away every trace of the blood shed among us during the past two years! Brooms to sweep into limbo every shred of the journals, gazettes, pamphlets, laws, documents, proclamations, decrees, which have maddened us and brought us where we are! Brooms to brush away all memories of '93 and '94, and sticks to beat down any man who does not curse those years with all his soul!

In the same number the *Journal des Rieurs* says:—

> We have a class of *nouveaux riches* among us: financiers who have dethroned the nobility; contractors who have heaped up millions by purveying our armies with cardboard shoes and tin-barrelled guns. We don't care how they made their money, let them only spend it well and bring jollity back to Paris. Let us hear once more the popping of champagne-corks, let our eyes be gladdened by the glow of kitchen fires; let women be worshipped again and not hailed as "citizens;" and, above all, let it become usual again to wash one's hands before dinner.

In 1795 a comedy called *Madame Angot* was produced at Madame Montansier's theatre (Palais Royal), and had a run of 400 nights, like its modern successor, *La Fille de Madame Angot*. In it the follies of the Terror were keenly ridiculed, and the press joyfully hailed this resurrection of Thalia. Also the *muscadins*, or dandies of the time, attended the theatre in crowds and got up affrays like those which signalised the first performances of M. Sardou's *Rabagas*, after the Commune. At every disparaging allusion to the Republic, some "friends and brothers" in the galleries would hiss, and then the *muscadins* would treat themselves to the pleasure of going up after these enthusiasts and thrashing them with long canes. All this, however, does not mean that politics came to a standstill; for so long as there were two legislative bodies and an executive of "Five Incapables" who mismanaged the affairs of the country, it was inevitable that discussions should arise, and that political newspapers should find buyers. On the whole, however, France had become absolutely indifferent and sceptical as to political systems; and when Bonaparte came and swept the Directorate away, and inaugurated his consulship with a decree which completely gagged the press, most people heaved a true sigh of relief. Just as had happened during the Fronde, the French press had enjoyed during the Republic a glorious occasion of doing good and had neglected it. Journalism, far from being an assistance and a blessing to the country, had been an unmitigated nuisance. It had excited all the bad passions of the time instead of checking them, it had preached murder, robbery, mutual hatred, and mistrust; and when Bonaparte stamped it down with the heel of his conquering boot, he seemed to be crushing out the last embers of a fire which had burned or blackened every great and good thing in the country.

Impressions of Iceland.

I SHALL not attempt in the compass of these few pages to give an account of Iceland, either physically, or socially, or statistico-economically, or politically, or historically, or from any of the other points of view of a gazetteer. There are several fairly good books of travel (Henderson's, the oldest, is still the best) in which those who are curious will find the extraordinary natural phenomena and the manners of the natives treated of at full length. All I desire to do here is to give some sort of notion of the kind of impression which the scenery and the people make on a passing traveller—a thing which is what one chiefly wishes to know about strange countries, though it is often that which it is hardest to convey.

Iceland is most easily described by negatives. There are no trees, though apparently there were plenty in the tenth century, when we hear of men hiding among them and being hanged from them. No corn is grown, nor any other crop, except a few turnips and potatoes which taste only half-ripe. The only wild quadrupeds are the blue fox (who has probably come, as the white bear now and then does, on ice-floes from Greenland), and the rein-deer—the latter introduced about a century ago, and still uncommon, ranging over the desert mountains. There is no town except the capital, a city of 1,800 people, no other place deserving to be called even a village, unless it be the hamlet of Akureyri, on the shore of the Arctic Ocean, with some fifty houses; no inns (save one in that village whose resources consist of two beds, a single jug and basin, and a billiard-table); no hens, ducks or geese (except wild geese), no pigs, no donkeys, no roads, no carriages, no shops, no manufactures, no dissenters from the established Lutheranism, no army, navy, volunteers, or other guardians of public order (except one policeman in Reykjavík), no criminals, only two lawyers, and finally no snakes. "What, then, is there?" Snow mountains, glaciers, hot springs, volcanoes, earthquakes, northern lights, ravens, morasses, and, above all, deserts.

Or rather—there is the Desert! For Iceland—and this is a point which none of the books of travel bring out—Iceland is really one vast desert fringed by a belt of pasture land which lies along the more level parts of the coast, and here and there runs up the valleys of the great rivers into the interior. And a desert in Iceland does not mean merely a land waste and solitary, such as large parts of Scotland and Ireland have become (especially since deer forests grew to be so profitable), but land that has always been and will always be desolate—land bare and drear, treeless, shrubless, grassless, where not a sheep or pony can browse, and where by consequence man can never plant his dwelling.

Of this great central space a part is occupied by glaciers and snow fields. One tremendous mass, out of which the highest peaks of the island rise, covers an area of some four thousand square miles, has never been crossed, and never will be. The mountains are not very high; but then the level of perpetual snow is only some 3,000 feet above the sea, and the larger glaciers descend almost to the sea-level. Other parts are filled by volcanic mountains surrounded by fields of rugged lava, sometimes, like the great Odaða Hraun, spreading over hundreds of miles, and not only barren but waterless. The rest is an undulating waste of black volcanic sand and pebbles, or perhaps, what is most dismal of all, an expanse of bare earth strewed with loose blocks of stone, from among which no herb springs, over which the nimble pony can hardly pick its way. On the lava fields one may have at least shrublets of dwarf birch and willow, nestling, with a few tiny ferns, in the chinks and hollows of the mouldering rock, but on these stony wastes all is desolation—not a flower, not an insect, not a bird, except the sombre raven, Odin's companion, least of all a sign of human presence. A far less imaginative people than the Icelanders might easily have peopled such a wilderness with trolls and demons.

Round the northern and western coasts, and in some of the broad river valleys of the north-eastern and south-western corners of the isle, the aspect of nature is less forbidding; for there one finds stretches of pasture land, flower-spangled in the earlier summer months, with now and then a farm-house, cosily placed upon some sunny slope, the grass hillocks of its tun * all round, and a bright stream murmuring below. Yet even in these more favoured regions a great deal of the surface is covered with dreary bog, and the land shows always a tendency to relapse —so to speak—into a desert. On a sudden, with no apparent provocation, you find, as you ride along, that the grass comes to an end, and you may then travel for miles and miles over bare earth and stones before it reappears again on the banks of some deep flowing stream. This is so round Reykjavík itself, the capital of the island, where the pasture land stops with the houses, and five minutes beyond the last tun one looks round upon an utter wilderness. As the life of man depends upon that of sheep and cows, and as sheep and cows depend upon grass, it follows that houses are few and far between even in the more habitable and civilised districts, while villages are unknown altogether. Seldom does one find more than one house where the map marks what the inexperienced traveller supposes to be a town, unless, indeed, on the coast, where sometimes two or three fishermen's huts lie near together. And from one house to another it is often five, six, or seven hours' riding.

Of the scenery I am rather reluctant to speak, because I know from experience that the effect produced on the reader will not be that

* Every baer (farm-house or city; the same word which appears in England as "by"—Derby, Grimsby) has its tun (town), a small enclosure of carefully-mown grass land; the greater part of it is usually covered with hillocks a foot or eighteen inches high.

which the writer desires. It is very strange and peculiar; solemn and stern, and, in its way, most stimulating. But we * found that everybody who asked us about it on our return, and had it described to him, went away with the notion that it was merely bleak and gloomy, perhaps downrightly ugly. This came of too much anxiety to be veracious. We described the actual features, the black and white of the country (it is a country of blacks and whites), and did not convey the impression it made. Very likely the same thing will happen now, and the present reader will form the same conception of Iceland as a dismal sort of place, with little to attract the lover of nature. Nevertheless, it is something more than that.

The elements of beauty in natural scenery are nobleness of form and richness of colour, with a certain measure of variety in both of these. Great size is, of course, sometimes desirable to produce majesty, yet certainly less necessary than we are apt to fancy. Now, as respects both form and colour, Iceland is badly off. The mountains are all of igneous rock, sometimes of basalt, amygdaloid, and the various kinds of trap, sometimes of more recent lavas and tuffs. The former have usually a tabular, the latter frequently a conical shape, but in neither are the outlines generally bold or noble. The basaltic hills are apt to be long flat-topped ridges of only slightly varying height, with abrupt and often precipitous faces, but singularly wanting in "sky line." Sometimes, when they front the sea, they break down towards it in a superb range of crags; sometimes in the middle of them one finds a grand "corrie," or hollow encircled by precipices, but usually they are the least picturesque of mountains, no better than those Ochil hills in Scotland, or the trappean mountains of Ulster, which in geological character they much resemble. The volcanic mountains proper do occasionally show finer forms—cones, though generally rather blunt and lumpy cones, like that of Hekla, serrated ridges, and here and there a group of jagged peaks, the fragments of some huge old crater which has been broken down and left these pieces of its rim standing up alone. But even such peaks and ridges are rather wanting in beauties of detail. One does not find those patches of cliff alternating with grass slopes, or those deep little glens and gullies which lend so much charm to the hill-sides of Scotland or Norway. And the mountains are mostly separated, not by valleys, as with us, but by level or undulating plains, which more completely detach the hills from one another, and give less occasion for the graceful curves and sweeps which are as essential to the beauty of the lower parts of mountains as bold and sharp-cut lines are to the higher peaks. In these plains lie the lakes, which are seldom fine, because the shores are low and you can see the whole of them at once. They lie among hills, but the hills do not dip straight into the water; there is none of that mysterious winding away behind promontories one has at

* "We" means a party of three friends, who spent two months in Iceland in the autumn of 1872, and who, strange to say, after being two months incessantly in company under considerable hardships, remain friends still. Their opinions, however, about the island and its people differed extremely, and the other two are not responsible for anything said here.

Killarney, or Ullswater, or Loch Lomond. As for colour, there are in Iceland (besides the white of the snow mountains) two colours and no more: to wit, intense volcanic black and the yellowish green of the marshy plains. Sometimes the black is wonderfully effective. In particular states of the atmosphere, and especially about sunset, it will turn to the richest purple or violet. Rising in inaccessible crags of lava, it is terribly stern; and where, as at the bottom of the cone of Hekla, it is powdered over with snow and ice, the contrast has a strikingly weird effect. So the yellow-green is a fine hue, especially in such clear air as that of Iceland, where the lights and shadows of the clouds playing over these broad open surfaces are inexpressibly beautiful. But one grows tired of the constant combination of these two colours only, unrelieved by intermediate shades. No reds, either of earth, or rocks, or heather bloom; no greys or light blues of limestone, such as one has in the Alps; no dark blues of slate rock, like those of Wales; no greens of fir, or beech, or oak, or hazel copse. Trees are wanting everywhere,* and anyone can fancy how much the landscape loses thereby in softness and variety. For one thing, there are no foregrounds, and the country is therefore as unfit for a painter as any really grand country can be. Wherever there is a fine prospect it is a distant and extensive one. One does not come upon gracious little cascades or wooded dells, or flowery lawns sloping to a brook, or groups of grey boulders overgrown by fern and brushwood, such as the sketcher loves—all these, all the smaller and more tender beauties of landscape, are wanting. Bare undulating flats of bog or stone, traversed by foaming rivers, and backed by wild irregular isolated mountains, sometimes snow-covered, sometimes black and rugged—such are the general elements of an Icelandic view, and it needs all the vivid brilliance of the air, and the dignity which vast extent gives, to redeem them from dreariness and monotony. The Danes, between whom and the Icelanders there is little love lost, have a saying that "God made the rest of the world, but the devil made Iceland." Natives of flat and sandy Denmark may have no right to be heard on a question of natural beauty, yet there is a sort of meaning in this Manichæan view of theirs. Iceland looks as if it had been made, I will not say by a malignant power, but by itself, by chance, by the ungoverned action of natural causes, without any purpose to produce beauty. There are regions in the world, parts of the Bernese Oberland for instance, or the central Pyrenees, and perhaps not least notably the English Lake country, where one feels as if the forces of nature had consciously laboured to mould and adorn a landscape delightful to human eyes, combining, as at Rosenlaui or in the valley of Derwentwater, hills, woods, rocks, and water, so as to create at every turn the most exquisitely finished pictures. In Iceland the elements of beauty and grandeur, or at least the chief among them, mountains, lakes, glaciers, rapid rivers, are present; but they are so ill-placed towards one another—so little

* To be strictly accurate, I will say that we came upon a pretty little thicket of birches in one of the northern valleys, and a rowan tree in the middle of the houses at Akurevri.

wrought out, so to speak—that a perfect landscape is rarely the result. There are many thrilling notes, but no harmony.

"What a gloomy, dismal, uninteresting country!" Gloomy? well, yes: dismal? sometimes: uninteresting? certainly not. There is something so singular about the scenery; so peculiar a sentiment, if one may use the expression, that one is often more profoundly and permanently impressed by it than by other regions which are more truly beautiful or sublime. Everywhere is silence, desolation, monotony; one is awed by the presence of the most tremendous forces of nature—fire which has reared these peaks and poured out these lava torrents; frost which rends the rocks and soil and frowns down on you from the interminable ice ridges. One knows oneself surrounded by a tempestuous ocean, far removed from even those outposts of civilization, Norway and the Shetland isles; in a land wholly out of relation to the rest of the world, and unaffected by its fortunes; a land where nothing has happened for many centuries; a land which seems not designed for man at all, but left waste for nature to toss wildly about the materials she did not need elsewhere, and disport her in sudden displays of her own terrible powers. The eye ranges over these vast black landscapes of the interior, and finds among them not only no trace of human habitation, but scarcely a grassy nook where a human habitation might be planted. Sahara itself is not more hopelessly sterile; and however full the world may in time become, little prospect is there that any new band of emigrants will turn their prows to the stormy shores of Iceland.

Perhaps the best way to give a notion of the sort of effect which the scenery produces on a traveller will be to say something about two characteristic views which came in our way. Very likely there are others finer. We had not time to reach the southern slope of the Vatna with its terrible rivers, on the banks of one of which, a torrent three quarters of a mile long and a mile and a half wide, the traveller is often obliged to halt for weeks before he can venture to cross. Nor have I seen the grand north-west—Breiðifjörðr and the icy valleys of the long Isafjörðr, where glaciers stream down the steep glens into a glassy sea; but can hardly think that anything even there can be more genuinely Icelandic than what I must now endeavour to describe.

Two days we had been driven over a tossing sea before a southerly gale, two days and nights since the majestic outline of the hill of Hoy,* westernmost and highest of the Orkneys, faded away among the mists that hang for ever round it; and on the morning of the third, grey mountains appeared upon the port bow, and we joyed not less than Ulysses when he saw the isle of the Phæacians rise like a shield from the sea. The first sight of land after a voyage, be it long or short, is always exciting, and it was now the more so because every one was

* These old red sandstone cliffs on the west side of Hoy (a name familiar to the readers of Walter Scott's *Pirate*) are at one point 1,100 feet in nearly vertical height, and certainly among the grandest in the British Isles. The little mail packet from Scrabster to Stromness passes close under them.

stirred by the utter strangeness of this untravelled ocean, and perhaps by a slight sense of danger, since nobody on board had ever seen the harbour of Seyðisfjörðr for which we were making. As the vessel drove swiftly nearer, the features of the coast revealed themselves, but the sense of mystery and danger grew almost stronger. Long lines of crags, black or of a grey more dismal than black, rose out of a deep deep sea, sometimes in sheer precipices, piled in terraces one above another, sometimes in steep slopes of loose stone, topped by a range of cliff with more rock slopes and more cliffs above. Highest of all, where the tops of the cliffs seemed to run back into a lofty table-land, walls of rock enclosed deep dark hollows, where the sun never came to melt the snow that filled them; and, last of all, further back still, sharp peaks and glittering ice-fields rose above the table-land, and peered down into the heads of these high ravines. Far up into the heart of this mountain mass ran the narrow winding fiords, the mouth of each guarded by a towering promontory and fringed by rocky islets, over which the billows broke in sheets of foam, marking the whole coast with a line of white. No brushwood, no heather, upon all these slopes and faces, not a blade of grass to vary the black and lamentable brown, not a trace of pasture, not a human dwelling all along the shores, not a sail upon the water, but a cold, grey, cheerless, hazy sea stretching away towards the Pole till it met the cold and steely sky. One thought of that enchanted mountain in the *Arabian Nights* against which ships are driven in an unknown sea; and the thrill of awe and mystery was almost painful, until at length, the desired haven found, we passed between the tremendous portals of one of these long fiords, and gliding swiftly up, cast anchor under the slopes of smiling green that encircle its head.

A fortnight later we had an experience of inland scenery not less impressive. The whole interior of the island is a desert, and although great part remains unexplored, there are some four routes by which it may be crossed from north-east to south-west, and by one of which, the westernmost, where the desert region is narrowest, it is crossed pretty frequently. Another (Vatnajökulsvegr) has, so far as I know, been traversed only once, and can never be traversed without serious risk of losing the horses by hunger and exhaustion, and probably getting lost oneself. A third is taken perhaps once or twice a year, and the fourth (Vatnahjallavegr), which we had determined to follow, stimulated to some extent by the mystery that enveloped it, had not been tried for fifteen years or so, and was supposed to be known to only one man in the whole country side, and who bore the name (common in Iceland) of Sigurðr, the hero of the Völsunga Saga.

On Monday morning, at five A.M., we started, a party of seventeen horses, three guides, and three Englishmen, from the last house on the north side of the wilderness, a strange, lonely place, where the simple natives had crowded and buzzed round us all the day before, in mingled curiosity and kindness, as if we were visitors from another planet. Climbing out of the valley where this house lay, we reached a high undulating

plateau strewn with loose rough slabs of stone, like the pavement of a ruined city, with here and there sheets of black water,* too small for lakes, too big for pools; patches of bog, and beds of half-thawed snow. The slowly rising clouds showed all round the same country, a land without form and void, a land that seemed as if only half created, with no feature for the eye to dwell upon; neither peaks nor valleys, neither rocks nor grass, but everywhere bare, bleak, blank desolation. It was not always the same, for sometimes there was more snow, sometimes bog, sometimes only stone; but one had no sense of progress in it, and felt as if it might go on for ever. Late in the afternoon the stone changed to a rolling plain of black volcanic pebbles, and coming at last to an oasis of short grass, we halted for an hour to give the horses a feed, though a scanty one, and to discuss our course, for the clouds had now settled down upon us, and there was no seeing more than a few hundred yards in any direction. Track, or mark to indicate a track, there was of course none; and Sigurðr admitted that without the Jökull † to guide him, he could not tell where we were or which way we were going. Now, the Jökull, though one knew, from the number and whitish colour of the torrents we crossed, that it could not be very far off, was in such weather hopelessly hidden. Onwards, however, we pressed, for night was beginning to fall; and if we could not reach a scrap of pasture that lay some hours ahead, it might go hard with the horses. Everything depended on the horses, for our supply of food was scanty, and the next house one hundred miles away. The compass was consulted in vain, and Sigurðr shook his head more and more ominously, till at last, when it was almost dark, and the mist, driven by a piercing wind, was turning to a snow mizzle, there was nothing for it but to halt. The tent was taken off the horse that carried it, and, with fingers so numb that we could scarcely untie its cords, we set about pitching it, while the natives tied our seventeen horses tail and head together to keep them from running off during the night, as their wont is. The tent-pegs took no grip of the soft loose shingle, however deep we drove them in; but when one remarked that the pole would probably fall during the night and bury us all in the ruins, the other two only gave a shivering assent and crawled inside. Then the head of the commissariat served out supper, consisting of some fragments of mouldy biscuit and clammy mutton, with a carefully limited sip of corn brandy; waterproofs were laid down, pillows extemporized out of riding-boots, every scrap of clothing turned to account against the cold, and we lay down to court sleep. The native Icelander regards neither cold nor hunger; but we were less seasoned, and one at least of the party lay awake all night, freezing hard, longing, as Homer says, for the coming of fair-throned Morning, listening resignedly to the sounds, steady and strong as the beats of a steam-engine, that told of

* Called, as we found to our amusement, "Ullarvötn," *i.e.* Ullswaters (=Wool-lakes).

† The term Jökull (*J* in Icelandic is pronounced as consonantal Y) describes both a perpetual snow-mountain and the glaciers which issue from it.

the better fortune of a comrade, trying now and then to relieve the weariness by fixing his mind upon a point of law, but failing always, and slipping off into a wandering reverie, wherein England and civilisation, and all familiar things beyond the great sea, seemed plunged deep in the past, or whirled away to an illimitable horizon.

Next morning early when we again mounted and started, unrefreshed, upon our way, everything was still wrapped in cloud, and Sigurðr's mind most of all, he moaning at intervals, "If I could only see the Jökull!" About nine o'clock, however, the mist suddenly rose and then vanished, the sun shone out, and the wished-for Jökull appeared, a long, flat-topped, smooth-sloped ridge of ice (névé one would have called it in the Alps), four or five miles to the east of us, trending away south further than eye could reach. So the way was now plain, and we rode on as fast as the roughness of the ground permitted, where flats covered with the overflow of glacier torrents alternated with rocky or shingly hills, and with the iron billows of successive lava-flows. The scene was unlike yesterday's, as drear and solitary, but with a certain weird splendour of its own. On one side the smooth endless line of snow-field, on the other an immense plain, flooded with sunlight, with a few tiny volcanic cones rising on its extreme western marge. Right in front, two bold snowy mountain groups, the square mass of Lang Jökull, and opposite it five sharp icy pinnacles capping the ridge of Blángny Jökull; between them a depression, through which we were to pass to the south, and which, so clear was the air, seemed no nearer at six o'clock, after incessant quick riding, than when we had caught sight of it before noon.

The unfruitful sea is not more lonely or more waste than this wilderness, shut in by frozen barriers. Yet it was not a howling wilderness, such as that which awes a child's imagination in the Hebrew prophets, such as that we had traversed the day before; but full of a strange stern beauty, stilling the soul with the stillness of nature. There was not a cloud in the sky, not a bird, not an insect, not a floweret at our feet; only the blue dome of air raining down brightness on the black desert floor, the dazzling snows in front, and far away exquisite tints of distance upon the western peaks. And then the silence, what was ever like it? a silence, not as of death, but as of a time before life was. To us the scene was all the more solemn because of yesterday's cloud and the weary night, for there was nothing to connect what we now saw with the region we had left on the northern side of the desert; we could no more tell how we had got there than how we should get out. It was like a leap into fairy land; and indeed, despite our exhaustion, a delicious leap, for the air was so fine and keen, the sky so brilliant, the aspect of everything so novel, that the barrenness underfoot, and the sense of danger in case any misfortune befel us, so far from human help, did not seem to depress us; and each rode alone in a sort of grave exhilaration, gazing as in a dream at the hills and drinking in the sunlight, content with silence and the present.

The sun went down as we entered the majestic sand-strewn portal

between the two Jökulls, and the eastern one, on whose snows his light lingered longest, glowed with colours more glorious than any we could remember in the Alps; the rose perhaps less vivid than that which burns at dawn upon the Silberhorn, but with it an infinitely varied and tender alternation of violet and purple, opal, and pink and orange, passing from one tint to another in swift iridescent pulses till they died away into chilly blue. Darkness had hardly descended before what had seemed a steel-grey bank of cloud in the north-east turned to an auroral arch, which soon shot forth its streamers across the zenith, throbbing and glancing from one side of heaven to the other, and flinging themselves into exuberant folds and curves of vaporous light. We rode, first by its help, and then stumbling about in utter darkness, all night through, making only one or two short halts for the sake of the wearied horses. The ground was rough, and we were more than half asleep, exhausted by fasting and excitement, so how we got safely across was a marvel then, and remains so to us now.

When the saffron robe of morning was spread over the east, we were among new mountains, with the pass already far away; and when from behind one of their pinnacles the sun suddenly flamed up, we were descending towards the great White Lake (Hvitarvatn), one of the largest in the country, over whose bosom two glaciers streaming down between savage ink-black cliffs scattered a shower of miniature icebergs that sailed about, sparkling in the morning light. It was a wild and striking scene, but not in the least beautiful, and almost too savage to be grand. For there was nothing tender, nothing graceful, nothing picturesque to break the intense grimness of the black mountains, with their blunt, harsh lines, or give variety to the huge sheet of whitish-blue water that washed them; no waterfall flashed among the rocks, no copse wood clothed the glens or dipped into the lake. One had little temptation to linger, especially as the swans that fluttered over the icebergs were too wild to let us approach them; so we hurried on, and after some hours more gained from the top of another pass a boundless prospect over the great south-western plain of the island, Hekla guarding it to the south, while in the distance, puffs of steam marked the spot where the Geysers lie.

The land was greener to the eye, but it was still utterly waste and desolate, nor did we find a place to halt, a human dwelling, and that which is the chief support of life in Iceland, a draught of milk, till after a long and hard day's riding we came at evening to the solitary farm of Haukadalr. Here the valiant Sigurðr departed, having first kissed us after the manner of his people, to return home all alone across the desert; and from this we mounted the red Geyser hill, and pitched our tent close to the boiling basin whence the Great Geyser rises, though now in his old age more rarely, and where all night long the earth shook beneath us with his thundering snorts and groans.

Having been thus betrayed into a sort of personal narrative, I am tempted to go on to describe the Geysers (which are, it need hardly be said, wholly unlike what one expects), and the ascent of Hekla (a perfectly

easy one, by the way, even in a snow storm), and the boiling mud-pits at Námaskarð, and the obsidian mountain of Hrafntinnuhryggr, and the great Myvatn (Midge water) Lake, where in July the gnats rise in clouds that hide the sun, and have been known (one hears) to devour a horse and his rider in ten minutes; and, what is most interesting of all, Thingvellir, the seat of the ancient federal parliament of the island, with its wonderful rock chasms, its lake, its waterfall, its Hill of Laws, its swirling pool into which witches were thrown, its island where judicial duels were fought out. Then there are incidents of travel without end to be enlarged on; the long weariful journeys on horseback at a foot's pace, usually ending in the dark, the encampments in the churches (which serve for inns, and though they supply nothing but a floor to lie down upon, and a pulpit to hang wet clothes from, are yet better than the biting winds without), the crossing of rivers, sometimes on a steed that can scarcely keep its footing among the stones, with the waves rising over its neck—sometimes where the stream is too deep for this amusement, driving in one's whole troop of cavalry with stones and whipcracking, and following in a leaky skiff which the torrent whirls away down its eddies; tent life and its pleasures (not so unmixed under the 66th parallel as Mr. Cook's tourists no doubt find them in Palestine); the internal economy of a baer, and the tricks one is driven to to get a whiff of fresh air among its ancient and fishlike smells, the conversations in dog Latin carried on with a worthy priest who has forgotten the little he once knew, the perpetual buying, selling, swopping, losing, searching for, and abandoning of horses, and general chaffering on the subject of horses, which goes on all day and every day, and which no linguistic difficulties seem to interrupt;* the food, an inexhaustible topic (although the items are so few), and the ardour with which the famished stranger pounces upon cold trout and sour curds,† the only dainties an Icelandic larder supplies—all these and many more details of the whimsical life one leads there I pass over, *spatiis exclusus iniquis*, and leave to be told by others after me, as they have been

* The first remark which an Icelander makes when he meets you crossing a desert, after the salutation "Come thou blest!" is, "What will you take for that horse?" whereto you of course answer by naming thrice the animal's value, and the conversation proceeds in a way which can be imagined. I am tempted to transcribe a dialogue on the same topic which took place one morning during our stay at Reykjavík. Enter an Icelandic friend: "Bonus dies, domini." "Bonus dies, dulcissime. Sedeas, precor, sedeas, nobisque, si quid novi affers, imperti." "Equos nonne vobis in animo est vestros hic in urbe vendere?" "Immo equidem." "Quomodo?" "Sub hasta." "Sed mihi alium vobis modum proponere liceat. Rusticus quidam ex familia mea nuper advenit; auditoque hominum sermone de equis vestris, mihi dedit mandatum vos rogare quantum pro nigro equo, quantum pro gilvo poscatis." (Short consultation among the vendors.) "Pro gilvo nos scito summam quadraginta imperialium (rikdalers), pro albo autem triginta quatuor poscere." "Gilvum quanti emistis? anne quinquaginta? Ecce autem rusticum meum, Steingrimum nomine." Enter Steingrimr accordingly, and continuation of the bargain through the interpreter.

† This is Skyr, a delicacy of long standing, since it is mentioned in the Saga of Egil Skallagrimsson and the Heimskringla. It is eaten with sugar and cream; and what cream!—cream in which the horn spoon stands erect!

told by many before. And even about the people, though desiring to say a word or two, I am somewhat afraid to speak, since I cannot speak with confidence. A passing traveller misjudges many things, especially if he is ignorant of the language, and though we learnt to read Icelandic (and very hard work it proved) we could never talk it. In the capital, to be sure, there may be found four or five people who speak English, nearly as many Latin, one or two German, and two or three a language which goes by the name of French. But the capital is the least genuinely national place in the island, and even there it is with travelled and educated men that one communicates through these various media. From the women, who are usually the best representatives of social character and spirit, of the ideas, feelings, and usages of an average household, we were wholly cut off. They were wonderfully kind and helpful when one came in starving and exhausted after a sixteen hours' ride; and had evidently plenty to say—indeed they said it—but we could only respond by nods and wreathed smiles and interjectional nouns, and try to look as grateful as our power of countenance permitted.

Any one might fancy that people who inhabit such a country would be silent, downcast, gloomy, perhaps sullen and morose; or, at any rate, on Mr. Buckle's principle, superstitious. Nothing of the kind. The average Icelander is more talkative than an average Briton, and much more so than a Spaniard; and though you would not call him downrightly gay, there is no want of cheerfulness and good humour. His position, "far amid the melancholy main," has not made him—as Mr. Disraeli thinks it has made the Irishman—discontented with his country; on the contrary, he tells you it is the fairest land the sun shines on. The solitude of his life in an isolated house, miles and miles from the nearest neighbour, throws him all the more upon the society of the other inmates, and makes him value a neighbour's visits more than one usually does in London. But there is a way in which external conditions do seem to have affected the modern Icelander, and moulded his character. He is wanting in dash and vigour, and in the spirit of enterprise generally; has little promptitude in his decisions, still less in his movements. Nothing could be more unlike than he is in all these respects to those terrible ancestors of his in the tenth and eleventh centuries, whose whole life was spent in adventures by flood and field, for when they were not harrying our coasts they were waging blood feuds with some neighbouring chieftain at home, or joining in the endless civil wars of Norway. The contrast between the magnificent heroes, whose exploits are written in their own magnificent Sagas, and the inhabitants of modern Iceland, seem much more striking than any which could be drawn between an Englishman, or German, or Frenchman, or Greek (assuming the Greek to be what his name implies) of to-day and his remote forefathers; for it is by no means merely a change of manners that one sees—in the case of the Icelander the very qualities which most strike you in the one are those most conspicuously absent in the other. One cause is probably to be found in the restriction of his

energies since the decline of piracy and the extinction of the independent republic in 1262 to so narrow a field, and to a life which gives no opening to enterprise, where there is no hunting because there is nothing to hunt, little navigation because no wood to build ships, no joint-stock companies because nobody is rich enough to take shares, no public meetings because a man lives fifteen or twenty miles from his nearest neighbour. But something may also be due to the crushing down of their souls by the overwhelming forces of nature. The old Vikings came straight from Norway, where the climate is comparatively genial, and the land productive; but the Icelanders have now for ten centuries been maintaining a ceaseless struggle against frost and fire, and frost and fire have been too much for them. They do not till the ground, for though corn and other crops were raised by the first colonists, these will no longer ripen, and they have given up the attempt to construct roads, to reclaim barren tracts, even to build themselves comfortable houses, because one of the terrible spring or winter storms, or more terrible earthquakes, may destroy in a moment the labour of many years. Despondency and sluggishness may be pardoned to a people which remembers as it were yesterday eruptions like that of the Skaptar Jökull in 1783, which covered with lava and ashes a tract larger than most English counties, and caused, either directly or through the famine it produced, the death of a fifth part of the whole population of the island. Nor is it so strange that they should set little value on time, or indeed, as one sometimes thought in moments of impatience, regard Time as an implacable enemy, to be got rid of at all hazards and by all devices. For they have always more than enough time for everything they have got to do—more time than they need in the three months' summer to garner in their scanty crop of hay, far more than they need in the long unbroken night of winter for the men to mend their nets and tools, while the women spin and weave the wool into the thick blue vaðmál, and out of it make clothes for the household. Hence an easy-going, listless sort of mind, as well as manner, has grown upon them, which makes them unwilling to hurry or exert themselves, no matter what your urgency, and seems to have rendered them curiously indifferent to discomforts which a little effort might remove or greatly diminish. Nature, to be sure, has a good deal to answer for in the wretchedness of an Icelander's lodging and food. There is no timber, the stone is bad for building purposes, and one must not complain of the absence of luxuries where everything comes over a thousand miles of sea. Still, the house need not be a mere rabbit-burrow, as it mostly is. It is built of sods, with a few blocks of basalt or lava (unmortared, of course) forming the lower part of some of the chief walls, is roofed with sods laid over the rafters, and covered on the top with grass and weeds, looking, when it stands with a hill behind it, itself so like a hillock that you are in some danger of riding over it, and finding the horse's fore-feet half-way down the smoke-hole before you know where you are. Inside, it is a labyrinth of low, dark, and narrow passages, with tiny chambers opening off them, one of which has, perhaps,

some little furniture, a table or board doing duty for a table, a couple of stools, and one or two bedsteads (often in the hollow of the wall). There is a small window, but its frame is fixed so that it cannot be opened. The air, therefore, is never changed, and as the room is seldom or never cleaned; as the chambers are half-full of dried stock fish, and reek with a variety of other hideous smells, any one can fancy what the interior of an Icelandic farm-house is like, and can understand why the first thing to be done on entering it is to light a pipe and smoke furiously till the room is in a cloud.* There is but one fire, and that a sorry one, consisting of a few smouldering turves, with twigs thrown on when a blaze is wanted to make the pot boil; it is in the central chamber, called the fire-house (eldhus), and of course does not substantially warm the rest of the house; but although we shivered incessantly, the natives do not seem to find the cold disagreeable. How they get on in winter, having no furs, we could not make out; for when we suggested that perhaps they spent all winter under the eider-down coverlets, which every house possesses, they replied that at no time of the year were they so little in bed. The furniture and internal appointments generally are what you might expect in such rooms; but three things no Icelandic farm wants—books, a coffee-pot, and a portrait of Jón Sigurdsson, the illustrious leader of the patriotic party.

After all, some one will say, this squalor is not worse than that of the poorest cottagers in Ireland or the Scotch highlands, not so bad as what you may see any day in the lowest parts of Liverpool. True enough, but in Liverpool the ignorance and spiritless abasement of the people is in keeping with the wretchedness of their life, whereas in Iceland the contrast between the man and the house he lives in is the strongest possible, and oversets in a delightful manner all one's English notions of fitness. He is poor, to be sure, poor in the sense of having very little ready money—there is less money in all Iceland than in many an English country town. But he is a person of some substance and of eminent respectability. He is in no danger of want; is the owner of horses, sheep, and oxen, very likely of broad lands which his family has held for centuries. His pedigree not improbably goes back further than that of all but three families in England. He considers himself altogether your equal, behaves as such (though he now no longer hesitates to receive some remuneration for his hospitality), and such, in fact, he is. Along with a certain want of finish in some of his personal habits, he has a complete ease and independence of manner, and a simple courtesy which, as it flows from this ease, is in no danger of being mistaken for servility. He is, moreover, an educated man, who, if a priest, speaks a little Latin, anyhow perhaps a little Danish, has learnt pretty much all that the island has to teach him, and is certain to be familiar with the masterpieces of his own ancient literature. It is this knowledge of the Sagas that has more than anything else given a measure of elevation as well as culture to his mind. It has

* Ghastly tales are told by many travellers of the insects; but herein we thought the country maligned, for though reasonably well bitten now and then, we were never eaten up but once.

stimulated his imagination, and added to his people and country a sort of historical dignity which their position in the modern world could never entitle them to. It has also cultivated his taste, given him a turn for reading generally, made him capable of taking in ideas. Few are the houses in Iceland which do not contain a library; and twice, in spots of rather exceptional wretchedness, I found exceptionally good ones—one chiefly of legal and historical treatises, the other an excellent collection of Sagas and poetry, in a lonely and miserable hovel at the foot of Hekla. It is a remarkable evidence of the power of an old literature which has struck deep root in the minds and affection of the people that, ever since the golden days when that literature sprang up, there have not been wanting, except for about a century and a half of darkness before the Reformation, poets as well as prose writers of substantial merit. The last fifty years have produced several highly valued, and, so far as a stranger can judge, rightly valued by their countrymen; and one is told that at this moment "to be a good skald," as the Sagas express it, is no rare accomplishment, and that many of the farmers and priests at whose houses we stayed are able to turn a neat sonnet on occasion, just as their ancestors were wont to pour forth those strange little poems (visus) which are the despair of modern interpreters. Strangest of all, this literature has preserved the language almost untouched by the wearing and varying influences of time and foreign intercourse. Modern Icelandic has adopted a very few Danish and Latin words, has dropped a few old grammatical forms, and has introduced some slightly different modes of construction. But, for all practical purposes, it is the Icelandic of the twelfth century; and differs less from the language which Egil, son of Skallagrim, spoke when he fought against the Scots for King Athelstan in A.D. 936 than the English of Tennyson differs from that of Gower, or the French of Michelet from Philip of Comines.

To a traveller, these historic memories which hover round him in Iceland rather heighten the impression of melancholy which its scenery makes. The ghosts of those terrible heroes seem to stalk across the desert plains, mourning the downfall of their isle. All its glories belong to days long past, the days of the free republic; since the submission to Norway it has dropped out of the sight of Europe, its climate has grown more bitter, its people have lost their old force and splendour; they live no longer in spacious dwellings such as the Sagas describe; they fetch home no shiploads of costly spoils from the coasts of Gaul and Spain. But to the people themselves these historic memories bring nothing but pleasure and pride; they spend the long night of winter in listening to the exploits of Gunnar and Bersi, or the wiles of Guðrún, or the unhappy loves of Helga the Fair and Gunnlaugr Snake-tongue read to them as they sit at work by some one planted in the midst. And within the last few years their reviving patriotism, fed by these memories, has extorted from Denmark the re-establishment of the ancient Althing, though in a new form and at a new place; and will not be content till the rights of the island to local self-government are fully recognised.

Manners are simple in Iceland, as indeed in all the Scandinavian countries; and all the simpler here because there is really no distinction of ranks. Nobody is rich, and hardly anybody abjectly poor; everybody has to work for himself, and works (except, to be sure, a few storekeepers in Reykjavík, and at one or two spots on the coast), with his own hands. Wealth would not raise a man much above his fellows, and there are indeed no means of employing it except in supplying a house with what would be thought in England indispensable comforts. Wealth, therefore, is not greatly coveted (although the Icelander likes a good bargain, especially in horseflesh), and an air of cheerful contentment reigns. The farm servant scarcely differs from the farmer, and probably, if a steady fellow, ends by marrying the farmer's daughter and getting a farm himself.* There is no title of respect, save Herra to the bishop and Sira to a priest; not even such a title as Mr. or Mrs., or Esquire. If you go to call for a lady you tap at the door and ask if Ingibjorg or Valgerðr is in; or, if you wish to give her her full name, Ingibjorg Thorvaldsdottir, or Eiriksdottir, or Bjarnardottir (as the case may be), for there is no title of politeness to apply. Her name, moreover, is her own name, unchanged from birth to death; for as there are no surnames or family names among the Icelanders,† but only Christian names, there is no reason for a wife assuming her husband's name, and she is Thorvaldsdottir after her marriage with Guðmundr just as before, while her children are Guðmundsson and Guðmundsdottir. When such a concession is made to the rights of women, it is a little surprising to find that she is in any other respect treated as an inferior, not usually sitting down to table with the men of the family, but waiting on them, and dining separately. Otherwise, however, women seem sufficiently well off, having full rights of property, and riding valorously about the country wherever they will; and we could not hear that there was any movement for their emancipation, or indeed for social reform of any kind, though, to be sure, imperfect knowledge of the language restricted our enquiries. In one regard, the women of Iceland have obtained a completer equality than their sisters in continental Europe. They receive exactly the same education as the men do. There are no schools in the island naturally, as families live mostly a dozen miles apart; and instruction is therefore given by the father to his sons and daughters alike and together, the priest—where there is a priest—sometimes adding a little Latin or Danish. Thus the girl learns all her parents can teach her, and is as good an arithmetician, and as familiar with the Sagas, as her brothers. Accomplishments, of course, are pretty well out of the question; painting, not only from the difficulty of procuring the materials, but because there is really nothing to paint; dancing,

* Crime is all but unknown; and though they have built a new prison at Reykjavík, I could not hear that there was any prospect of inmates, and should certainly, on our promised next visit, apply for lodgings there, as it is the only stone house in the place, except the Governor's, and occupies the finest site.

† Some few families have adopted the Danish fashion of a surname; but this practice, which is quite an innovation, is said to be already declining.

because you can seldom gather a sufficiently large party, and have no rooms big enough; instrumental music, on account of the impossibility of transporting a piano over rocks and bogs on the back of a pony. Nevertheless, we found in a remote house (a good wooden house, by the way), upon the coast, where we were hospitably entertained for a day and night, not only a piano, but several young ladies who could play excellently on it and a guitar, accompanying themselves to songs in four or five languages, the Swedish, as we thought, the prettiest of all. They lived in the most desolate spot imaginable—the sea roaring in front on a long strand; inland, a plain of dreary bog, and behind it, miles away, grim shapeless mountains. They had no neighbours within ten or fifteen miles, and told us they were often without a visitor for months together. But they were as bright and cheerful as possible; and though they did not respond to the suggestion of a dance, they sang and played to two of us all evening long in the tiny drawing-room, while the storm howled without; and their worthy father (who was a sort of general merchant for that part of the island), and the lord-lieutenant of the county, who had dropped in from his house thirty or forty miles off, brewed noble bowls of punch, and held forth to our third comrade, in a strange mixture of tongues, upon the resources of Iceland, and the prospects of opening, by means of British capital, a flourishing trade in sulphur.

As for society, it must not be imagined that there is any society in Iceland in the same sense as in England or America. Except at weddings or funerals there are no social gatherings; even in the town an entertainment is the rarest thing in the world, and in the country it is impossible. There are no "county people," no "best sets," and hence no struggles to get into them. But there is not only a great deal of practical hospitality, everybody staying as a matter of course at everybody else's house, but a very generous spirit shown in giving it. This is one of the things which one most enjoys in travelling there, and which atones for many discomforts. Everywhere you meet a hearty welcome; all that the house affords is set before you, the best room is at your service, and what is done, be it great or little, is done in an ungrudging spirit, and with genuine kindliness of manner. In fact, the strongest impression which we carried away, after that of the grimness of the scenery, was that of the geniality of the people, and the pleasant sense of a social equality which involves no obtrusive self-assertion by the poorer, since it is the natural result of the conditions under which life goes on.

Hospitality, it may be said, is natural enough in a wilderness where the least engaging stranger brings news, and varies somehow the intense monotony of life. But in Iceland, as nothing ever happens, there can hardly be even news to bring, except round the coast, where the expected arrival of a ship is a great event; and the people have singularly little curiosity about other countries. The two newspapers (to which I believe a third has since been added) contained only the most trival local incidents and reflections on the Danish Government. Nobody (except of course those few who had themselves travelled) enquired what was passing in the

great world of Europe. Some had just heard of the fall of Louis Napoleon two years before; but not a question was put as to the war or its results on France, and when one volunteered remarks they excited no interest. Once or twice I was asked whether London was not a large town, and if I had seen when in America the Icelandic colony at Milwaukee, but here curiosity about foreign countries stopped. The fact was that they did not know enough about the phenomena of the world outside to know what to ask about it; while, as to its politics or social or literary movements, they felt that nothing that happened there would or could make any difference to them. To them at least what the French call the "solidarity of the peoples" has not any meaning or application. No political revolution, no ascendancy of democracy or imperialism, no revival or decay of literature or art, no scientific invention, will substantially affect their lives. Steam and the telegraph have done nothing for them, for there is not a steam-engine or galvanic battery in the country; and though a steamboat visits them six times a year, trade is not more brisk than in the old days. Even those discoveries which seem of the most universal utility, discoveries in medicine and surgery, are practically useless to them, who have but one doctor.*

And this is the third and last of the dominant impressions which one receives in Iceland—an impression of utter isolation and detachment from the progress of the world; stronger here than in the remotest wilds of America, because it is an old country, because its inhabitants are civilised, and because you know that whichever way the currents of trade and population may flow, they will never turn hither. The farmer of the interior of Iceland, or the north-west coast, lives on and is clothed by the produce of his own hillside, reads only his own language, hears of the great world but once or twice a year: what do its excitements and changes signify to him? What can they signify even to his late descendants? Human life is reduced to its simplest elements; and one feels how permanent those elements are, and how small a part man plays in the order of things. Nature confronts him, strong, inexorable, always the same; and he remains the same because unable to resist her. It is not wholly, it is not even chiefly, a dismal feeling, this sense of isolation and stillness in Icelandic life. The traveller enjoys for himself the most absolute immunity from the interruptions of his usual interests and duties that can be imagined, for no news from Europe can reach him; he may be offered a seat in the Cabinet, or accused of forgery, or pourtrayed in *Vanity Fair*—he will know nothing about it till his return. And he sees that the native Icelander, if he wants some of those requisites for the enjoyment of life which custom has made us expect, wants also many of the fountains of bitterness which spring up in a highly civilised society, and possesses all that philosophy can admit to be necessary for happiness.

* He is a very delightful and energetic old doctor, who travels up and down constantly, trying to diffuse sound ideas regarding health; but no one man can do much in such an area.

Comfort he has never known, and therefore does not miss; and he has the primal human affections, healthful and useful labour, books to ennoble his life by connecting him with the past and the future, the changing seasons, clouds and the colours of sunset, and, most of all, calm and the freedom from temptations—*secura quies et nescia fallere vita.* When the first Norwegians came to Iceland, driven forth by the conquests of Harold the Fair-haired, they found it already inhabited by a few saintly Irish hermits, who soon disappeared before the intruders. It is still a place to be commended to those who are tired of the giddy world and would give themselves to meditation upon everlasting problems.

These wandering reminiscences have rambled on further than was intended, yet many things have been passed over which it would have been pleasant to speak of—whimsical incidents of travel, curious little bits of ancient usage, such as the institution of parish arbitrators to whom a dispute must be submitted before it turns to a law-suit; instances of the friendly warmth with which the people are ready to receive strangers who do not give themselves airs, and which culminated in a farewell entertainment, at which the health of the departing visitors was proposed by a dear old friend, in a long Latin speech, with an eloquence and command of Ciceronianisms that put the answerer to shame. Enjoyable, however, heartily enjoyable, as we found our two months there, I cannot say that other travellers would, any more than I can feel sure that the views and sentiments I have tried to express are those which the aspect of the country and people will suggest to others. Even in our little party there were those who balanced very differently the pleasures and the miseries of our lot, and opinions diverged upon all sorts of Icelandic questions; one, for instance, maintaining the Icelanders to be an exceptionally religious people; a second, exceptionally unreligious; while the third thought them neither more nor less religious than the rest of the world. (Each still holds to his own view, so I commend the matter to the next traveller.) On the whole, our conclusion was that tourists, even those who are tired of Alps and Pyrenees, ought not to be advised to visit Iceland, unless they either are interested in Scandinavian literature and history, or belong to that happy and youthful class which enjoys a rough life for its own sake. Life in Iceland is certainly very rough, and if it may strengthen the strong, it tries too severely the weak. But he who does not fear hardships, and penetrates the desert interior, or coasts the wild north-west, may rest assured that he will find a new delight to the study of the ancient literature of the island, and of the island itself will carry away an ineffaceable impression. Ineffaceable, not only because it is peculiar, but because it is so simple; for as respects nature, it is the impression of an unchangeable present; as respects man, of an unreturning past. Iceland had a glorious dawn, and has lain in twilight ever since; it is hardly possible that she should again be called on to play a part in European history. But the brightness of that dawn can never fade entirely from her hills, or cease to ennoble the humble lives of her people.

JAMES BRYCE.

Arachne in Sloane Street.

The readers of the *Spectator* will remember the journal of the candid Clorinda, who at one in the afternoon calls for her handkerchief and works half a violet leaf. At the end of the week Clorinda moralizes as follows:—

"Upon looking back to this my journal," she says, "I am at a loss to know whether I pass my time well or ill, and indeed never thought of considering how I did it before I perused your speculation upon that subject. I scarce find a single action in these five days that I can thoroughly approve of, excepting the working upon the violet leaf, which I am resolved to finish the first day I am at leisure."

Clorinda has evidently some respect for her needle. In her day the golden age of embroidery was not quite over. I have no doubt that the violets of her time, though stiffly drawn, were harmoniously shaded. The faded wreaths may still be to be seen, perhaps in some museum or repository of ancient goods, shaming the forward steam-propelled ornamentation of later generations by their modest graces. It would be indeed strange if hand-work did not surpass machinery in that same quality which makes a drawing superior to a photograph, a letter to a printed circular. Hitherto it has given us many yards of indifferent and formal produce in the place perhaps of as many inches of really good and worthy ornament; but now, says the Report, it has become probable that furniture will be decorated by the hands of women quite, or nearly, as cheaply as by machinery. "Hand-work is not only more beautiful, but it is thoroughly durable (the Exhibition of Ancient Needlework at South Kensington proved this), and each example has an individual interest and value." The Report then goes on to point out, "the peculiar advantage of this employment for gentlewomen who find themselves obliged to earn a living. The work is fascinating in itself, and brings out the best powers of the worker, while its endless variety and intellectual interest obviate all the weariness of monotony."

I cannot help contrasting this quotation and that from Clorinda's journal with a description I met with by chance a few days ago in George Sand's novel of Mauprat. It is of Edmée, the heroine, and her woolwork:—

"Elle était penchée sur sa tapisserie, et de temps en temps elle levait les yeux sur son père pour interroger les moindres mouvements de son sommeil. Mais que de patience et de résignation dans tout son être! Edmée n'aimait pas les travaux d'aiguille; elle avait l'esprit trop sérieux pour attacher de l'importance à l'effet d'une nuance à côté d'une nuance,

et à la régularité d'un point pressé contre un autre point ; mais depuis que son père, en proie aux infirmités de la vieillesse, ne quittait presque plus son fauteuil, elle ne quittait plus son père un seul instant ; et ne pouvant toujours lire et vivre par l'esprit, elle avait senti la nécessité d'adopter ces occupations féminines. Dans une de ces luttes obscures qui s'accomplissent souvent sous nos yeux sans que nous en soupçonnions le mérite, elle avait fait plus que de dompter son caractère, elle avait changé jusqu'à la circulation de son sang."

As one reads the page one can imagine the pattern that Edmée is tracing as she numbs away the time of her lover's absence; and her stitches mark the length of the slow-passing hours in line upon line of dull, unmeaning ornament, and dismal monotonies. No wonder that George Sand, great and impatient mistress of vivid colouring, of mystical workmanship; a weaver of unexpected and harmonious patterns, the unwinder of complicated threads of fate and life, speaks with scornful disparagement of the mechanical labour of Edmée's hands; but not so would she write of intelligent work with some interest and meaning in its intention. Clorinda, with unconscious art, might have given Edmée a hint as to her pattern. I am sure she would have liked to peep (with bright eyes enhanced by that fascinating patch which took so long to place) behind a certain red curtain that a friendly hand held up one bright spring morning not long ago; I dare say Edmée herself might have exclaimed, seeing a pleasant and unexpected sight; Clorinda would certainly have noted it all down in her journal on her return to her home, and to the attentions of Mr. Froth.

Behind the red curtain is a long and lofty room, into which the sun comes streaming, and where some twenty ladies are at work at tables and embroidery-frames, among shining heaps and folds of satin, veils of silver paper, packets of silk, bright tinted patterns. The heads are bent; the stitches are falling; there is a certain sense of serenity and application which strikes you as you come in—of colour and sunshine upon it. For one thing, a work-room of ladies is not a usual sight, and one is naturally impressed by some feeling of quiet refinement, in the place of that stolid dulness and indifference which so often weighs upon one's spirits, and one's conscience too, as one looks into some of those work-places, for which one feels in some measure responsible.

Perhaps there may have been a time when such sights as this in Sloane Street were more usual than they are now. One has read of the châtelaines sitting, surrounded by maidens, in the castle-hall, and working many a scroll and patient conceit of tapestry against their lord's return. One has seen the result of Queen Matilda's perseverance, as she turned her days and years into long histories (what a strange law of life it is, by which people turn the vaguest of things, secret impatiences, weariness, want of money or interest, into tangible, hard shape, into stitches, into black lines upon paper, into coming and going, other people's affairs, into visiting cards, order, disorder, as the case may be!).

Here most certainly was a useful impulse of benevolence and cultivated instinct come to life; a new possibility among all the impossible things which are in the world.

No one noticed us as we came in. The stitches went on falling into their places. I could have imagined some such scene in the days when a Raphael himself might have come walking in with a design for tapestry, or when a Botticelli did not disdain to trace a pattern for the petticoat of a goddess. The two châtelaines, whose special interest lies among these workers, were standing in the midst directing. The work-mistress was going her rounds, the secretary was bringing her report, the workers were silently progressing. As Lady A—— went by, some of them looked up to smile at a familiar face. Patterns were flowing in a prim and measured cadence upon moon-lit and sun-lit stuffs. Here is a honeysuckle border starting from its suave satin ground, crisp and stately and harmonious.

When the lady for whom these honeysuckles were made went to Court in her raiment of fine needlework, no wonder that the people looking on admired as she passed. Most of them said it was rare old brocade —an heirloom in the great family to which she belongs; but our ladies have shown that they can do as well as the workers who lived in the most golden age of art. Some of the appliqué work is so well restored, that it is impossible to tell the difference between that of our ladies and their century-ago ancestresses. I saw a noble crimson flood of damask embroidered with a stately pattern which Titian himself might have liked to paint; and then again came great sun-flowers turning their faces to the sun, upon brown and upon velvet. One beautiful screen was shown us of pearl-green satin, blooming into a garden for a royal princess. Pink delicate hollyhocks rearing their full and stately heads, birds suddenly flying into a silken existence, corn heads, lilies uprearing on their stems. Surely the fairy princesses must have come to Sloane Street for their magic court robes, sunlight and moonlight stuffs and starry mantles. It remains to be seen whether the school will be able to stamp the mark of its work upon this Manchester age. That the work is charming is beyond a doubt, as also that it rises to the dignity of art, being kindled with that *something* beyond mere mechanism which should belong to all manual labour, of whatever kind it may be. The ladies are in some measure artists; their stitches are set with a certain intelligence and cultivation which tells even in a pattern traced upon a sampler. "The colour of that bird's wings kept me awake last night," I heard the work-mistress saying. No wonder that the bird plumes in harmonious tints upon its satin. As I think of the place, numberless pleasant, handsome things occur to me. There was a peacock dazzling upon a sunset blaze of gold, there were gentle little daisies flowering upon a melodious green ground.

The Report says that the School was started, first of all to revive a beautiful and practically lost art; secondly, to provide private and suitable employment for gentlewomen wishing to earn a living.

The story of the rise of the School I heard from a lady connected with the place. The original foundress, she told me, had always been interested in the art, and had herself designed and worked some embroidery for her own house. One day an upholsterer, who was at work for her, happened to say, "If this kind of thing were for sale, I could always command a price for as much of it as I could get." These words struck the lady, who began to think of the possibility of using her gift to some useful end, as she remembered some girls to whom she had given her patterns and instruction at different times. Some of these were young ladies to whom a suitable employment would be of all boons the most welcome. She spoke to them on the subject, and established a little class in her own drawing-room. Then she went to a friend, another kind châtelaine, who listened to her scheme for a while, and then suddenly held out her hand and said, "Let us be partners," and so the thing was done. The proposed scheme was to open a workroom, where ornamental work should be produced with some intention and harmony of colour and charm of design, and at the same time to employ those ladies whose cultivated instincts would be valuable in such an occupation.

The little enterprise was started, but struggled with many difficulties. The first manager, Mrs. Dolby, whose experience and special gifts had seemed to be the mainspring of the whole enterprise, fell ill and died at a time when one of the two ladies so much interested in the success of the venture was herself ill and confined to her bed. The staff of workers was organised, but everything else had to be found out day by day. Mrs. Dolby's loss was irreparable: nobody else had any knowledge of the practical working of such a scheme. "Fortunately at this crisis Princess Christian, who had become interested in the scheme, came forward, and 'her unfailing encouragement and unselfish personal exertions' in a measure helped to carry the undertaking through at a time when it was in the greatest danger of collapse."

I cannot help further quoting an interesting passage from the Report:

Up to that time the School had profited by Mrs. Dolby's large experience and exceptional knowledge of the highest branches of needlework, and her rare powers of tuition. But since her death, as no really efficient substitute could be found, it has been forced painfully to work out every detail, and to solve each problem as it arose by the slow and expensive process of many failures, crowned at last by success—a success, perhaps, the more complete because earned by experience. This, however, was not the only obstacle. There was the difficulty—a very real one—of training in regular, careful, and accurate habits of work, ladies accustomed to easy leisure rather than professional work; the difficulty of admitting all without distinction of creed (which, without great and patient care, might have led to painful discord); the difficulty of organizing a staff among the ladies themselves, ignorant of business, and with only a few months' experience of art-work, while there was none to lead them but an amateur with only an amateur's experience, and a complete stranger to commercial affairs. Then there were the further difficulties of valuing and classing work; of having materials specially made and dyed (sometimes dyed at the School) to reproduce the rich harmony of ancient colour; of forming a code of regulations; in short, of initiating nothing less than a thorough business system for which there was

no precedent. Many of these hindrances being much increased by the humble size of the School's original quarters (a small room over a bonnet shop), it was decided by H.R.H. the President and Council last May that the first thing to do was to find a suitable house. The house was found (31 Sloane Street), fortunately well adapted for the purpose, and the School was settled there in July, 1873.

From this time the history of the School may be said properly to begin. Though only known to a circle of private friends, orders have been sent in to a large extent—in many cases of such a value as to require large sums to be expended in executing them ; and one of the most satisfactory proofs of the confidence which has been so quickly earned is the quantity of ancient needlework of the utmost value and rarity which has been confided to the School to be transferred, repaired, added to, or copied, &c.

Forty-three ladies are now (Oct. 1873) on the regular books, and their numbers are being added to from time to time. Each lady pays an entrance fee of 5*l*., and she must reside in London, and practically devote her life to the work, as in any other profession.

Work is not paid for by time, but by the piece, so that the most skilful and rapid worker earns the largest sums.

Some of the ladies live in the house, and a dinner is provided for them at a certain hour. Where it is possible, they take the work away. The secretary, Miss Turner, told me that in some cases she was able to look after younger girls, or absentees from sickness. There is a natural and kindly esprit de corps which I need not dwell upon, but which seemed to me not the least of the advantages to be gained by such co-operation.

It is no use—so Miss Turner told us—for persons to come who have not already worked with some natural aptitude—" with fingers instead of thumbs," as she said, laughing; and it is no use for ladies not living in London to apply; many of those we saw were married and living in homes of their own; one or two were young girls. There had been but few cases of incompetence and incompatibility; for by long experience, Miss Turner, who is deeply interested in her work, can now tell who is likely to do well in the School, and she only admits those of whom she has good hope.

I think we must all allow the real gratitude which we must feel to those who try to discern, behind the dull contrivance and commonplace of daily toil and life, the secret of an artistic fitness and beauty which certainly exists in most things and most places, but which so many cares and pre-occupations combine to choke and to hide away. Those who have means and leisure beyond the actual calls of a daily and laborious existence are doing most practical and useful work when they try to make things more fit and more full of interest and beauty for others. Where cultivated human instincts deal with material things, some true and valuable result must come from the contact.

We all have our household gods, whether or not we recognize the fact; and we all pay them homage in a fashion of our own—gods of association, of harmony, of fancy, of long-expected realisation. These super-

natural visitors hide unsuspected in many a shabby place and corner. Some are visible only to certain people and at certain times; others, again, disclose their secret to any who have the gift to recognise their divinity; and I, for my part, honestly believe that nothing exists which may not be made more worthy by their touch, and none of us that may not benefit by recognising their existence in our daily life. What god from Parnassus has laid his hand upon those shabby garret walls—upon the torn curtain hanging from the pole—the broken jar standing in the sunshine, with its sprouting balsaam plant? The curtain is weather-seamed and stained by wet; the jar is cracked, the wall is smoked; but the blue serenity of the sky outside shows beyond the balsaam pot and the ragged curtain; some mysterious harmony in those shabby russet tones is melting to tranquillity upon the gray; the faded blue of the drapery is falling into shadow, the bright culminating flash of the flower flames a life into it all. Art seems to be a sort of soul to life that reaches us and uplifts with a strange yet gentle might of inspiration. I could imagine that a real and mighty work of art might even share in that same life which belongs to natural things—brightening and changing from day to day; fading and dimming sometimes, and then again behold it re-created for us, and standing as in a shrine, supreme and triumphant and revealed.

So, not long ago, was she of Milo revealed. Suddenly, and for one instant, she seemed to thrill with a divine and mighty life; not life such as ours, struggling for something—it knows not what—or clinging to definite things, passionately apprehending for one moment and forgetting the next. This was something beyond—absolute, dominant and self-sufficing—that seemed to thrill with the sound of some faint Olympian music, stirring, not to effort, but to an existence more complete and more supreme.

And it is no small thing to learn from others to like that which is to be liked—to see the golden radiance of the gods where it falls, upon the the head of a goddess or the fringe of a garment; nor shall we live our own lives the less completely for such warmth and revivification.

To a Friend Leaving England in September.

Dear friend, you leave our chary northern clime,
Now that the daylight's waning, and the leaf
Hangs sere on chesnut bough, and beech, and lime;
The husbandman has garnered every sheaf;
Pale autumn leads us to the lingering grief
Of melancholy winter; while you fly
On summer's swallow-wings to Italy.

Great cities—greater in decay and death—
Dream-like with immemorial repose—
Whose ruins like a shrine for ever sheath
The mighty names and memories of those
Who lived and died to die no more—shall close
Your happy pilgrimage; and you shall learn,
Breathing their ancient air, the thoughts that burn

For ever in the hearts of after men:—
Yea, from the very soil of silent Rome
You shall grow wise; and walking, live again
The lives of buried peoples, and become
A child by right of that eternal home,
Cradle and grave of empires, on whose walls
The sun himself subdued to reverence falls.

* * * * * * *

You will see Naples and the orange-groves
  Deep-set of cool Sorrento—green and gold
Mingling their lustre by calm azure coves,
  Or like the fabled dragon fold on fold
  Curled in the trough of cloven hills, or rolled
Down vales Hesperian, through dim caverned shades
Of palace ruins and lone colonnades:

Capri, the perfect island—boys and girls
  Free as spring flowers, straight, tall, and musical
Of movement; in whose eyes and clustering curls
  The youth of Greece still lingers; whose feet fall
  Like kisses on green turf by cypress tall
And pine-tree shadowed; who, unknowing care,
Draw love and laughter from the innocent air:

Ravenna in her widowhood—the waste
  Where dreams a withered ocean; where the hand
Of time has gently played with tombs defaced
  Of priest and emperor; where the temples stand,
  Proud in decay, in desolation grand,—
Solemn and sad like clouds that lingeringly
Sail and are loth to fade upon the sky:

Siena, Bride of Solitude, whose eyes
  Are lifted o'er the russet hills to scan
Immeasurable tracts of limpid skies,
  Arching those silent sullen plains where man
  Fades like a weed mid mouldering marshes wan;
Where cane and pine and cypress, poison-proof,
For death and fever spread their stately roof.

* * * * * * *

You will see Venice—glide as though in dreams
  Midmost a hollowed opal: for her sky,
Mirrored upon the ocean-pavement, seems
  At dawn and eve to build in vacancy
  A wondrous bubble-dome of wizardry,
Suspended where the light, all ways alike
Circumfluent, upon her sphere may strike.

There Titian, Tintoret, and Giambellin,
And that strong master of a myriad hues,
The Veronese, like flowers with odours keen,
Shall smite your brain with splendours: they confuse
The soul that wandering in their world must lose
Count of our littleness, and cry that then
The gods we dream of walked the earth like men.

* * * * * * *

About your feet the myrtles will be set,
Grey rosemary, and thyme, and tender blue
Of love-pale labyrinthine violet;
Flame-born anemones will glitter through
Dark aisles of roofing pine-trees; and for you
The golden jonquil and starred asphodel
And hyacinth their speechless tales will tell.

The nightingales for you their tremulous song
Shall pour amid the snowy scented bloom
Of wild acacia bowers, and all night long
Through starlight-flooded spheres of purple gloom
Still lemon boughs shall spread their faint perfume,
Soothing your sense with odours sweet as sleep,
While wind-stirred cypresses low music keep.

For you the mountain Generous shall yield
His wealth of blossoms in the noon of May—
Fire-balls of peonies, and pearls concealed
Of lilies in thick leafage, glittering spray
Of pendulous laburnum boughs, that sway
To scarce-felt breezes, gilding far and wide
With liquid splendour all the broad hill-side.

Yea, and what time the morning mists are furled
On lake low-lying and prodigious plain,
And on the western sky the massy world
Contracts her shadow—for the sun-beams gain
Unseen, yet growing,—while the awful train
Of cloudless Alps stand garish, mute and chill,
Waiting the sun's kiss with pale forehead still,—

You from his crest shall see the sudden fire
  Flash joyous: lo! the solitary snow
First blushing! Broader now, brighter and higher,
  Shoots the strong ray; the mountains row by row
  Receive it, and the purple valleys glow;
The smooth lake-mirrors laugh; till silently
Throbs with full light and life the jocund sky!

* * * * * * *

Farewell: you pass; we tarry: yet for us
  Is the long weary penitential way
Of thought that souls must travel, dubious,
  With tottering steps and eyes that wane away
  'Neath brows more wrinkle-withered day by day:
Farewell! There is no rest except in death
For him who stays or him who journeyeth.

J. A. S.

Artificial Memory.

When the inimitable cavalier of the sad countenance was for imitating Beltenebros' madness in the Sierra Morena, he wished Sancho to learn by heart a love-letter to that Dulcinea, of whom it is recorded in the Arabic to her honour that she was the best hand at salting pork in La Mancha. But Sancho said, "Write it, your worship, for it's sheer nonsense to trust anything to my memory, since my noddle is such that very often I can't even remember my own name." There are, in fact, those whose capacity is so confined that they can only follow one particular science, and by applying his mental powers to more than the study of *refranes* Sancho might have been in the unenviable position of that Biscayan who forgot his own language, and did not learn the Castilian. So, whether the father of proverbs, by the aid of the thread now about to be spun, might have succeeded in tracing the idea of his own name through the labyrinth of oblivion, is extremely doubtful, but between him and Pascal, who is said never to have forgotten anything—an intellectual Corinth not given to all to attain—there are very many orders of minds, and to the amusement or instruction of these the following pages may perhaps somewhat conduce. To say that Sancho's memory was that of a beast would neither be true nor a compliment to the brute creation. It is certain that other animals than man are endowed with memory—excellent memory sometimes—and use it unaided by the gospel preached of Simonides and Cicero, Kästner and Feinaigle. When a cow is bereaved of her calf she remembers that accident, and laments her misfortune with familiar lowing, and when a horse, rejoicing in his strength, hears the jangle of his harness, and sees his well-known trappings, he snorts, rolling (as Virgil says) "under his distended nostrils collected fire," pawing the ground for very impatience and pricking his ears at his master's voice, possessed by a memory of, and a passionate yearning for, his accustomed course. Parrots, doubtless, retain the pattern or idea of Pretty Poll in their minds, during their repeated essays and gradual approach to perfection in the enunciation of that familiar formula. Cats or dogs, who are supposed to be without reason, yet remember and return to their accustomed homes, though transported from them by night, and to a considerable distance. Horne Tooke thought it would have been well if Monboddo had imitated the example of Porphyry's partridge, quoted by his lordship, and foreborne his noise until he was spoken to.

Once upon a time a barber at Rome possessed a very clever magpie.

Through the street in which he lived a rich man was carried out to burial, accompanied by much music. After this the bird remained for a season mute, not even uttering those cries by which he was wont to express his desire for food. Those who before wondered at his voice were now amazed by his silence. Some supposed witchcraft was at work, others deemed the pie deafened by the sound of the music. But nothing of the kind was the cause. The bird was occupied in meditation, busied, in fact, about vocal and instrumental harmony. For suddenly it burst out, not into its old familiar phrases, but into an exact imitation of all the songs and orchestral pieces played at the rich man's funeral. This story, told by Plutarch, may be collated with several in Jesse's *Gleanings*.

"In the Republic of Letters," says Bayle, "memory is almost as necessary as life." The proposition that it is useless to read books unless memory take charge of their contents requires no proof; and it is equally futile to hear any worthy thing with one ear which goes out speedily at the other. It is obvious, since we only know so much as we remember, that without this secondary perception no intellectual improvement could result from the most enlightened and extended experience. Plato, indeed, goes so far as to suppose that all human knowledge is but a recollection, after long oblivion, of what the soul knew before its imprisonment in matter. Without this spiritual spigot of memory we should, like the virgin daughters of Danaus, fill our urns at the fountain of the waters of wisdom in vain. And at the best, memory is like that bridge in the Vision of Mirza, which serves to carry only a few of our ideas in safety over the deep dark sea of oblivion, while the great majority fall through its hidden holes and fissures. The most retentive mind but resembles, to quote the elegant words of Locke, the tomb to which it is fast approaching, where, though the brass and marble may remain, yet too soon the inscription is effaced by time, and the imagery mouldered away.

It would be but filling many pages, and doing that which is already done, to write more about natural memory. It is enough that mythology makes the Muses the daughters of Mnemosyne, and the old poet Afranius Memory and Use the parents of Wisdom. Without entering into the Cartesian theory of broad and strait traces in the brain worn by spiritual footsteps, it may be said that the keynote of the music of all fantasias on artificial memory is association. The influence of this, Bacon's "binding of thoughts," need scarcely be enlarged on to anyone who has shifted the position of a finger-ring, or in Berlin put pieces of paper in a snuffbox, or in London tied a knot in a handkerchief. Some there are, indeed, who have converted that article into a Laocoon without attaining the object of their desire; considering their knots, when the time for action is come, with a blank despair akin to that engendered by a continental *Bradshaw;* while others, forgetting alike both knots and handkerchief, leave for disentanglement to the weeping hands of the wordy washerwoman these linen witnesses of their wasted labour. Passing over Coleridge's mackerel and gooseberry sauce, how often recollections which we thought

cold, dead, and buried without hope of resurrection are roused into warm and instant being by the fortuitous sound of some old and once familiar song, by the faint perfume of some faded rose. Did not Peter immediately remember the word of Christ when the cock crew? and how few persons there are who having once seen that noble piece of frozen music in the Strand known as Northumberland House will not when they think thereon remember also, in obedience to the law of objective suggestion, the lion with his outstretched tail!

Here let us intercalate on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle a word or two about a mystery which seems to have nothing to do with association. How is it that which is old remains in our recollection, while that which is recent we are unable to retain? That we forget what happened yesterday, and yet remember many of the deeds of our childhood, like those who, looking back on their journey, see the hills left behind them in the far distance, but can, for the grey mist which covers them, discern but little of those low-lying lands and valleys which are interposed between their present resting-place and those distant hills? Returning to the theory of association, how often are we at a loss to find the name of a person or an idea, though we send out emissary eyes of the soul to spy in what dark cell it lies concealed, seeking it carefully and with tears, and yet this same name, by some subtle connecting link, will rise before us like a ghost, unsolicited, and when we least expect it. The link may be of any of the senses: in the following instance it is a sharply defined note of sound. For it is difficult to forget that Ahiman was one of the sons of Anak, though no etymologist, other than Ménage, would conclude from this fortuitous relation of syllables, that our English "a high man" was connected with the Hebrew. It may be said that the mind naturally seeks some assistance of this kind for the memory. Not seldom are we surprised on finding a person of whom we had before only heard, fat, instead of thin, short, instead of tall, contrary in some respect to the imaged associations which the mind had spontaneously clustered about his name.

Simonides is supposed to have been the inventor of the first mnemonic art. The story entitled, "Simonides saved by the Gods," which led to the invention, is told by Phædrus with the moral that mortals are honoured by the divinities. On an occasion this Simonides was asked to write a panegyric on a certain pugilist. The name of the pugilist was, according to Cicero, "Scopas," but there is considerable dispute among the ancient grammarians both as to his name and the scene of the circumstances about to be narrated, the latter being as uncertain as the birthplace of Homer, and the former as great a subject of dispute as the original and family appellation of Don Quixote. This Scopas, however, had conquered in a boxing match. The poet agreed for a certain price to write his praise, and leaving the reek of the city, with its riches and its roar, sought a retired spot suited to composition. But finding little inspiration on his subject, and feeling himself uncomfortably hampered by the narrow limits of Scopas's fame, he by a poetic license ventured on a slight

digression, and introduced Leda's twin stars into his poem. Pollux, in his opinion, was a glorious precedent. Having completed the work, as he thought satisfactorily, he returned once more to public life, and handed over his MS. to Scopas, who, however, paid him only one third of the price agreed on between them. When the poet demanded the balance, the pugilist, expressing astonishment at his shamelessness, replied, "Let those pay the other two thirds who have received two thirds of your panegyric." Saying this, he referred to the Dioscuri in disgust. "Lest, however," he added, "you should depart in a passion, come and sup with me to-night. I expect a few friends." The poor lyric poet of Ceos, though bubbled out of his hire, and in a bitter rage, having regard to his future interest, and not desiring to lose a customer, consented. At the appointed period he came, and reclined with his elbow on a cushion of his particular purple couch. The feast was heightened with wine and laughter. The gleam of gold and silver shone amidst many-hued and sweet-scented flowers, and the vaulted roof of the joyous room re-echoed with all kinds of music. Suddenly two youths, of more than mortal stature, stained with the dust and sweat of travel, stood in the doorway. They stop a slave who happens to be passing, and bid him call out to them Simonides at once, that their errand thither was of the last importance, and brooked no delay. The frightened boy summons Simonides. He quits the apartment, where they do not refrain either from eating or drinking on account of his absence. Scarcely, however, had he quitted his place, when the roof of the chamber fell, burying his fellow revellers in its ruin. But no one was found at the door. So, says the fabulist, it was evident that the children of Leda gave the poet life for a partial loss of payment. Corollary: It is evident, as Malherbe says, we cannot praise the gods too much. The arrangement, by the way, seems scarcely consistent with equity, inasmuch as these deities delivered him from a danger into which he had been led by their own contrivance. It may be added as somewhat strange that Simonides never in his works alluded to this circumstance for him so full of glory. Quintilian takes up the story as here left by Phædrus, and tells us that in consequence of the severity of the blow, the faces of the guests were mutilated to such an extent, that they were not recognisable by their nearest relatives, who therefore found themselves in a difficulty with regard to the proper administration of funeral rites. Then Simonides, by remembering the exact position of the roisterers, restored the bodies to their relations each to each—unfortunately for their full satisfaction, there was none to audit his account, but the ancient author records no expressions of dissatisfaction with the arrangement.

Such, then, according to Quintilian and others, was the origin of topical memory, or the art of connecting matters of memory with place. Some, however, attribute the invention to Pythagoras, others to the Egyptians, a divergence we might expect, since it is in vain to hope for universal agreement on any subject under the sun. The art was known to the

Greeks as μνημονικὰ and to the Latins as "artificiosa memoria." Its principles have ever been fundamentally the same. Ancients and moderns found that, on returning to a place after a long absence, they not only recollected the place itself, but often also what they did or said there. The whole area became filled with shadowy forms, and faces long silent and forgotten stood again before them. Therefore ancients and moderns alike give such rules as these: Let, they say, some room be chosen, and all its attributes and qualities be well studied and remembered, that we may run them over when necessary without hesitation. If we cannot effect this, our art will be as the guidance of the dim-sighted leading the blind. We must then fill these attributes and qualities with arbitrary signs, intimately, or as far as possible, connected with what we wish to remember. For instance, if we wish to recollect a shipwreck we must picture to ourselves a broken anchor in one of the panes of the bay window of our room, and so voyaging, like Xavier de la Maistre, round our chamber, and locating the signs of our thoughts in order in each book-shelf of our book-case, each corner of our writing-desk, each bar of our fire-grate, each foot of our easy chair, when we visit these spots again and ask from them that which we committed to their safe custody, they will for the most part render up their trust with far less damage and far more readiness than our animate friends return (if indeed they do return) our books or our umbrellas. For about umbrellas it may be said, parenthetically, there is a popular and by no means ill-grounded belief, that the memory is very treacherous. Men generally seem with regard to these, considered as a loan, to be in the condition of Strepsiades, who when asked by Socrates in the Nephalæ if he had a good memory, answered thus: "Yes, by Zeus; and yet no, for what any one owes me I remember distinctly, but what I owe any one fades with astonishing rapidity from my recollection."

How many soever, then, these signs may be they are returned to us without confusion of order. After they have served our purpose, we can cast them off like old friends, and illuminate our room with fresh characters; for these may, as we are told, like letters, be erased, while our chamber topics, ancient waxen tablet, or modern Bath post remains. Mnemotechny is, in fact, the sister of writing. "Facies non una nec diversa, tamen qualem decet esse sororum," as the pictures of Doris's daughters on the silver portals of the sun. The more familiar our room the better. It should be, if possible, that which has seen us as children, and which, happily, we shall constantly see. The choice of Metrodorus was therefore injudicious when he chose for his chamber the Zodiac, dividing each of its twelve signs into thirty compartments, for none of these subdivisions were sensible, distinct, and familiar objects on which the mind could readily rest. Such, or of a similar nature, may have been the signs to which Catius so anxiously refers when unfortunately interrupted by Horace, by which he might remember precepts of gastronomy, preferred by him to those of that wise one accused by Anytus, of Pythagoras, and the learned Plato.

Suppose, says an ancient writer, we had to prosecute a man for murder by poison, that the murder was done for the sake of an inheritance, and that there were many witnesses of the crime. We must imagine lying in our room a sick man in bed, with the prisoner standing by him holding in his right hand a cup, in his left tablets, and on his medical or third finger a particular kind of purse. Then the cup will remind us of the poison, the tablets of the inheritance, and the purse—in a way not here to be explained—of the witnesses. But a lawyer, on whose mind wax was spread so thinly, to use Plato's expression in the Theætetus, as to be unable to retain an impression of the essential and primary subject of his case, would as little deserve trust as princes for a recollection of its remaining circumstances. It is more difficult, continues the ancient author, to express similitudes of words—a subject we shall consider afterwards.

The usual daily and natural occurrences of life do not, we know by experience, much affect the mind, which, on the contrary, is moved by anything new, wonderful, or ridiculous. Few of us care to see that sight of rich and lustrous glory, a summer sunrise, but all of us are ready to look at an eclipse through a piece of smoked glass. If for no other reason, at least because it is the fashion so to do. For a reason akin to this, those long ready-made tables are far better omitted, consisting of Actæons, orange trees, mowers, conjurors, monuments, and cabriolets, with many more which form so large and ponderous a part of all mnemonical systems. For as some do not recognise portraits which to others bear a patent resemblance, so that which is remarkable to one is to another the reverse. Therefore it is wiser to leave the pupil to people his own mnemonic world. Brutus can raise a spirit as well as Cæsar. Feinaigle, of whom we shall speak more farther on, one might easily imagine was, like Frankenstein, horrified as well as haunted by the monsters of his own creation, to such an extent has he filled his pages with pedlars, state beds, cock fights, standard bearers, golden calves, peacocks, grand pianofortes, pagan priests, and apothecaries. Let the mnemonic student of the present day choose far fewer and fairer forms. Nor let him commit everything to these, but only such things as he may deem it very difficult or perhaps impossible to remember without them, having constantly before his mind's eye that golden saying of the philosopher Antisthenes to one who stood wailing the loss of his tablets: "You ought to have trusted to your memory, rather than to your memorandum book." One of the reasons, says Cæsar, for which the Druids were unwilling to commit their records to writing was lest those who had them in charge should, considering them secure, cease to think of them, and thus allow their memory to grow weak from want of practice.

The fundamental plan of artificial memory is, then, to transfer a train of ideas, the archetypes of which are not sensible objects, to another train of ideas whose archetypes are not only sensible but objects of sight. One more example of a kind often given by mnemonicians. To recollect any

homily, our well-known room being chosen, the homily—supposing the preacher to have improved our shining hours with these subjects—is divided into sections, as riches, intemperance, and chastity ; these ideas are expressed typically by a Cornucopia, a Bacchante, and a Joseph, and are then hung by the hand of imagination on three of its walls taken in any order. Here it is plain that the recollection is assisted only as far as regards the heads of chief subjects of the discourse, and it is idle to expect more from any mnemonic system. Some daring artists, it is true, have ventured on the construction of symbols for every word. This is, in fact, an unwritten shorthand, with the exception that the hieroglyphics of the usual stenography bear not even a supposed resemblance to the words which they represent. The nugatory nature of this supplementary system will be sufficiently evidenced by the following illustration.

Feijoo, a Spanish Benedictine, who, from his exposure of the bigotry and ignorance of his brethren, barely escaped the Inquisition, mentions a certain Nolegar, an Italian, who copied all things, even his examples, from a Spaniard, Velasquez, of the preceding century. This Nolegar imagines a certain sphere in place of the usual room, and to remember the simple lines,

Fenix divina,
De tan bellas alas,
Humilde y piadosa,
Al cielo te ensalzas,

fills it with the following monsters. A phœnix is placed on the right hand, in the first predicament of the sphere. This corresponds with the first place in the first wall of a room—a papal tiara on its head represents *divina*. For the second verse, says Nolegar, you must take the second predicament on the left hand, and place there a drum with a stick to beat it; the drum is supposed to say to the drummer *de*, the drum being beaten to cry *tan*. Then two beautiful women are to sit by the drummer, who should have two wings lying at his feet. But the symbolism of the fourth line is the most striking. A piece of carpet (*alfombra*) is to be placed in the fourth predicament, to which is to be sewn the tester of a bed, thus representing *al cielo*. The rest of the verse is shown by a priest elevating the host, for whom the *ayudante* should hold salt, saying *ten sal alzas*.

It is difficult to resist quoting one more example of Nolegar's method—

Pongan, Senor, el medio y el gobierno
Los altos atributos de tu esencia.

Here a slave, or a black woman, with a basket and two hens in it, is to be placed in a central compartment of the sphere; close to the slave a duke, who on entering should attempt to frighten the fowls, at which the slave says *Pongan, Senor*, "Let the hens lay, my lord." On the right of the slave must stand a *medio celemin*, half-peck measure ; on the left a chain for *y*, and some gall, *hiel*. For *gobierno*, a governor must enter and exhibit astonishment at what is going forward—as, indeed, he well might, the

mise en scène being somewhat marvellous—*los altos* are to be signified by a couple of uprights, and *atributos* by two tributary princes with the letter A on the head of one; it is better to imagine, says Nolegar, that each is going to collect tributes, and that the name of one is Andrew. *De* is supplied by the ingenious artifice of the drum and stick above alluded to, and *esencia* by an alembic.

It may be imagined the reader will take these passages to be "rote sarkastic," as Artemus Ward said; but there is little reason to doubt that their authors, or rather author, and his imitator proposed them in sad seriousness. An entertaining arithmetical problem arising from the consideration of these examples may be expressed thus:—If a couple of lines require so many images, how many images will a couple of pages require? This system seems also to give a double labour, for first the symbol must be remembered, and then its signification. The chain which is placed for the conjunction *y* might also stand for a slave, a prison, a captive, love, a debt, in fact a dozen objects.

A sermon, probably, consists of at least 4,000 words. We say a sermon, not from any private predilection for that form of oratory, but because Velasquez and Nolegar take it as an instance in which their mnemotechy may be happily applied. Supposing that the hearer can make his images as readily as the preacher utters his words, he must make at least 4,000 images—probably many more, for some words, as we have seen, require more than one image to express them—and remember them. Any member of the congregation equal to such a task as this would scarcely need an artificial memory. So, though it may be easy to remember the heads of a discourse by the mnemonic art, it is far less so to remember each particular word. Mnemonics applied to this purpose call to mind the cumbrous machinery of Hogarth's corkscrew, that notable invention of M. de la Pillule in the third plate of the *Marriage à la Mode*, and it is difficult to conceive how any one, unable to remember a dozen words, can retain in his recollection at least double that number of images. Nor are such words as "by," "nevertheless," &c., readily expressed by any image. We may, it is true, imitating Nolegar's method, write them; but a minister of the gospel pursuing such a method, and referring each of his words to its particular image, would far sooner exhaust the patience of his congregation than the contents of his black, limp, patent leather sermon case.

All systems of mnemonics, then, are founded on association with places and images. The first represent the relations of the things to be remembered; the second, the things themselves. Order, "*tantum series juncturaque pollent*," is no sleeping partner of association; and fancy is employed to give ordered conceptions a local habitation and a name. Sight, mental or bodily, not only recalls, but originates. How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done! The mind is less easily affected by that which sinks into it through the ear than by that which is submitted to the faithful eye. This maxim of the Epicurean is the motive of every composition in mnemonics. The mage seen by

the mind's eye is the medium between the living and the dead, the present and the past—that of which we are conscious, and that which we would recall.

As our places and images may be chosen at will from the wide fields of nature and of art, it follows that scarcely two systems of mnemonics are alike in their particulars, while generically their resemblance is invariable. While principles and practice remain precisely the same, places and images constantly change. The places which have been most frequently chosen are public or private edifices, single rooms, colonnades, porticoes, pyramids, shops, churches; and sometimes constructions as imaginary as the *Republic* of Plato or the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More. Marafioti divides the hands for his places. One proposes the arrangement of the different heads of a sermon or lay discourse on the face of the recipient auditor, taking nose, eyes, mouth, &c. in any succession which may be convenient. Another says, let it be arranged on different projections of the church or theatre in which it is delivered. This last method reminds us of Dugald Stewart's "young woman, in a very low rank of life," who treasured up in her heart the sayings of her pastor by locating them in different portions of the church roof. This young person, adds the author of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, whenever she saw the roof, recollected the homily. But an extraordinary choice of topics is that of him who, being a man of a morbid turn of mind, chose a churchyard where ever musing melancholy reigned, and deposited his friends' names and other particulars each on its proper sepulchral stone.

Another ingenious artist laid out for himself a pleasant spot beyond the smoke and stir of this dull world, after the model of the garden of Calypso in Ariosto, or that of Venus in the *Lusiad*, which he filled with quaint summer-houses, and pagodas, and parterres, curvilinear and rectilinear, in recognised mathematical figures and trapezia of his own conception, planted in order with all his favourite and fairest flowers.

So, likewise, a great variety of images have been adopted. Some have taken, as Grataroli, the beasts of earth; some, as Metrodorus, the beasts of heaven. This philosopher was followed by Giordano Bruno who, supposing those sciences only true which were built on the sandy foundation of the dreams of astrology, discarded all other places as his *points de rappel*, and sought for them in the signs of the Zodiac. But neither in these nor in places should our choice be altogether arbitrary, but rather submitted to those rules which nature indicates, and which are confirmed by reflection. Since experience shows us that we are more affected by some objects than others, by things new and strange than by those old and familiar, it is obvious that we ought to select those images which most fix our attention either in themselves or in their relation. So with regard to the choice of places, Cicero, in his second treatise on *Rhetoric*, addressed to Herennius, if Cicero be indeed the author, says we should choose them rather in a solitary than a crowded locality, that the fancy may be less tempted to wander; that they should not be very large or very small, to

prevent vagueness on the one hand and confusion on the other; not very light or very gloomy, lest in the former case our eyes should become dark by excess of light, or lest in the latter we should not well discern the outline of our symbols in the circumfluent shadows; and lastly, that these symbols should not be far distant from each other, lest the imagination should find a difficulty in uniting them.

In these places, as in emporiums of thought, storehouses in which the wise, from a mnemonic point of view, lay up knowledge, we may seek for our intellectual necessities and ornaments, each bedecked with its appropriate symbol, as the linen and embroidery which a lady buys at Marshall and Snelgrove's. But not even by mnemonics can wisdom be bought without money and without price. Is it not Seneca, himself a mnemonician, who says, *nil sine labore dei debent hominibus, sed laboribus omnia vendunt*? The price of learning is intellectual toil, which mnemonics are intended to lessen indeed, but not to obviate. If, says Quintilian, any one were to ask me the art *par excellence* of memory, I should reply, exercise and labour. Nothing, it is certain, is equally increased by care, or ruined by inattention. Every day something should be learnt by heart; daily some food, however unpleasant, over and over again masticated; and we should accustom ourselves to heavy tasks, as the athlete who vibrates the masses of lead and iron, about to contest in the circus with swift and naked hands. A ready memory readily loses the thing remembered, resigning its charge as lightly as a steward called to give an account of his stewardship, while a slow memory is loth to let go what has been impressed on it with so much labour. In this neither more nor less than in any other art is that old proverb true—"Practice alone makes perfect." Therefore those to whom all difficult things are displeasing, and who hope some day to find a royal road to learning, not consenting to walk in the strait and narrow path, may turn once more upon their side and sleep, for of that day not as yet grows in the intellectual horizon any glimpse of grey betokening the dawn.

From the age of Thomas Aquinas, the dumb ox or angelic doctor, and his contemporary, Raymond Lully, the scholastic metaphysician or fanatic missionary, whose *Ars Magna* was called by Bacon *Methodus Impostura*, seems to be the first person of importance among the moderns who devoted in the thirteenth century their attention to mnemonics; and from that of Publicius and Peter of Cologne in the fifteenth to the present period, men have started up from time to time, like comets, to astonish their fellows with this old invention of Simonides, supposing Simonides was the inventor, and not rather the first of whom memory is extant of a servile herd of imitators.

These men, all the sort of them, have had many qualities in common. With but few exceptions, they have all, like the children of Israel, though without murder, come unto a Canaan of wells which they digged not, and vineyards which they had not planted. They have all dressed up the old lay-figure of Quintilian in new apparel, after the fashion of their respective

ages. They have all given examples, wonderful and out of all whooping, of their *summi homines et divina prope memoria*, results of the efficacy of their respective systems. They have been successful in buying golden opinions from all sorts of people, but especially from parsons. They have all declared their own particular method infinitely superior to that preceding it, of which it is found too often to be an inferior copy. The whole herd, as if possessed by the father of lies, affirm each that his own system is a perfectly novel invention, not looking to the rock whence it was hewn, nor the hole of the pit whence it was digged, and never failing to add that it has obtained a most rapid and astonishing success. They all with one accord set their showiest furniture in their entrance hall. Their preface is a mountain in labour, the body of their work a ridiculous mouse. Thus we read in nine of their pages out of ten promises of instruction, and gather with confusion of faces in the tenth page chaff instead of grain. They all hold out to us with both hands large and luscious hopes of remarkable progress, without painstaking, in the acquisition of all sciences—astronomy and metaphysics, mythology and aerostatics, and what not. They all forbid any divulgation of their mystery; and lastly —for are not indolence and credulity of every age!—they all amass a large amount of money.

We will gather and examine a few of these waifs and strays, picking them up here and there as they float, heavy as most of them are in bulk, but light in benefit, along the river of oblivion, scarcely discernible amidst the deep shadows of the past. They begin for the most part with an anatomical treatise, full of that well-worn, old-fashioned wisdom connected with the gratuitous doctrine of radical humidity, the grey ghost of ancient pathology, which with its brother, radical heat, was once held to constitute the energy of existence. Of this old creed the expressions "good humour," and that apparent antiperistasis "dry humour," bear present witness, to which may be added "temper," or the proper admixture of heat and cold, dryness and humidity, all of them memorials of those old channels in which medical thought once ran. We find in these treatises the brain divided into its wonted ventricles; memory occupies its particular seat in the occiput, and we are informed that we scratch our head when we wish to recollect a matter, in order to warn and stimulate that particular ventricle where memory dwells, since nature does nothing in vain. One writer, by the way, gravely tells us that as blows on the head are for this reason especially prejudicial to memory, we should have a particular, nay, excessive care, to avoid falls from high places. Those with a bad memory suffer from excess of moisture, as water cannot retain an impression. Such a memory was that of Clavisius Sabinus, mentioned by Seneca, who, though superior to Sancho in his ability to recall his own name, was unable to remember the names of his nearest friends. Those, on the contrary, who learn slowly, remember long. They suffer from too little humidity, and retain an impression like lead. But of the doctrine this little taste may suffice the reader, who is likely to dismiss the subject with an *apage hæ*

nugæ, a phrase which is the only explanation left on record by Adam Clarke of the superiority in age by two years of Ahaziah over his father Jehoram.

Peter of Ravenna was one of those whom Democritus Junior would wish him that is melancholy to study, and whose memory, for the *naïveté* of some of his lucubrations, is like a box of precious ointment. This Peter was a Professor of Canon Law of the University of Padua. He was of opinion that if we would remember any particular circumstance, we must form first a vivid imagination of the event, and then associate it with the names of some pretty women of our acquaintance. Now, one of three things—pretty women must have been more plenteous in the time of Peter, or the Professor must have been fortunate in his female acquaintance, or the particular circumstances he wished to remember must have been very few. "These," he says, referring to the pretty ladies, "are wonderfully kind to the recollection, and my secret is most useful, but it is one which I have long concealed for very shame." To prevent any disappointment in his pupils, he adds that his receipt is of no use to those who hate or despise women. It is, in the words of another disciple of Lully, who speaks *ore rotundo* what he finds fitting to say, "paradise" to an acolyte of Acidalia, but to a misogynist "hell;" for under these high names that disciple classifies things pleasant and unpleasant, both which, however, doubtless with reason, he considers equally profitable to his art. A petty portion of Peter's system must suffice. To remember the words *amo*, or *emo*, we figure Antony or Eusebius grinding at a mill (*mola*). Vespasianus is remembered by Peter, or it may be one of his congeners, through the words *vespa*, *si*, *anus*, the first and last being translated into their corresponding emblems of a wasp and an old woman. It is difficult, however, to see the relation of these things either to one another, or to the Roman Emperor. "Hope" is expressed in a hop by apocope, and by aphæresis "ear" is the picture of "year." Amantes by metathesis becomes amentes, and pudica cupida. Other figures of grammar, such as epenthesis, paragoge, syncope, &c., are used at discretion. To remember Samos, we must first consider it written in a retrograde fashion, thus, Somas. Then we take Oliverius, the last and first letters of which word give us "so." "Ma" is expressed by the Latin equivalent for an article of furniture, and "s" we may remember by its being the initial letter. Reconvert the word, and the thing required is done. This is another specimen of Hogarth's corkscrew. It would scarcely occur to the unassisted intellect that this device is intended to facilitate the memory and to save time. It is quoted here rather to entertain the imagination, than from any conviction of its practical utility, the end for which it was originally proposed.

Grataroli, a learned physician, born at Bergamo, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in a wonderful Latin treatise which he called *Memory's Castle*, mentions one *non ignavus auctor*, who, following the order of nature, took for his places the head, fore-legs, belly, hind-legs, and tail of animals whose names began in the order of the alphabet, as Ass, Basilisk, Canis, Dragon, Elephant, Fawn, &c.; for X taking

Xistus, the philosopher, who wrote concerning these; and for Z, for some unapparent reason, Zaccheus. Grataroli himself says we may remember by dissimilarities, putting Marah for Naomi, and for a fratricide Ptolemy Philadelphus. He also recommends images which cause laughter, pity, or wonder. An example which he gives of the second kind is the head of Antony in the mouth of a mad ass, who chews it like a thistle, with the blood gushing out, and Antony invoking succour with suppliant hands. This is doubtless exceeding pitiful. In the last category we see a nobleman intoxicated. To represent Cicero disputing with Hortensius, he tells his disciple to imagine a pea (*cicer*) complaining about the barrenness of the garden (*hortus*). This method seems somewhat cumbrous. Grataroli gives a few medical directions for forgetfulness, which with the thought of his time he thinks proceeds from too great humidity or frigidity of the brain. The patient should have his head shaved and rubbed with fresh butter. He should avoid eating marrow of the bones of cocks, or the flesh of cranes, or cold potherbs; he should smell pepper and pour castor-oil into his ears. Several pages of receipts follow, of equal hygienic value; one too remarkable to be lightly omitted. A mixture of mole's fat, calcined human hair, cumin, and bear's grease; a hazel-nutful to be swallowed at bed-time. "This," says the learned author, "will be found greatly comforting the memory." The book concludes, as most books of that time, with a religious invocation.

It may be said here, in parentheses, that though doubtless the memory is much affected by the state of the body, and the fire of a day's fever may calcine the recollection of years, yet that the memory may be rendered lastingly more retentive by means of medicaments is a matter which others than the eminent Roman rhetorician of Calagurris will not be credulous enough to believe, though many moderns have held a contrary opinion. Sir Benjamin Brodie is reported to have affirmed that proper means might be discovered for preserving that temperament of the brain favourable to memory; and the immortal Bacon, in the tenth century of his *Natural History*, goes so far as to say that the roasted brains of hares and hens, taken in wine, strengthen the recollection. "This," he adds, "seemeth to be incident to the brains of those creatures that are fearful!" Charles of Burgundy is said to have paid 10,000 florins to an English doctor for a mixture of some score of herbs and flowers, with which he anointed his ears and nostrils. Lastly, the Spanish philosopher, Feijoo, before quoted, speaking from his own experience—a man worthy of all men to be believed—is of opinion that such cephalics as ambar, cubebs, cardamoms, and the famous anacardina, supposed to be based on an Indian fruit, doubtless stimulate the memory, but merely for a time. They are followed and paid for by a state of extreme dulness and stupidity. Anacardina was believed to be a very dangerous medicine, occasionally destroying the sense of touch; yet it is possible that the only sense of touch which it affected was that of the money paid for it to the druggist.

Willis, a "batchelour" in divinity, the most important name after Grataroli, digested his mnemonics into three books. They are such as few but himself could digest. After imagining a set of rooms which he calls repositories, each room being divided into two portions, so that it should be six yards in every direction, and placing pillars of red, white, black, blue, &c. in the centres for distinction, he tells us we must "increase small and lessen large ideas." If the idea be a spider, a number of spiders must be represented on one of the walls of the repository; and they should be in motion, for those in motion affect us more; if a battle, a picture of a battle must be suspended.

The book abounds in delicate touches of satire. Glory may be represented by a sword wreathed in myrtle, whose dark green metallic leaves are stained with large red gouts of blood; a widow, by a woman weeping with her handkerchief before her eyes; a man of education by a figure dressed in university raiment with B.A. imprinted on it in colours corresponding with the pillar of his repository. The word "toilet" is recalled by a picture of a lady painting herself and inserting a set of false teeth. As an instance of relation, he supposes the two ideas of a mathematician absorbed in calculation, and of a farrier giving a horse a drench with a horn, and connects them by supposing the horse disgusted with the dose, kicking the mathematician in the maw.

This work concludes with an injunction not to sleep under moonbeams; a set of prayers for Divine assistance; a direction to the reader to comb his head backward every day fasting; and an earnest exhortation to abstain from all evacuation by virtue of physic except upon extreme necessity.

Another mnemonician of the seventeenth century used symbols for numbers thus: 1 was a candle; 2, a swan; 3, a trident; 4, a die; 5, a hand; 6, a tobacco-pipe; 7, an adze; 8, spectacles; 9, a riding-stick made of a reed; 0, an orange; 10, a candle piercing an orange; 20, a swan with an orange in her mouth, and so on. Suppose, to give an illustration of the use of these symbols, that you have borrowed sixteen Russian leather books and a dozen green silk umbrellas, and by some chance wish to remember the fact, you must place somewhere in the room of your choice an acquaintance, or friend if you think you possess one, clad in a parti-coloured remnant of Russia leather and green silk, holding in his right hand an orange pierced by a long clay, and in the left the same fruit in the mouth of a swan. Again, if you wish to remember the text of the sermon last Sunday, which we will say was 2 Tim. iv. 13, in which Paul expresses his solicitude about a certain cloak and parchments which he had left behind him, you must suppose located in your second room, in the fourth corner, a poll- (Paul) parrot, having an hour-glass (time) in one paw, and in the other a trident with a candle fixed on every apex. The cloak and parchments might also of course be introduced into the composition if desirable.

The alphabet is expressed by the same artist symbolically—B, a bent

bow; C, a horn, &c.; while the vowels are represented arbitrarily by colours; as A, crimson; E, violet, &c.

These symbols are evidently taken, though of course without any acknowledgment, from the famous Neapolitan, Baptista Porta, the probable inventor of the camera obscura, who, in his work on *Natural Magic*, came within a hair's breath of capital punishment by law—which is, and has ever been, the perfection of reason. His house was considered, at the end of the fifteenth century, an asylum for persecuted poets, philosophers, and men of letters generally. Porta's hieroglyphic for 2 was a sickle, which is better than a swan; and for 9 a crosier, to which a "riding-stick made of a reed" seems certainly inferior in symbolic significance, if not in intelligibility. Many other numerical representatives might be mentioned, some of them very ingenious: as, for 1 a yard measure; for 4 a priest's cap; for 6 a comet; for 8 a sand-glass, a nut measure, or double egg-cup; for 9 a hunting horn; and for 0 a snake with his tail in his mouth, the well-known symbol of eternity.

The celebrated Jesuit Kircher has composed a work of some 500 closely-printed pages on the subject of this article. Another gives a list of remarkable mnemonicians from Adam to A.D. 1690. There is a somewhat startling volume, yclept *The True Christian's Daily Delight*, which professes to aid the memory by delivering the sum of Biblical history in acrostics. This *Microbiblion, or Bible's Epitome*, refreshes the reader with such poetical flowers as these, about the predictions concerning the chief butler and baker of Pharaoh :—

> Rehearse your dreams. O Butler, thou
> A happy man shall be;
> Have me in mind, O Baker, mark,
> The gallows groans for thee.

The personification of the gallows is one of those rare touches which support an advertisement at the end of the work that the reverend author was much esteemed for his preaching, but more for his poetry.

Another piece of rhyme of superior syntax and prosody has helped many an Oxford man through his little go, and clung to his memory with the tenacity of Dr. Watts's "How doth the little busy bee" ever since :—

> Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Jephunneh,
> Were the only two who ever got through
> To the land of milk and honey.

It is one and the chief purpose of these pages to lessen that vulgar admiration of modern charlatanism which is more the child of ignorance than of wisdom. For this we have removed the masks of night from the faces of these old authors, and formed a species of compo as diaphanous, it is to be hoped, if not equally valuable, with amber, in which their coruscations of genius may be imbedded and preserved. For how could their wonders be known in the dark, or their righteousness in the land of forgetfulness ?

We pass on to a more modern artist of higher importance. Grey's system, which the curious may compare with that of Winkelmann or Leibnitz, originally published in 1730, is the ordinary artificial memory now in use. It is tolerably well known, but we will give a sketch of it. We are told by some learned men that the Deluge—of which other learned men doubt the possibility—happened in the year before Christ 2348. Grey expresses all this by Deletok,—Del standing of course for Deluge, and etok for 2348. This is explained by the following key:—

a	e	i	o	u	au	oi	ei	ou	y
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
b	d	t	f	l	s	p	k	n	z,

where a or b stand for 1, oi or p for 7, and so on.

These letters are not assigned arbitrarily, and therefore difficult to remember, as might at first sight appear. Indeed, any one who does not at first sight see the reason governing the assignation, might find the use of method in memory by trying to learn them before and after the following explanation given for such as may require it, *non omnia possumus omnes.*

It is tolerably evident that the vowels are arranged in an order corresponding with the numerals; au is but the equivalent of 1 and 5 or 6; oi of 3 and 4 or 7; ou of 4 and 5 or 9; ei are the initials of 8; the ambiguous letter y, as last vowel, is represented by 0. Among the consonants, where the initials of the number can be conveniently retained, they are used to signify that number, as t for three, &c. B is probably assigned for 1, as the first consonant; d for 2, from the Latin *duo*; n for 9, from the Latin *novem*; l for 5, being the Roman letter for 50; p and k for 7 and 8, as first consonants of the Greek equivalents ἑπτὰ and ὀκτώ; and z, as last consonant, for 0. Y, we are told, is to be pronounced w, to distinguish it from i. It would seem better, therefore, to have substituted w for y in the original table.

The anchor of Grey's system—the conversion of numbers into letters—is but a substitution known as well to the ancient people of Palestine and the Peloponnese as to the linendraper of to-day who marks his elegant articles with arbitrary and alphabetical symbols. Take a short example of its working.

The diameter of the earth's orbit is said to be 172,102,795 miles. The technical word is accordingly Dorbterboid azepoul. Dorbter is here written acrostically for diameter of orbit of earth from the initial letters of the corresponding Latin words. This reminds us of the to theatrical men well-known "bags," by which the player recollects the divers paces in which time travels with divers persons, as explained by Rosalind to her lover in the forest of Arden. Most children find for themselves a rude mnemonic system of this kind. While learning their poetical lessons they cover with the right hand all but the first words of every line; the unseen succeeds the seen as shadow bodies in

the sunshine; and the catechumen by this intellectual follow-my-leader, while courting only entertainment, is enticed into wisdom.

Different words may, of course, be made of the same date according to the discretion of the compositor; 93,451, may thus be written niola, outfub, nifla, outolb, &c. Out of this variety we should choose that which is most uncommon, or which bears an accidental relation to our subject. The supposed date of Æneas's settlement in Italy is 2,824; this may be expressed by ekef or deido. For reasons obvious to the reader of Virgil, the latter is chosen, and the date will not readily be forgotten. So Inakus represents very happily the supposed commencement of the reign of the father of the unhappy Io.

In large numbers g, an apparently arbitrary symbol, may stand for hundred; th, considered as in Saxon, one letter, for thousand; m for million. So the solid contents of the earth 264,856,000,000 cubic miles, is expressed by Termagnit eso klaum. Fractions are written, taking r for separating line, thus "north"=·094; when the numerator is unity, it is left unexpressed, so rath=·001. A history of the six General Councils with their place, pope, emperor, adversary, and date may—it would take up too much space to explain how—by this method be represented in a couple of hexameter lines.

The system reflects great credit on its author, being, to a certain extent, original, for which reason, and for its practicability, it has here received fuller consideration. It is simple and easily learned; nor will a wise student disdain its meanness or exility, knowing that from a grain of mustard seed springs the largest of all trees, that the whole art of music is born out of eight simple notes, and that all the sciences are preserved and handed down to posterity, like the burning lamps in the festival of the fire-god Hephæstus, in but twenty-six poor letters, which any babe may learn. Succeeding writers have applied this method of Grey, with but few alterations, to calculations of annuities, dimensions of Noah's Ark, elasticity of the atmosphere, chronology, arithmetical tables, ductility, durability of matter, evaporation, and a host of other unexpected objects, making their books bristle with logographs, and terrible as an army with banners. But most can raise the flower now, for all have got the seed.

A German, Von Feinaigle, at the commencement of the present century, raised a hybrid plant out of mixed modern and ancient seed. He made use of the numbers of Grey, and the walls of Simonides. His stereotyped set of walls is divided into compartments, which he numbers in the natural order, thus:—

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

where the diagonals intersect the odd numbers. The four walls and floor of his room are, in this way, divided into forty-five places. The decades 10, 20, &c. are placed on the ceiling over the walls, and 50 in its centre over the floor. A second room is portioned out in a similar manner. The reckoning commences from the floor. The number 75 will consequently be in the second room, in the second wall, and in the fifth place.

Next, symbols are set over the ciphers between which some connection is imagined to assist the memory. Here the system is better than Grey's, whose monstrous words are often as burdensome as the matters they represent. Next, consonants nearly connected with the arithmetical figures are set under them thus :—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
t	n	m	r	l	d	c	b	p	s
						k	h	f	z
						g	v	pipe	x
						q	w	puff	
						cage	hive		

These words and letters are ingeniously connected with the figures, but our space precludes any demonstration. Vowels are afterwards introduced to make what the author is pleased to call sense. For others than Don Juan's mother was Feinaigle's a useless art; nevertheless, he was not obliged to "shut up his shop," to quote the author of *Childe Harold*, though he could never make "a memory as fine as that which adorned the brain of Dona Inez."

This substitution of letters for figures—whether we follow Grey or Feinaigle, is immaterial—is doubtless of much advantage in daily affairs. Suppose a widow should wish to remember that to express properly her grief for the dear deceased her dress required forty-one yards of crape. By substitution and introduction of a vowel, say o, a sound of wailing, she obtains, according to the table, the monosyllable "Rot." She connects it with the effect of the said dress in Rotten Row, and no serious mistake is likely to occur.

Gregory de Feinaigle published—as no doubt his predecessors did, though time, *edax rerum*, has devoured their paper—a prospectus of practical success. In this advertisement M. le Maire, of the seventh *arrondissement*, gives an account of an examination, after two days' instruction by M. Feinaigle, of some half-dozen children about ten years old, to M. le Councillor d'État, Prefect of the Department of the Seine. One of these unfortunate infants is said to have given the names of all the principal towns in Europe with their degrees of longitude and latitude.

Another repeated a hundred decimal places, part of a conclusion arrived at by a member of the Academy of St. Petersburg as to the relation of the diameter to the circumference. Another made a classification of the first book of the Civil Code, with its divisions and titles, chapters and sections, giving the subject of each. All these wretched ones invariably answered with smiling faces and without hesitation, or at the most after an instant's reflection. But the most extraordinary case is the last. In this a child, "le jeune Chevrier, âgé de 10 ans"—his name certainly deserves, for his own memory, to be remembered—made an exposition of Jussieu's Botanical System. After dividing it into its three parts of acotyledons, monocotyledons, and dicotyledons, the child divided these each into fifteen classes, and each class into families; each family bore a name which alone would have been sufficient to frighten any ordinary child, but the young Chevrier, like a second Mazeppa, urged his way undismayed through Orobranchoides, Rhinantoides, Acantoides, Convolvulaceæ, Polemonaceæ, &c., explaining politely at intervals when called upon. Later on we read that even M. le Maire was astonished. After this success M. Feinaigle certainly deserved that increase of subscribers which his pamphlet touches on cursorily and with a side wind of signification.

Such instances of remarkable memory, generally supposed to be assisted by mnemotechny, have been given from the time of Cicero, who concludes that memory is not therefore of the heart, blood, brain, or atoms; whether of air or fire he is not, like the rest, ashamed to say he is ignorant; he undertakes, however, to swear that it is divine, having regard to such men as Cineas, the ambassador of Pyrrhus, who saluted the senate and all the people by their names the second day after his arrival at Rome; of Theodectes, the disciple of Aristotle; and of Hortensius, a man of his own time. We have most of us heard of Joseph Scaliger, who learnt the twice twenty-four books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in three weeks; of Avicenna, who repeated by heart the whole of the Koran at the age of ten; of Lipsius, who was willing to recite the histories of Tacitus word for word, giving any one leave to plunge a dagger into his body if he made a mistake —an idle license, for few would have cared to run the resultant risk; of the youth of Corsica of good appearance, mentioned by Muretus, who recited all the barbarous words the latter had written till he was tired of writing, and stopped at last, as it was necessary to stop somewhere, while the youth, like Oliver, asked for more. "Certainly," says Muretus, "he was no boaster, and he told me he could repeat in that way 36,000 words. For my own part I made trial of him after many days, and found what he said true." This Corsican, as those others, was no doubt of a soul disdaining silver and gold, or he might have made his fortune by offering his services to an Emperor. Of Frances Suarez, who, after the witness of Strada, could quote the whole of Augustine (the father's works would fill a small library) from the egg to the apple. Of Dr. Thomas Fuller, who could name in order all the signs on both sides of the way from the beginning of Paternoster Row at Ave Maria Lane to the bottom of Cheapside to

Stock's Market, now the Mansion House. Of Magliabecchi, whose name is pleasantly and permanently associated with spiders and the proof of the lost MS. Of William Lyon, who for a bowl of punch, a liquor of which he was exceedingly fond, repeated a *Daily Advertiser*, in the morning, which he had read once only, and then in the course of a debauch, over-night.

We might extend this paper far beyond its normal dimensions by mention of such names as Jedediah Buxton, who, if his witness be true, could by some strange mnemotechny of his own, multiply 39 figures by 39, without paper, and amused himself when at the theatre by a compilation of the words used by Garrick, and at another time by that of the pots of beer drank during twelve years of his life; of Zerah Colburn, a mere child, of whom there remains on record a testimony that he could tell the number of seconds in fifty-eight years in less time than the question could be written down; or of that prodigy of parts, Pascal, to whom reference was made at the beginning of this paper, who is said to have forgot nothing thought, read, or done during his rational age. This, says the author of the essay on the *Conduct of the Human Understanding*, is a thing so wholly inconsistent with our experience of human nature that to doubt it is no reprehensible stretch of scepticism.

The same remark might be well applied to other marvels, as of Cyrus, who is reported by Pliny to have possessed that necessary good of life to such a degree that he knew the names of all the soldiers in his army—an account, by the way, considerably modified by Xenophon, who substitutes generals for soldiers; and of Mithridates, a prototype of Magliabecchi, who spoke the tongues of twenty-two peoples under his rule. In the one a nomenclator was supererogatory, the other had no need of any dragoman. There was in Greece, says Pliny, a man named Charmidas, who, when a person asked him for any book in a library, related the contents of it to that person by heart. Such tales are, like those of miracles and spiritual manifestations, interesting perhaps, but supported by insufficient evidence. Though, says Quintilian, "I never had the good fortune to witness such a performance," speaking of some mental gymnastics of this kind, "I yet conceive the belief in their possibility may be well cherished if for none other reason than that some who think it practicable may go and attempt to do likewise." So Leibnitz defended the search for the Philosopher's Stone by saying it frequently discovered scientific truth.

All, then, that artificial memory does is to represent ideas by sensible signs, and co-ordinate the ideas so represented. Simply, it teaches us to write: our places are paper, our images letters, the relative disposition of them the sequence, and the mind reads the result forwards, or backwards, with almost equal facility. And as the mind reads these ideal tablets, unassisted by corporeal organisms, and it may be with no perishable eyes, so it can read them alike at midnight and at noonday.

There are objections urged against mnemonics. The first touches on the confusion likely to arise from so many symbols; but, to take an example from the art of music alone, how many arbitrary signs are here

which the mind by habit reads, it would seem so instantaneously as to admit no reflection, and these symbols if arranged with intelligence and order are less difficult to understand than arbitrary signs. They are not, it is true, written in never-fading colours, but neither are those natural impressions on the mind which we must, if we would preserve them, since they are too often like shadows flying over fields of corn, again and again renew. Our artificial impressions must be deepened by repetition, as our natural impressions; and even then their duration will depend on the subject-matter of the mental tablet, whether it be marble, freestone, or sand.

A second objection refers to the symbols themselves, and complains of them as useless lumber after they have served their purpose. But, apart from the consideration of the capacity of the intellect, these symbols disappear of themselves after the ideas transmitted by them have mingled themselves with those acquired by the unassisted memory. The house being built the scaffolding falls away, or it may be the dry bones are no more seen for the flesh that covers them. But the scaffolding must be fixed securely or we can never build. To get rid of these symbols a German author, probably the most noted of modern writers on this subject, soberly proposes to hang up a carpet over them. In this way, he says, we have a double advantage, for the figures still remain behind, and if we should wish to revert to them at any time, we have only to remove our tapestry. It nowhere seems to occur to him that this blanket of the dark is often not easily to be lifted. Another method of "evacuation," to adopt his phraseology, is to open the windows of the room, and then—supposing the images written on paper light as the Sibyl's leaves—we have only to imagine that a great storm arises, and that tempestuous wind Euroclydon will blow them about immediately into the four quarters of the world. If this imagination should be inconvenient, that astute German suggests a little maid with a besom, or a gang of thieves. Such devices as these would be of infinite service to our great Palladium of English freedom, a British jury, when told by the judge to disburden their minds of important evidence, which, after long consultation infixing it indelibly in their recollections, has been considered inadmissible.

A third objection, applying especially to the ancient method and its imitators, is its length; for, first, we must determine the edifice, then the room in the edifice, then the wall of the room, and then the position of the symbol on that wall. It becomes, in fact, a sort of inverted "Old Woman and her Pig." But that which most affects the progress of mnemonics is more a moral than an intellectual difficulty; for, though it seems a sad thing to say, in the interests of truth it must be said, that the great majority of mnemonic systems appear evidently designed to be understood by nobody. Their authors, if we are not mistaken, are desirous to sell their book and retain their secret. As those obliging conjurors who, after exhibiting some miracle of their wonder-working art, gesticulate rapidly for a season with their hands, before the mouths of their astonished audience, and then say, "There, that's how it's done!"

so these mnemonicians profess to explain all things in their book, and leave us after we have bought it—which is the gist of the matter—as much in the dark as we were before. The unhappy purchaser finds that it is given unto him to know these mysteries only in parables, and seeing, sees not, nor by hearing understands!

Schenkel's *Gazophylacium* is a work of such determined obscurity, that succeeding commentators have met with a difficulty in explaining even its explanation, which was published by one of his pupils, probably as much a child of Mammon as his master. The *Ars Magna* of Raymond Lully is well known to be a night without a star, and the student may run, with his torch in his hand, searching among many of his successors—those tombs of buried sense—and gain as much information on the subject of his search as instruction in modern gastronomy by gazing on the hieroglyphics of an Egyptian obelisk.

In conclusion we see that the path of mnemonics is scarcely that shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. We may suppose, taking a middle path, that a good system of mnemotechny is of advantage, but not of such great advantage as is generally supposed. The parasitic puffs which encumber the art, clinging to it like the wrappers of Holloway's pills, without which none are genuine, prove little or nothing. How many brave authors bore witness to the Philosopher's Stone, its conversions of iron into gold, circumstanced by place, time, and testimony, and withal the subject of their panegyric not more real than, as Cervantes said of his hero's favourite romances, "the miracles of Mahomet!" Natural and artificial memory must run together. *Utraque alterâ separatâ minus erit firma*, says the author of the address to Herennius. Both are enriched by sobriety and attention, as both are impoverished by distraction and drunkenness. Both are attracted by that which is pleasant, and repelled by that which is uninteresting. For pleasure is the sauce of all things, the seasoning of affection, the spur of talent, the food of volition, and the strength of memory. Nor must we conceive of memory as of the stomach, that it is only capable of containing a certain quantity. The idea that the memory may be overcharged and destroyed is thus answered by Cicero: *Quare hac exercitatione non eruenda est memoria, si qua est naturalis, sed certe si latet, evocanda.* Extremes, however, are always to be avoided. Our memory, like iron, if used too little turns rusty, and if too much is worn away.

Town and Country.

One of the questions which newly-married couples whose income is derived from the husband's work in London most commonly put to themselves is, whether they shall go and live in the country. Railways, and the untiring enterprise of suburban builders, have made it easy for them to do so if they like. There are houses of every degree of capacity to be had in all directions round London; and, as regards getting to business in the morning and home again in the afternoon, the train puts the dwellers in them nearly on a level with the inhabitants of Tyburnia or South Kensington. It is practically as easy now to live in the country as it is to live in London. Indeed, were it not for this, the subject would hardly be worth discussion. A generation ago men who chose to settle themselves twenty miles away had to submit to very appreciable sacrifices in point of comfort. The railways only came to the outskirts of London, the service of trains was very incomplete, the distance between the station and their home was often considerable. Men who submitted to the small but constant annoyances which this state of things implies had usually some solid reason for living out of town. They had a real love for the country or a genuine dislike to London. It was only when the facilities for the two modes of life became pretty equally balanced that the question which to choose came to be a matter of serious debate. Before that time it was a question that settled itself. It does in some cases still; and as the object of this paper is to render to those who are debating it such aid as can be given by a fair statement of the advantages on each side, it will be convenient first of all to mention what these exceptional cases are. The most obvious are those in which considerations of health point decidedly to one alternative or the other. There are some women and more children to whom London air or London ways seem positively hurtful; there are some men who are made ill by constant railway journeys, however short. There is no room for nicely balanced argument here. It is better to be well in a place you do not care for than to be an invalid in a place you like. Another class of cases is those in which the husband's occupation takes him away from home at night. The editor of a morning paper, for example, unless he can afford to have two houses going at once, has no choice but to live in London. There are people, again, with exceptionally strong tastes, who are in much the same position—people with a passion for their garden which makes them feel homeless in the best appointed house if there is no lawn or greenhouse into which they can step from their drawing-room window;

people with a passion for music which makes concerts, public and private, almost a necessary of existence. There is no doubt where either of those classes ought to plant themselves. In what follows it will be taken for granted that no preponderating reasons of this kind come into play; that, so far as those who have to decide the question know, they will be well enough to enjoy life, either in town or country; that the man's work is done in the ordinary working day; that the pursuits whether of the husband or of the wife admit of being adapted without an overpowering sense of loss to the circumstances in which they are placed. The persons addressed are not those who know what they want to do but have a difficulty in doing it, but those who have a difficulty to decide what it is they want.

Probably the point which soonest presents itself when people seriously set to work to weigh London against the country is the comparative cost of living. They wish to ascertain how far their income will go in each case. As often happens this, though it is the first question to be asked, is usually the last to be answered. Before a man can determine what his income will do for him in one place, and what it will do for him in another, he must have decided what the things are that he most wishes it to do for him. After all, that is the cheapest place to live in where you can satisfy the largest number of wants and yet make both ends meet. A mere comparison of prices tells very little upon this head. It may be said generally, however, that every year tends to equalise the cost of living in different parts of England, and this process naturally goes on fastest in the immediate neighbourhood of London. As regards food, meat and bread command pretty much the same prices everywhere. Dairy produce may sometimes be had cheaper in the country, because small producers will sell it to local customers at a slight advance on the price which they can get from the London dealer, and the cost of carriage and the greater part of the middleman's profits are thus saved. Against this, however, must be set the additional cost of groceries and all goods that come from London. If the consumer has them down at his own expense this increase takes the form of railway charges; if he makes his purchases at the local shop it takes the form of higher prices or lower qualities. In the matter of rent the apparent advantage is on the side of the country, unless the situation happens to be exceptionally pleasant. But then in the country there are certain charges which have no exact counterpart in London, and are really of the nature of rent. A season-ticket on the railway is one of these; the cost of labour bestowed on the garden is another. It may be said that this last ought to be charged to service; but, inasmuch as it is the only point in which more service is required in the country than in London, the addition is in effect an addition to rent. Supposing that 100*l.* a-year in the country will command as good a house as 150*l.* will in London, but that, other things remaining the same, the owner of the former has to pay 20*l.* a year for a railway ticket, and 30*l.* a year for keeping his garden

in order, the result is to put the cost of the two houses exactly on a level. In the year's account, of course, the garden will stand for a great deal more than 30*l.*, but this will represent optional rather than necessary outlay, and ought therefore to be set against money spent in furniture or pictures or amusements. A few good conifers, a new rose-bed, or a little more "glass," may cost as much as a marqueterie cabinet, or a new set of drawing-room curtains, or a dozen stalls at the Opera; and if the former are to be included in rent in the country the latter have an equal claim to be included in it in London. A further addition to the expense of living in the country is the cost of a pony-carriage. Anything else you may have in this way is no more necessary in the country than it is in London; but without a pony-carriage a lady living in the country is decidedly worse off than a lady living in town. She has no underground railway, and the "gondola of London" does not come at her call. Unless she is an unusually good walker, she must be content only to visit her distant friends in the solemn and occasional fly; and in a district so much built over as the neighbourhood of London the chances are that the walks she most cares to take are separated from her by a long stretch of dusty roads and dull garden palings. Against this virtual increase of rent in the country may be set the greater costliness of dress—at least of ladies' dress—in London. The wear and tear of clothes in the latter case is immense, and a lady cannot, as she can in the country, keep a spare gown for all rough work. Smoke, which is a Londoner's worst enemy in so many ways, respects occupations no more than persons. In the evening the full force of this difference of cost is not so much felt, because, though each dress lasts a shorter time, there is less need for having a number of dresses at once. Except in a kind of society in which money is not an object, a lady may go out a good many times in London and not meet the same persons twice; but in the country the elements from which social combinations have to be evolved are very much fewer, and each is consequently reproduced a good deal oftener. It may be contended, no doubt, that a lady ought to be above any dislike to being seen in the same gown, and that, so long as it is not too old to be worn anywhere, it is new enough to be worn everywhere. But in practice, as most women will admit, even rigid philosophers shrink from the application of this extreme test, and the persons who come for information to such a paper as this have probably stopped a good way short of rigid philosophy.

There is good reason to suppose, therefore, that in weighing the relative advantages of town and country the question of cost need not enter largely into the calculation. One mode of life is not appreciably more expensive than the other. If this is denied it will usually be found that the challenger is subject under one set of circumstances to some special temptation to spend money which does not apply to him under another set of circumstances. When a man complains that his garden runs away with a little fortune, or that now he lives in town his wine merchant's bill is as much again as it was when he lived in the country,

it only means that gardening or giving dinners is a special hobby of his, and that the more opportunities he has of riding it the more costly the process becomes.

The considerations which reasonable people have most in view when they are sketching out a mode of life are principally three: under what conditions they will do the best work; under what conditions they will do their work with most ease; and under what conditions they will have most enjoyment of life. These three questions cannot be answered independently of one another, and not one of them can be altogether left out of sight. The best work, for example, is ordinarily the work which is done with most ease, and in the performance of which there is the keenest sense of enjoyment. But it would not be true to say that when once a man has ascertained under what conditions his best work is produced he need make no further enquiries. It sometimes happens that men work their best under the stimulus of excitement or pressure, but that the exhaustion thus produced is fatal to any high average of good work. In this case the conditions under which work is done most easily become of great importance. On the other hand a man may find that amidst certain surroundings his work goes on smoothly enough, and yet he may be conscious that, though it gives him so little trouble to do, it gives him even less satisfaction when it is done. It is true, again, that there are few greater pleasures than the sense that you are working with your full strength, and on this ground it may seem needless to ask whether a mode of life which ensures this ensures a fair share of enjoyment also. But a nature which finds its highest pleasure in hard work may easily come to find no pleasure except in work, and there is too much to be got out of leisure and recreation to make this exclusiveness healthy. It will be well, therefore, for a man to consider how the choice between town and country affects ease of work as well as quality of work, and enjoyment of life apart from work as well as enjoyment in work. This is hardly a matter, however, upon which general advice can be given. It would be necessary to take the whole individual character and temperament into account before offering any opinion which would be worth acceptance. No attempt will be made here, therefore, to discuss how the fact of living in town or country will affect a man's professional or business success. It will be assumed that the main work of his life will go on equally well in either case. But this main work may be indirectly affected by the development of the intellectual character generally, and this is formed by other agencies than work, strictly so called. What these other agencies are is largely determined by the surroundings of home, and to this extent even the question which has now been put aside may be indirectly affected by what follows.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between life in the country and life in London is that there is more repose in the former and more stimulus in the latter. The merely physical accidents of the two modes of life are an apt illustration of this difference. Take the case of a man

who leaves chambers at four o'clock on a July afternoon and goes down to his home twenty miles off. When he gets there he finds his wife sitting under a tree on the lawn, and his first act after he has got off his black coat is to lie flat on his back upon the grass, with the pleasant consciousness that, except of his own free will, he need not get up again till dinner-time. If he does get up again it is probably only to move from the lawn into a boat—not to row, few men who are not training for a race think of rowing in July—but just to paddle to the nearest shady reach, and there watch the fish leaping, or the cattle standing in the shallows, until the hot haze of the river meadows seems to grow a part of himself, and to impart its quivering indistinctness to his very thoughts. Or else he has the pony-carriage brought round, and his wife drives him far away from the village with its faint flavour of town, and the late afternoon fades away in slow saunterings through country lanes, or frequent halts wherever the hedges or the trees break away and open out one of those large and level landscapes of which the home counties have so many. After dinner, if there is still light enough, comes the stroll round the garden, and the unexciting speculation whether the pears on the wall need pruning, or whether the new roses will prove the continuous bloomers which the catalogue described them; and last of all the smoke in the verandah in the fragrant air of the summer night, which in the country is never too hot, because it has none of that radiation from pavements and walls which gives the London atmosphere its indescribable dryness—a dryness which can be felt and tasted. Compare with this the case of the Londoner who leaves chambers at the same hour on the same day. He also feels that he wants fresh air, and he finds it in a stroll in the park, or on a chair near the blazing flower beds of Rotten Row, or beneath the shade, not yet all departed, of Kensington Gardens. But wherever he goes the world is with him. If he tries to outstay it it does but change its character. The fashionable pleasure-taking world of the afternoon becomes the working class world of the evening. As he goes homeward the crowd of carriages carrying people back to dress becomes mixed with the first droppings of the later crowd that will carry them out to dine, and this fact probably reminds him that he too must soon be off on the same errand. There is no need to describe a London dinner party in July. It may be pleasant or dull, a scene of animated talk or politely suppressed yawns; but whichever it be it does not suggest repose. This is the Londoner's notion of a lazy afternoon, and the contrast will be all the more marked if he prefers to spend the same hours in some more strenuous manner—in a crush at the Academy or at a flower show, in the buzz of an afternoon party, in a hurried journey to Richmond or the Crystal Palace. Even the country, when visited for an hour or two, seems to borrow the bustle of London. It is impossible but that two modes of life so different in themselves should in the long run exert a perceptible influence on the minds subjected to them. The nature of this influence will depend on the character of the mind. What is repose to

one is rust to another; what is stimulus to one is merely distraction to another. The action of London on a sluggish nature will ordinarily be beneficial; the action of the country on the same temperament may lead to the gradual rusting of all the faculties not actually needed in making money. But in the case of excitable natures the repose of the country may serve to check that frittering of time and energy which London, with its huge array of occupations, cherishes and exaggerates.

Perhaps the contrast between London and the country is best seen in the keen sense of social life which a man has in the former as compared with the keen sense of physical life which he has in the latter. Most of us know the feeling of going into the open air on a sunny morning in the country—the variety and play of existence of all kinds, and the strange way in which you seem to live more consciously because you are a part of that abounding animal energy which confronts you in all directions. In London the only being of which you take notice is man; but a crowded street imparts a similar sense of the variety and play of existence, with the difference that this abounding energy is united to yours by a social rather than a physical tie—by an identity of interests and pursuits as well as of animal organs. If man is designed to live in combination with his fellows, his conception of his destiny will surely be more vivid in London than in the country. Yet this statement must be taken with a certain qualification. As has often been remarked, the very vastness of London generates a strong sense of individual insignificance. It is much easier to feel yourself necessary in the country, because there is almost sure to be some group of persons out of which you would be missed if you were to go away. You must occupy a very conspicuous position in London before you can flatter yourself that your absence would be noticed except by very intimate friends. An incidental consequence of this distinction is that a man is much more independent in London than in the country. He can call his soul his own with much less fear that his conscience will flatly give him the lie. A familiar instance of this is the regularity with which many people go to church in the country, who are by no means to be always found there when they are in London. Nothing is implied here as to the propriety or impropriety of not going to church, or as to the expediency of setting an example when what you do will certainly be noted. The fact that there is such a difference is the only thing which concerns us, and that is so far an important fact that people who mean to be very unlike their neighbours ought to remember that to be this in the country demands very much more resolution and persistence than it demands in London. The concessions they may have to make in order to avoid being talked about may not be many or serious, but they will be happier probably if they make up their minds that some such concessions there will be, and that these had better be made with the best grace they can command.

There are some minds to which a home in the country is endeared by a keen love of nature in all the aspects under which the changing seasons

present her. This is the great counterbalancing charm to the opportunities of observing the hardly less various phases of social life which London supplies. There is no possibility of deciding which of these two tastes best deserves to be gratified. Dr. Johnson and Wordsworth will always remain types of different classes of minds. But it may be well to point out one serious drawback which detracts from the full enjoyment which the love of nature would otherwise secure to a man who makes his home in the country. It is not a drawback of nature's providing. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that the country is only pleasant in summer or in fine weather. Chance aspects of scenery yield enjoyment at all times, and to escape from the yellow fog and black mud of a wet winter day in London to the white mists and natural coloured muds of the country is scarcely less delightful than to make the corresponding exchange on a blazing day in summer. In the worst weather there are some natural objects which do not lose their charm. The drawback meant is the inexorable progress of the builder, and the consequent deterioration of almost every habitable district within twenty miles of London. Unluckily the builder is like an unclean insect—he spoils far more than he eats. He can deprive a prospect miles in extent of all its characteristic beauty by setting down half-a-dozen houses in the wrong place. They will certainly, however, be set down there, and nowhere else, if there happen to be a plot of ground to be let on a building lease. This incursion of villas of inevitable and indescribable ugliness would be bad enough if it stood alone; but the villas are invariably followed by an army of camp-followers more hideous, if possible, than themselves. The gradual transformation of the old village street, and the mushroom growth of new streets in which red bricks and yellow bricks contend which shall look the worst, are sights which any one who lives near London must make up his mind to endure. Fortunately the farther you go the more chance there is that much that is charming will be left untouched for years to come; and perhaps, before complete destruction overtakes the whole district round London, builders may learn that to kill the goose, in the shape of country scenery, is hardly the way to secure an unfailing succession of golden eggs, in the shape of tenants who are attracted from London by the love of country scenery.

Even the repose and leisure of the country need to be varied from time to time. It is no more good for man and wife to live alone than it was for man before a wife was given him. Some amount of intercourse with friends is a necessity—or next door to a necessity—of life. Some amount of hospitality is an instinct—or almost an instinct—of human nature. To this point the advocate of living in London over living in the country usually addresses himself with the utmost confidence of victory. In his opinion to live in the country is to bury yourself alive; to live in London is to have the command of as pleasant society as any in the world. Before this antithesis can be accepted as a complete expression of the facts some qualifications must be introduced into it on both sides. One

of these qualifications has just been indicated. The great overflow of London life has worked an extraordinary change in the surrounding districts. They have altogether ceased to be those social cemeteries which the country proper is said to be. It would be difficult now to find any village within twenty miles of London which has not its complement of new houses and its daily contingent of professional and business passengers. Indeed, if such a village could be discovered, the attractions of a bit of genuine country within easy access of London would ensure its being built over as soon as the land could be brought into the market. On the other hand the command of the best society which every Londoner is conventionally supposed to enjoy often means little more than a larger amount of the same kind of society which is usually to be had in the country. Still the contrast has a side of truth to it. In London every one can to a certain extent pick and choose their acquaintance, whereas in the country their acquaintance is pretty much chosen for them. If the place is large enough there may be two or even more sets in it; but it is probably a matter of chance into which a new-comer is introduced, and he can seldom pass from one to the other or be equal friends with all. At first sight it may seem that in this respect the advantage is altogether on the side of London. The liberty of choosing your associates is certainly very valuable; and in the matter of intellectual interest there is usually no comparison between society in the country and society in the town. Dinner parties in London are a series of social lotteries, in which the excitement is maintained by the constant chance of a prize turning up. Here, as everywhere, there are plenty of blanks, for there are no houses in which you can be secure against having a dull neighbour. But at all events you start with the chances in your favour. You do not go to dress with the melancholy foreboding that you may take down the same lady to whom you found nothing to say the week before last. You are spared the small local gossip, the domestic interrogatories and the domestic news vouchsafed in answer to them, which you meet in the country. You are not catechised as to the plan and probable cost of your new greenhouse, or expected to sympathise in your host's relations with a peccant coachman. The subjects which you have in common with your fellow-guests are at all events of some public interest. You do not find that the lady next to you only sees the *Times* when her husband brings it down from town, and that to-day she had gone up to dress before he came in.

Still there is something to be said on the other side. If London is the best place for making acquaintances, or for enjoying the company of people who are not even acquaintances, the country is the best place for making friends, and for really seeing the friends you have already. Society in London is like a complicated dance figure, in which you touch hands with everybody and have scarcely time for a word with your partner. Even in the pleasantest parties it may be only just before the time comes for leaving that you find out that one of the guests is the person whom

of all others you want to talk to on some subject in which you are mutually interested; and as to those whom you knew beforehand, it is so long since you have met them that you feel it is safest not to assume any recollection of what you then discussed with them. In the country you cannot choose your associates as you can in London; but, if you are pleased with the associates which chance has given you, the intercourse with them is much more intimate. You meet the same people so often that if there is anything in them there is full time for it to come out. You find by degrees that you have common pursuits; you enquire what each has lately been doing in them; you agree to come down by the same train the next afternoon, and to take your friend's house on your way home. All this is theoretically possible in London as well as in the country, but it can only be done by a special effort. It does not spring naturally out of the society which you frequent; you have to consider how you are to see So-and-so, and what vacant day can be found to ask him to dinner. A man who trusted to seeing his friends in the ordinary course of a season's parties would be much in the position of a man who trusted to meeting them in the street. There is another feature of country as contrasted with London life which tends in the same direction. In London you ask your friends to dinner, and, as regards men at all events, this is your only chance of seeing them. Such of your friends as happen to live in the country you hardly see at all; for what with the difficulty of making room for them in a London house, and the restraint which their presence imposes in the midst of the engagements of London society, they rarely pay you a visit. In the country, on the contrary, you ask your neighbours to dinner, and you ask your London friends to come and stay with you. There is more opportunity for growing intimate with people who are with you from a Saturday afternoon till a Monday morning, and during that time become a part of your household, are seen at all hours and under all circumstances, and have time to throw off a little of the gloss of society, and to show the real character underneath, than there is in a whole series of dinner parties. In the course of a single summer you may turn more than one set of acquaintances, who in London would have remained acquaintances to the end of the chapter, into genuine friends. Even as regards neighbours the question comes back very much to the contrast between repose and stimulus which underlies so much of the difference between the two ways of life. The very description just given of a typical country dinner party, which to one man will seem dull beyond words, to another will seem just what an evening's relaxation should be. "When I am tired with a hard day's work," the latter will say, "I do not care to be too much roused up in the evening. The exciting and brilliant talk which you promise me in London is not at all what I want. I had much rather hear a little news about the neighbourhood, and compare notes with my friends as to the progress of our fruit-trees or our respective successes in salad growing." Whether he or the Londoner is most

in the right is a point that everyone must decide for themselves. Something may depend on the nature of a man's work during the day, and the demands it makes on the intellect; something on the light in which he regards conversation to take part in which needs a quick and sustained attention; something on the degree in which his wife is pleased or bored by one or the other types of society.

Among the points of contrast between town and country none perhaps will have more weight than the opportunities for recreation which they severally offer. Work is much the same everywhere, and under all circumstances. The husband goes out in the morning to his office or his chambers; the wife takes up her household concerns, her letter writing, her visiting among the poor, or whatever else she classes among duties that must be done. When the business day is over they have a certain fraction of time at their own disposal. On Sundays probably they have the whole day, and besides their summer holiday they have days at other times which they can spend in whatever manner pleases them. As regards the employment of these hours and days, living in London and living in the country have each their advantages. In the country there is a standing source of pleasure in the garden. Whether the space at a man's disposal be small or large, there is always something to be done or planned in it. Assuming of course that it is something better than the mere patch before or behind a suburban villa, there is room for alterations if it be an old garden, for laying out if it be a new one, for judicious thinning if the trees are too crowded, for judicious planting if the ground is bare. In every season of the year there is some part of the garden that will give occupation either out-door or in-door. You have newly come to your house in the autumn, and you find that the fall of the leaf has left a side of the house exposed which you wish to keep sheltered at all times. You have let the season for autumn planting slip by you; but there is employment for mild days in considering how your evergreens shall be grouped, and for winter evenings in comparing authorities to see which plants will suit your purpose best, and catalogues to ascertain the sizes which you can get them at starting and the prices you will have to pay. Or you notice that evergreens are too predominant in your shrubbery, and that they need to be interspersed with trees which shall give a thicker shade in summer and more varied tints in spring and autumn. You have now to calculate different rates of growth, lest you should be planting for posterity instead of for yourself, to consider whether you care more for trees which put out their leaves early or for trees which keep them late, whether you prefer mass or symmetry, whether you wish the variations of colour to be most conspicuous when the foliage is young or when it is fading. If former tenants have already pretty well covered the ground, you have still to consider whether the general plan of the garden may not be improved, whether the flower beds shall be brought nearer the house or moved further away from it, whether space now wasted in useless paths shall be thrown into lawn, whether the paths that are kept shall be made

to take a more convenient direction. Probably there is some sort of green-house about the place, or, if not, there is ground on which to build one; and, in considering how much you want in the way of glass and what use you propose to make of it—whether to grow plants which require heat or to be content with such as only require protection, whether to devote most of your space to modern flower beds or to old-fashioned mixed borders, whether to put out your full strength in the spring or in the summer—it will be strange if a good many hours do not slip away almost unmarked. Then the winter is the time for the bookwork of gardening, for benefiting by the advice of friendly experts, for arming yourself against the enemies, whether in the shape of frost or drought or insects, which are only waiting till the season of growth begins to put out all their strength against you. As the year goes on there is room for constant observation of your own success or failure, and of the points in which you can gain a hint from the experience of your neighbours. If there is much wall space about the house, how to cover it to the best advantage becomes a study of itself. If you have a special love for roses there is not a week, from the day in February when the trees are first pruned down to the day not far off from Christmas when the last bud which the frost has condemned never to open is sorrowfully gathered, that has not an interest of its own. All these pleasures relate to the intellectual side of gardening. There are as many on its physical side. No man enjoys a summer morning more than he who turns out the moment he has got his clothes on to note what progress has been made since yesterday. No man appreciates the cool of the late afternoon more than he who feels it approach amidst the sound of trickling water-pots and the sight of reviving plants. The long saunter round the garden is interrupted at every step by the detection of something that he can do himself or must tell the gardener to do to-morrow. The knife, the scissors, the string, and the stick are never long in the pocket of the man who really loves gardening. There is always something to be done with one or other of them. That tree wants pruning, those dead flowers want nipping off, that bent stem calls for support, that straggling branch has to be nailed in. It is the great merit of a garden that it adapts itself to every variety of income, and the more of your own labour you give to it the greater is the pleasure derived.

There is no single form of recreation open to Londoners that can be set against a garden. The balance must be adjusted by putting several together. Concerts and plays can hardly be enjoyed by persons who live out of town, since the late railway journey detracts too much from the pleasure. Picture-galleries, sale-rooms, and museums are scarcely compatible with the inexorable necessity of catching the afternoon train. In all these things the Londoner has to find a substitute for a garden; and except in the first days of spring, or the first burst of warm weather in June, there is certainly a great deal of pleasure to be got

out of them. They have the merit, too, which the garden has not, of being almost independent of weather. A soaking afternoon may be good for plants, but it interferes terribly with their owner's inspection of them; and it is difficult to indulge in landscape gardening in a dense fog. But no amount of rain makes the National Gallery less enjoyable, and the South Kensington Museum or Messrs. Christie and Manson's Auction-rooms are bright even in the dullest afternoons of December. Every man who lives in London ought to have a hobby of some kind. It gives him something to do in his spare moments. It occupies many an hour on his way home in the afternoon. It gives a point to walks which would otherwise be too dull for endurance. It beautifies streets which in themselves are destitute of any kind of charm. Hanway Street and Wardour Street do not stand very high among London thoroughfares, but none are dearer to the curiosity hunter. Bookstalls have sadly fallen from that high estate in which Charles Lamb knew them, but there are still old eyes that brighten, and old pulses that quicken, at the thought of a possible treasure to be found on them. There is hardly a form which the passion for collecting takes that has not a street devoted to its gratification. The more cultivated the taste becomes, the more sources of enjoyment London is found to possess. The man who has his home out of town can ordinarily only avail himself of these by some exercise of forethought or some sacrifice of convenience. He must look out for a leisure day, and leave business an hour earlier. He must travel by a later train than ordinarily, and wait a proportionate time for dinner. The Londoner, if he can command but little leisure in the afternoon, has at all events that little at his own disposal. The main distinction between London pleasures and country pleasures is that the former either offer only another form of intellectual excitement, or else fail to absorb the mind sufficiently to answer the great end of recreation. A man tired and perhaps worried with his day's work sits down in a picture-gallery or listens to a scientific lecture. If his interest in what he sees or hears is keen enough to make him forget the cares which he brought with him, it will in most cases be keen enough to create a genuine and additional sense of fatigue. He goes home happier indeed than when he left his office, but more rather than less weary. Or else his thoughts wander back to the business he has left behind him; and though he religiously works through the catalogue, or sits till the lecture is over, he does so with no real appreciation of the subjects with which his eyes or ears are occupied. In his garden, on the contrary, this sort of double existence is almost impossible. He must give his mind to what he is doing, if he is to do it at all, and yet the occupation makes no real demand on those faculties which the work of the day has jaded. On the other hand there are many cases in which the work of the day, though exhausting as regards the attention, is not exhausting as regards the intellect, and in these cases it may be a gain to a man to have his powers drawn out and exercised during his hours of recreation.

Nothing has been said about field sports, because they demand more time than men who come to town every day can commonly afford to devote to them except in their holidays. Still the country has in this respect some advantages over London. It is a far less serious and costly business, for example, to have a day's hunting when the hounds meet near your home than it is to go down from London for the same object. The greatest gain in this way is the opportunity for boating which a man enjoys if his house happens to be on the banks of the Thames. Few forms of exercise are pleasanter, or have pleasanter incidents connected with them, and none except walking has so largely the merit of being cheap.

As regards occasional holidays it is hard to say whether the man who lives in London or the man who lives in the country is the best off. The latter has no need to plan beforehand how to spend them. There are usually a number of things that want looking after which have been put aside till he had a free day to give to them, or if he is inclined for a long walk, or drive, or ride, there is the country waiting to be visited, and certain, unless he has chosen his neighbourhood ill, to repay more time than he can spare to get to know it. On the other hand London, as regards the scenery which surrounds it, is many sided, and the railroad puts you for the day on a level, now with the friend who lives in Surrey, now with the friend who lives in Kent. You can break ground in a fresh place every holiday, and come at last to have a more extensive, though a more superficial knowledge of the country lying within thirty miles than is attainable by the man whose range is marked out for him by the situation of his home. In the summer, again, besides the season of complete cessation of work, there is often a time when work is slack, and a man can take a holiday or a half holiday once or twice a week for four or five weeks together. If he lives in the country he is usually dependent for his enjoyment of this slack time upon the resources of his own home. If he lives in London he can take a country house year after year, and each year make acquaintance with some new district or some new combination of districts he knows. Perhaps the man who enjoys this most will be he who cherishes a vague intention of leaving London altogether, and who consequently surveys each fresh house he hires with the critical eye of a possible purchaser. As regards the more formal holiday, which is taken once a year, the Londoner has the advantage. The mere rest may be no more to him than to the man who lives in the country, but an unbroken acquaintance with brick walls has made him far better able to appreciate the change of surroundings. There is another side, however, to the question that must not be quite put out of sight. There may come a year when the exigencies of work or of pocket may forbid a man to take a holiday at all, and in that case he who lives in the country will feel the want of one infinitely less than he who lives in London. The one may grow tired of his lawn and his trees, and long to exchange them for Swiss mountains or Italian cities, but his desire will be something different in kind from the desire of the

Londoner who sees the leaves beginning to fall at the end of July, and knows that between him and the real autumn all August and September are interposed. In the one case the feeling is only a longing for something he has not, in the other case it is loathing for what he has.

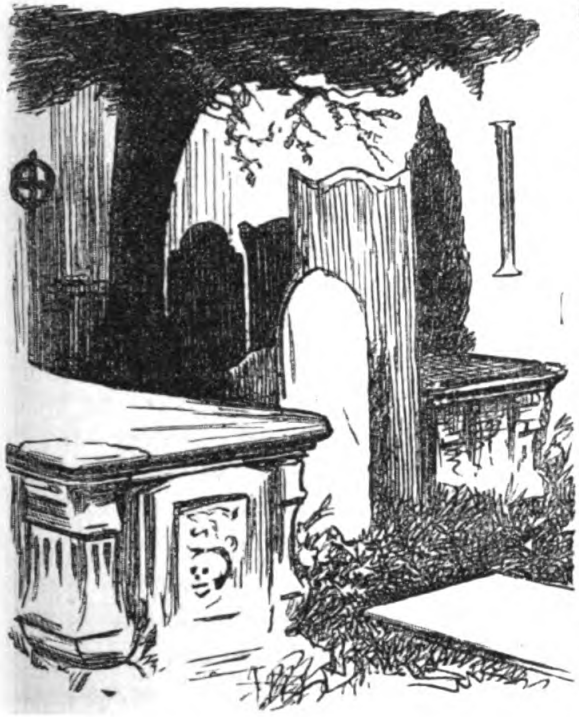
Still there are two pleasures connected with holidays which can only be enjoyed in perfection by the man who lives in town. One is the delight of getting out of London, the other is the delight of getting back to it. The sensation of sudden change which there is in leaving London on a summer morning, and realising that every step takes you further away from the city which you have grown so weary of, has no counterpart for a man who exchanges London for the country every afternoon. And however fond the latter may be of his country house he may be excused if he feels it a little dreary as he settles in again among the first fogs of October or November, and compares his lot with that of his London friend to whom the same season is the renewal of so much social and intellectual enjoyment. Nature *versus* Society—this, after all, is the issue really raised whenever we hesitate whether to live in the country or in London, and the happiest decision will be that which most honestly represents a preference genuinely felt for the one or the other.



They were interrupted by a third person, who had come along

A Rose in June.

CHAPTER VII.



"IT does not seem possible," said the Rector, slowly; "and yet somehow I cannot help thinking sometimes that I must be going to die."

"Herbert!"

"It is very curious—very curious—my reason tells me so, not feeling. I myself am just what I always was; but I think the symptoms are against me, and I see it in Marsden's looks. Doesn't he say so to you?"

"Dear," said Mrs. Damerel, with a trembling voice, "he does not conceal from me that it is very serious; but oh, Herbert, how often have we seen even the children at death's door, and yet brought back!"

"At death's door," he said, reflectively; "yes, that's a good expression—at the door of something unknown. Somehow it does not seem possible. One can believe it for others, not for one's self. The idea is very strange."

Mrs. Damerel was a good, religious woman; and her husband was a clergyman. She did not feel that this was how he ought to speak at such a moment, and the thought wrung her heart. "Dearest," she said, growing more tender in her grief and pity, "it is a thing we must all think of one time or another; and to you, who have served God faithfully, it must be something else than 'strange.'"

"What else?" he said, looking up at her. "I might say confusing, bewildering. To think that I am going I know not where, with no certainty of feeling that I shall ever know anything about it; that I am no longer a free agent, but helpless, like a leaf blown into a corner by the wind—I who for very nearly fifty years have had a voice in all that was done to me. My dear, I don't know that I ever realised before how strange it was."

"But—you are—happy, Herbert?" she said, in a low, imploring voice.

"Happy, am I? I don't know—why should I be happy? I know what I am leaving, but I don't know what I am going to. I don't know anything about it. Something is going to happen to me, of which I have not the least conception what it is. I am not afraid, my dear, if that is what you mean," he said, after a momentary pause.

This conversation took place weeks after the departure of Edward Wodehouse, and the end of that first flowery chapter of Rose's life. Her parents had not thought very much of her feelings, being concerned with much weightier matters. It had been a very long, lingering illness, not so violent as some fevers, but less hopeful; and the crisis was over, but the patient did not mend. He was dying, and his wife knew it; and, though no one as yet had made the solemn announcement to him, he had found it out. He was very weak; but his mind was not at all impaired, and he could talk, with only a pause now and then for breath, as calmly as ever. It was a curious spectacle. He was gathering his cloak round him like Cæsar, but with sensations less satisfied and consciously heroic. Mr. Damerel was not a man to be indifferent to the necessity of dying fitly, with dignity and grace, but he had confidence in himself that nothing would disturb the folds of his robes at that supreme moment; he knew that no spiritual dread or cowardice would impair his fortitude; it was not necessary for him to make any effort to meet with dignity the unknown which was approaching; and his mind was at leisure to survey the strange, unexpected situation in which he found himself—going to die, without knowing what dying was, or how it would affect him, or where it would place him. I do not know, though he was a clergyman, that there was anything religious in the organisation of his mind, and he had never come under any of those vivid influences which make men religious—or, at least, which make them fervent religionists—whatever may be the constitution of their mind. Mr. Damerel was no sceptic. He believed what he had been taught, and what he had taught in turn to others. His mind was not doctrinal or dogmatic, any more than it was devout; but he believed in the broad truths of Christianity, in some sort of a heaven, and some sort of a hell. These beliefs, however, had no effect upon his present state of feeling. He was not afraid of the hereafter; but his mind was bewildered and confounded by the contemplation of something close at hand which he did not know, and could not know so long as he retained consciousness of this only world with which he was acquainted. He was absorbed by the contemplation of this mystery. He was not thinking of his sins, nor of reward, nor of punishment, nor of rest from his labours (which had not been many). In short, he did not consider the great change that was about to take place upon him from a religious point of view at all, but rather from one which was at once natural and philosophical. I should not like to blame him for this, as, perhaps, some people will do. When we have lost much that made life sweet; when our friends, our children, have gone before us into the unseen country; then,

indeed, the heart learns many longings for that world in which alone there can be reunion and explanation of life's sore and weary mysteries. But this was not Mr. Damerel's case. There was no one waiting for him at the golden gates; except, perhaps, those whom he had long forgotten, and who had gone out of his life. He was departing alone, the first of his generation; curious and solitary, not knowing where he was going. To God's presence; ah yes! but what did that mean?

"All the same, my dear," he said, cheerfully, rousing himself, "we must not make ourselves wretched about it. A thing that happens to every man cannot be so very bad; and, in the meantime, we must make the best of it. I ought to have thought of it, perhaps, more than I have done."

"Oh, Herbert! God is very merciful," said his wife, who was crying softly by his side.

"Yes, yes, that is quite true; but that is not what I was thinking of. I ought to have thought of what would follow in case of this happening which is about to happen. I ought to have tried to save; but how could I have saved out of the little pittance we had?"

"Dear, don't think of such things now."

"But I must think upon them. I have never had any extravagant tastes, and we have always lived very quietly; but I fear you will find a difference. What a blessed thing that you are the sort of woman you are! The struggle will not fall so heavily upon you as upon most people. Incledon, of course, will marry Rose——"

"Oh, Herbert! what does all this matter? Do not think of it. I would so much rather hear you speak of yourself."

"There is nothing to say about myself; and, perhaps, the less one thinks, in the circumstances, the better; it is a curious position to be in—that is all that one can say. Yes, Incledon will marry Rose; he will make her a very good husband. Do not let it be put off from any regard to me. He will be a great help to you; and you may trust him, I should think, to settle about the boys. Lay as much upon him as you can; he is quite able to bear it. If one had foreseen this, you know, there are many things that one might have done; but—curious!" said the Rector, with a smile, "I can't believe in it, even now."

"Oh, Herbert, it is never too late for God! Perhaps your feeling is the right one. If He would but give you back to us now!"

"No, no; don't think there is anything prophetic in my feelings, my dear. You may be sure every man is like me, more or less," said Mr. Damerel. "I know we must all die; only it is impossible in respect to one's self; I am myself you perceive just as much as ever; and yet to-morrow, perhaps, or next day—there's the wonder. It makes one feel giddy now and then. About the boys; I have always felt that one time or other we should have to decide something for the boys. Leave it to Incledon; he is a practical man, and will know what to advise."

"Dear Herbert, if you can talk of it—oh, how much better it would be to tell me what *you* wish, that I might be guided by your own feeling—than

to refer me to any one else!" said Mrs. Damerel, crying, kissing his hand, and gazing with wet eyes into his calm face.

"Oh, talk; yes I can talk, but for a little catching of the breath, the same as ever, I think; but the boys are a troublesome subject. Leave it to Incledon; he knows all about that sort of thing. I think now, perhaps, that I might sleep."

And then the curtains were dropped, the watcher retired a little out of sight, and everything was subdued into absolute stillness. Mrs. Damerel sat down noiselessly in the background, and covered her face with her hands, and wept silent tears, few and bitter. She had felt him to be hard upon her many a day; she had seen what was wanting in him; but he was her husband, the first love of her youth, and her heart was rent asunder by this separation. She had enough to think of besides, had she been able; she had poverty to face, and to bring up her children as best she could in a world which henceforward would not be kind and soft to them as it had been hitherto. Her soul was heavy with a consciousness of all that was before her; but, in the meantime, she had room for no distinct feeling except one—that her husband, her love, was going to be taken from her. This tremendous parting, rending asunder of two lives that had been one, was more than enough to fill all her mind; she had room for nothing more.

And he slept, or thought he slept, floating out of the vague pain and wonder of his waking thoughts into strange, vague visions, dimmer still, and then back again to the fancies which were waking and not sleeping. There was a dim impression of painfulness in them, rather than pain itself; wonder, curiosity, and that strange sense of an absolute blank which makes the soul giddy and the brain swim. Sometimes his mind seemed to himself to wander, and he got astray somehow, and felt himself sinking in an unfathomable sea, or striving to make his way through some blackness of night, some thorny wood in which there was no path. I suppose he was asleep then; but even he himself scarcely knew.

When he woke it was evening, and the lamp, carefully shaded, had been lit at the other end of the room. He liked the light; and, when he stirred and spoke, the watchers made haste to draw back the curtains. The serene evening sky, full of soft tints of reflection from the sunset, with breaks of daffodil light melting into ineffable soft greenness and blueness, shone in through the uncurtained window, which he liked to have left so, that he might see the sky. Rose and her mother, close by the bright circle made by the lamp, were, one of them preparing some drink for him, the other opening a new bottle of medicine which had just been sent. Though it was all so familiar to him, the fact that he was to go away so soon seemed to throw a strangeness over everything, and gave a bewildering novelty even to the figures he knew so well.

"More of Marsden's stuff," he said, with a low laugh; and his own voice sounded far off to him, as he lay looking at that strange little picture —a distant view of the two women against the light, with the sky and the

window behind; somebody's wife and daughter—his own—his very Rose, and she who had been his companion since his youth. Strange that he should look at them so quietly, almost with an amused sense of novelty, without any tragic feeling or even pain to speak of, in the thought that he was going away shortly and would see them no more. He fell to thinking of a thousand things as he lay there watching them, yet not watching them. Not the things, perhaps, that a dying man ought to think of; little nothings, chance words that he had forgotten for years, lines of poetry, somehow connected with his present condition, though he did not remember the links of connection. "The casement slowly grows, a glittering square," he said to himself, and made an effort to think whence the line came, and why it should have at this moment thrust itself into his mind. Then he fell altogether into a poetic mood, and one disconnected line followed another into his mind, giving him a vague sense of melancholy pleasure. He said one or two of them aloud, calling the attention of his nurses—but it was not to them he was speaking. Finally, his mind centred on one which first of all seemed to strike him for its melody alone—

> Who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
> This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,
> Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
> Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

He said this aloud once or twice over. "To dumb forgetfulness a prey!" that is not my feeling—not my feeling; the rest is very true. Gray does not get half justice now-a-days. How it satisfies the ear, flowing round and soft! "To dumb forgetfulness!" now I wonder what he meant by that?"

"You are better, papa," said Rose, softly. Her mother stayed behind, not able to speak; but the girl, in her simplicity, thought the poetry "a good sign."

"No, Rose. 'Dumb forgetfulness,'—it is not that, child; that is not what one fears; to be sure there is a coldness and blackness that might chime in with the words. But the rest is true, 'The warm precincts of the cheerful day'; warm is a living word altogether; it is not warm out here."

"I will put the quilt on the bed," said wistful Rose, thinking he complained of cold.

"No," he said, roused, with a gentle laugh; "the quilt will do nothing for me; I am not cold—not yet; I suppose I shall be presently. Is your mother there? My dear, help me with your experience. I dislike cold so much; does one feel it creeping up before one dies?"

"Oh, Herbert, dearest!" said his wife, heart-broken. What could she answer to such a question?

"Nay, I don't want to make an unnecessary fuss," he said; "it is only a curiosity I have. Cold creeping up—it is disagreeable to think of it. What! have I more medicine to take? What does Marsden mean by

sending me his detestable compounds still? it will only make your bill the larger, and me the less comfortable. I will not have it; take it away."

"It is something different," said Mrs. Damerel. "The doctor thought, perhaps, it might be worth trying."

"Is it the elixir of life?" said the patient, smiling; "nothing short of that would be worth trying; even that would be too much trouble for the good. It would be folly to come back now when one has got over all the worst of the way."

"You do not feel worse, Herbert?"

"Oh, no; when I tell you the worst is over, my anxious Martha! I am curious—curious—nothing more. I wish I could but tell you after what sort of a thing it was. Sit down by me, and give me your hand. Rose, you will be good; you will do everything your mother says?"

"Oh, Herbert!" said his wife, "do not think of us—if it has come to this—think of yourself, think where you are going—to God, Herbert, dearest, to be happy beyond anything we can think."

"Is it so?" he said, still smiling. "I don't know where I am going, my dear, and that is the only thing that gives me a little trouble. I should like to know. I am not afraid of God, who has always been far better to me than I deserved; and I hope I know the way of life." This he said with a momentary seriousness which was quite exceptional. Then he added, in the musing tone which to his anxious watchers seemed almost a gentle delirium, "But think, my dear! to be sent even into a new place, a strange town, in the dark, without any direction—without knowing where to go, right hand or left." He gave a little, soft, broken laugh. "It is the strangest way of dealing with curious inquisitive creatures like men. I never realised it before."

Here some one appeared, beckoning behind the curtains, to say that Mr. Nolan was in the next room. The Curate came daily, and was always admitted. Rose went softly out to meet him, and almost dropped into the kind man's arms in her exhaustion and excitement. "He is talking so very strangely," she said, the tears running down her pale cheeks. "Oh, Mr. Nolan, I think he is wandering in his mind! Should I send for the doctor? To hear him speak is enough to break one's heart."

The good Curate put her in a chair and soothed her, smoothing her pretty hair, with unconscious tenderness as if she had been a child. "Don't cry, dear," he said; "or rather, do cry, poor child, it will do you good; and stay quiet till I come back."

Rose did what she was told with the docility of helplessness. She lay back in the chair, and cried softly. In this new strait she was as a child, and all the child's overwhelming sense of desolation and half-superstitious awe of the terrible event which was coming, weighed down her heart. Pity, and terror, and grief mingled in her mind, till it seemed unable to contain so much emotion. She sat and listened to the low voices in the next room, and watched the side gleam of light which came from the half-open door. The very world seemed hushed while this drama

came to its conclusion, and there was not a sound without or within but the soft movements in the sick-room, and the low voices. How many new experiences had come into her simple life in so short a time! Darkness overshadowed the earth already, so that her pleasant pathway in it seemed lost; and now here was Death, that visitor who is always so doubly appalling the first time he enters a peaceful house.

"Well, Nolan, you have come in time, for I am just setting out," said the Rector, in a voice stronger than it had been, his anxious wife thought. "Why, man, don't look so grave; and you, my dear, don't cry, to discourage me. Set me out on my journey a little more cheerily! I never thought much about dying people before; and mind what I say, Nolan, because it is your work. Of course, to those who have never thought about such matters before, religion is all-important; but there's more in it than that. When a man's dying he wants humouring. Such strange fancies come into one's head. I am not at all troubled or serious to speak of; but it is a very odd thing, if you think of it, to set out on such a journey without the least notion where you are to go!"

And he laughed again. It was not harsh nor profane, but a soft laugh, as easy as a child's. I do not know why it should have horrified the attendants so, or what there is wrong in a laugh so gentle from a death-bed; but the hearers both shivered with natural pain and almost terror. They tried to lead him to more serious thoughts, but in vain. His mind, which had been serious enough before, had got somehow dissipated, intoxicated by the approach of the unknown. He could think of nothing else. A certain levity even mingled in his excitement. He asked questions almost with eagerness—questions no one could answer—about the accessories of death. He was curious beyond description about all that he would have to go through. "What a pity that I shall never be able to tell you what it is, and how I liked it!" he said, reflectively; "at least until you know all about it, too—we can compare notes then." He would not give up this kind of talk. After the prayers for the sick, which Mr. Nolan read, he resumed the same subject; and if it is possible to imagine any thing that could have made this terrible moment of her life more bitter to poor Mrs. Damerel, I think this would have been the one thing.

"Are his affairs in order, do you know?" said the doctor, after paying his late visit, as the Curate accompanied him to the door. He had just given it as his opinion that his patient could not see another morning; and Mr. Nolan had made up his mind to remain at the Rectory all night.

"I shouldn't think it. He has never taken much trouble with his affairs."

"Then don't you think you could speak to him even now? I never saw a man so clear-headed, and in such possession of his faculties, so near—— Speak to him, Nolan. He knows exactly how things are, and no agitation can harm him now. He must have some wishes about his family—some arrangements to make."

Mr. Nolan restrained with difficulty an exclamation that rose to his lips, and which might have sounded unkind to a dying man; and then he asked abruptly, "Do you find, in your experience, that people who are dying are much concerned about those they leave behind?"

"Well, no," said the doctor, doubtfully; "I don't think they are. Self gets the upper hand. It is all Nature can do at that moment to think how she is to get through——"

"I suppose so," said the Curate, with that seriousness which naturally accompanies such a speculation. He walked with the doctor to the gate, and came back across the plot of shrubbery, musing, with a heavy heart, on the living and on the dying. It was a lovely starlight night, soft and shadowy, but with a brisk little questioning air which kept the leaves a-rustle. Mr. Nolan shivered with something like cold, as he looked up at the stars. "I wonder, after all, where he is going?" he said to himself, with a sympathetic ache of human curiosity in his heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Damerel did not die for twenty-four hours after this. People do not get out of the world so easy. He was not to escape the mortal restlessness, "the fog in his throat," any more than others; and the hours were slow and long, and lingered like years. But at last the Rector came to an end of his wondering, and knew, like all the *illuminati* before him who have learned too, but are hushed and make no sign. It is a strange thought for mortals to take in, that almost every death is, for the moment at least, a relief to those who surround the dying. The most intolerable moment is that which precedes the end, and most of us are thankful when it is over. I need not enter into the dismal hush that fell upon the pleasant Rectory, nor say how the curious sun besieged the closed windows to get into the house once so freely open to the light; nor how, notwithstanding the long interval of illness which had banished him from common view, the shady corner under the lime-trees, where Mr. Damerel's chair and round table still stood, wore a look of piteous desolation, as if he had left them but yesterday. All this is easily comprehensible. The servants cried a little, and were consoled by their new mourning; the children wept bitterly, then began to smile again; and two poor clergymen, with large families, grew sick with anxiety as to who should have Dinglefield before our Rector had been dead a day (neither of them had it, you may be sure, they wanted it so much). When the news was known in the parish, and especially on the Green, there was a moment of awe and emotion very real in its way. Most people heard of it when they were first called, and thought of it with varying degrees of impression till breakfast, to which they all came down looking very serious, and told each other the details, and remarked to each other what an inscrutable thing it was, and yet that it was

wonderful he had lasted so long. Breakfast broke in upon this universal seriousness; for when it is not any connection, as Mrs. Perronet well remarked, you cannot be expected to remain under the impression like those who are relatives; and after breakfast the Green with one consent turned from the dead to the living, and began to ask what Mrs. Damerel would do, how she would be "left," what change it would make in her circumstances? Many shook their heads and feared that it would make a very great change. They calculated what he had had, and what she had had, when they were married, which was an event within the recollection of many; and what the income of the Rectory was, after deducting the Curate's salary and other necessary expenses; and how much Bertie cost at Eton; and many other questions which only an intimate knowledge of their neighbours' affairs could have warranted them in discussing. General Perronet knew for certain that Mr. Damerel's life was insured in at least two offices; and though they could not, everybody agreed, have saved anything, yet there arose after a while a general hope that the family would not be so very badly off. Some of the ladies had quite decided before luncheon that the best thing Mrs. Damerel could do would be to take the White House, which happened to be empty, and which contained a number of little rooms just suitable for a large family. To be sure it was possible that she might prefer to go back to her own county, where her brothers still lived, one of whom was a squire of small property, and the other the parson of the hereditary parish; but the Dinglefield people scarcely thought she would take this step, considering how many friends she had on the Green, and how much better it was to stay where you are known, than to go back to a place where people have forgotten you.

"And then there is Mr. Incledon," said Mrs. Wodehouse, who felt that her son had been slighted, and may be excused perhaps for being a little spiteful. "The mother has always had her eye upon him since he came back to Whitton. You will see that will be a match, if she can manage it; and of course it would be a great match for Miss Rose."

I think if an angel from heaven came down into a country parish, and a good woman with daughters entertained him unawares, her neighbours would decide at once which of the girls she meant to marry Gabriel to. But Mrs. Wodehouse had more justification than most gossips have. She could not forget the little pleading note which her Edward had made her write, entreating Rose to come down if only for one moment, and that the girl had taken no notice of it; though before that expedition to Whitton to see the Perugino, and Mr. Incledon's great house, Rose had been very well satisfied to have the young sailor at her feet. Mrs. Wodehouse had met the mother and daughter but seldom since, for they had been absorbed in attendance upon the Rector; but when by chance she did encounter them, she felt proud to think that she had never said anything but "Good morning." No enquiries after their health had come from her lips. She had retired into polite indifference; though sometimes her heart had been touched by poor Rose's pale cheek, and her wistful look, which

seemed to ask pardon. "I do not mind what is done to me," Mrs. Wodehouse said to her dear friend and confidant, Mrs. Musgrove; "but those who slight my son I will never forgive. I do not see that it is unchristian. It is unchristian not to forgive what is done to yourself; and I am sure no one is less ready to take personal offence than I am." She was resolved, therefore, that, whatever happened, "Good morning" was all the greeting she would give to the Damerels; though of course she was very sorry indeed for them, and as anxious as other people as to how they would be left, and where they would go.

Mrs. Damerel herself was overwhelmed by her grief in a way which could scarcely have been expected from a woman who had so many other considerations to rouse her out of its indulgence, and who had not been for a long time a very happy wife. But when man and wife have been partially separated as these two had been, and have ceased to feel the sympathy for each other which such a close relationship requires, a long illness has a wonderful effect often in bringing back to the survivor the early image of the being he or she has loved. Perhaps I ought to say she; I do not know if a sick wife is so touching to a husband's imagination as a sick man is to his wife's. And then a little thing had occurred before the end which had gone to Mrs. Damerel's heart more than matters of much greater moment. Her husband had called Rose, and on Rose going to him had waved her away, saying, "No, no," and holding out his feeble hands to her mother. This insignificant little incident had stolen away everything but tenderness from the woman's mind, and she wept for her husband as she might have wept for him had he died in the earlier years of their marriage, with an absorbing grief that drove everything else out of her thoughts. This, however, could not last. When the blinds were drawn up from the Rectory, and the brisk sunshine shone in again, and the family looked with unveiled faces upon the lawn, where every one still expected to see him, so full was it of his memory, the common cares of life came back, and had to be thought of. Mrs. Damerel's brothers had both come to the funeral. One of them, the Squire, was the trustee under her marriage settlement, and one of the executors of Mr. Damerel's will; so he remained along with the lawyer and the doctor and Mr. Nolan, and listened to all the provisions of that will, which were extremely reasonable, but of a far back date, and which the lawyer read with an occasional shake of his head, which at the moment no one could understand. Unfortunately, however, it was but too easy to understand. The Rector, with the wisest care, had appropriated the money he had to the various members of his family. The life interest of the greater part was to be the mother's; a small portion was to be given to the girls on their marriage, and to the boys on their outset in life, and the capital to be divided among them at Mrs. Damerel's death. Nothing could be more sensible or properly arranged. Mr. Hunsdon, Mrs. Damerel's brother, cleared his ruffled brow as he heard it. He had been possessed by an alarmed sense of danger—a feeling that his sister and her family were likely to come upon him—which

weighed very heavily upon the good man's mind; but now his brow cleared. Further revelations, however, took away this serenity. The money which Mr. Damerel had divided so judiciously was almost all spent, either in unsuccessful speculations of which he had made several with a view to increased dividends; or by repeated encroachments on the capital made to pay debts; or for one plausible reason after another. Of the insurances on his life only one had been kept up, and that chiefly because his bankers held it as security for some advance, and had consequently seen that the premium was regularly paid. These discoveries fell like so many thunderbolts upon the little party. I don't think Mrs. Damerel was surprised. She sat with her eyes cast down and her hands clasped, with a flush of shame and trouble on her face.

"Did you know of this, Rose?" her brother asked, sternly, anxious to find some one to blame.

"I feared it," she said, slowly, not lifting her eyes. The flush on her cheek dried up all her tears.

Mr. Hunsdon, for one, believed that she was ashamed—not for the dead man's sake—but because she had shared in the doing of it, and was confounded to find her ill doings brought into the light of day.

"But, good heavens!" he said, in her ear, "did you know you were defrauding your children when you wasted your substance like this? I could not have believed it. Was my brother-in-law aware of the state of the affairs? and what did he intend his family to do?"

"Mr. Damerel was not a business man," said the lawyer. "He ought to have left the management in our hands. That mining investment was a thing we never would have recommended, and the neglect of the insurance is most unfortunate. Mr. Damerel was never a man of business."

In the presence of his wife it was difficult to say more.

"A man may not be a man of business, and yet not be a fool," said Squire Hunsdon, hastily. "I beg your pardon, Rose; I don't want to be unkind."

"Let me go, before you use such language," she said, rising hastily. "I cannot bear it. Whatever he has done that is amiss, he is not standing here to answer before us now."

"I mean no offence, Rose. Nay, sit down; don't go away. You can't imagine—a man I had so much respect for—that I mean to cast any reflections. We'll enter into that afterwards," said Mr. Hunsdon. "Let us know at least what they will have to depend on, or if anything is left."

"There is very little left," said Mrs. Damerel, facing the men who gazed at her wondering, with her pale face and widow's cap. "We had not very much at first, and it is gone; and you must blame me, if any one is to blame. I was not, perhaps, a good manager. I was careless. I did not calculate as I ought to have done. But, if the blame is mine, the punishment will also be mine. Do not say anything more about it, for no one here will suffer but my children and me."

"I don't know about that. You must be patient, and you must not be unreasonable," said her brother. "Of course we cannot see you want; though neither George nor I have much to spare—and it is our duty to enquire."

"Will enquiring bring back the money that is lost?" she said. "No, no; you shall not suffer by me. However little it is, we will manage to live on it; we will never be a burden upon any one. I don't think I can bear any more."

And the judges before whom she stood (and not only she, but one who could not answer for himself) were very compassionate to the widow, though Mr. Hunsdon was still curious and much disturbed in his mind. They slurred over the rest, and allowed Mrs. Damerel and her son and daughter to go, and broke up the gloomy little assembly. Mr. Hunsdon took Mr. Nolan by the arm and went out with him, leading him on to the lawn, without any thought how the sound of his steps would echo upon the hearts of the mourners. He would have seated himself in the chair which still stood under the lime-trees had not Mr. Nolan managed to sway his steps away from it, and lead him down the slope to the little platform round the old thorn-tree which was invisible from the windows. The good Curate was deeply moved both for the living and the dead.

"I don't mind speaking to you," said the anxious brother; "I have heard so much of you as an attached friend. You must have known them thoroughly, and their way of living. I can't think it was my sister's fault."

"And I know," said Mr. Nolan, with energy, "it was not her fault. It was not any one's fault. He had a generous, liberal way with him——"

"Had he?" said the Squire, doubtfully. "He had a costly, expensive way with him; is that what you mean? I am not saying anything against my late brother-in-law. We got on very well, for we saw very little of each other. He had a fine mind, and that sort of thing. I suppose they have kept an extravagant house."

"No, I assure you——"

"Entertained a good deal. Kept a good table, I am certain; good wine—I never drank better claret than that we had last night—the sort of wine *I* should keep for company, and bring up only on grand occasions. If there is much of it remaining I don't mind buying a few dozen at their own price," Mr. Hunsdon said, parenthetically. "I see; fine cookery, good wine, all the luxuries of the season, and the place kept up like a duke's—an expensive house."

"No," said the Curate, reiterating an obstinate negative; and then he said, hotly, "She did herself a great deal of injustice. She is the best of managers—the most careful—making everything go twice as far and look twice as well as anybody else."

Mr. Hunsdon looked at him curiously, for he was one of those people who think a man must be "in love with" any woman whose partisan he makes himself. He made a private note of the Curate's enthusiasm, and

concluded it was best that his sister and her daughter should be warned of his sentiments. "I have not seen very much of my poor brother-in-law for some time," he said, disguising his scrutiny, "so that I have no way of judging for myself. I don't know which is most to blame. In such cases the wife can generally stop the extravagance if she likes. Two boys at Eton, for example—*I* can't afford so much."

"Bertie is on the foundation, and costs very little. He is a boy who will do something in the world yet; and I ought to know, for I taught him his first Greek. As for Reginald, his godfather pays his expenses, as I suppose you know."

"You have been here for a long time, I perceive," said the Squire, "if you taught the boy his first Greek, as you say?"

"Eight years," said Mr. Nolan, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"And now?"

"Now? I'll go off again, I suppose, like a rollin' stone, unless the new Rector will have me. God help us, what heartless brutes we are!" said the Curate, with fiery heat; "I've just laid my old Rector in the grave, and I think of the new one before the day's gone. God forgive me; it's the way of the world."

"And why shouldn't you be Rector yourself? No one would be so good for the parish, I am sure."

"Me!" said Mr. Nolan, his face lighting up with a broad gleam of humour, which he quenched next moment in the half-conventional gravity which he felt to be befitting to the occasion. "The days of miracles are over, and I don't expect to be made an exception. No; I'll get a district church maybe some time, with plenty of hard work and little pay; but I am not the kind that are made to be Rectors. There is no chance for me."

"The people would like it," said Mr. Hunsdon, who was fishing for information; "it would be a popular appointment, and my sister and I would do anything that might lie in our power."

Mr. Nolan shook his head. "Not they," he said; "they have a kindness for me in my humble condition. They know I'm a friend when they want one; but they want something more to look at for their Rector —and so do I too."

"You are not ambitious?" said Mr. Hunsdon, perplexed by his new acquaintance, who shrugged his shoulders again, and rose hastily from the seat under the thorn-tree where they had been sitting.

"That depends," he said, with impatient vagueness; "but I have my work waiting if I can be of no more use here. For whatever I can do, Mrs. Damerel knows I am at her orders. And you won't let her be worried just yet a while?" he added, with a pleading tone, to which his mellow brogue lent an insinuating force which few people could resist. "You'll not go till it's fixed what they are to do?"

"You may be sure I shall do my duty by my sister," said the Squire, who, though he had been willing to take the Curate's evidence about the

most intimate details of his sister's life, instantly resented Mr. Nolan's "interference" when it came on his side. "He is in love with one or the other, or perhaps with both," said the man of the world to himself; "I must put Rose on her guard;" which accordingly he tried to do, but quite ineffectually, Mrs. Damerel's mind being totally unable to take in the insinuation which he scarcely ventured to put in plain words. But, with the exception of this foolish mistake and of a great deal of implied blame which it was not in the nature of the man to keep to himself, he did try to do his duty as became a man with a certain amount of ordinary affection for his sister, and a strong sense of what society required from him as head of his family. However he might disapprove of her, and the extravagance in which she had undeniably been act and part, yet he could not abandon so near a relation. I should not like to decide whether benefits conferred thus from a strong sense of duty have more or less merit than those which flow from an affectionate heart and generous nature, but certainly they have less reward of gratitude. The Green was very much impressed by Mr. Hunsdon's goodness to his sister, but I fear that to her his goodness was a burden more painful than her poverty. And yet he was very good. He undertook, in his brother's name and his own, to pay Bertie's expenses at Eton, where the boy was doing so well; and when it was decided, as the Green by infallible instinct had felt it must be, that the White House was the natural refuge for Mrs. Damerel when the time came to leave the Rectory, Mr. Hunsdon made himself responsible for the rent, and put it in order for her with true liberality. The whole parish admired and praised him for this, and said how fortunate Mrs. Damerel was to have so good a brother. And she tried herself to feel it, and to be grateful as he deserved. But gratitude, which springs spontaneous for the simplest of gifts, and exults over a nothing, is often very slow to follow great benefits. Poor Mrs. Damerel thought it was the deadness of her grief which made her so insensible to her brother's kindness. She thought she had grown incapable of feeling; and she had so much to realise, so much to accustom herself to. A change so great and fundamental confuses the mind. So far as she could see before her, she had nothing now to look forward to in life but an endless humiliating struggle; and she forgot, in the softening of her heart, that for years past she had been struggling scarcely less hardly. When she looked back she seemed to see only happiness in comparison with this dull deprivation of all light and hope in which she was left now. But the reader knows that she had not been happy, and that this was but, as it were, a prismatic reflection from her tears, a fiction of imagination and sorrow; and by-and-by she began to see more clearly the true state of affairs.

They stayed at the Rectory till Christmas by grace of the new Rector, who unfortunately, however, could not keep on Mr. Nolan—of whose preferment there never had been a glimmer of hope—beyond that period. Christmas is a dreary time to go into a new home; though I don't think the Rector of Dinglefield thought so, who brought home his bride to the

pretty Rectory, and thought no life could begin more pleasantly than by those cheerful Christmas services in the church, which was all embowered in holly and laurel, in honour of the great English festival and in honour of him; for the Green had of course taken special pains with the decorations on account of the new-comer. The long and dreary autumn which lay between their bereavement and their removal was, however, very heavy and terrible for the Damerels. Its rains, and fogs, and dreary days seemed to echo and increase their own heaviness of heart; and autumn as it sinks into winter is all the more depressing in a leafy woodland country, as it has been beautiful in its earlier stages. Even the little children were subdued, they knew not why, and felt the change in the house, though it procured them many privileges, and they might now even play in the drawing-room unreproved, and were never sent away hurriedly lest they should disturb papa, as had been the case of old when sometimes they would snatch a fearful joy by a romp in the twilight corners; even the babies felt that this new privilege was somehow a symptom of some falling off and diminution in the family life. But no one felt it as Rose did, who had been shaken out of all the habits of her existence, without having as yet found anything to take their place. She had not even entered upon the idea of duty when her secret romance was brought to a sudden close, and that charmed region of imagination in which youth so readily finds a refuge, and which gilds the homeliest present with dreams of that which may be hereafter, had been arbitrarily closed to the girl. Had her little romance been permitted to her, she would have had a secret spring of hope and content to fall back upon, and would have faced her new life bravely with a sense of her own individuality, such as seemed now to have faded altogether out of her mind. Her very appearance changed, as was inevitable. Instead of the blooming maiden we have known, it was the whitest of Roses that went about the melancholy house in her black dress, with all the colour and life gone out of her, doing whatever she was told with a docility which was sad to see. When she was left to herself she would sit idle or drop absorbed into a book; but everything that was suggested to her she did, without hesitation and without energy. The whole world had become confined to her within these oppressive walls, within this sorrowful house. The people on the Green looked at her with a kind of wondering reverence, saying how she must have loved her father, and how she looked as if she would never get over it. But grief was not all of the weight which crushed her. She was for the moment bound as by some frost, paralysed in all the springs of her interrupted being. She had no natural force of activity in her to neutralise the chill her soul had taken. She did all that she was told to do, and took every suggestion gratefully; but she had not yet learned to see for herself with her own eyes what had to be done, nor did she realise all the changes that were involved in the one great change which had come upon them. Misfortune had fallen upon her while she was still in the dreamy vagueness of her youth, when the within is more important than the without,

and the real and imaginary are so intermingled that it is hard to tell where one ends and another begins. Necessity laid no wholesome vigour-giving hand upon her, because she was preoccupied with fancies which seemed more important than the reality. Agatha, all alert and alive in her practical matter-of-fact girlhood, was of more value in the house than poor Rose, who was like a creature in a dream, not seeing anything till it was pointed out to her; obeying always and humbly, but never doing or originating anything from her own mind. Nobody understood her, not even herself; and sometimes she would sit down and cry for her father, thinking he would have known what it meant, without any recollection of the share her father had in thus paralysing her young life. This strange condition of affairs was unknown, however, to any one out of doors except Mr. Nolan, who, good fellow, took it upon him once to say a few coaxing, admonishing words to her.

"You'll ease the mother when you can, Miss Rose, dear," he said, taking her soft, passive hands between his own. "You don't mind me saying so—an old fellow and an old friend like me, that loves every one of you, one better than another? I'll hang on if I can, if the new man will have me, and be of use—what's the good of me else?—and you'll put your shoulder to the wheel with a good heart like the darling girl that you are?"

"My shoulder to the wheel," said Rose, with a half-smile, "and with a good heart! when I feel as if I had no heart at all?" and the girl began to cry, as she did now for any reason, if she was startled, or any one spoke to her suddenly. What could poor Mr. Nolan do but soothe and comfort her? Poor child! They had taken away all the inner strength from her before the time of trial came, and no better influence had yet roused her from the shock, or made her feel that she had something in her which was not to be crushed by any storm. Mr. Nolan knew as little what to make of her as her mother did, who was slowly coming to her old use and wont, and beginning to feel the sharpness of hardship, and to realise once more how it was and why it was that this hardship came.

CHAPTER IX.

The White House did not stand on the Green, but on one of the roads leading out of it, at a short distance from that centre of the world. It looked large from outside—something between a mansion and a cottage—and within was full of useless passages, confused little rooms, and bits of staircases on which the unaccustomed passenger might break his neck with ease, and a general waste of space and disorder of arrangement which pleased the antiquary as quaint, but was much less desirable practically than artistically. There were two sitting-rooms, which were large and low, with raftered roofs, and small deep-set windows overgrown with creepers; and there was a garden, almost as rambling as the house

itself, and surrounded by old walls and hedges which effectually shut out every view, except into its own grassy, mossy depths. Some former enterprising inhabitant had introduced into the drawing-room one long French window, by which there was a practicable exit into the garden; and this was the only modern point in the house. Some people said it spoilt the room, which otherwise would have been perfect; but it was a great convenience and comfort to the Damerels in summer, at least. The house was somewhat damp, somewhat weedy, rather dark; but it was roomy, and more like a house in which gentlefolks could melt away into penury than a pert little new brick house in a street. It was very cheap; for it had various disadvantages, into which I am not called upon to enter. Mrs. Damerel, whose house had always been the perfection of houses, with every new sanitary invention, was glad to put up with these drawbacks for the sake of the low rent—so vast and so many are the changes which absence of money makes. Before Christmas Day they had all the old furniture—save some special pieces of *virtu*, graceful old cabinets, mirrors, and ornamental things, which were sold—arranged and adapted, and settled down in tolerable comfort. The boys, when they came from school, looked with doubtful faces at the change, especially Reginald, who was humiliated by it, and found fault with the room allotted to him, and with the deficiencies of service. "Poor! why are we poor? It must be some one's fault," said this boy to his sister Agatha, who cried, and declared passionately that she wished he had not come back, but had gone to his fine godfather, whom he was always talking of. When an invitation arrived for him from his godfather, some days later, I think they were all glad; for Reginald was very like his father, and could not bear anything mean or poor. The number of servants had dwindled to one, who made believe to be of all work, and did a little of everything. Except in the case of those lucky families who abound in fiction, and now and then, *par exception*, are to be found in ordinary life, who possess a faithful and devoted and all-accomplished woman, who, for love of them, forsakes all hopes of bettering herself, and applies at once genius and knowledge to the multifarious duties of maid-of-all-work—this class of functionary is as great a trouble to her employers as to herself; and to fall back upon attendance so uninstructed and indifferent is one of the hardest consequences of social downfall. The girls had to make up Mary Jane's deficiencies in the White House; and at first, as they were not used to it, the results were but little consolatory. Even Bertie, perhaps, though a good son and a good boy, was not sorry to get back to school, and to the society of his friends, after these first holidays, which had not been happy ones. Poor children! none of them had ever known before what it was to do without what they wanted, and to be content with the bare necessaries of life.

All the same, a shower of cards from all the best people about came pouring down upon the new dwellers in the White House, and were taken in by Mary Jane between a grimy finger and thumb to the drawing-room,

where the rumble of the departing carriages excited Agatha and Patty, at least, if no one else. And all the people on the Green made haste to call to express their sympathy and friendliness. Mrs. Wodehouse was the only one who did not ask to see Mrs. Damerel; but even she did not lose a day in calling; and, indeed, it was while on her way from the White House that for the first time she met Rose, who had been out about some business for her mother, and who, with her black veil over her face, was straying slowly home. Mrs. Wodehouse said, "Good morning," with a determination to hold by her formula and not be tempted into kindness; but when the girl put back her veil and showed her pale face, the good woman's heart melted in spite of herself.

"How pale you are!" she said. "Oh, Rose! and how is your mother?" she added hastily, trying to save herself from the overflowing of tenderness which came upon her unawares.

"Are you going to see her?" said Rose.

"I have been to call; I did not, of course, expect she would see me. And how do you like the White House? I hope you have not been ill; you do not look so fresh as when I saw you last."

"It is very nice," said Rose, answering the first question; "though it feels damp just at first; we all think we shall soon get used to it. It is a long time since I saw you last."

This was said with a little piteous smile which made Mrs. Wodehouse's resolution "never to forgive" become more and more hard to keep.

"I could not think I was wanted," she said, with an effort to appear short and stern; "or I should have gone to your mother before now."

"Why?" asked Rose, with a wondering glance; and then, as there was a dead pause, which was awkward, she said, softly: "I hope you have news from—your son?"

"Oh, yes; I have news from him. He is always very good in writing. There never was a kinder boy to his mother. He never forgets me; though there are many people who would fain get his attention. Edward is always finding friends wherever he goes."

"I am glad," said poor Rose.

"Plenty of friends! I have nothing but good news of him. He writes in the best of spirits. Oh, Rose!" cried Mrs. Wodehouse, hurriedly running one subject into another with breathless precipitancy, "how could you be so heartless—so unkind—as not to come down stairs when I asked you to bid my poor boy good-bye?"

A flush of colour came upon Rose's pale face; it made her look like herself again. "I could not," she said; "do not be angry. I have so wanted to tell you. There was nobody there but me, and he held my hand, and would not let me leave him. I could not. Oh! how glad I am that you have asked me! It was not my fault." Her father's name brought the big tears to her eyes. "Poor papa!" she added, softly, with an instinctive sense that he needed defence.

Whether Mrs. Wodehouse would have taken her to her arms forthwith on the open Green in the wintry afternoon light, if no one had disturbed them, I cannot tell; but, just as she was putting out her hands to the girl, they were interrupted by a third person, who had been coming along the road unnoticed, and who now came forward, with his hat in his hand, and with the usual enquiry about her mother to which Rose was accustomed. The sound of his voice made Mrs. Wodehouse start with suppressed anger and dismay; and Rose looked out from the heavy shadow of the crape veil, which showed the paleness of her young face, as if under a penthouse or heavy-shaded cavern. But she was not pale at that moment; a light of emotion was in her face. The tears were hanging on her eyelashes; her soft lip was quivering. Mr. Incledon thought that grief and downfall had done all that the severest critic could have desired for her young beauty. It had given tenderness, expression, feeling to the blooming rose face, such as is almost incompatible with the first radiance of youth.

"Would Mrs. Damerel see me, do you think?" he asked; "or is it too early to intrude upon her? It is about business I want to speak."

"I will ask," said Rose. "But if it is about business she will be sure to see you. She says she is always able for that."

"Then I will say good-bye," said Mrs. Wodehouse, unreasonably excited and angry, she could scarcely tell why. She made a step forward, and then came back again with a little compunction, to add, in an undertone: "I am glad we have had this little explanation. I will tell him when I write, and it will please him, too."

"You have not been quarrelling with Mrs. Wodehouse, that you should have little explanations?" said Mr. Incledon, as he walked along to the White House by Rose's side.

"Oh, no! it was nothing;" but he saw the old rose flush sweep over the cheeks which had half relapsed into paleness. What was it? and who did Mrs. Wodehouse mean to write to? and what was she glad about? These foolish questions got into the man's head, though they were too frivolous to be thought of. She took him into the drawing-room at the White House, which was almost dark by this time, it was so low; and where the cheery glimmer of the fire made the room look much more cheerful than it ever was in the short daylight, through the many branches that surrounded the house. Mrs. Damerel was sitting alone there over the fire; and Rose left him with her mother, and went away, bidding Agatha watch over the children, that no one might disturb mamma. "She is talking to Mr. Incledon about business," said Rose, passing on to her own room; and Agatha, who was sharp of wit, could not help wondering what pleasant thing had happened to her sister to make her voice so soft and thrilling. "I almost expected to hear her sing," Agatha said afterwards; though indeed a voice breaking forth in a song, as all their voices used to do, six months ago, would have seemed something impious at this moment, in the shadow that lay over the house.

Mr. Incledon was nearly an hour "talking business" with Mrs. Damerel, during which time they sat in the firelight and had no candles, being too much interested in their conversation to note how time passed. Mrs. Damerel said nothing about the business when the children came in to tea—the homely and inexpensive meal which had replaced dinner in the White House. Her eyes showed signs of tears, and she was very quiet, and let the younger ones do and say almost what they pleased. But if the mother was quiescent, Rose, too, had changed in a different way. Instead of sitting passive, as she usually did, it was she who directed Agatha and Patty about their lessons, and helped Dick, and sent the little ones off at their proper hour to bed. There was a little glimmer of light in her eyes, a little dawn of colour in her cheek. The reason was nothing that could have been put into words—a something perfectly baseless, visionary, and unreasonable. It was not the hope of being reconciled to Edward Wodehouse, for she had never quarrelled with him; nor the hope of seeing him again, for he was gone for years. It was merely that she had recovered her future, her imagination, her land of promise. The visionary barrier which had shut her out from that country of dreams had been removed—it would be hard to say how; for good Mrs. Wodehouse certainly was not the doorkeeper of Rose's imagination, nor had it in her power to shut and open at her pleasure. But what does how and why matter in that visionary region? It was so, which is all that need be said. She was not less sorrowful, but she had recovered herself. She was not less lonely, nor did she feel less the change in her position; but she was once more Rose, an individual creature, feeling the blood run in her veins, and the light lighten upon her, and the world spread open before her.

> If I have freedom in my love,
> And in my soul am free—

I suppose this was how she felt. She had got back that consciousness which is sometimes bitter and sometimes sad, but without which we cannot live—the consciousness that she was no shadow in the world, but herself; no reflection of another's will and feelings, but possessor of her own.

When her mother and she were left alone, Rose got up from where she was sitting and drew a low chair, which belonged to one of the children, to her mother's knee. Mrs. Damerel, too, had watched Agatha's lingering exit with some signs of impatience, as if she, too, had something to say; but Rose had not noticed this, any more than her mother had noticed the new impulse which was visible in her child. The girl was so full of it that she began to speak instantly, without waiting for any question.

"Mamma," she said, softly, "I have not been a good daughter to you; I have left you to take all the trouble, and I have not tried to be of use. I want to tell you that I have found it out, and that I will try with all my heart to be different from to-day."

"Rose, my dear child!"—Mrs. Damerel was surprised and troubled. The tears, which rose so easily now, came with a sudden rush to her eyes. She put her arms round the girl, and drew her close, and kissed her. "I have never found fault with you, my darling," she said.

"No, mamma; and that makes me feel it more. But it shall be different; I am sorry, more sorry than I can tell you; but it shall be different from to-day."

"But, Rose, what has put this into your head to-day?"

A wavering blush came and went upon Rose's face. She had it almost in her heart to tell her mother; but yet there was nothing to tell, and what could she say?

"I—can't tell, mamma. It is mild and like spring. I think it was being out, and hearing people speak—kindly——"

Here Rose paused, and, in her turn, let fall a few soft tears. She had gone out very little, scarcely stirring beyond the garden, since her father's death, and Mrs. Damerel thought it was the mere impulse of reviving life; unless indeed——

"My dear, did Mr. Incledon say anything to you?" she asked, with a vague hope.

"Mr. Incledon? Oh, no! except to ask me if you would see him—on business. What was his business?" said innocent Rose, looking up into her mother's face.

"Rose," said Mrs. Damerel, "I was just about to speak to you on a very important matter when you began. My dear, I must tell you at once what Mr. Incledon's business was. It was about you."

"About me?" All the colour went out of Rose's face in a moment; she recollected the visit to Whitton, and the sudden light that had flashed upon her as he and she looked at the picture together. She had forgotten all about it months ago, and indeed had never again thought of Mr. Incledon. But now in a moment her nerves began to thrill and her heart to beat; yet she herself, in whom the nerves vibrated and the heart throbbed, to turn to stone.

"Rose, you are not nervous or silly like many girls, and you know now what life is—not all a happy dream, as it sometimes seems at the beginning. My dear, I have in my hand a brighter future than you ever could have hoped for, if you will have it. Mr. Incledon has asked my leave to ask you to be his wife. Rose——"

"Me! his wife!" Rose clutched at her mother's hand and repeated these words with a pant of fright; though it seemed to her the moment they were said as if she had all her life known they were coming, and had heard them a hundred times before.

"That is what he wants, Rose. Don't tremble so, nor look at me so wildly. It is a wonderful thing to happen to so young a girl as you. He is very good and very kind, and he would be, oh! of so much help to all your family; and he could give you everything that heart can desire, and restore you to far more than you have lost; and he is very fond of you,

and would make you an excellent husband. I promised to speak to you, dear. You must think it over. He does not wish you to give him an answer at once."

"Mamma," said Rose, hoarsely, with a sudden trembling which seemed to reach into her very heart, "is it not better to give an answer at once? Mamma, I am not fond of him. I think it would be best to say so now."

"You are not fond of him? Is that all the consideration you give such a question? You do not intend *that* for an answer, Rose?"

"Oh, mamma, is it not enough? What more answer could I give? I am not fond of him at all. I could not pretend to be. When it is an answer like that, surely it is best to give it now."

"And so," said her mother, "you throw aside one of the best offers that ever a girl received with less thought on the subject than you would give to a cat or a dog! You decide your whole future without one thought. Rose, is this the helpfulness you have just promised me? Is this the thoughtfulness for yourself and all of us that I have a right to expect?"

Rose did not know what to reply. She looked at her mother with eyes suddenly hollowed out by fear and anxiety and trouble, and watched every movement of her lips and hands with a growing alarm which she could not control.

"You do not speak? Rose, Rose, you must see how wrong you would be to act so hastily. If it were a question of keeping or sending away a servant, nay, even a dog, you would give more thought to it; and this is a man who loves, who would make you happy. Oh, do not shake your head! How can a child of your age know? A man who, I am sure, would make you happy; a man who could give you everything and more than everything, Rose. I cannot let you decide without thought."

"Does one need to think?" said Rose, slowly, after a pause. "I do not care for him, I cannot care for him. You would not have me tell a lie?"

"I would have you deny yourself," cried her mother; "I would have you think of some higher rule than your own pleasure. Is that the best thing in the world, to please yourself? Oh, I could tell you stories of that! Why are we in this poor little house with nothing? why is my poor Bertie dependent upon my brother, and you girls forced to work like maid-servants, and our life all changed? Through self-indulgence, Rose. Oh! God forgive me for saying it, but I must tell the truth. Through choosing the pleasure of the moment rather than the duties that we cannot shake off; through deciding always to do what one liked rather than to do what was right. Here are eight of you children with your lives blighted, all that one might be pleasant and unburdened. I have suffered under it all my life. Not anything wrong, not anything wicked, but only, and always, and before everything what one liked one's self."

Mrs. Damerel spoke with a passion which was very unlike her usual

calm. The lines came into her brow which Rose remembered of old, but which the tranquillity of grief had smoothed out. A hot colour mounted to her cheeks, making a line beneath her eyes. The girl was struck dumb by this sudden vehemence. Her reason was confused by the mingled truth and sophistry, which she felt without knowing how to disentangle them, and she was shocked and wounded by the implied blame thus cast upon him who had been of late the idol of her thoughts, and whom, if she had once timidly begun to form a judgment on him, she had long ceased to think of as anything but perfect.

"Oh! stop, stop! don't say any more!" she cried, clasping her hands.

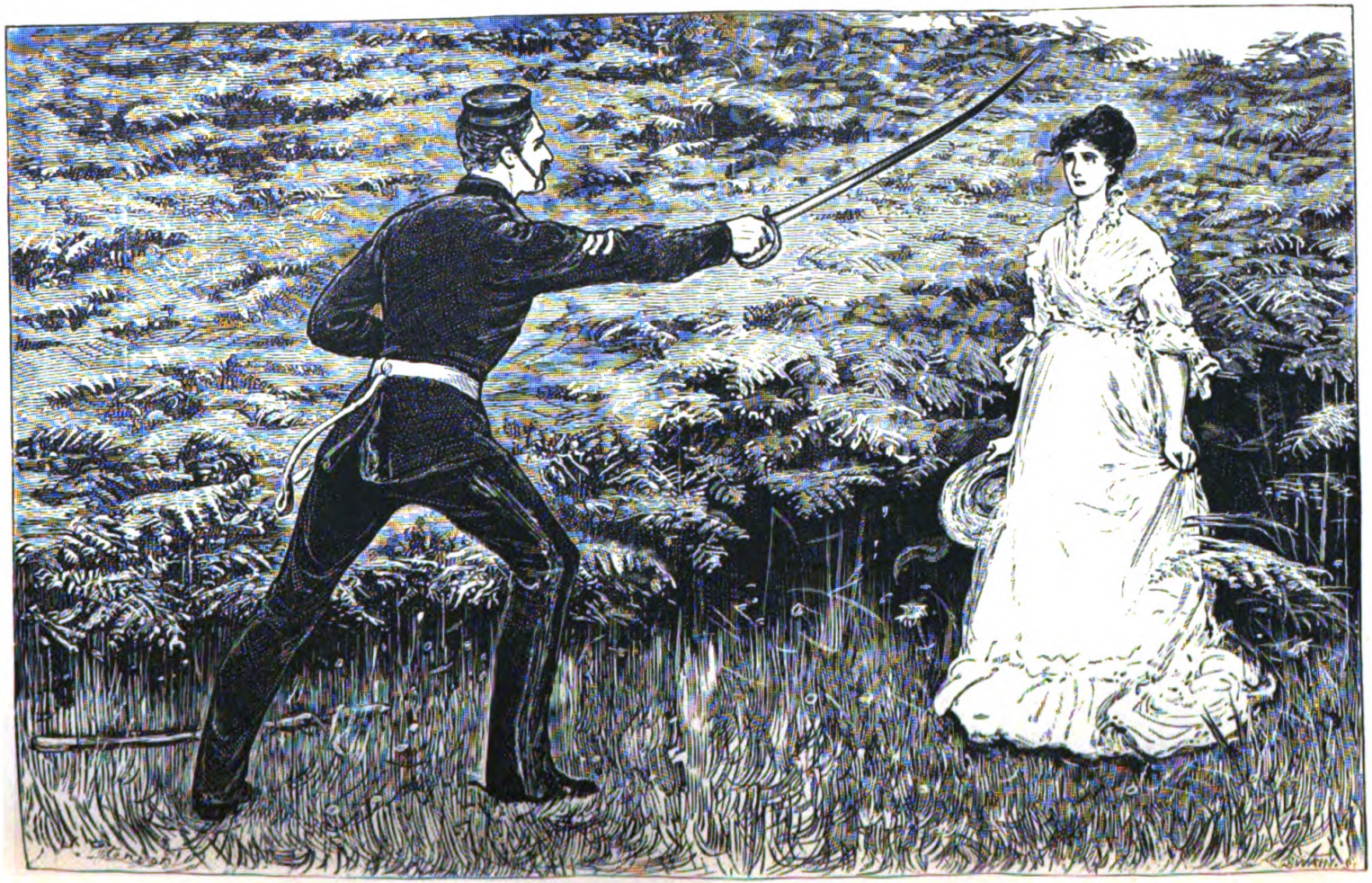
"I cannot stop," said Mrs. Damerel; "not now, when I have begun. I never thought to say as much to one of his children, and to no other could I ever speak, Rose. I see the same thing in Reginald, and it makes my heart sick; must I find it in you too? There are people who are so happy as to like what they have to do, what it is their duty to do; and these are the blessed ones. But it is not always, it is not often, so in this life. Dear, listen to what I say. Here is a way by which you may make up for much of the harm that has been done; you may help all that belong to you; you may put yourself in a position to be useful to many; you may gain what men only gain by the labour of their lives; and all this by marrying a good man whom you will make happy. Will you throw it away because at the first glance it is not what your fancy chooses? Will you set your own taste against everybody's advantage? Oh, my darling, think, think! Do not let your first motive in the first great thing you are called upon to do, be mere self!"

Mrs. Damerel stopped short, with a dry glitter in her eyes and a voice which was choked and broken. She was moved to the extent of passion—she who in general was so self-restrained. A combination of many emotions worked within her. To her mind, every good thing for her child was contained in this proposal; and in Rose's opposition to it she saw the rising of the poisonous monster which had embittered her whole life. She did not pause to ask herself what there was in the nature of this sacrifice she demanded, which made it less lawful, less noble, than the other sacrifices which are the Christian's highest ideal of duty. It was enough that by this step, which did not seem to Mrs. Damerel so very hard, Rose would do everything for herself and much for her family, and that she hesitated, declined to take it, because it was not pleasant, because she did not like it. Like it! The words raised a perfect storm in the breast of the woman who had been made wretched all her life by her ineffectual struggle against the habitual decision of her husband for what he liked. She was too much excited to hear what Rose had to say; if, indeed, poor Rose had anything to say after this sudden storm which had broken upon her.

"We will speak of it to-morrow, when you have had time to think," she said, kissing her daughter, and dismissing her hastily. When Rose

had gone, she fell back into her chair by the waning firelight, and thought over the many times in her own life when she had battled and had been worsted on this eternal point of difference between the two classes of humanity. She had struggled for self-denial against self-indulgence in a hundred different ways on a hundred fields of battle, and here was the end of it: a poor old house, tumbling to pieces about her ears, a poor little pittance, just enough to give her children bread; and for those children no prospect but toil for which they had not been trained, and which changed their whole conception of life. Bertie, her bright boy, for whom everything had been hoped, if her brother's precarious bounty should fail, what was there before him but a poor little clerkship in some office from which he never could rise, and which, indeed, his uncle had suggested at first as a way of making him helpful to his family. God help her! This was what a virtuous and natural preference for the things one liked had brought Mrs. Damerel to; and if her mind took a confused and overstrained view of the subject, and of the lengths to which self-denial ought to be carried, was it any wonder? I think there is a great deal to be said on her side of the case.

Rose, for her part, lit her candle and went up the old stairs—which creaked under her light foot—with her head bent down, and her heart stifled under a weight that was too much for her. A cold, cold January night, the chill air coming in at the old casements, the dark skies without lending no cheering influence, and no warmth of cheery fires within to neutralise Nature's heaviness; an accusation thrown upon her under which her whole being ached and revolted; a duty set before her which was terrible to think of; and no one to advise, or comfort, or help. What was she to do?



SHE TOOK UP HER POSITION AS DIRECTED.

THE

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JUNE, 1874.

Far from the Madding Crowd.

CHAPTER XXV.

The New Acquaintance Described.



IDIOSYNCRASY and vicissitude had combined to stamp Sergeant Troy as an exceptional being.

He was a man to whom memories were an encumbrance, and anticipations a superfluity. Simply feeling, considering, and caring for what was before his eyes, he was vulnerable only in the present. His outlook upon time was as a transient flash of the eye now and then: that projection of consciousness into days gone by and to come, which makes the past a synonym for the pathetic and the future a word for circumspection, was foreign to Troy. With him the past was yesterday; the future, to-morrow; never, the day after.

On this account he might, in certain lights, have been regarded as one of the most fortunate of his order. For it may be argued with great

plausibility that reminiscence is less an endowment than a disease, and that expectation in its only comfortable form—that of absolute faith—is practically an impossibility; whilst in the form of hope and the secondary compounds, patience, impatience, resolve, curiosity, it is a constant fluctuation between pleasure and pain.

Sergeant Troy, being entirely innocent of the practice of expectation, was never disappointed. To set against this negative gain there may have been some positive losses from a certain narrowing of the higher tastes and sensations which it entailed. But limitation of the capacity is never recognised as a loss by the loser therefrom: in this attribute moral or æsthetic poverty contrasts plausibly with material, since those who suffer do not see it, whilst those who see it do not suffer. It is not a denial of anything to have been always without it, and what Troy had never enjoyed he did not miss; but, being fully conscious that what sober people missed he enjoyed, his capacity, though really less, seemed greater than theirs.

He was perfectly truthful towards men, but to women lied like a Cretan—a system of ethics, above all others, calculated to win popularity at the first flush of admission into lively society; and the possibility of the favour gained being but transient had reference only to the future.

He never passed the line which divides the spruce vices from the ugly; and hence, though his morals had never been applauded, disapproval of them had frequently been tempered with a smile. This treatment had led to his becoming a sort of forestaller of other men's experiences of the glorious class, to his own aggrandisement as a Corinthian, rather than to the moral profit of his hearers.

His reason and his propensities had seldom any reciprocating influence, having separated by mutual consent long ago: thence it sometimes happened that, while his intentions were as honourable as could be wished, any particular deed formed a dark background which threw them into fine relief. The Sergeant's vicious phases being the offspring of impulse, and his virtuous phases of cool meditation, the latter had a modest tendency to be oftener heard of than seen.

Troy was full of activity, but his activities were less of a locomotive than a vegetative nature; and, never being based upon any original choice of foundation or direction, they were exercised on whatever object chance might place in their way. Hence, whilst he sometimes reached the brilliant in speech, because that was spontaneous, he fell below the commonplace in action, from inability to guide incipient effort. He had a quick comprehension and considerable force of character; but, being without the power to combine them, the comprehension became engaged with trivialities whilst waiting for the will to direct it, and the force wasted itself in useless grooves through unheeding the comprehension.

He was a fairly well-educated man for one of middle class—exceptionally well educated for a common soldier. He spoke fluently and unceasingly. He could in this way be one thing and seem another: for

instance, he could speak of love and think of dinner; call on the husband to look at the wife; be eager to pay and intend to owe.

The wondrous power of flattery in *passados* at woman is a perception so universal as to be remarked upon by many people almost as automatically as they repeat a proverb, or say that they are Christians and the like, without thinking much of the enormous corollaries which spring from the proposition. Still less is it acted upon for the good of the complemental being alluded to. With the majority such an opinion is shelved with all those trite aphorisms which require some catastrophe to bring their tremendous meanings thoroughly home. When expressed with some amount of reflectiveness it seems co-ordinate with a belief that this flattery must be reasonable to be effective. It is to the credit of men that few attempt to settle the question by experiment, and it is for their happiness, perhaps, that accident has never settled it for them. Nevertheless, that the power of a male dissembler, who by the simple process of deluging her with untenable fictions charms the female wisely, becomes limitless and absolute to the extremity of perdition, is a truth taught to many by unsought and wringing occurrences. And some—frequently those who are definable as middle-aged youths, though not always—profess to have attained the same knowledge by other and converse experiences, and jauntily continue their indulgence in such experiences with terrible effect. Sergeant Troy was one. He had been known to observe casually that in dealing with womankind the only alternative to flattery was cursing and swearing. There was no third method. "Treat them fairly, and you are a lost man," he would say.

This person's public appearance in Weatherbury promptly followed his arrival there. A week or two after the shearing, Bathsheba, feeling a nameless relief of spirits on account of Boldwood's absence, approached her hayfields and looked over the hedge towards the haymakers. They consisted in about equal proportions of gnarled and flexuous forms, the former being the men, the latter the women, who wore tilt bonnets covered with nankeen, which hung in a curtain upon their shoulders. Coggan and Mark Clark were mowing in a less forward meadow, Clark humming a tune to the strokes of his scythe, to which Jan made no attempt to keep time with his. In the first mead they were already loading hay, the women raking it into cocks and windrows, and the men tossing it upon the waggon.

From behind the waggon a bright scarlet spot emerged, and went on loading unconcernedly with the rest. It was the gallant Sergeant, who had come haymaking for pleasure; and nobody could deny that he was doing the mistress of the farm real knight-service by this voluntary contribution of his labour at a busy time.

As soon as she had entered the field Troy saw her, and sticking his pitchfork into the ground and picking up his walking-cane, he came forward. Bathsheba blushed with half-angry embarrassment, and adjusted her eyes as well as her feet to the direct line of her path.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SCENE ON THE VERGE OF THE HAY-MEAD.

"AH, Miss Everdene!" said the Sergeant, lifting his diminutive cap. "Little did I think it was you I was speaking to the other night. And yet, if I had reflected, the 'Queen of the Corn-market' (truth is truth at any hour of the day or night, and I heard you so named in Casterbridge yesterday), the 'Queen of the Corn-market,' I say, could be no other woman. I step across now to beg your forgiveness a thousand times for having been led by my feelings to express myself too strongly for a stranger. To be sure I am no stranger to the place—I am Sergeant Troy, as I told you, and I have assisted your uncle in these fields no end of times when I was a lad. I have been doing the same for you to-day."

"I suppose I must thank you for that, Sergeant Troy," said the "Queen of the Corn-market," in an indifferently grateful tone.

The Sergeant looked hurt and sad. "Indeed you must not, Miss Everdene," he said. "Why could you think such a thing necessary?"

"I am glad it is not."

"Why? if I may ask without offence."

"Because I don't much want to thank you for anything."

"I am afraid I have made a hole with my tongue that my heart will never mend. Oh these intolerable times: that ill-luck should follow a man for honestly telling a woman she is beautiful! 'Twas the most I said—you must own that; and the least I could say—that I own myself."

"There is some talk I could do without more easily than money."

"Indeed. That remark seems somewhat digressive."

"It means that I would rather have your room than your company."

"And I would rather have curses from you than kisses from any other woman; so I'll stay here."

Bathsheba was absolutely speechless. And yet she could not help giving an interested side-thought to the Sergeant's ingenuity.

"Well," continued Troy, "I suppose there is a praise which is rudeness, and that may be mine. At the same time there is a treatment which is injustice, and that may be yours. Because a plain blunt man, who has never been taught concealment, speaks out his mind without exactly intending it, he's to be snapped off like a son of a sinner."

"Indeed there's no such case between us," she said, turning away. "I don't allow strangers to be bold and impudent—even in praise of me."

"Ah—it is not the fact but the method which offends you," he said, sorrowfully. "But I have the sad satisfaction of knowing that my words, whether pleasing or offensive, are unmistakably true. Would you have had me look at you, and tell my acquaintance that you are quite a commonplace woman, to save you the embarrassment of being stared at if they come near you? Not I. I couldn't tell any such ridiculous lie

about a beauty to encourage a single woman in England in too excessive a modesty."

"It is all pretence—what you are saying!" exclaimed Bathsheba, laughing in spite of herself at the Sergeant's palpable method. "You have a rare invention, Sergeant Troy. Why couldn't you have passed by me that night, and said nothing?—that was all I meant to reproach you for."

"Because I wasn't going to," he said, smiling. "Half the pleasure of a feeling lies in being able to express it on the spur of the moment, and I let out mine. It would have been just the same if you had been the reverse person—ugly and old—I should have exclaimed about it in the same way."

"How long is it since you have been so afflicted with strong feeling then?"

"Oh, ever since I was big enough to know loveliness from deformity."

"'Tis to be hoped your sense of the difference you speak of doesn't stop at faces, but extends to morals as well."

"I won't speak of morals or religion—my own or anybody else's. Though perhaps I should have been a very good Christian if you pretty women hadn't made me an idolater."

Bathsheba moved on to hide the irrepressible dimplings of merriment. Troy followed entreatingly.

"But—Miss Everdene—you do forgive me?"

"Hardly."

"Why?"

"You say such things."

"I said you were beautiful, and I'll say so still, for, by —, so you are! The most beautiful ever I saw, or may I fall dead this instant! Why, upon my——"

"Don't—don't! I won't listen to you—you are so profane!" she said, in a restless state between distress at hearing him and a *penchant* to hear more.

"I again say you are a most fascinating woman. There's nothing remarkable in my saying so, is there? I'm sure the fact is evident enough. Miss Everdene, my opinion may be too forcibly let out to please you, and, for the matter of that, too insignificant to convince you, but surely it is honest, and why can't it be excused?"

"Because it—it isn't a correct one," she femininely murmured.

"Oh fie—fie! Am I any worse for breaking the third of that Terrible Ten than you for breaking the ninth?"

"Well, it doesn't seem *quite* true to me that I am fascinating," she replied evasively.

"Not so to you: then I say with all respect that, if so, it is owing to your modesty, Miss Everdene. But surely you must have been told by everybody of what everybody notices? and you should take their words for it."

"They don't say so, exactly."

"Oh yes, they must!"

"Well, I mean to my face, as you do," she went on, allowing herself to be further lured into a conversation that intention had rigorously forbidden.

"But you know they think so?"

"No—that is—I certainly have heard Liddy say they do, but . . ." She paused.

Capitulation—that was the purport of the simple reply, guarded as it was—capitulation, unknown to herself. Never did a fragile tailless sentence convey a more perfect meaning. The careless Sergeant smiled within himself, and probably the devil smiled too from a loop-hole in Tophet, for the moment was the turning-point of a career. Her tone and mien signified beyond mistake that the seed which was to lift the foundation had taken root in the chink: the remainder was a mere question of time and natural seriate changes.

"There the truth comes out!" said the soldier, in reply. "Never tell me that a young lady can live in a buzz of admiration without knowing something about it. Ah, well, Miss Everdene, you are—pardon my blunt way—you are rather an injury to our race than otherwise."

"How—indeed?" she said, opening her eyes.

"Oh, it is true enough. I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb (an old country saying, not of much account, but it will do for a rough soldier), and so I will speak my mind, regardless of your pleasure, and without hoping or intending to get your pardon. Why, Miss Everdene, it is in this manner that your good looks may do more harm than good in the world." [The Sergeant looked down the mead in pained abstraction.] "Probably some one man on an average falls in love with each ordinary woman. She can marry him: he is content, and leads a useful life. Such women as you a hundred men always covet—your eyes will bewitch scores on scores into an unavailing fancy for you—you can only marry one of that many. Out of these say twenty will endeavour to drown the bitterness of despised love in drink: twenty more will mope away their lives without a wish or attempt to make a mark in the world, because they have no ambition apart from their attachment to you: twenty more—the susceptible person myself possibly among them—will be always draggling after you, getting where they may just see you, doing desperate things. Men are such constant fools! The rest may try to get over their passion with more or less success. But all these men will be saddened. And not only those ninety-nine men, but the ninety-nine women they might have married are saddened with them. There's my tale. That's why I say that a woman so charming as yourself, Miss Everdene, is hardly a blessing to her race."

The handsome Sergeant's features were during this speech as rigid and stern as John Knox's in addressing his gay young queen.

Seeing she made no reply, he said, "Do you read French?"

"No: I began, but when I got to the verbs, father died," she said, simply.

"I do—when I have an opportunity, which latterly has not been often (my mother was a Parisian)—and there's a proverb they have, Qui aime bien, châtie bien—he chastens who loves well. Do you understand me?"

"Ah!" she replied, and there was even a little tremulousness in the usually cool girl's voice; "if you can only fight half as winningly as you can talk, you are able to make a pleasure of a bayonet wound!" And then poor Bathsheba instantly perceived her slip in making this admission: in hastily trying to retrieve it, she went from bad to worse. "Don't, however, suppose that *I* derive any pleasure from what you tell me."

"I know you do not—I know it perfectly," said Troy, with much hearty conviction on the exterior of his face: and altering the expression to moodiness; "when a dozen men are ready to speak tenderly to you, and give the admiration you deserve without adding the warning you need, it stands to reason that my poor rough-and-ready mixture of praise and blame cannot convey much pleasure. Fool as I may be, I am not so conceited as to suppose that."

"I think you—are conceited, nevertheless," said Bathsheba, hesitatingly, and looking askance at a reed she was fitfully pulling with one hand, having lately grown feverish under the soldier's system of procedure—not because the nature of his cajolery was entirely unperceived, but because its vigour was overwhelming.

"I would not own it to anybody else—nor do I exactly to you. Still, there might have been some self-conceit in my foolish supposition the other night. I knew that what I said in admiration might be an opinion too often forced upon you to give any pleasure, but I certainly did think that the kindness of your nature might prevent you judging an uncontrolled tongue harshly—which you have done—and thinking badly of me, and wounding me this morning, when I am working hard to save your hay."

"Well, you need not think more of that: perhaps you did not mean to be rude to me by speaking out your mind: indeed, I believe you did not," said the shrewd woman, in painfully innocent earnest. "And I thank you for giving help here. But—but mind you don't speak to me again in that way, or in any other, unless I speak to you."

"Oh, Miss Bathsheba! That is too hard!"

"No, it isn't. Why is it?"

"You will never speak to me; for I shall not be here long. I am soon going back again to the miserable monotony of drill—and perhaps our regiment will be ordered out soon. And yet you take away the one little ewe-lamb of pleasure that I have in this dull life of mine. Well, perhaps generosity is not a woman's most marked characteristic."

"When are you going from here?" she asked, with some interest.

"In a month."

"But how can it give you pleasure to speak to me?"

"Can you ask, Miss Everdene—knowing as you do—what my offence is based on?"

"If you do care so much for a silly trifle of that kind, then, I don't mind doing it," she uncertainly and doubtingly answered. "But you can't really care for a word from me? you only say so—I think you only say so."

"That's unjust—but I won't repeat the remark. I am too gratified to get such a mark of your friendship at any price to cavil at the tone. I *do*, Miss Everdene, care for it. You may think a man foolish to want a mere word—just a good morning. Perhaps he is—I don't know. But you have never been a man looking upon a woman, and that woman yourself."

"Well."

"Then you know nothing of what such an experience is like—and Heaven forbid that you ever should."

"Nonsense, flatterer! What is it like? I am interested in knowing."

"Put shortly, it is not being able to think, hear, or look in any direction except one without wretchedness, nor there without torture."

"Ah, Sergeant, it won't do—you are pretending," she said, shaking her head dubiously. "Your words are too dashing to be true."

"I am not, upon the honour of a soldier."

"But *why* is it so?—Of course, I ask for mere pastime."

"Because you are so distracting—and I am so distracted."

"You look like it."

"I am indeed."

"Why you only saw me the other night, you stupid man."

"That makes no difference. The lightning works instantaneously. I loved you then, at once—as I do now."

Bathsheba surveyed him curiously, from the feet upward, as high as she liked to venture her glance, which was not quite so high as his eyes.

"You cannot and you don't," she said, demurely. "There is no such sudden feeling in people. I won't listen to you any longer. Dear me, I wish I knew what o'clock it is—I am going—I have wasted too much time here already."

The Sergeant looked at his watch and told her. "What, haven't you a watch, Miss?" he enquired.

"I have not just at present—I am about to get a new one."

"No. You shall be given one. Yes—you shall. A gift, Miss Everdene—a gift."

And before she knew what the young man was intending, a heavy gold watch was in her hand.

"It is an unusually good one for a man like me to possess," he

quietly said. "That watch has a history. Press the spring and open the back."

She did so.

"What do you see?"

"A crest and a motto."

"A coronet with five points, and beneath, *Cedit amor rebus*—'Love yields to circumstance.' It's the motto of the Earls of Severn. That watch belonged to the last lord, and was given to my mother's husband, a medical man, for his use till I came of age, when it was to be given to me. It was all the fortune that ever I inherited. That watch has regulated imperial interests in its time—the stately ceremonial, the courtly assignation, pompous travels, and lordly sleeps. Now it is yours."

"But, Sergeant Troy, I cannot take this—I cannot!" she exclaimed, with round-eyed wonder. "A gold watch! What are you doing? Don't be such a dissembler!"

The Sergeant retreated to avoid receiving back his gift, which she held out persistently towards him. Bathsheba followed as he retired.

"Keep it—do Miss Everdene—keep it!" said the erratic child of impulse. "The fact of your possessing it makes it worth ten times as much to me. A more plebeian one will answer my purpose just as well, and the pleasure of knowing whose heart my old one beats against—well, I won't speak of that. It is in far worthier hands than ever it has been in before."

"But indeed I can't have it!" she said, in a perfect simmer of distress. "Oh, how can you do such a thing; that is, if you really mean it! Give me your dead father's watch, and such a valuable one! You should not be so reckless, indeed, Sergeant Troy."

"I loved my father: good; but better, I love you more. That's how I can do it," said the Sergeant, with an intonation of such exquisite fidelity to nature that it was evidently not all acted now. Her beauty, which, whilst it had been quiescent, he had praised in jest, had in its animated phases moved him to earnest; and though his seriousness was less than she imagined, it was probably more than he imagined himself.

Bathsheba was brimming with agitated bewilderment, and she said, in half-suspicious accents of feeling, "Can it be! Oh, how can it be, that you care for me, and so suddenly! You have seen so little of me: I may not be really so—so nice-looking as I seem to you. Please, do take it; oh, do! I cannot and will not have it. Believe me, your generosity is too great. I have never done you a single kindness, and why should you be so kind to me?"

A factitious reply had been again upon his lips, but it was again suspended, and he looked at her with an arrested eye. The truth was, that as she now stood excited, wild, and honest as the day, her alluring beauty bore out so fully the epithets he had bestowed upon it that he was quite startled at his temerity in advancing them as false. He said mechanically, "Ah, why?" and continued to look at her.

"And my workfolk see me following you about the field, and are wondering. Oh, this is dreadful!" she went on, unconscious of the transmutation she was effecting.

"I did not quite mean you to accept it at first, for it is my one poor patent of nobility," he broke out, bluntly; "but, upon my soul, I wish you would now. Without any shamming, come! Don't deny me the happiness of wearing it for my sake? But you are too lovely even to care to be kind as others are."

"No, no; don't say so. I have reasons for reserve which I cannot explain."

"Let it be, then, let it be," he said, receiving back the watch at last; "I must be leaving you now. And will you speak to me for these few weeks of my stay?"

"Indeed I will. Yet, I don't know if I will! Oh, why did you come and disturb me so!"

"Perhaps in setting a gin, I have caught myself. Such things have happened. Well, will you let me work in your fields?" he coaxed.

"Yes, I suppose so; if it is any pleasure to you."

"Miss Everdene, I thank you."

"No, no."

"Good-bye!"

The Sergeant lifted his cap from the slope of his head, bowed, replaced it, and returned to the distant group of haymakers.

Bathsheba could not face the haymakers now. Her heart erratically flitting hither and thither from perplexed excitement, hot, and almost tearful, she retreated homewards, murmuring, "Oh, what have I done! what does it mean! I wish I knew how much of it was true!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

HIVING THE BEES.

THE Weatherbury bees were late in their swarming this year. It was in the latter part of June, and the day after the interview with Troy in the hayfield, that Bathsheba was standing in her garden, watching a swarm in the air and guessing their probable settling-place. Not only were they late this year, but unruly. Sometimes throughout a whole season all the swarms would alight on the lowest attainable bough—such as part of a currant-bush or espalier apple-tree; next year they would, with just the same unanimity, make straight off to the uppermost member of some tall, gaunt costard, or quarrington, and there defy all invaders who did not come armed with ladders and staves to take them.

This was the case at present. Bathsheba's eyes, shaded by one hand, were following the ascending multitude against the unexplored stretch of

blue till they ultimately halted by one of the unwieldly trees spoken of. A process was observable somewhat analogous to that of alleged formations of the universe, time and times ago. The bustling swarm had swept the sky in a scattered and uniform haze, which now thickened to a nebulous centre: this glided on to a bough and grew still denser, till it formed a solid black spot upon the light.

The men and women being all busily engaged in saving the hay—even Liddy had left the house for the purpose of lending a hand—Bathsheba resolved to hive the bees herself, if possible. She had dressed the hive with herbs and honey, fetched a ladder, brush and crook, made herself impregnable with an armour of leather gloves, straw hat and large gauze veil—once green but now faded to snuff colour—and ascended a dozen rungs of the ladder. At once she heard, not ten yards off, a voice that was beginning to have a strange power in agitating her.

"Miss Everdene, let me assist you; you should not attempt such a feat alone."

Troy was just opening the garden gate.

Bathsheba flung down the brush, crook and empty hive, pulled the skirt of her dress tightly round her ankles in a tremendous flurry, and as well as she could slid down the ladder. By the time she reached the bottom Troy was there also, and he stooped to pick up the hive.

"How fortunate I am to have dropped in at this moment!" exclaimed the Sergeant.

She found her voice in a minute. "What! and will you shake them in for me?" she asked, in what, for a defiant girl, was a faltering way; though, for a timid girl, it would have seemed a brave way enough.

"Will I!" said Troy. "Why, of course I will. How blooming you are to-day!" Troy flung down his cane and put his foot on the ladder to ascend.

"But you must have on the veil and gloves, or you'll be stung fearfully!"

"Ah, yes. I must put on the veil and gloves. Will you kindly show me how to fix them properly?"

"And you must have the broad-brimmed hat, too; for your cap has no brim to keep the veil off, and they'd reach your face."

"The broad-brimmed hat, too, by all means."

So a whimsical fate ordered that her hat should be taken off—veil and all attached—and placed upon his head, Troy tossing his own into a gooseberry bush. Then the veil had to be tied at its lower edge round his collar and the gloves put on him.

He looked such an extraordinary object in this guise that, flurried as she was, she could not avoid laughing outright. It was the removal of yet another stake from the palisade of cold manners which had kept him off.

Bathsheba looked on from the ground whilst he was busy sweeping and shaking the bees from the tree, holding up the hive with the other hand for them to fall into. She made use of an unobserved minute whilst his

attention was absorbed in the operation to arrange her plumes a little. He came down holding the hive at arm's length, behind which trailed a cloud of bees.

"Upon my life," said Troy, through the veil, "holding up this hive makes one's arm ache worse than a week of sword-exercise." When the manœuvre was complete he approached her. "Would you be good enough to untie me and let me out? I am nearly stifled inside this silk cage."

To hide her embarrassment during the unwonted process of untying the string about his neck, she said:

"I have never seen that you spoke of."

"What?"

"The sword-exercise."

"Ah! would you like to?" said Troy.

Bathsheba hesitated. She had heard wondrous reports from time to time by dwellers in Weatherbury, who had by chance sojourned awhile in Casterbridge, near the barracks, of this strange and glorious performance, the sword-exercise. Men and boys who had peeped through chinks or over walls into the barrack-yard returned with accounts of its being the most flashing affair conceivable; accoutrements and weapons glistening like stars—here, there, around—yet all by rule and compass. So she said mildly what she felt strongly.

"Yes; I should like to see it very much."

"And so you shall; you shall see me go through it."

"No! How?"

"Let me consider."

"Not with a walking-stick—I don't care to see that. It must be a real sword."

"Yes, I know; and I have no sword here; but I think I could get one by the evening. Now, will you do this?"

Troy bent over her and murmured some suggestion in a low voice.

"Oh no, indeed!" said Bathsheba, blushing. "Thank you very much, but I couldn't on any account."

"Surely you might? Nobody would know."

She shook her head, but with a weakened negation. "If I were to," she said, "I must bring Liddy, too. Might I not?"

Troy looked far away. "I don't see why you want to bring her," he said coldly.

An unconscious look of assent in Bathsheba's eyes betrayed that something more than his coldness had made her also feel that Liddy would be superfluous in the suggested scene. She had felt it, even whilst making the proposal.

"Well, I won't bring Liddy—and I'll come. But only for a very short time," she added; "a very short time."

"It will not take five minutes," said Troy.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Hollow amid the Ferns.

The hill opposite one end of Bathsheba's dwelling extended into an uncultivated tract of land, covered at this season with tall thickets of brake fern, plump and diaphanous from recent rapid growth, and radiant in hues of clear and untainted green.

At eight o'clock this midsummer evening, whilst the bristling ball of gold in the west still swept the tips of the ferns with its long, luxuriant rays, a soft brushing-by of garments might have been heard among them, and Bathsheba appeared in their midst, their soft, feathery arms caressing her up to her shoulders. She paused, turned, went back over the hill and down again to her own door, whence she cast a farewell glance upon the spot she had just left, having resolved not to remain near the place after all.

She saw a dim spot of artificial red moving round the shoulder of the rise. It disappeared on the other side.

She waited one minute—two minutes—thought of Troy's disappointment at her non-fulfilment of a promised engagement, tossed on her hat again, ran up the garden, clambered over the bank and followed the original direction. She was now literally trembling and panting at this her temerity in such an errant undertaking; her breath came and went quickly, and her eyes shone with an infrequent light. Yet go she must. She reached the verge of a pit in the middle of the ferns. Troy stood in the bottom, looking up towards her.

"I heard you rustling through the fern before I saw you," he said, coming up and giving her his hand to help her down the slope.

The pit was a hemispherical concave, naturally formed, with a top diameter of about thirty feet, and shallow enough to allow the sunshine to reach their heads. Standing in the centre, the sky overhead was met by a circular horizon of fern: this grew nearly to the bottom of the slope and then abruptly ceased. The middle within the belt of verdure was floored with a thick flossy carpet of moss and grass intermingled, so yielding that the foot was half buried within it.

"Now," said Troy, producing the sword, which, as he raised it into the sunlight, gleamed a sort of greeting, like a living thing, "first, we have four right and four left cuts; four right and four left thrusts. Infantry cuts and guards are more interesting than ours, to my mind; but they are not so swashing. They have seven cuts and three thrusts. So much as a preliminary. Well, next, our cut one is as if you were sowing your corn—so." Bathsheba saw a sort of rainbow, upside down in the air, and Troy's arm was still again. "Cut two, as if you were hedging—so. Three, as if you were reaping—so. Four, as if you were threshing—in that way. Then the same on the left. The thrusts are

these: one, two, three, four, right; one, two, three, four, left." He repeated them. "Have 'em again?" he said. "One, two ——"

She hurriedly interrupted: "I'd rather not; though I don't mind your twos and fours; but your ones and threes are terrible!"

"Very well. I'll let you off the ones and threes. Next, cuts, points and guards altogether." Troy duly exhibited them. "Then there's pursuing practice, in this way." He gave the movements as before. "There, those are the stereotyped forms. The infantry have two most diabolical upward cuts, which we are too humane to use. Like this—three, four."

"How murderous and bloodthirsty!"

"They are rather deathy. Now I'll be more interesting, and let you see some loose play—giving all the cuts and points, infantry and cavalry, quicker than lightning, and as promiscuously—with just enough rule to regulate instinct and yet not to fetter it. You are my antagonist, with this difference from real warfare, that I shall miss you every time by one hair's breadth, or perhaps two. Mind you don't flinch, whatever you do."

"I'll be sure not to!" she said invincibly.

He pointed to about a yard in front of him.

Bathsheba's adventurous spirit was beginning to find some grains of relish in these highly novel proceedings. She took up her position as directed, facing Troy.

"Now just to learn whether you have pluck enough to let me do what I wish, I'll give you a preliminary test."

He flourished the sword by way of introduction number two, and the next thing of which she was conscious was that the point and blade of the sword were darting with a gleam towards her left side, just above her hip; then of their reappearance on her right side, emerging as it were from between her ribs, having apparently passed through her body. The third item of consciousness was that of seeing the same sword, perfectly clean and free from blood held vertically in Troy's hand (in the position technically called "recover swords"). All was as quick as electricity.

"Oh!" she cried out in affright, pressing her hand to her side. "Have you run me through?—no, you have not! Whatever have you done!"

"I have not touched you," said Troy quietly. "It was mere sleight of hand. The sword passed behind you. Now you are not afraid, are you? Because if you are I can't perform. I give my word that I will not only not hurt you, but not once touch you."

"I don't think I am afraid. You are quite sure you will not hurt me?"

"Quite sure."

"Is the sword very sharp?"

"Oh no—only stand as still as a statue. Now!"

In an instant the atmosphere was transformed to Bathsheba's eyes. Beams of light caught from the low sun's rays, above, around, in front of her, well-nigh shut out earth and heaven—all emitted in the marvellous evolutions of Troy's reflecting blade, which seemed every where at once, and yet nowhere specially. These circumambient gleams were accom-

panied by a keen sibilation that was almost a whistling—also springing from all sides of her at once. In short, she was enclosed in a firmament of light, and of sharp hisses, resembling a sky-full of meteors close at hand.

Never since the broad-sword became the national weapon, had there been more dexterity shown in its management than by the hands of Sergeant Troy, and never had he been in such splendid temper for the performance as now in the evening sunshine among the ferns with Bathsheba. It may safely be asserted with respect to the closeness of his cuts, that had it been possible for the edge of the sword to leave in the air a permanent substance wherever it flew past, the space left untouched would have been a complete mould of Bathsheba's figure.

Behind the luminous streams of this *aurora militaris*, she could see the hue of Troy's sword-arm, spread in a scarlet haze over the space covered by its motions, like a twanged bowstring, and behind all Troy himself, mostly facing her; sometimes, to show the rear cuts, half turned away, his eye nevertheless always keenly measuring her breadth and outline, and his lips tightly closed in sustained effort. Next, his movements lapsed slower, and she could see them individually. The hissing of the sword had ceased, and he stopped entirely.

"That outer loose lock of hair wants tidying," he said, before she had moved or spoken. "Wait: I'll do it for you."

An arc of silver shone on her right side: the sword had descended. The lock dropped to the ground.

"Bravely borne!" said Troy. "You didn't flinch a shade's thickness. Wonderful in a woman!"

"It was because I didn't expect it. O you have spoilt my hair!"

"Only once more."

"No—no! I am afraid of you—indeed I am!" she cried.

"I won't touch you at all—not even your hair. I am only going to kill that caterpillar settling on you. Now: still!"

It appeared that a caterpillar had come from the fern and chosen the front of her boddice as his resting place. She saw the point glisten towards her bosom, and seemingly enter it. Bathsheba closed her eyes in the full persuasion that she was killed at last. However, feeling just as usual, she opened them again.

"There it is, look," said the Sergeant, holding his sword before her eyes.

The caterpillar was spitted upon its point.

"Why it is magic!" said Bathsheba, amazed.

"O no—dexterity. I merely gave point to your bosom where the caterpillar was, and instead of running you through checked the extension a thousandth of an inch short of your surface."

"But how could you chop off a curl of my hair with a sword that has no edge?"

"No edge! This sword will shave like a razor. Look here."

He touched the palm of his hand with the blade, and then, lifting it, showed her a thin shaving of scarf-skin dangling therefrom.

"But you said before beginning that it was blunt and couldn't cut me!"

"That was to get you to stand still, and so ensure your safety. The risk of injuring you through your moving was too great not to compel me to tell you an untruth to obviate it."

She shuddered. "I have been within an inch of my life, and didn't know it!"

"More precisely speaking, you have been within half an inch of being pared alive two hundred and ninety-five times."

"Cruel, cruel, 'tis of you!"

"You have been perfectly safe nevertheless. My sword never errs." And Troy returned the weapon to the scabbard.

Bathsheba overcome by a hundred tumultuous feelings resulting from the scene, abstractedly sat down on a tuft of heather.

"I must leave you now," said Troy softly. "And I'll venture to take and keep this in remembrance of you."

She saw him stoop to the grass, pick up the winding lock which he had severed from her manifold tresses, twist it round his fingers, unfasten a button in the breast of his coat, and carefully put it inside. She felt powerless to withstand or deny him. He was altogether too much for her, and Bathsheba seemed as one who, facing a reviving wind, finds it to blow so strongly that it stops the breath.

He drew near and said, "I must be leaving you." He drew nearer still. A minute later and she saw his scarlet form disappear amid the ferny thicket, almost in a flash, like a brand swiftly waved.

That minute's interval had brought the blood beating into her face, set her stinging as if aflame to the very hollows of her feet, and enlarged emotion to a compass which quite swamped thought. It had brought upon her a stroke resulting, as did that of Moses in Horeb, in a liquid stream—here a stream of tears. She felt like one who has sinned a great sin.

The circumstance had been the gentle dip of Troy's mouth downwards upon her own. He had kissed her.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PARTICULARS OF A TWILIGHT WALK.

WE now see the element of folly distinctly mingling with the many varying particulars which made up the character of Bathsheba Everdene. It was almost foreign to her intrinsic nature. It was introduced as lymph on the dart of Eros, and eventually permeated and coloured her whole constitution. Bathsheba, though she had too much understanding to be

entirely governed by her womanliness, had too much womanliness to use her understanding to the best advantage. Perhaps in no minor point does woman astonish her helpmate more than in the strange power she possesses of believing cajoleries that she knows to be false—except, indeed, in that of being utterly sceptical on strictures that she knows to be true.

Bathsheba loved Troy in the way that only self-reliant women love when they abandon their self-reliance. When a strong woman recklessly throws away her strength she is worse than a weak woman who has never had any strength to throw away. One source of her inadequacy is the novelty of the occasion. She has never had practice in making the best of such a condition. Weakness is doubly weak by being new.

Bathsheba was not conscious of guile in this matter. Though in one sense a woman of the world, it was, after all, that world of day-light coteries, and green carpets, wherein cattle form the passing crowd and winds the busy hum; where a quiet family of rabbits or hares lives on the other side of your party-wall, where your neighbour is everybody in the tything, and where calculation is confined to market-days. Of the fabricated tastes of good fashionable society she knew but little, and of the formulated self-indulgence of bad, nothing at all. Had her utmost thoughts in this direction been distinctly worded (and by herself they never were) they would only have amounted to such a matter as that she felt her impulses to be pleasanter guides than her discretion. Her love was entire as a child's, and though warm as summer it was fresh as spring. Her culpability lay in her making no attempt to control feeling by subtle and careful inquiry into consequences. She could show others the steep and thorny way, but "reck'd not her own rede."

And Troy's deformities lay deep down from a woman's vision, whilst his embellishments were upon the very surface; thus contrasting with homely Oak, whose defects were patent to the blindest, and whose virtues were as metals in a mine.

The difference between love and respect was markedly shown in her conduct. Bathsheba had spoken of her interest in Boldwood with the greatest freedom to Liddy, but she had only communed with her own heart concerning Troy.

All this infatuation Gabriel saw, and was troubled thereby from the time of his daily journey a-field to the time of his return, and on to the small hours of many a night. That he was not beloved had hitherto been his great sorrow; that Bathsheba was getting into the toils was now a sorrow greater than the first, and one which nearly obscured it. It was a result which paralleled the oft-quoted observation of Hippocrates concerning physical pains.

That is a noble though perhaps an unpromising love which not even the fear of breeding aversion in the bosom of the one beloved can deter from combating his or her errors. Oak determined to speak to his mistress. He would base his appeal on what he considered her unfair treatment of Farmer Boldwood, now absent from home.

An opportunity occurred one evening when she had gone for a short walk by a path through the neighbouring corn-fields. It was dusk when Oak, who had not been far a-field that day, took the same path and met her returning, quite pensively, as he thought.

The wheat was now tall, and the path was narrow; thus the way was quite a sunken groove between the embrowing thicket on either side. Two persons could not walk abreast without damaging the crop, and Oak stood aside to let her pass.

"Oh, is it Gabriel?" she said, "You are taking a walk too. Good night."

"I thought I would come to meet you, as it is rather late," said Oak, turning and following at her heels when she had brushed somewhat quickly by him.

"Thank you, indeed, but I am not very fearful."

"Oh no; but there are bad characters about."

"I never meet them."

Now Oak, with marvellous ingenuity, had been going to introduce the gallant Sergeant through the channel of "bad characters." But all at once the scheme broke down, it suddenly occurring to him that this was rather a clumsy way, and too bare-faced to begin with. He tried another preamble.

"And as the man who would naturally come to meet you is away from home, too—I mean Farmer Boldwood—why, thinks I, I'll go," he said.

"Ah, yes." She walked on without turning her head, and for many steps nothing further was heard from her quarter than the rustle of her dress against the heavy corn-ears. Then she resumed rather tartly:

"I don't quite understand what you meant by saying that Mr. Boldwood would naturally come to meet me."

"I meant on account of the wedding which they say is likely to take place between you and him, Miss. Forgive my speaking plainly."

"They say what is not true," she returned quickly. "No marriage is likely to take place between us."

Gabriel now put forth his unobscured opinion, for the moment had come. "Well, Miss Everdene," he said, "putting aside what people say, I never in my life saw any courting if his is not a courting of you."

Bathsheba would probably have terminated the conversation there and then by flatly forbidding the subject, had not her conscious weakness of position allured her to palter and argue in endeavours to better it.

"Since this subject has been mentioned," she said very emphatically, "I am glad of the opportunity of clearing up a mistake which is very common and very provoking. I didn't definitely promise Mr. Boldwood anything. I have never cared for him. I respect him, and he has urged me to marry him. But I have given him no distinct answer. As soon as he returns I shall do so; and the answer will be that I cannot think of marrying him."

"People are full of mistakes, seemingly."

"They are."

"The other day they said you were trifling with him, and you almost proved that you were not; lately they have said that you are not, and you straightway begin to show——"

"That I am, I suppose you mean."

"Well I hope they speak the truth."

"They do, but wrongly applied. I don't trifle with him, but then, I have nothing to do with him."

Oak was unfortunately led on to speak of Boldwood's rival in a wrong tone to her after all. "I wish you had never met that young Sergeant Troy, Miss," he sighed.

Bathsheba's steps became faintly spasmodic. "Why?" she asked.

"He is not good enough for you."

"Did any one tell you to speak to me like this?"

"Nobody at all."

"Then it appears to me that Sergeant Troy does not concern us here," she said, intractably. "Yet I must say that Sergeant Troy is an educated man and quite worthy of any woman. He is well born."

"His being higher in learning and birth than the ruck of soldiers is anything but a proof of his worth. It shows his course to be downward."

"I cannot see what this has to do with our conversation. Mr. Troy's course is not by any means downward; and his superiority *is* a proof of his worth."

"I believe him to have no conscience at all. And I cannot help begging you, Miss, to have nothing to do with him. Listen to me this once—only this once! I don't say he's such a bad man as I have fancied—I pray to God he is not. But since we don't exactly know what he is, why not behave as if he *might* be bad, simply for your own safety? Don't trust him, mistress; I ask you not to trust him so."

"Why, pray?"

"I like soldiers, but this one I do not like," he said, sturdily. "The nature of his calling may have tempted him astray, and what is mirth to the neighbours is ruin to the woman. When he tries to talk to you again, why not turn away with a short 'Good day;' and when you see him coming one way, turn the other. When he says anything laughable, fail to see the point and don't smile, and speak of him before those who will report your talk as 'that fantastical man,' or 'that Sergeant What's-his-name.' 'That man of a family that has come to the dogs.' Don't be unmannerly towards him, but harmless-uncivil, and so get rid of the man."

No Christmas robin detained by a window-pane ever pulsed as did Bathsheba now.

"I say—I say again—that it doesn't become you to talk about him. Why he should be mentioned passes me quite!" she exclaimed desperately. "I know this, th-th-that he is a thoroughly conscientious man—

blunt some times even to rudeness—but always speaking his mind about you plain to your face!"

"Oh."

"He is as good as anybody in this parish! He is very particular too, about going to church—yes, he is!"

"I am afeard nobody ever saw him there. I never did certainly."

"The reason of that is," she said eagerly, "that he goes in privately by the old tower door, just when the service commences, and sits at the back of the gallery. He told me so."

This supreme instance of Troy's goodness fell upon Gabriel's ears like the thirteenth stroke of a crazy clock. It was not only received with utter incredulity as regarded itself, but threw a doubt on all the assurances that had preceded it.

Oak was grieved to find how entirely she trusted him. He brimmed with deep feeling as he replied in a steady voice, the steadiness of which was spoilt by the palpableness of his great effort to keep it so:—

"You know, mistress, that I love you, and shall love you always. I only mention this to bring to your mind that at any rate I would wish to do you no harm: beyond that I put it aside. I have lost in the race for money and good things, and I am not such a fool as to pretend to you now I am poor, and you have got altogether above me. But Bathsheba, dear mistress, this I beg you to consider—that both to keep yourself well honoured among the workfolk, and in common generosity to an honourable man who loves you as well as I, you should be more discreet in your bearing towards this soldier."

"Don't, don't, don't!" she exclaimed, in a choking voice.

"Are you not more to me than my own affairs, and even life?" he went on. "Come, listen to me! I am six years older than you, and Mr. Boldwood is ten years older than I, and consider—I do beg you to consider before it is too late—how safe you would be in his hands!"

Oak's allusion to his own love for her lessened, to some extent, her anger at his interference; but she could not really forgive him for letting his wish to marry her be eclipsed by his wish to do her good, any more than for his slighting treatment of Troy.

"I wish you to go elsewhere," she said, a paleness of face invisible to the eye being suggested by the trembling words. "Do not remain on this farm any longer. I don't want you—I beg you to go!"

"That's nonsense," said Oak, calmly. "This is the second time you have pretended to dismiss me, and what's the use of it?"

"Pretended! You shall go, sir—your lecturing I will not hear! I am mistress here."

"Go, indeed—what folly will you say next? Treating me like Dick Tom and Harry when you know that a short time ago my position was as good as yours! Upon my life, Bathsheba, it is too barefaced. You know too that I can't go without putting things in such a strait as you wouldn't get out of I can't tell when. Unless, indeed, you'll promise to have an

understanding man as bailiff, or manager, or something. I'll go at once if you'll promise that."

"I shall have no bailiff; I shall continue to be my own manager," she said decisively.

"Very well, then; you should be thankful to me for staying. How would the farm go on with nobody to mind it but a woman? But mind this, I don't wish you to feel you owe me anything. Not I. What I do, I do. Sometimes I say I should be as glad as a bird to leave the place —for don't suppose I'm content to be a nobody. I was made for better things. However, I don't like to see your concerns going to ruin, as they must if you keep in this mind. . . . I hate taking my own measure so plainly, but upon my life your provoking ways make a man say what he wouldn't dream of other times! I own to being rather interfering. But you know well enough how it is, and who she is that I like too well, and feel too much like a fool about to be civil to her."

It is more than probable that she privately and unconsciously respected him a little for this grim fidelity, which had been shown in his tone even more than in his words. At any rate she murmured something to the effect that he might stay if he wished. She said more distinctly, "Will you leave me alone now? I don't order it as a mistress—I ask it as a woman, and I expect you not to be so uncourteous as to refuse."

"Certainly I will, Miss Everdene," said Gabriel, gently. He wondered that the request should have come at this moment, for the strife was over, and they were on a most desolate hill far from every human habitation, and the hour was getting late. He stood still and allowed her to get far ahead of him till he could only see her form upon the sky.

A distressing explanation of this anxiety to be rid of him at that point now ensued. A figure apparently rose from the earth beside her. The shape beyond all doubt was Troy's. Oak would not be even a possible listener, and at once turned back till a good two hundred yards were between the lovers and himself.

Gabriel went home by way of the churchyard. In passing the tower he thought of what she had said about the Sergeant's virtuous habit of entering the church unperceived at the beginning of service. Believing that the little gallery door alluded to was quite disused, he ascended the external flight of steps at the top of which it stood, and examined it. The pale lustre yet hanging in the north-western heaven was sufficient to show that a sprig of ivy had grown from the wall across the door to a length of more than a foot, delicately tying the panel to the stone jamb. It was a decisive proof that the door had not been opened at least since Troy came back to Weatherbury.

King Fritz.

(FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE W. M. THACKERAY.)

King Fritz at his palace of Berlin
I saw at a royal carouse,
In a periwig powdered and curling
He sat with his hat on his brows.
The handsome young princes were present,
Uncovered they stood in the hall;
And oh! it was wholesome and pleasant
To see how he treated them all!

Reclined on the softest of cushions
His Majesty sits to his meats,
The princes, like loyal young Prussians,
Have never a back to their seats.
Off salmon and venison and pheasants
He dines like a monarch august;
His sons, if they eat in his presence,
Put up with a bone or a crust.

He quaffs his bold bumpers of Rhenish,
It can't be too good or too dear;
The princes are made to replenish
Their cups with the smallest of beer.
And if ever, by words or grimaces,
Their highnesses dare to complain,
The King flings a dish in their faces,
Or batters their bones with his cane.

'Tis thus that the chief of our nation
The minds of his children improves;
And teaches polite education
By boxing the ears that he loves.
I warrant they vex him but seldom,
And so if we dealt with our sons,
If we up with our cudgels and felled 'em,
We'd teach 'em good manners at once.

Homer's Troy, and Schliemann's.

Amidst the startling survivals of antiquity, the dusty revivals of the mythic man, not one has come with such a theatrical (would that we could say dramatic!) *éclat* upon us as the recent excavations in the Troad. Priam and his kingdom have so long been consigned to the same Hades as Minerva and Theseus, Jason and Hercules, the Dioscuri and Deucalion, that it was a sensation not unlike that from suddenly seeing a megatherium in the paddock beyond your garden wall, to hear the announcement of the recovery of King Priam's treasure, lying in the square place where its oaken casket had crumbled to dust, with the key beside it which the unhappy guardian had brought at the dreadful final moment to rescue something for his consolation in exile; the ashes, calcined rocks, the pell-mell of weapons, bronze and stone—then the owl-headed Minerva, the heaps of gold vases and gold ornaments, Hecuba's head-dress and necklace, rings in countless store, helmets and battle-axes, with all the aids of the most curiously coincident items of stage business. Grave men who regard archæology as a science, and successful exploration as the highest prize of long-continued and well-directed study of history and mythology, of geography and geology, of cabinets and museums, might well be pardoned if they took this exploit of a raw student—amateur archæologue in the green stage of Homeric enthusiasm—for a plant rather than a find, and conjectured that Schliemann only discovered what he had concealed.

There are many people who find the easiest thing to believe just that which is the least credible without being impossible, and the world in general rather prefers to believe than the contrary; and Max Müller and these terrible myth-analysts have so frightfully invaded our poetic properties, and distilled so much of our heroic history into mere statement of first principles—not history, but the primal elements of it crystallized anthropomorphically—that many of us would have been glad to see the last royal successor of Dardanus come to the foot-lights and disclaim them. What a triumph for poetry, what a milestone for history, was suggested by Schliemann's cry of exultation! But closer examination shows that, while his enthusiasm and happy credulity have not been rewarded by finding what he went to find, Homer's Troy, he has unearthed a riddle which is likely to give work to archæology for some time to come.

Schliemann's early life was one of hard work and enthusiasm; as an errand boy in a commercial house in Amsterdam he contrived to lay the foundations of a linguistic education, which gave him such commercial advantages that in 1868 he retired from business with wealth enough to enable him to take up the study of archæology, drawn thereto by classical

reading. An interesting sketch of his early life, by Bayard Taylor, printed in the *New York Tribune*, shows that his enthusiasm in classical study was of such an exaltation that one might in advance predict that he would find whatever he wanted to find, and see what he went out to see, but that his scientific faculties would hardly keep pace with his fancy. "In 1869, with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in his pocket," he went into the Levant, first to Ithaca, where he soon satisfied himself of the identity of the site of Ulysses' palace, the grotto of the Nymphs, and the home of the swine-herd, "with ten of the twelve stalls for swine." The people in Ithaca, it seems, were deeply impressed with his Homeric devotion, and often gathered together to hear him read the verses of his great original; and on one occasion (to quote Mr. Taylor's translation of the passage), "in order to be heard by all, he had a table placed, as a rostrum, under a plane-tree in the centre of the village, and then read, with a loud voice, the twenty-third book of the *Odyssey*, from the opening to the 247th verse, wherein it is related how the Queen of Ithaca, the best and most chaste of women, recognizes her beloved spouse after twenty years of separation. Although I had already read the passage numberless times, I was always freshly moved whenever I perused it, and the magnificent lines made the same impression on my auditors. All wept profusely, and I was obliged to weep with them." To those who know the modern Greek, and the quick-wittedness of the people, the image of this grave foreigner who acquired the language in middle age, gathering the Ithacans about him to read to them a poem in a language of which very few of them would comprehend a sentence, even in a familiar pronunciation, must suggest other attractions than the pathos of the poem, and possibly other cause for tears than sympathy with Penelope! The schoolmaster is not a stranger in Greece, but the *Iliad* is an immense distance still from peasant Greek, and the self-satisfaction at his bardic prowess kindles a lively appreciation of his *naïveté* and kindly nature—of his ultra-German unsuspectingness and poetic sympathies—but hardly inspires any confidence in his scientific acumen or exactitude in future researches.

One is easily induced to believe in the authenticity of traditions when travelling in Greece, for the double reason that the people are as yet only partially cursed by letters, and therefore keep all things by tradition; and because, without our knowing it, the traditions have perhaps been made partly by the existing remains. Rambling over the island of Cerigo one day, I came across some abandoned excavations, some fragments of columns, and a fine Hellenic wall—evidently part of a temple of the good days of Greek art. Close by, a shepherd boy listlessly watched half-a-dozen sheep, and, more by way of opening conversation than because I expected information, I asked him what this had been. "Oh, the king's palace," he said. "But what king?" I asked. "Menelas—King Menelas, of course—don't you know?" he replied, with a look of simple wonder, as if everybody ought to know as much as that. Now here the supposed tradition had been a revival, not survival—the peasant had

borrowed, through many removes, from mythology. The so-called temple of "Menelas" was a comparatively modern temple, and the shepherd boy did much as Schliemann has just been doing—he named the oldest thing he knew to suit the favourite theory.

But the peasant of classic lands generally has a peculiar instinct for comparative archæology, an especial reverence for very old buildings; and when we come to consider that it only requires the transmission from father to son, or grandson, fifty times, of such simple facts as "here the ancient city stood," or "here the great battle between Agamemnon and Priam was fought," which is the extent of popular tradition in such matters, to take us back twenty-five hundred years, it is not so absurd as people generally think to find history in popular tradition. What is really singular, and yet, in my own experience, positively the case, is, that deeds which are equally flattering to national pride, and equally local in the interest, but which occurred within the range of *written* history, are entirely lost from popular tradition, while historico-mythical events are retained. An instance of this occurred to me in Crete, where the traditional tendency is at the maximum. I was searching for the site of Minoa, a city founded by Minos, of which Strabo says that it was only a ruin in his time, and which Spratt has placed on the shore of Suda Bay, and marked by a little circular port, over which, on the hill-side, is a remnant of military walls and a round tower. On visiting these ruins, I saw at once that they were of much later date than Spratt had supposed. A city founded by Minos means simply, of course, a city of the early Pelasgic date of Cretan civilization, and these have always Cyclopean walls (in Crete always of the second period and neo-lithic), while the ruins cited by Spratt were clearly Hellenic, the stone in polygonal forms, but finely cut and jointed to perfection, with the marks of the cutting tools still showing on the surface. A careful search through the vicinity gave me nothing older, and I abandoned the quest for the time; but on a subsequent visit to that part of the island, I asked a shepherd if he could tell me of any remains of a very old city, and he told me that, on a hill he mentioned, situated on a little harbour outside of Suda, a beautiful, nearly land-locked port, admirable for ancient usages, I would find it. He knew nothing about this later work—did not even know it existed. I found, on the spot to which he directed me, the site of a city, with the foundations of small houses cut in the rock, and remains of two or three tombs. The reverence for the παλαιὸ-κάστρον was the only part of the antique character which remained to him. And I venture to say that, of the uneducated people of Greece, ten will know about the Trojan war, and the heroes of it, where one will know anything of Marathon or Salamis, and the chiefs who won them. If this be the case even now, how much more in old time, when the bard was master of all men's souls, and the definiteness of verse embalmed the faith once versified, while history unversified was forgotten?

But to return to Schliemann and his quest. It was to be expected

that he would find Troy, or at least that he would satisfy himself that he had found it; he did—the latter, at all events. It was Homer's Troy he wanted, and Homer was his guide-book. If Homer had been history, *ipsissima verba*, he would have found nothing, for Homer would have guided excavators long ago—he has as it is—and if Schliemann had followed Homer, he would never have found what he believes to be Troy.

As to history, there does not seem much reason to dispute the existence of a city which was the object of a long and violent struggle between the Greeks and the Asiatics, and that that city was called Ilion by the Greeks. Lenormant and other Egyptologists believe that they recognize in Iluna and Dardani of the Egyptian inscriptions, Ilion and the Dardanians; and the general unanimity of Greek tradition makes the occurrence of this war hardly a matter to be regarded as mythical. The details, even if of importance, are necessarily a matter as to which Homer (whether he be the bard himself or whether that bard be another myth, and the name only a *nom de chant* for an editing committee of some pre-historic Homer Publishing Society, I care not now to opine) must have necessarily been almost as much in the dark as we; but that the *Iliad*, as we have it, is a complete, consecutive, and carefully reduced narrative, written with a thorough knowledge of the locality now known as the Troad, and conformed in all its movements and strategy to the supposed battle-field, has, I think, been conclusively proven by Mr. Nicolaïdes, a Cretan author resident in Athens.*

As to the mythic personalities with which the story is constructed, of course we have critically nothing to do, any more than with the descriptions and manners as given by the poem. These are, of course, conformable to the epoch in which the poem was written. Homer describes the weapons and arts of Homer's own day, just as a Cretan story-teller told me one day how Yanni of one of the villages we passed in our excursion had fallen in love with a Nereïd in a cave he pointed out to me; and then he went on to repeat to me the swan maiden's story, with some classical modifications, and in terms of to-day, even to the fiddle Yanni played. It is as absurd to take Homer's descriptions of the shield of Achilles as an illustration of the state of the art at any definite period of Greek history as to take Rembrandt's picture of the Gethsemane scene as a proof that Roman soldiers used blunderbusses. As to the Trojan war, we know absolutely nothing which could fix its date. The epoch at which Greek tradition would fix it can only be the latest date possible; too many events are crowded into that century or two about the 14th B.C. to permit us to regard this as anything more than a mythical expression of time.

What proves, even more than the mythical details of the *Iliad*, that it took place in the mythical period is, that Homer made it hang on the rape of Helen; and as this myth is recorded in various ways by the mytho-

* *Topographie et plan stratégique de l'Iliade* (Paris, 1867, Hachette): a work which shows not only the mastery of the text which might be expected of a Hellene, but a minute knowledge of the localities.

logists—one version making Theseus the ravisher, and the whole story, according to Professor Max Müller, a repetition of an older Indian myth—it is clear that the event was so remote from historical recollection that it had, in fact, lost all definite *personality* as much as the labours of Hercules or the voyage of Jason.

But because mythical, thence not necessarily fictitious or without a general accordance with the real events; and that it is not out of the province of criticism and archæological research combined to prove some day that Troy did exist and where, is my firm belief. Of the importance of the conclusions, if attainable, the start which Schliemann's supposed discovery gave the archæological world sufficiently shows. Of course, all investigation must begin with the *Iliad* as the nearest to history; for whether all separate Hellenic traditions shaped themselves to suit the *Iliad*, or were originally in independent accord with it, we cannot, of course, determine; and the result is the same—we have only "Homer" as authority, and the chief practical question is, to see if the *Iliad* gives any clear local indications of the site which was in early times recognized as that of Troy; and whether the siege was *the* actual occurrence, the facts of which were preserved by him, or only a myth by him localized, is at present unimportant; what we want first to know is, if he shows any proof of having attempted to localize it, and where. The examination will show that he had definite notions as to this, and that he fixed on the heights at Bounarbashi as the precise site.

The *Iliad* supposes the fleet to have been drawn up on the shore of the Hellespont, as we see by several allusions throughout the poem; but, to be more precise, we are told that the ships, being in a level space between two promontories, were necessarily placed in several lines, "and filled entirely the great borders of the gulf included between the two promontories" (Book xiv.). This expresses accurately the nature of the alluvial plain at the mouth of the Mendere, which has been the agent in the construction of the land which is slowly being built out into the Hellespont. Strabo notes that, from the Trojan war to his time, the plain had been extended six stadia beyond the place occupied by the Greeks; Herodotus compares the Trojan plain to the delta of Egypt; facts which, while they have no absolute value, show that the shore of the Hellespont at the mouth of the Mendere, and between Capes Sigæum and Rhætium, was recognized as the site indicated for the Greek camp by the *Iliad*. According to Nicolaïdes, the recession of the Hellespont since the date assigned to the Trojan war is about 3,000 metres, and the length of the plain from the site marked out for the Greek camp to that occupied by Troy would be, on the Bounarbashi hypothesis, between six and seven miles, which accords well with the movements.

The manœuvres of the troops in the attack on the Greek camp and fleet show that the assault was made facing the north, with the river, the Scamander, on the left; Hector, on the left of the army, being on the river, and in reply to Polydamas, who calls his attention to the augury, he

says that it does not matter to him if birds fly to his right, towards the East and the dawn, or to his left, towards the West and the shadows. The shore of the Hellespont, then, at the east of the river, may be taken as a certain point of departure according to the topography of the *Iliad*.

If, then, we find that the other local indications correspond with the natural features of the plain, we have a recognition of general location of the highest value.

Of course the Scamander forms in the demonstration, as in the poem, a feature of the first importance; and it is no slight proof of Homer's distinct localization to find the same general character as that which the *Iliad* attributes to it, and that the river of to-day corresponds to the many gracious epithets Homer lavished on the Xanthus, as if he himself had been nurtured near a mountain torrent, and found on the Trojan plain something glad whose sound and sight restored his boyhood to him (for Homer, if Homer, was not blind when he went to Troy), and which we might know thence to be Scamander, grown hardly older, though certainly less majestic, since Turkish unthrift has cleared away so much of the forests which once clothed Ida and the lesser hills along its course.

Nothing could better characterise the Mendere, the Scamander of to-day, than the epithets Homer gives it—"deep eddying," "deep flowing," "silver eddied," with precipitous bank—torrential—cutting away the bank—carrying away the trees and stones; for in time of flood it is a wild torrent, and in summer a tranquil, bright, and gently eddying streamlet. We cannot question that this is the Scamander, and whether (to leave archæology for a moment) it was here that Hector, still reeling from the blow of the mighty Ajax, was laid on the silvery shore, that the cool waters might reawaken his dizzy sense; here that Priam crossed on his last despairing quest; whether here a foot of Agamemnon's host ever passed or not, we may be certain that by this way the poet passed who gave us the *Iliad*: whether he was born in Cos or Chios we shall never know, but we may know that this sacred plain he knew (waiving, if I am permitted, for the moment the committee notion), that here the *Iliad* (committee or no) was born. He has described it too faithfully to leave any doubt on this, and on that rocky height where the goats have browsed for unbroken ages he saw what he believed to be the city of Priam. There are still the smoking fountains where the Trojan women washed, as do the women of Bounarbashi to-day, their linen on the pleasant days when no foe was near, almost as he described them, and looking back he might have seen Samothrace, from whose summit he knew that Neptune looked on while the war was raging.

It is true that as history the *Iliad* almost disappears from sight when we have eliminated the greater Gods and their progeny; but the Scamander and the great plain, with the fishy Hellespont, the Pergamus, and even the solid Pelasgic wall remain, and all the best of the *Iliad* with them. One may almost mark the ford where the gallant Asteropaios turned to defy the invincible son of Thetis, and the steep bank where the lance of

the angry Greek, missing its aim, was buried, as to its point, in the pebbly earth. Somewhere here the hapless Lycaon knelt on the sandy shore, and in one of the most touching petitions of the *Iliad*, prayed the inexorable demi-God for sweet life. What vision of poet must that have been in which he saw Hecuba, frantic with deadly fear, offer her forgotten breast to her doomed son, and bewail, with that most pitiful woman's wail of the centuries gone by, the death she already saw gathering over her son, her own, her hope and that of Troy. Here was run that triple course round the walls of which the prize was "the soul of the divine Hector." No *deus ex machinâ* is needed to make the heart-broken venture of old Priam into the camp of the Achæans an episode of unsurpassed interest. Like the wounded Hector and the ruthless Achilles, he passes the ford which lay between the fleet and city. The Gods may fly from Olympus to Ida, and Iris may cross the Euxine and fly thence back to Ethiopia in a breath, but Homeric mortals toil on the plains of Troy and measure and re-measure this very Scamander with weary or flying feet. There is no mistaking the Homeric topography, and besides the Hellespont and river, the smoking fountains and the Simoïs tumbling in on the other side, there is Batiia, the hill before the city; the Pergamus above it, and the very ground, such as Homer describes it, where the heroes ran the triple course round the city, and the ford between the camp and the city.

Schliemann finding Priam's treasure, therefore, is an archæological joke; but finding Homer's Troy was not only doing a possible thing, but one very likely to have been done; and in the opinion of most archæologists the only reason for his not having accomplished it, is that it has already and long ago been discovered, at Bounarbashi. Schliemann himself recognized this at first, and went there to try, but found nothing, as was to be expected since if "Troy was," it must have been so long ago that nothing but the solid stone walls which Hahn and Mauduit uncovered years ago at Bounarbashi would have resisted decomposition, unless protected by something more than ashes and accumulation of ruin. There was nothing on the site, which is a rocky hill-top, but what has probably been ravaged, from cupidity or reverence, many years ago. Whether it was Troy or not, it is indisputable that the author of the *Iliad* took it to be so; and if so his contemporaries; and with the whole Hellenic world ringing with the glory of that great feat of their ancestors, it is not likely that as late as the time of Alexander, or even of Herodotus, there was a tile or movable fragment which antique grace or recent fraud could invest with the value of a relic which would not have been carried away by the pilgrims; for human nature was, three to four thousand years ago, pretty much what it is now; and just across the river was the new city Ilium, whose inhabitants, probably curious and intelligent Ionians, most likely passed much of their holidays as we do, scratching about for keepsakes of famous people and places. It would be curious indeed if a fragment of pottery had remained for this inquisitive German in the only place where he looked, viz. on the Acropolis.

So he went to Hissarlik, where are the ruins of a comparatively modern city, New Troy. The very name New Troy shows that it was not believed in ancient times to be on the same site as Old Troy. Here Schliemann dug however, sensibly enough, and safely enough, for there are few old sites in the Levant where some results of excavations might not be obtained. Very few of the celebrated antique sites have ever been systematically excavated. Mycænæ, Argos, Gnossus, Gortyna, Polyrrhenia, Aptera, Kisamon, and many other well-known cities lie buried, with here and there a fragment protruding, like a finger beckoning from the grave. What has been found by excavation is probably not the hundredth part of what will be found when archæology *pays*.

Schliemann was deficient in two important qualifications for his quest —he had no archæological judgment, and a very incomplete understanding of Homer. He had, however, what most real archæologists have not —money; and he was able to pay for digging, which is an important point in archæological research. He decided that the Hissarlik site must be that of Troy, for the following reasons:—He found no remains anywhere else, which, as I have pointed out, is no reason under the circumstances; the tumuli called (by modern tradition) after Hector and Priam have been opened and nothing found in them, which is simply evidence of their great antiquity; the fact that they were tumuli is more important than that nothing was found in them, for the existence of tumuli proves a city; the citadel at Bounarbashi is too abrupt for the race of Hector and Achilles, and the remains of the ancient edifice on the top too small to have belonged to so important a city as Ilion; an argument which will recommend itself only as based on Schliemann's acceptation of the Homeric text. The distance from *Sigæum* (!) is nearly ten miles to the Bounarbashi site, while it is only three to that of Hissarlik; from which Schliemann concludes either that Homer exaggerated the pedestrian powers of his heroes as much as their muscular, or else Hissarlik was Troy; a curious sample of his method of misstating his facts, and drawing his conclusion from his misstatements. The Greek camp having been, as we saw, not at Sigæum, which is on the open Aegean, and the west side of the Scamander, but on the Hellespont, and east of the Scamander, there would be no river between it and Hissarlik, so the Doctor moves the camp over to Sigæum, in order to be able to cross the river so as to get at Troy! It seems useless to discuss the Homeric conditions under such obliquity of vision, and we had better leave Schliemann his convictions, confident that no one will care to dispute the priority with him. The reasons why Hissarlik cannot have been the site of the Homeric Troy are, as we have seen, as numerous as the topographical indications given by Homer; but a correspondent of the *Academy*, Mr. Huyshe, has given one mathematically conclusive—viz. that, calculating the recession of the shores of the Hellespont since the date assigned to the siege, the Greek camp must have been under the walls of the city, if it stood on the hill of Hissarlik.

But the Doctor's discoveries raise another question—the important one of our inquest—did Homer know where Troy was, and did he not, almost as much in the dark as we, take the Pelasgic ruin at Bounarbashi for the lost site? The reply to this involves several considerations. In the genealogical dispute between Achilles and Æneas (Book xx.), the latter repeats what seems to be the earliest tradition of Troy, that before that city was built the people of his race dwelt on the slopes of Ida. Troy was, then, the first city in the Troad, and if Homer had no definite information on the subject, he was justified in supposing the oldest ruin to be that of Ilion, the sacred, built by the Gods. At his day there was little chance of confounding the more recent city at Hissarlik with the Pelasgic city, and the words put into the mouth of Æneas furnish another argument, if more were needed, against Hissarlik; for Schliemann finds under his Troy a more ancient and yet more civilised city, which is thus seen to be absolutely inconsistent with the Homeric hypothesis.

Again, Homer describes, in terms not to be mistaken, the position of a tumulus of great size on the shores of the Hellespont as that raised over the ashes of Patroclus and Achilles. The tumulus still exists, and must have been raised for some important commemorative use, and if any such were due to an event later than the Trojan war, would Homer, or any ancient Greek author, not have known of it, and would he have dared divert it from the known use to suit poetical purposes, especially in a day when poetry was regarded as a sacred medium for the preservation of what were believed to be important facts? The universal concurrence of tradition, admittedly anterior to the *Iliad*, renders it impossible that Homer should have invented or falsified important details of an almost sacred character, merely to furnish vraisemblance to his poem. The poetic imagination could not use its fire to nobler purpose than in painting the heroic struggle against fate and force of fated Hector; but what poetic necessity other than that of obeying the duty of a poet in preserving the dignities of heroes could be met by Æneas's recital of his genealogy as the son of Anchises, who was the son of Capys, who was the son of Assaracus, who was the son of Tros, who was the son of Dardanos, who was the son of Jupiter. That the poet himself recognizes the incongruity to the imaginative sense is shown by his making Æneas say that both he and Achilles already know each other's parentage, and after the pedigree, "but in the midst of this combat let us not talk like children." If then he delays with all these details, it is because they were a necessary part of the history he sung, and because the traditions he recounted were clear and definite, as delivered to him, and it is utterly incredible that with such detail on secondary matters the age of Homer should have lost the traditions of the site of Troy.

The question, then, reduces itself to this: was there ever a Troy, and if so, did the author of the *Iliad* correctly locate it? The concurrence of traditions, with the Egyptian inscriptions which have been interpreted, leave hardly a rational doubt of the former; and as to the latter, the

existence of a city of that mythical period known as the Pelasgic on the heights of Bounarbashi—the situation itself, the fittest in that portion of Asia Minor for an important and powerful city; the universality of the early belief in this city, as shown by the visit of Xerxes to it, which we can hardly concede to have been caused by his knowledge of the *Iliad*; the overwhelming importance which the Trojan war had in the feeling of all Hellas, and which, while it might greatly magnify the glory and heroism of it, could scarcely allow so important an item to pass out of knowledge; and, above all, the scarcely-to-be-disputed consideration that it was the Trojan war and the Hellenic pride in it which made the *Iliad*, not the *Iliad* which made the pride or invented the war—all these considerations, duly weighed, will leave the balance of probabilities so much in favour of the actual war and an actual Troy, substantially the basis of the *Iliad*, that we should be more surprised if the poem were found to be a pure fiction even than to find it true history. It is next to impossible that circumstances for three thousand years should have so combined as to make such a chain of evidence.

So that, myths and all considered, all the uncertainties and limitations of the poetic imagination duly weighed, there does not seem to be sufficient reason for rejecting the hypothesis of the existence of an actual city which would have been the object of a struggle between the Greek and Asiatic tribes, for doubting that the author of the *Iliad* intended to designate Bounarbashi as the site of Troy: (if the *Iliad* were the result of a kind of school of poetry, there was still less probability of the designation being made without reliable traditional knowledge). The probabilities are enormously in favour of its being the site sought for, and somewhat in favour of finding something, by complete excavation, to indicate such to be the fact.

But while this latter point is very uncertain, there is one test which would almost certainly determine this exceedingly curious (and, if determined, very important) point in ancient history, *i.e.* the excavation of what must have been the position of the Greek army itself. The chance of variation of this position is limited to one direction; for east and west the limits of the plain are invariable, and the plain has only grown northwards, being shut in by hills on each side. The ground occupied by a camp for even half the years the Trojan war is supposed to have lasted would inevitably have been covered with an immense deposit of all kinds of rubbish, which the washing of the river would only cover deeper. A trench driven along that part of the plain, parallel to the course of the river, would, to a certainty, throw up some trace of the camp—not gold and silver vases, or valuable arms, but broken weapons and little trifles not worth picking up in their day, but now worth more than Schliemann's gold and silver put together, since they would not only confirm one of the most important traditions of the classical world, but give a means of ascertaining approximately its date, and so prove or disprove all the assigned dates of early Greek history. If anything *were* found there of

the nature sought, it would complete the chain of circumstantial evidence which the topography of the *Iliad* has begun, and, besides fixing a point in history, give us the earliest object of archæological interest to which a positive place can be assigned in the classical cycle. The Trojan war is the field where the mists of mythology begin to disclose personality and history; to find something of this epoch would enable us perhaps to fix the period at which the change took place. We must not be so exacting or so credulous as Schliemann, and ask for something which shall be Agamemnon's or Ajax's; but a broken lance, a shattered helmet or fragment of a shield, the foundations of a wall, or some article which served as medium of exchange, would illuminate that mythic twilight in a marvellous way.

But what, then, is Schliemann's discovery? Certainly a city not of the earliest date. He digs down through the Greek city of New Troy, and finds below it evidence of barbaric life—ashes, débris of buildings built mainly of wood, or at best of small stones and earth; then going down still he finds stone implements, pottery, knives of flint and implements of bone, and then still deeper he comes on bronze implements, and finds a ruin of cut stone with many bronze implements mixed with stone, and what he considers as Priam's treasure. But unfortunately for his conclusions he found below this a city of a superior state of civilisation which, for whatever reason, he did not trouble himself to investigate. Perhaps he saw that it would disprove his Trojan theory.

It is unfortunate that the enthusiastic Doctor has so little archæological knowledge or judgment that we can accept none of his conclusions as of any authority, and the photographs he has sent out with his book are so bad as to be utterly worthless—mostly made from bad drawings, and of these none made with intelligent reference to the important data in such excavations, the character of the walls and the manner of working the stone. The single fact of a city having preceded that which he supposes to be Troy would be sufficient to upset his hypothesis, especially if this be of a higher stage of civilisation, and this, the most important fact developed by the excavation, the simple-minded archæologist (?) neglected to follow up.

The articles which he calls Priam's treasure prove nothing. The ornaments very much resemble the jewellery made to-day in the interior of Asia Minor in style of workmanship, and not a little in general character. The mixture of copper and stone is only apparently confusing, for the use of flint implements for certain purposes lasted long after the age of bronze as in North America; with the Jews even, where the knives for circumcision were flint, for the simple reason that it gave sharp cutting edges which no metals would until the art of tempering them was discovered. The bronze lance would pierce and the bronze helmet protect, bronze axes even might well chop wood; but to cut the tough hide of a bull, to make a quick and properly chirurgical incision, a keen flint edge is still better than a blunt knife. The mound at Marathon is covered, after

heavy rains, with small flint points like arrow-heads, which must have been scraped up with the earth from the surface of the field from which the mound is made, and must be contemporary with the battle.

This position of the excavated city, above the more civilised one, is an almost insuperable objection to its high antiquity; and the character of the objects found is no offset to this objection, for without exception (so far as one can judge from the photographs, of which only about half-a-dozen of the vases, &c., are tolerable) they are of the kind which all barbaric workers produce—the pottery very rude, and the fantasy of the "owl-headed Minerva" the most unfounded delusion that ever strained conclusion to meet desire. The Doctor everywhere proves too much and assumes too much, and we must not be surprised that there are many who regard his treasures as another Shapira swindle.

Supposing it genuine, however, it is impossible that it should pass without grave question as pre-historic. Due it may be to one of the waves of Asiatic barbarism which, from the earliest advance of Pelasgic or Hellenic civilisation in Asia Minor, at intervals buried that civilisation, and this would afford no clue whatever to the period of this particular work. There are no inscriptions, though some of the terra-cotta objects have marks which resemble unintelligent imitation of early Greek characters, and which recall the Persian imitations of the coins of the Alexandrian empire; but these, if really such, would be conclusive evidence of the comparatively late barbarism of the work; for it is pretty clear that long after the time at which Troy is supposed to have fallen there was no Greek alphabet properly speaking. The single instance in which a Greek word, *Φίλιον*, has been suspected by Professor Max Müller, is much more like an unintelligent copying of the letters with the digamma in an unprecedented position. It is, moreover, from a careless drawing that the photograph was made which the Professor examined, and there is nothing to show that it was correct or from what part of the excavation it came, whether from the first or the fourth layer of ruins. There is not a particle of evidence in all that Schliemann has given us which is of any definite value whatever, and until some one more intelligent and more desirous of truly archæological results shall finish the excavation of the lowest stratum of ruin, we shall hardly have any more precise idea of the past of this mysterious site, of which only one thing is absolutely certain, viz. that, be Troy what and where it might, *this* is not the ruin of the sacred city.

A Bye-Day in the Alps.

Of all that has been said or sung of mountain scenery there is one phrase which most frequently recurs to me. The teachers of the peasant noble, according to Wordsworth, had been, amongst others,

> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

The phrase exemplifies that mysterious charm with which a poet can invest the expression of the apparently most obvious thought in the simplest language. The silence of the stars, as Addison shows in his familiar hymn, is but another version of the music of the spheres. The sound is eloquent in the ear of reason because imperceptible to the ear of the sense. The sleep of the hills has been less frequently noticed, because it is only in modern times that the mountains have excited much human sympathy. And yet, in wandering amongst the glorious solitudes of the Alps, a mountaineer by affection is always sensible of that gentle and soothing influence which prompted Wordsworth's phrase. Sleep, indeed, is an article which varies at least as much in quality as wine. To say nothing of the sleep which intervenes between a public dinner and a morning headache, there is the sleep which rewards a young gentleman in training for a boat race, and the sleep which is kept at bay with damp towels or strong coffee by the competitor for university honours; the sleep which descends upon the weary compiler of copy for the press, and the sleep which he is the means of providing for his readers; there is a sleep which deserves all that Macbeth says of it, and a sleep which is merely another name for that suspension of the faculty of volition which leaves us for hours to suffer on an intellectual treadmill, wearily and mechanically repeating some round of vexatious thoughts. The sleep to be found amongst the mountains belongs to the finer growths, and it, too, might be divided into various classes. In "Blencathara's rugged coves," where it came to Wordsworth's hero, it is occasionally rather too full-bodied. The atmosphere of the English lakes is apt to be enervating; and the sleep which they impart might pass into slumbers as prolonged as those of Rip Van Winkle. The sleep of the high Alps is more refreshing and stimulating in its properties. To the happy refugee from London worries, it truly knits up the ravelled sleave of care. It soothes without stupifying, and is visited by no depressing dreams. I do not speak merely of the physical state, which supervenes upon a day of vigorous exercise in a pure atmosphere and amidst exquisite scenery; but rather of the sleep of the mind which may be enjoyed with open eyes and during the exertion of muscular activity.

Some people, I am aware, think whilst they walk, and I have known of a case in which a newspaper leader was composed during an ascent of the Jungfrau. But, in my own case, which I take to be an ordinary one, the brain during active walking (and the result is one of the great charms of that form of exercise) becomes merely an instrument for co-ordinating the muscular energies. Enough thought is secreted to make legs and arms work harmoniously, and to propel the organism in any required direction; but there is no surplus of cerebration to take the shape of conscious intellectual effort. Vague phantoms of ideas may possibly flit across the brain, but they give rise at most to some vague simmering of the mind rather than to anything which can be called reasoning, or even meditation. Thought, that is, becomes indistinguishable from emotion. The outside world is not a collection of objects to be classified, and still less does it suggest trains of speculation; it is merely the background of a dream; its presence is felt rather than perceived; it is like the tapestry of some gorgeous chamber which one vaguely watches with half-shut eyes during the initial stages of a quiet doze. The mountains and the sky are potent influences, but if one attempted to analyse the specific elements which they contribute to thought, the charm would vanish. Some people can enjoy such a frame of mind, when in a state of bodily inactivity. To me, I confess, this is very difficult. My body becomes a nuisance to me unless I provide it with occupation. When sitting by a stream or lying under a tree, I cannot forget the existence of legs and arms. Gnats tickle my nose, or ants creep into my shoes, or I find that, in attempting to wrap myself in a fit of abstraction, I have incurred a cramp or an attack of "pins and needles;" moreover, under such circumstances, I cannot keep the intellectual valves properly screwed down. And, therefore, I find that nothing is more conducive to the proper state of delicious drowsiness than the regular monotonous rise and fall of a pair of feet in hobnailed boots forcing me upwards through a perpendicular height of about 1,500 feet in an hour. A much quicker ascent calls for too much attention; a slower rate of motion allows the intellect to wriggle itself into superfluous activity. For this reason, though a professed cultivator of the art of doing nothing, I find that even the seaside is not equal in sedative power to the mountains. It is pleasant, indeed, to lie upon the sand on a calm day and watch the little waves playing at being a genuine surf. The ocean resembles an invalid just recovering strength enough to enjoy a languid motion of his limbs, which reminds him that no real exertion is necessary. But the amusement palls upon one after a time, and is apt to provoke a fidgety restlessness rather than the desired dreaminess. The mountain air stimulates without exhausting, and supplies, therefore, a more harmless opiate.

Sleep, it is true, has been but too effectually dispelled from some Alpine districts. I do not quite share Mr. Ruskin's hatred for the railways which have disturbed many mountain solitudes, and amongst them the sacred scenery round the head of the Lake of Geneva. Few things,

to my taste, are more picturesque than one of the great Alpine carriage-roads; and I do not see my way to a clear logical distinction between the zigzags across the Simplon and the tunnel beneath it. Any new object of course jars upon us at first; and there was a time when a plough was as great an innovation in agricultural scenery as a steam-engine at the present day. Object to machinery as machinery, and it is hard to see where the line is to be drawn. We are scandalised by Milton's use of earthly artillery in the wars of the angels; but there seems to be no good reason why cannon should be intrinsically less poetical than swords and bucklers. All things are harmonized by time; and perhaps some epic poet of the future—if epic poetry survives—may introduce telegraphic wires into a similar scene, with no more sense of discord than Milton felt in the introduction of cannon. Perhaps, indeed, the scream of the engine still brings up too many jarring associations; and, whatever may be the case with the mechanism of travel, it is unfortunately too clear that the travellers are in great need of some civilising process. The tourist who haunts the gigantic hotels of that lovely district is too frequently a person in whose company all poetical sentiment collapses, as steam is condensed by a jet of cold water. The lover of sleep would therefore do well to retire to one of the quiet old towns which slumber on the opposite shore. There, say at Evian, he at once sinks into the comparative calm of a century or so back. The quaint little street which has wedged itself between the lake-shore and the huge natural terrace behind, recalls the days when there were still such things as little independent duchies protected by the mountain fastnesses against the ambition of the greater powers. Though Savoy has been swallowed up in France, the town seems to be barely conscious of the change. Certain springs of disagreeable taste serve as a pretext for Parisians in search of a quiet holiday. But the hotel which they frequent is not as yet of American proportions; and the population generally dozes in tolerable indifference to its visitors. Here and there, perhaps, a shop consults the tastes of tourists by a display of attenuated alpenstocks; but competition is apparently not severe; and for the most part the shopkeeper seems to be still at that state of civilisation at which the entrance of a customer is considered as a fair pretext for a steady gossip, and a comparison of views upon the prospects of the harvest, or perhaps for inquiries into the state of the Thames Tunnel—an enterprise which, for some mysterious reason, seems to have a great interest for most remote populations. Evian, in short, still resembles an English country town in the days of Miss Austen; though from the terrace of the hotel there is a view to which no English town can produce a satisfactory rival. There, on one lovely summer evening of last year, we watched a sunset of magical beauty. Some fifty miles of the Jura rises like a wall to the west; and as the sun went down, it was converted into one broad band of glowing purple. The gleaming lake below reflected a breadth of straw-coloured sky above; the twin sails of one of the characteristic boats

which always recall the sharp wings of a swallow, showed their dark points against its surface; and in the immediate foreground stood out a mass of picturesque towers, and a bank of foliage, just green enough in the gathering gloom to be not absolutely black. Certainly, as an intense expression of perfect calm, nothing could be more exquisite; and yet—for the human mind is apt to be hypercritical even in the face of nature—there was something not quite satisfactory. Perhaps the scenery was a little too well composed; there was a dash of the melodramatic about it; one fancied that the effect was too much studied and arranged with too careful an observance of the rules of art; or, possibly, the presence of some fellow-creatures of an appreciative turn of mind produced a kind of perverse recalcitration. Perhaps it may be said as a general rule that things ought not to be too perfect; though it must in fairness be added that they very seldom fail in that direction. Anyhow, as I turned my back upon the scene for a moment, I was fascinated by a form in the opposite direction. The phantom of a rocky peak, pale and hardly definable in the twilight, was looking at me with a tacit significance, over the shoulder of a nearer hill. Mountains behave in a strangely capricious manner under such circumstances. Sometimes they seem to shrink into themselves as the daylight leaves; and what was a noble crag becomes no better than an insignificant undulation. On other occasions, and this was one of them, they gain a fresh charm by obscurity; and though this particular peak was but a grey and colourless rock scarcely to be distinguished, if the truth must be said, from the gable of a neighbouring house, and altogether humiliated by contrast with the gorgeous purple and gold of his Western rivals, he seemed to be distinctly beckoning to his humble servant. "I hear a voice you cannot hear," as somebody says, which on the present occasion declared it to be an unmistakeable duty to make a closer acquaintance with this apparently modest peak. To hear was to obey. No elaborate preparations were necessary to carry out so modest a scheme; and next morning, instead of summoning guides, ordering provisions, and testing ropes and axes, I surreptitiously conveyed a roll from the breakfast-table into my pocket, and started with a domestic walking-stick upon an exploring expedition.

The first couple of hours took me through a region which formed a kind of neutral ground between the realms of sleep and the outside wide-awake world. The road—like many Alpine roads—is grand out of proportion to the traffic. A diligence might thunder along it at full speed, save for one or two sharp rises; but it leads past quiet old farmhouses to remote villages, and seems to be used only by peasants with agricultural carts. The houses, indeed, are such as may fitly be occupied by a population which regards Evian as a vortex of fashionable dissipation. They are solid high-shouldered stone edifices, whose ground floors are principally occupied by cows. Each is generally sheltered by a group of noble walnut or chestnut trees; coeval, apparently, with the venerable but slightly fusty edifice. In a drowsy region one must not expect to find too lively a worship

of certain modern idols. The scrubbing of floors and a rigid attention to drainage are not amongst the virtues of a land of sleep. Here, for example, is a scene which I noticed without attempting to convert it into an allegory. It is much at the service of any dealer in such wares, but I am content to turn it loose upon the world without specific application. A cluster of picturesque houses crowns the top of a long ascent, and between them one catches a glimpse through rich foliage of the broad blue waters of the lake. At one's feet and under one's nose stagnates a little pond of that queer green fluid so common in English farm-yards, and in the fluid dabbled certain contented ducks, whose aspirations are obviously quite satisfied with their immediate surroundings. A little further on is a symbol of a different kind. On the top of a rounded knoll lies a monstrous boulder—

> Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
> Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself.

A noble chair it would make for a professor of geology. To me it recalls an eastern legend which I have somewhere read. There is a stone column in Ceylon, if I remember rightly, which is now about six feet in length. Formerly, it is said, it was twice its present size; but once in every century, or, for it matters little, in every thousand years, an angel passes and just touches the corner of the pillar with the extreme hem of his aerial garment. The degradation produced by this contact has been the one cause of decay, and when the column is quite worn out something will happen—which does not much matter to the existing generation. The boulder wears away a little faster, but it too takes the mind back into a giddy abyss of years sufficient to crush the human imagination. It is pleasant to look at some minute channel on its surface and guess that when the rain first began to trace it, the Roman empire may still have been flourishing, and that a knob on its surface has been in process of carving ever since the pyramids were erected. The boulder marks a definite epoch, in that vast abyss of time, as distinctly as the seaweed washed ashore by the last tide. The great ice-wave reached just this point some inconceivable number of centuries back, and then began its slow retreat towards the central peaks. Meanwhile the old boulder is sleeping peacefully in the sun, whether at some remote future again to be lifted on the shoulders of a new glacier in another icy period, or to melt away like a lump of snow, and descend piecemeal into the lake. My own time being more limited, I was content to pass steadily forwards along the ridge of the huge natural embankment. In a couple of hours the road suddenly left off, and I found myself under the shadow of my friendly peak. A quaint little village marks the furthest limit of permanent civilized life. The sleep of the hills here begins to make itself perceptibly felt. The village repeats the ordinary features of all these remoter valleys. In the most central place is of course the inevitable fountain with its group of gossipping women. What they find to talk about is matter for speculation, but it may be presumed that the conversation has a general

resemblance to that of Margaret in Faust or of Rebecca at the well. The English drumbeat, as the American orator remarks, encircles the world with an unbroken strain of military music. The talk at fountains has gone on for a longer period, and has been dribbling unceasingly since the remotest periods of history. In this little village, the great rival of the fountain at one stage of progress, namely the barber's shop, is still a thing of the future. There seems, for the present, to be very little opening for any such industry. A solitary crétin is blinking half asleep in the sun and, so primitive is the region, does not even put out his hand for charity. Half-a-dozen goats, the "interviewers" of the animal world, are incessantly poking their restless noses into every promising cranny, but their curiosity seems only to be rewarded by the discovery of an occasional lizard who wriggles himself dexterously into a crevice. One sign, indeed, presents itself of the advance of a new period. An enterprising native has accumulated enough capital for the purchase of a couple of bottles of *limonade gazeuse*. He has displayed them as conspicuously as he can at the little opening which does duty for a window, and surmounted them by a phonetic inscription tending to show that lodgement may be provided for travellers, and even that guides may be obtained for the ascent of my mountain, the *Dent d'Oche*. I turned my back, however, resolutely upon his simple fascinations. The traveller who would enjoy the true sleep of the hills is better without guides. They are often excellent persons in their way; but a flavour of bad tobacco, and the necessity of making conversation in an intricate *patois*, produce an uncomfortable sense of discord upon these occasions. Accordingly I advanced in solitude to place one more screen between myself and the outside world. The background of the village is formed by a pine forest, out of which escapes a sparkling little stream, buried in a deep gorge. It is a fitting approach to the central recesses, for at the first turn of the valley all signs of humanity disappeared, except the rambling pathway made as much by the cows as by their attendants. I was soon alone with myself and the trees.

> Silence the sombre armies kept
> The vanguard of the pine,

as Mr. Myers puts it in his charming little poem on the Simmenthal. The phrase is appropriate, for the pine is the most military of trees. They stand all round me, "bolt upright and ready to fight"—every tree in the attitude of attention prepared to meet all comers in the shape of floods, whirlwinds, and avalanches. One enemy, indeed, has been too much for them; for a discharge of stone artillery has come down from a neighbouring peak and cleared a broad passage right through the ranks of the pine army. In time they will close up their files, and already some adventurous stragglers have gripped the prostrate rocks with their spurs and are gallantly breasting the hill. Meanwhile they have thrown out a body of skirmishers in the shape of rhododendron bushes which cluster thickly across the open space. To my delight, too, they are in brilliant bloom.

These "Alpine roses" are criticised by some of those ingenious persons who would find fault with Spenser, because he did not write "Hamlet" as well as the "Faery Queen," or with the builder of St. Paul's because he was not also the architect of Westminster Abbey. So I have heard these Alpine flowers compared invidiously with Scottish heather. They do not, it is said, and with perfect truth, convert whole leagues of mountain-side into sweeps of purple. One stone differs from another, and the shapeless lumps which pass for mountains in Scotland may boast this one point of superiority to the Alpine ridges. But reserving any further expression of southern malignity, I am content to say, that I can never see an Alpine rose, even when crushed out of symmetry by botanical cruelty, without a thrill of pleasure. They are true embodiments of the mountain spirit. Their brilliant complexion shows that their faces have been visited, rudely enough, by the freshest of breezes; and even when mangled in an album, remind one of old Simon Lee, the running huntsman, of whom it is said, that

> Though he has but one eye left
> His cheek is like a cherry.

The comparison to an Alpine rose would be still more appropriate. The glowing colour, relieved against their polished leaves, is to me more associated with cheerfulness than the Christmas holly; of which I somehow always think as stuck in the flayed carcase of a fat sheep pendent in a butcher's shop. Encouraged by the friendly greeting which the mountain seemed to be offering, I speedily climbed beyond the pine-forest, and entered a lofty glen, where I was absorbed into a yet more intimate union with the spirit of the hills.

Indeed it is in this region that one finds the essence of Alpine scenery. Alp, as everybody knows, means in the mountains, simply a lofty pasturage. The peasant of course considers the hills simply as providing food for his cattle; and *montagne* in French, is used in a precisely equivalent sense. But though the use of the word implies a rather utilitarian view of things in its first properties, there is a meaning in the view that here is the essence of the Alps, for persons of a more romantic turn. Between the forests and the snows lies the most poetical of the mountain regions. There, when climbing upwards, you first feel that the bundle of earthly cares rolls off your shoulders, and that you have finally cleared the "slough of despond." There, in the early months, you walk knee-deep in flowers, every one of which is a bit of embodied poetry. When the snow has just departed, the fragile cup of the Soldanella makes a purple carpeting amidst turf which seems to have been scorched by the frost. Its delicate beauty suggests that it is made rather of air than of earthly elements, and yet it ventures where no plant of grosser frame dares to rival it. To gather it seems to be sacrilegious; and you are forced to justify yourself for cutting short its career by the general argument of oppressors, namely, that, if you don't commit the crime, some less appreciative sinner, probably a coarse-minded cow, will commit it

instead. And the Soldanella is only one amongst a throng of beauties to which justice could only be done by the author of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. When descending from the sterner heights above, the Alp is equally delicious. There you hear the first sound that tells of life, the music of the cattle-bells which, to some unfortunately constituted person, at least, is the only music in the world not rather disagreeable than otherwise—probably because it makes no attempt at a tune. Most bells indulge in rather querulous reproach. It is time to get up, to go to church, or to come to dinner, they seem to be saying; and in another minute you will be too late. But the sound of the cow-bells, bursting out for a moment as a faint puff of air lends it wings, or the cattle make a slight movement, and then dying away fitfully and accidentally, dispels for a time the belief that such a thing as hurry exists. The words which set themselves to such music would be, "take your time," "chew the cud," "think of nothing," "breathe fresh air," and "crop sweet herbage." What can be more delicious than the regions with which such sensations are associated; the delicate beauty of the most exquisite flowers, the sound of cow-bells, and the fragrance of cow's breath: the softness of mountain turf, and the freshness of the mountain air; the rounded slopes of pasture in the foreground, and behind a rugged peak or two, fading into a mere flat shadow in the distance? Why not lie down on one's back, and enjoy the sleep of the hills in their loveliest recesses? Here, indeed, I was on an ideal Alp. A little tarn, quiet and black as that

> In whose black surface you may spy
> The stars, though sunshine light the sky,

reflected on one side two or three tiers of limestone cliffs rising one above the other to the south; whilst on the north the final peak of the Dent d'Oche lifted itself in one steep slope from the glen. It was, indeed, a charming recess; but there was still one drawback—one crumpled rose-leaf in this Sybarite's couch. Here, in fact, was the ultimate outpost of civilization. The châlet inhabited by a small party of cowherds might have pleased a painter, especially if his sense of smell were imperfectly developed. And yet, even in such a case, he would have been rather annoyed by that sea of filth wherewith human beings delight to surround their habitations even in these delicious solitudes. The unsophisticated man, it seems, likes to make an Alp resemble a fragment of St. Giles's as closely as possible. The native who stared upon me from his door, arrayed in the single shirt which serves him during his three month's sojourn, was little inclined to sympathise with any praises of the scenery not of a strictly economical tendency. Accordingly, after a peace-offering of tobacco, in return for a draught of foaming milk, I took leave, and turned to the ascent of the peak.

The climb is perfectly easy, though I contrived to complicate matters by going the wrong way. The absence of guides generally enables one to enjoy a little excitement, the more agreeable because not contemplated beforehand. Indeed, to confess the truth, a former attempt upon the

mountain had failed altogether by reason of my ingeniously attacking it by the only impracticable route. It was with all the more satisfaction that I found myself on the present occasion rapidly approaching the summit, and circumventing the petty obstacles which tried to oppose my progress. Crossing a sharp ridge of bare rock, I stepped upon the highest peak. Few views in the Alps or in Europe can be more impressive, according to the ordinary modes of judgment. At my feet lay the huge crescent of the Lake of Geneva—forty-four miles in length along the southern shore and fifty-five along the northern—says the mountaineer's bible; and the whole surface was as visible as the Serpentine from the Kensington bridge. To the right I could see the mouths of the Rhone, and far away to the left a few sparkles showed the glass roofs of some buildings in Geneva. Here was a fitting place to invoke the shades of Byron and Shelley and Rousseau, of Gibbon and Voltaire, and of all the great men whose names, as the guide-books tell us, are indissolubly associated with the loveliest lake in Europe. I would not forget even that mediæval divine who travelled along its shores with his eyes turned the other way, in order that he might mortify the flesh. Alas! I am very bad at such associations. I don't believe that my patriotism would grow warm at Marathon or my piety at Iona. I have looked on many places where strange things have happened and great men have lived, and have seldom succeeded in giving the least perceptible jog to my imagination. Some old memories here and there may sufficiently consecrate some narrow shrine set apart exclusively for that purpose, but where the scene has a decided character of its own, the little personal meaning is swallowed up in the wider significance. To me, though the confession may be humiliating, the attempt to write the name of Byron or Rousseau across a mountain district seems to be another and not a much higher manifestation of the impulse which leads the vulgar tourist to inscribe his name on the walls of a church. I am scarcely more amazed when confronted with the name of Jones on the roof of Milan Cathedral than when asked to remember the *nouvelle Héloise* on the mountains above Meillerie. I may be grateful to the great writer who first opened new sources of emotion; but I object to giving him a vested interest in the sentiment ever after, and posting his shadow at the entrance of his peculiar district to touch its hat and ask for a trinkgeld of posthumous gratitude. Indeed, if the truth be told, I find such memories rather vexatious than otherwise. The Lake of Geneva, for example, of *Childe Harold* obstinately refuses to coalesce with the original. No two people see the same earth any more than the same rainbow. My eyes, I am well aware, are not so good as Byron's; but they have the advantage—to me—of being my own, and I prefer to use them for objects immediately present. In London I may find the poetry better than the fading memory, but here I would try to dispense with such artificial stimulants. Only a few minutes were possible for absorbing or being absorbed into the mountain-spirit. Here is the very essence of the sleep which I have been seeking. Higher up, on

the grim ranges of bare rock and snow, the dreams of a solitary traveller would be apt to turn to nightmares. The ice-bound cliffs would threaten him like so many spectres. But here, just in mid-air, on the dividing line between life and death, one may realise the "pleasing heaviness" which Glendower promised to Mortimer. The lake and the mountains seem to be just in the humour. The surface of a vast lake on a still day is indeed precisely the embodiment of that idea. It represents the neutral point between the two poles of repose and motion. Infinite mobility is combined with perfect rest. The vast planes of gleaming light and shadow are unusually shifting in obedience to some unseen influence, and suggest not the impulse of a breeze, but some mysterious thrill passing through the waters themselves. The lake, in short, is like Wordsworth's sea, where the image of Peel Castle was reflected from day to day, and "trembled, but it never passed away;" a line which Shelley has borrowed in the verses called "Evening." Perhaps, indeed, Shelley is not the only poet who could have adequately described this special aspect of nature, and the extremely indefinite person who represents the spirit of solitude in Alastor might well have paused over some such lake in his vague wanderings through nowhere in particular. The mountains which ranged themselves in a vast arc along the background were, in sober earnest, as solid masses of ice-clad granite as one could wish to see. But the heated air which quivered above the ground gave even to them a tremulous uncertainty, and no one could describe them, if description were possible, without taking some images significant of stately motion. I might call them a procession of sheeted phantoms, or compare them to ocean waves, or to clouds drifting before a storm, but no comparison would be adequate which did not take into account the sense of potential entirety in the midst of momentary calm. I do not, however, venture to describe either the range of Mount Blanc or the Lake of Geneva, or the subordinate hills and plains which filled the circle of the horizon. For my first, and, I will add, my judicious course of proceeding, was to close my eyes and throw myself flat on the ground. That, I will venture to say, is an excellent way of enjoying grand scenery. You should not look at external objects, but feel that you could look at them if you were not too lazy. I became, for a strictly limited period, a convert to Buddhism. Instead of fixing my eyes on a region near the lowest button of my waistcoat, which is, I believe, the mode by which some Eastern recluses seek to abstract their minds from the outer world, I lazily fingered a little clump of gentians and tried to sink into a temporary Nirwana. A certain vague pantheism, however objectionable as a moving principle of life, supplies the right mood for nature-worship on such occasions. All thoughts and emotions should be forced into a colourless whole, differing from the ordinary operations of the intellect as the thinnest vapour differs from tangible substance. I endeavoured to be simply an animated top of the mountain, if animation can be predicated of something in which all volition and thought is as nearly as possible

suspended. Physiologists, I believe, refuse any consciousness to flowers because they are not bothered by a nervous system. I could try, however, to identify myself, so far as the working of certain grey matter in my brain would allow, with the objects which the imagination refuses to contemplate as not more or less partaking of the spirit of the scenery. The only creature besides myself that could fairly be called living was a small black spider, which had been led by an apparently misguided spirit of enterprise to seek for prey in this loftiest zone of organic existence. I have generally a weakness for spiders, but I admit that I considered his intrusion to be uncalled for. Had I been a *bonâ-fide* anchorite, I might possibly have remained on the summit of the Dent d'Oche till my nails grew into my flesh. If, indeed, the natives of the Alp below had sufficiently respected my sanctity to overcome their intense dislike to the mountains and climbed the rocks to provide me with the necessaries of even a hermit's existence, I should have eclipsed St. Simon Stylites. But the Western mind refuses to lend itself long to such uncongenial efforts. In a few minutes the most sublunary considerations began to force themselves upon my mind. Thoughts of dinner and speculations about a certain short cut became irresistible, and before long I discended from my peak and my poetising. I found on my return the route by which I ought to have ascended, passed the Alp at a round trot, rushed down the zig-zags through the forests below, bathed in the most delicious of waterfalls, filled my hands with Alpine roses as a token for the inhabitants of Evian, and then obliterated all longings for the ideal and the beautiful by a steady two hours tramp along the now prosaic high road by which I had ascended in the morning.

Agricultural Labourers.

"Vous êtes comme l'enfant dans le sein de sa mère, attendant l'heure de sa naissance; comme l'insecte ailé dans le ver qui rampe, aspirant à sortir de cette prison terrestre pour prendre votre essor vers les cieux."

LES PAROLES D'UN CROYANT.

"OF all forms of mistake prophecy is the most gratuitous," writes George Eliot, and we do not desire to prove once more by our own personal failure how true is the assertion. We do not attempt in any degree to forecast the years and predict the outcome of the dispute between employers and employed in the agricultural districts of England. This much only is safe to say—it is perhaps so obvious as scarcely to need saying—that when this crisis is over, the relation between the two parties will be found to have permanently changed. All cannot be as though the struggle had not been; the fact that the old conditions of agricultural labour have ceased, if but for a time, has shown that at any rate their continuance was not bound up with the persistence of the universe itself.

It is quite natural to regret the past, which always is, or seems more picturesque than the present, and has always found a *vates sacer*. Few have not read and enjoyed the pretty lines of Keats, in which he sighs for Robin Hood and his company, for the vanished time whose hours are old and grey—

> Gone the merry morris din,
> Gone the song of Gamelyn;

and there are many now who, looking on some almost deserted village, for there are such in the west, which have sent as emigrants all that is best of their youth and vigour, consider that England's true peasantry, loyal, devout, humble to their betters, are gone away as completely as the mediæval England which the poets sang.

But in our sceptical days it has at last been asked whether that life in Sherwood Forest had a real existence, if the bold outlaw was ever more than a name, having a certain value as formulating traditions, but not as representing that which ever was. Nor does scepticism stop there. It is even asserted that the tendency of the luxurious classes has ever been to invest the labourer with an ideal idyllic grace, so that they might unconsciously to themselves, veil the stern reality of the facts, and justify, still unconscious that any justification was needed, their own beautiful existence, by imagining a beauty of its own for a life which certainly but little resembled theirs. It is said, in fact, that the life of the fields and woods, whether lived by the tiller of the soil, or the noble poacher in his outlawry, has never been known, never understood, that the English

"peasantry" and their homes, described in drawing-rooms, sketched in albums, preached at from pulpits, are as mythical as that world, which Keats desired vainly to revive.

There have been but few attempts made by those most concerned to place themselves in at all a different light. The labourers, for many hundred years, have, on the whole, acquiesced in the view taken of them, and in the place found for them in the scheme of society. When they have not done so, at times widely distant and under very different conditions, the upheaval has been often attended with so great violence, and so great social danger, that the whole of the respectable classes, not only that class whose privileges seemed immediately menaced—rose as one man to crush the movement. The attempts with which the names of Wat Tyler and Jack Cade—"that much misunderstood politician"—are associated, pointed indeed to a wide dissatisfaction, were not unconnected with an earnest religious feeling, but were necessarily short-lived because they were mixed with a wild communism, with which the times were in no degree sympathetic. The outbursts of thirty or forty years ago were not religious, and so lacked that element of dignity which had existed in the middle ages; were not thoughtful enough to have a communistic idea; were simply a blind and drunken outcry against machinery, from ignorance of what machinery could do for them, against wealth, because themselves were starving. It was but an exaggerated and unguided bread-riot, without a definite aim, without political plan, without conviction of the brain, but simply of the belly.

Now, however, the revolt of the labourer against his existing condition makes itself known under quite other circumstances. It has been conducted with remarkable temper and an absence from violence, the more striking because it is not a studied, but an instinctive absence. There has not been a threat or a suggestion from those who represent the labourers, that any course was possible than that which has been pursued. The leaders of the movement are religious men, are many of them local preachers and teetotal orators; their eloquence is the eloquence of the pulpit; they speak of their cause as one which they can call on God to bless. There has been no communism talked, no demands in themselves extravagant, made. The claim for increased wages has been, as a rule, studiously moderate. Whether the farmer can pay this claim is of course, a different matter. The leaders have a definite political plan; they have an ideal future. What strikes a looker-on is the studious limitation of the one within the bounds of existing institutions, the prosaic nature of the idea.

To enable our readers to understand the situation, we propose to sketch the labourer as he is, and give a true picture of village life. It will render it more real if we admit at once that we have in our mind a definite western county, and an actual agricultural district; that knowing other counties and other districts almost equally well, we believe these to be fairly typical; that we shall state facts known to ourselves, and for the

accuracy of which we pledge our credit; or rather, let us say the writer of this paper—for the "we" has an individuality—pledges his credit.

Whatever else it may have done, the agitation of which we speak has, at least, bettered the position of the labourer in regard to wages. They are almost everywhere, for Union and non-Union men alike, higher than they were; and when people object to the demand for more wages, and ask if the labourer is worth more than fifteen or even thirteen shillings a week—inadequate as the larger of those sums seems to others—they are already conceding much, for the same question was asked in still angrier tones than now, when, two years since, the labourer in the Western counties asked for a rise of wages over the nine shillings he was then receiving per week. We could name more than one Dorset parish in which the wages stood, within the last ten years, at eight shillings per week, and that they should rise to ten was anywhere a strange and almost unexampled fact.

On this weekly sum the labourer married, and endeavoured to support his wife and children, when these were born to him. And they were born almost invariably, the family beginning with a promptness quite astonishing to those who do not know the real life of the agricultural districts. For a year, or even two years, if the wife was thrifty and the husband did not take his money to the public house, they managed to exist and keep a decent home on even this pittance; but difficulties soon came, and debt at the village shop. What this means may not be obvious, though all who have lived in the country know the place and its strange odour, in which soft soap, red herrings, salt butter, bacon, cheese, corduroy, and (now) mineral oil struggle for the mastery. In nearly every village are two or three of these establishments, where many articles are retailed at almost a hundred per cent. above their cost price. The neighbouring town, it is true, affords a better market, but in very few parts of the country does the custom obtain of marketing, and laying by any store; wages are too scanty, goods are bought to pass from hand to mouth, the actual wear and draggle of clothes over some miles of country road, and the expenditure of time are all things to be considered. So long as ready money is paid the purchaser gets fairly good articles at such a shop, though the price is high. If the red herring be somewhat stronger than the bloater or sardine, it is more "tasty;" a smaller quantity of tea than in our own homes will serve to colour the water, so that there is no doubt that black tea has been sold; the bacon, when cooking, sends its fragrance far down the village street. All this, however, is as the purchaser would wish it to be.

But on a day when the ready money is not forthcoming, when the children's shoes have required the week's wages, or nearly so, when a couple of day's illness, during which the man has stayed at home, has reduced his week's earnings by a third, credit is asked for and as readily granted to so good a customer. It may be cause of wonder how this should be so, but in truth a few creditors are by no means unprofitable.

The tradesman still gets all the money that is forthcoming, and he is able to sell his second-rate, or even damaged articles to those who are in his debt, not by any means at a reduction. If the purchaser goes then to another shop, the tradesman has his remedy in the County Court, and a payment of his score at some small sum per week; but, for the most part, he trusts to getting as much as he can by instalments each year at the time of harvest, and harvest-money, of which more hereafter.

Thus then, after the first year or two, the labourer is found in a condition of chronic debt, from which he only emerges if he be so fortunate as to have only sons born to him, and if they, at far too early an age, are sent into the fields to earn their living instead of being kept at school.

The weekly expenditure of an average labourer's family can hardly be brought lower than the table here presented, which is carefully compiled from the averages given by several labourers' wives, in more than one district, the details varying slightly in some cases:—

Weekly Expenditure of a Farm Labourer, his Wife, and Three Children.

	s.	d.
5 Gallons Bread	6	3
½ lb. Butter	0	8
1 lb. Cheese	0	6
1 lb. Bacon	0	8
½ lb. Sugar	0	2
Pepper, Salt, &c.	0	1
2 oz. Tea	0	4
¼ lb. Candles	0	3½
Soap	0	2
Soda, Starch, and Blue	0	1
Coals	2	0
1 Faggot	0	2½
Rent and Rates	1	6
Man's Sick Club	0	6
Boots	0	7
Children's Schooling	0	3
	14	3

(No *luxuries* or clothing included.)

It will of course be objected that the weekly wages do not represent the whole income, and this we have admitted by the mention of harvest-money. To what sum, then, do the extras amount, and in what way is it made up?

First, then, there are some agricultural operations, such as turnip-hoeing, mowing, reaping—where these last are not done by machinery—trenching, clearing copses, and the like, which are almost invariably done by piece-work, and at these the labourer may no doubt earn from three to four shillings a week more than at the rest of his labour. But he earns it by extremely hard work, for which he should be paid higher, whatever wages ordinarily are. He works later, at a rate, and in a manner, that he could not do continuously. If, as it may be hoped, even larger share of ordinary farm work shall be in the future done "by the piece," it is quite certain that it cannot be done with the same spurt and *élan* which now is put into what is exceptional, casual, and limited in time.

In some parts of the country "gristing" is given as part of the wages, the actual sum in money being lessened by the value of the "gristing,"

estimated, it must be allowed, at a low rate. Gristing is simply wheat to make bread, and as it is independent of the fluctuations of the market, it has been in some cases a very great boon. But in the case of a hard and grasping master, or even in the case of a good master, when a part of his corn has been less good than the remainder, it stands almost as a law of human nature that the poor man, who must take what is given, should not get the best. A black and musty loaf was exhibited not long since at an open-air meeting in a western town as a specimen of bread made from gristing, which had been given as part wages, and for this the man who carried it was offered, not by his master, but by another farmer, ten shillings for the loaf rather than that it should be seen. Taken, however, at its best, gristing is either a perquisite or a charity, and both are objectionable.

Beyond this there is generally a certain lump sum given as harvest-money for extra time in loading and getting home the wheat, amounting, perhaps, from a pound to thirty shillings a head. These things, all taken together, and at their highest computation, amount to, perhaps, two shillings a week beyond the nominal wages, that is to say, that the labourer at a nominal ten shillings a week may possibly earn for his family, not 26*l.*, but 28*l.* 16*s.* per annum.

We have not noticed that on which the farmer often insists greatly, the extra beer, and sometimes the malt to make beer, which is given at hay and harvest time. The latter, which is the least objectionable, is less prevalent than the former, but it is no gain to wages. If beer is not supplied, the worker in the fields drinks but little at his own cost, and quite as often tea or cocoa as beer or cider, and goes home at night tired but sober. Liquor which he drinks at another's cost is generally taken in so great quantity as to make him wish for more, the evening is spent at the public house, where of course his own money is squandered, and the harvest money materially lessened by the score against him at the "Duck and Trumpet."

So much for wages. It will have been seen that in the schedule of expenses given above was an item for rent. Cottages are held in various ways. In some cases nearly all the houses in a village are let with the farms, and are sub-let by the farmers to the labourers, the rent being deducted from their weekly wages; in some they are held of the landlords direct; in some, where cottages have been let on lives, from some owner who has no relation to the soil. But this rather affects the conditions of tenure than the rent, which is paid directly or indirectly, averaging about eighteen pence a week, for a cottage and a few perches of garden ground, enough in a favourable year to grow potatoes for the family consumption. The farmers, as a body, greatly discourage their men having more than this. Up to this extent they have been willing that the men should have a garden or an allotment, often indeed give to their carters and best labourers a piece of newly broken ground for a year's potatoe crop—it must be remembered that the potatoe clears and cleans the ground admir-

ably for the next year's growth—and they have not unfrequently allowed the men an hour's use of the plough and horses to get the ground in order. But any such extent of ground as would grow more than a few potatoes and cabbages, any keeping of a pig, much more of a cow, is the farmer's detestation. He distrusts his men, and thinks that his grain, his hay, and, still more, the time that is his due, would be purloined if the labourer *farmed* ever so small a territory, and kept stock to however small an extent.

The cottage itself is, in many of our rural districts,—and in spite of much, very much that has been done by kindly landlords, filled with a real sense of their responsibilities,—a scandal and disgrace to England. We could point to village after village, and name them by their names, in which there are houses inhabited by whole families, in which there is but one bed-room; many with only a sort of outer lobby or landing which serves as a room, and one only regular chamber; three rooms are quite an exception in almost all our older village tenements. The sanitary arrangements are in keeping, and even ordinary personal cleanliness is out of the question. Yet it must be said, and said most emphatically to the honour of our poor, that many of the evils which might be thought to be inseparable from such a state of things do not exist, and those who know their real condition wonder, not at the vices of the poor, but at their many virtues, which shine all the more brightly under so unfavourable circumstances.

It is obvious, from what has been said, that the work of women and children in the fields has been in many districts an absolute necessity, in order that the scanty earnings of the labourer himself should be eked out. People unfortunately do not read Blue Books, which are repulsive in their form, and difficult to obtain; but if any of our readers care to go into this matter, we would advise them to obtain the Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture. The information obtained by these gentlemen, and particularly by the Hon. Edward Stanhope, who brought to his work hereditary zeal not unduly biassed by his hereditary Toryism, throws more light on this position of the subject than any other work we know.

It is in women's labour in the fields that the real evil of the cottages comes out. Delicacy has there been sapped, and the woman takes her part in the coarseness of the fields. Her presence is no restraint on language. She becomes in all but sex a man among the men. Those husbands and brothers who have the finest instincts among the labourers, feel it a deep degradation, even when they must submit to it, that their wives and sisters have to work in the fields. There is a certain poetry of motion in the long lines of women who toss the hay after the mowers, and bind the sheaves where the reapers have laid low the corn, and the picture of a Ruth when—

> She stood breast high among the corn,
> Clasped by the golden light of morn,

is a fair one, but the beauty is like that of the woodland cottage she lives in, and will not bear too close an examination.

Recent legislation in regard to the children may do much, unless our present masters see fit to reverse it; but nearly up to the present date there has been nothing to prevent the merest children doing men's work, when they should have been at school. It is true they have often done it well. The writer of this article has seen in one field fourteen ploughs at work at once, each with its pair of horses, each furrow a straight line that was a real pleasure to the eye to rest upon, and only four grown men among the whole. Mere boys were driving the plough, and the farmer with engaging candour stated the case quite plainly. He said in so many words that a man's wages were nine shillings, and that with his eye and his head carter's over them the two boys, at three and sixpence a week each, were at least as good as a man, so that by the employment of two boys he saved two shillings, and got a man's work for seven shillings a week.

The clergy, no doubt, would have wished to keep the children at school, and teach them at least the catechism; but they have been powerless, and even in the rural districts where the church has not, we are told, lost her hold upon the masses, the ignorance which is manifested at times is quite equal to that which so shocks our excellent London Police Magistrates, when some poor little mortal does not know where he will go to if he tells a lie. We know a country parish where a lad, one of a large unthrifty family, carried a gun and discharged it loaded with powder to scare the birds before he was six years old. At that tender age his clergyman was a zealous man, and an earnest evangelical, who did all that he could for the parish and the people. To him succeeded a no less zealous high churchman, who, had he lived, would certainly now have been in the foremost ranks of ritualists. Both these gentlemen had Sunday-schools and evening classes, to which they gave their utmost attention. But at the time of Sunday-school and church our young friend was scaring rooks, and on week-day evenings was far too tired to attend a class. Another change in the parish, and there came a broad churchman, who tried to use the machinery of his predecessors, but again without success on this lad, and many another like him. The Bishop gave notice of a Confirmation, and among the candidates came the lad in question to his parson.

"Well, Tom, do you know why you want to be confirmed?"

"They tell I 'twill do I good."

"You don't know much about it yet, do you, Tom?"

"No; I do 'low I don't."

"Have you ever heard of Jesus Christ?"

"I think I've heerd tell on him, but I b'ent sure."

And this was a lad who, if he had found his way to church, would possibly have found himself confronted by an alms' dish, held out for a problematical penny to send missionaries to the Fiji Islands.

Another little lad whose "first years" were not allowed to be spent

in "books," and who, being sent to "work" preferred "healthful play," tossed up a button with a boy of his own age which should hold the muzzle of a loaded gun to the body of the other and fire. They were sure as there was no shot in it, that it would not hurt, but only make them jump. Fortunately the gun was directed to the part to which, had they been at school, the cane would have been applied, but the result was to scoop out a piece of flesh quite cleanly, so that the wound looked exactly like a pomegranate, out of which a tablespoonful had been extracted; and the boy, for whom the button had fallen wrong side upwards, spent many weeks in bed, in the position of one who swims. The two poor little boys in Alton Locke, who said, "Turmits is froze, and us can't turn the handle of the cutter," are types of a large class, whose ignorance and whose sufferings have long called imperatively for redress.

Under no circumstances is real field work suited for women or children. Machinery will, of course, do much, as it has done already, to simplify and alleviate the disagreeables and difficulties of the work, but it can never be free from much that is hard, severe, discomfortable, deserving good pay. To those who think it is such pleasant and picturesque employment, that the labourer's life is an idyll, only needing to be translated into words, we would recommend that they should go, not only on some fine summer's evening when the heat of the day is declining, "with Thestylis to bind the sheaves," but with Roger on a foggy November morning, to spread rotten muck over the heavy clay land; not only to "hear the milk sing in the pail, with buzzings of the honied hours," but to milk those same cows at four o'clock in winter, when the frost is on the grass, and a keen north wind blowing across the pastures.

Those who have lived in the country and among the poor, though they have seldom admitted to themselves how hard and joyless was the lot of the tiller of the soil, have yet had a consciousness of the fact, and have endeavoured to mitigate it in many kindly ways. It is quite impossible to overstate the really charitable intentions of the country clergy, and country squires' wives and daughters. And though it may be doubted if the charity has always partaken of the character of mercy as described by Shakspeare, it has certainly been like it in that it has blessed the giver. Nothing has more tended to subdue the stiff dogmatic zeal of many a country rector and curate than that some troublesome ranter has fallen sick, and needed not only prayers and exhortations, but beef-tea and arrow-root, and nothing has so helped to free many a girl's mind from the artificialness and "petty dust" of society than the visit of comfort to some hard worked village drudge, and the humane sympathy brought out at the bedside of a sick child.

But when all this is admitted, it must be asserted that except in that matter of human sympathy which would be more precious *without* the material gifts, parish and private charities do not bless the recipients. They are simply palliatives to make men forget the insufficiency of wages; they foster unthrift and perpetuate dependence. We scarcely know a

sadder sight than one familiar to us for years—a long string of weary women walking once a week nearly two miles to the great house, and two miles back, with a full pitcher of soup, excellent, no doubt, and kindly given, but with the strong feeling that if any of those privileged to apply did not apply they would be considered ungrateful, defiant, and revolutionary.

It is the same with coal clubs, clothing clubs, perquisites. Those who receive the benefits are dependent; they take them because they admit, they are given because it is declared, *ipso facto*, that wages are insufficient and they stand in need of *alms*. Why is the agricultural labourer to be constrained to accept what the artisan would scorn, and which he, as he becomes more educated, will feel weighs him down with its kindly-intentioned pressure?

Such, roughly speaking, is the condition of the agricultural labourer, or rather was his condition two years ago. It is obviously impossible in a paper of this extent to attempt to particularise, to define modifications, and to state the special position of different classes of farm labourers, *e.g.* of shepherds and carters. Enough to say that the receipts were—taken all round—from eighteen pence to two shillings a week more than those of the ordinary labourer. His condition had subdued his nature to what it worked in. Few things are sadder in a country village than to see the bright intelligent child in the school become dull and loutish when he goes to work, and the little maiden, modest and demure, become the hoyden of the harvest field. There are many who do not become all that their surroundings would imply, but these even, for the most part, are far from the ideal of peasant life, and farther still from the reality they might attain of independent manhood. They could look forward to nothing better, and when the days of work were over there were no savings to fall back upon. How should there be? a parish pittance was all their hope, and a workhouse often their most comfortable home. There are many districts in England —we speak deliberately and after the testimony of relieving officers—in which there is not one old man or woman disabled by age for work who is not in receipt of parish pay. Their religion is an unintelligent acquiescence in what was taught them in church or chapel, a touching hope that God will be good to them in some future state, and take their many sufferings as a set off against what they were told were their sins, an assurance to their friends that they died "happy"—as poor souls, why should they not?—with perhaps a faint reminiscence of chapel hymns and a fancied vision of Glory! Glory!

Their morality, as has been hinted, was far better than might have been expected; and having their own definite but unwritten code in the matters of chastity, honesty, truth, poaching, and some other points on which law and conscience, the rich and the poor are now and then at issue, were truer to that code than are sometimes their superiors in social rank. But here, again, it is impossible to go into detail.

That in a needy and suffering class there are always some who when pressure is strongest, cast it off and spring to the front, is a story as old

as Moses. The precise circumstances which led to the Warwickshire strike, and the formation of the Labourers' Union, need not here be detailed, for they were accidents. "The tale of bricks was doubled, Moses came," according to the old proverb; and if it had not been there, and if Mr. Arch had not found his opening there, the rising would soon have come somewhere else, and another leader would have been the first, though Arch would never have been far behind.

Of strikes and lock-outs let us say at once that they are and must be modes of warfare, and that all warfare is simply deplorable; and this the strikers admit, while they assert also its necessity. It may be well to quote the definition of the position of the Union from the words of one of its most eager advocates among the classes which are not those of labouring men:—

What the Union wants is not to raise one class at the expense of another, but to take care that the progress of the labourer is commensurate with the general progress of the country. If England were impoverished by a long war, or any other national calamity, so that distress was in its degree on all classes, then would the labourers too be ready to share in the troubles of their country, and bear their ills without complaint. But when England is growing richer every day, and landlords and farmers, all that are called by a stretch of courtesy the upper classes, have luxuries and comforts of which their ancestors never dreamed, the labourer also claims his share in the growing prosperity, that that shall no longer be true that the *Times* has said, that "the advance of civilization has given to the labourer nothing but lucifer matches and the penny post." I wish also to define the position of the Labourers' Union. It is not true that it is intended to set, or has the effect of setting, class against class, or to foment disorder or encourage strikes; it is simply to bring labour and work into relation with each other, so that the labourer may, like all other men who have goods for sale, bring his labour to the best market. The mode in which this agitation has been conducted has been admirable, and this is a patent fact, nor is it without its effect even on those who feel most strongly against the opinions we are here to-night to advocate. I would say one word on the position of myself and my friends on this platform. We are here but as a temporary arrangement, not as wishing to dictate or to lead. We must look facts in the face, and the agricultural labourer will be the first to acknowledge that, though through no fault of his own, he has not had in past years that education which the State is now, if slowly, still really, placing within the reach of all; and till such education is given the labourer, he calls on those who, through any accident, have had a better education, to forward his desires. The labourer knows well what he needs; he asks more educated men just now to find him words and writing and figures. When more men can speak like Mr. Arch, then will those who thus aid the men as a temporary arrangement stand aside, to cheer and sympathize with them, while they do their own work in their own way. And that way will be the right way, for one of the strongest beliefs I have is that the people are, when once they have made up their minds, invariably right; you may always trust the instincts of the people; and therefore I welcome, with all my heart, the hope of that household suffrage in counties, which will really place the power of England in the hands of the people of England. The evils of all popular movements only begin when the will of the people is thwarted, as even the most useful and admirable engine or machine may prove dangerous to those who stand in the way of its work.

We do not say these words are not too sanguine, we do not say that we make them our own, but they at least show that, in the minds of the leaders, this is no movement of a rash communism, no pulling down of

one class at the expense of another, but merely the determination that the labourer shall share in the general prosperity of the country.

The position of the squire and the farmer is widely different to what it was in the recollection of men now not past middle age: they have comforts and luxuries of which then they did not dream; the country squire is no longer to be recognized under the name "Western;" the farmer stands above, far above, the position the squire once filled; but Molly with her dung-pick, as she appears in what is perhaps the most surprising scene in the whole range of English fiction—Molly and her relatives remain the same.

That the farmers, as a class, should be very angry, is not to be wondered; the breeches pocket is the most sensitive part of his organization. It is for the class who read this Magazine to do what they can between those who are now at war, and heal a strife which cannot but be disastrous.

We have not gone, and we do not intend to go, into the politico-economical question; we will only say it is not a simple question of supply and demand; for men in want of wages are now leaving England with their families by hundreds for Queensland, for New Zealand, for Canada. The hay harvest is coming on, the corn harvest will soon follow, the demand will come, and where will be the supply? We could point again to Western villages where one third of the houses are vacant, where the young men have disappeared, where the land is going out of cultivation. The younger labourers have gone abroad, or to the North. "Oh," say the farmers, "they will come back; such an one has done so already. They will find they were better off here." Not so. More than five hundred men had left one Western county more than six months ago; less than five per cent. have returned; from those that have remained come nothing but good accounts of their changed circumstances. Those who drift back are those who would work nowhere, who prefer to shuffle where hands of any sort are wanted. But these cases are known, while the farmers will not recognize the fact that the flower of the village are those who go and stay, not those who go and return.

Whatever may be the end of this, and even if the farmers gain the day, and the labourers fall back to their old, or nearly their old wages for a time, the agitation has in spite of all its drawbacks done good. It has educated the labourer in self-respect, and self-reliance has taught him to know himself as a member of a class, and so of a state, not as an unit, without coherence and relation with the world at large. It has brought out fellowship and broken down the bounds of the parish. In old days his notion of geography and, by consequence, of the system of things, were somewhat like those of a lad who, born in Windsor, was sent to school at Eton. Being asked by the then fourth-form master to name the four quarters of the globe, he answered, Windsor, Eton, Datchet, Eton-Wick. So to the labourer the limits of the world were confined within those of his village, the nearest workhouse town, the market town, if it were not the same, and he would have found it hard to name a fourth boundary if it were not the "Pig and Whistle" in the next village. Now, he is a part

of all that is, rising in intelligence, able to know what he is and needs, to ask for what he needs, and if now silenced, to ask again after a time with ever increasing persistence till he gets it.

And in the meantime it is for the comfortable classes to mediate in the matter, at least to consider the question, so as to throw the weight of their opinion into the scale. On the one side are those whom they have invested with a sentimental poetry, and looked on as creatures to be petted, if touched at all; while now it appears that their dumb seeming acquiescence, if it had found a tongue, would have said nearly such words as these—"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."

On the other hand are the farmers, who say "We cannot afford to give higher wages;" behind them are the landowners, who say "We cannot afford to lower our rent."

Here we may venture to quote the words of another who has become, from force of circumstances, the spokesman of the labourer on this question:—

> We have often been told that the farmers can't afford to give higher wages. I won't go into the question as to whether political economy would recognise the doctrine that the price of a commodity is to be regulated by what the purchaser alleges he can afford to give for it. This is a question of income, and questions of income are delicate things to go into. But if the discussion is forced on us, we must meet it. Is it not a fact, that when a good farm is in the market there are a dozen applicants for it? Farm produce is rising in price year by year, and so is the rental of dairies. If some of the good stout yeomen of twenty and thirty years ago could come to life again, I think they would be rather astonished at the outward and visible signs of the inward financial struggles of their successors. More money paid in wages, means to many modern farmers one hunter less in the field, one carriage instead of two, their sons educated for their calling instead of being crammed with useless classics at the public schools, their daughters taught something that shall be useful in after life instead of being french-polished by a foreign governess. And to the great landowners what does a reduction of rental mean? A box a tier higher at the opera, a racer less and a few thousands saved on the turf, some hundred head of pheasants and hares less butchered at battues, which means more corn grown and cheaper meat for the people, lower gaol, police and poor-rates.

We dare not take up more of our editor's available space, or more of our readers' time.

We have wished in a few plain words to show that the labourers are not discontented from simple "naughtiness," but that here, as when Lamennais addressed his burning words to his countrymen, here too are men struggling for a new birth, or rather a new development of existence.

We have said next to nothing of Mr. Arch, a man whom all who know him respect as a simple-minded, straightforward, honourable man, called to a greatness and a notoriety he did not desire, and the "burthen of an honour" he would gladly lay down. Mr. Forster's recognition of him in the House of Commons does credit to both the men.

If our readers will study the matter for themselves with the aid of Blue Books and their native common sense, our long night's labour will not have been in vain.

English Lyrical Poetry.

Mr. Palgrave, in the introduction to his admirable volume, the *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*, observes that he is acquainted with no strict and exhaustive definition of lyrical poetry, and he is content to point out a few simple principles which have guided him in his work. We think that Mr. Palgrave is right, and that he has judged wisely in not giving a definition which must have proved at best partial and unsatisfactory. To say what lyrical poetry is not, is an easy task, to express in a brief sentence what it is, so that if the question be put the answer, like a reply in the Catechism, may be instantly forthcoming, is well-nigh impossible. And the reason is that the lyric blossoms and may be equally beautiful and perfect under a variety of forms. The kind of inspiration that prompts it is to be found in the Ode and in the Song, in the Elegy and in the Sonnet. Its spirit is felt sometimes where it is least expected, its subtle charm is perceived occasionally in almost every kind of poetry save the satirical and didactic. Like life, like light, like the free air of the mountains, the lyric is enjoyed, as it were, unconsciously. We brush the bloom off fruit when we handle it too roughly, and there is perhaps a danger lest, in attempting to criticise lyrical poetry, the critic, by his precision and careful attention to rules, should destroy some of its beauty. We have learnt, however, of late years what was not understood a century ago, that the critic's office is to follow the poet, not to require that the poet should follow him. The poet indeed, like all artists, must be obedient to law, but his genius is less likely to lead him astray than the critic's book-knowledge, and of the lyric poet especially it may be safely asserted that the lack of conventional restraint, the freedom to sing his own song to his own music, is essential to success. In building the lofty rhyme of the epic, in the long narrative poem, in the drama, in the satire, some of the material must necessarily be of a common-place order. No great poem but has its weak points, its prosaic details, its matter of fact lines. The poet-artist who designs a vast work knows that it cannot be of sustained excellence throughout. If his eye roll in a fine frenzy at one part, it is certain to grow dim and sleepy at another; he cannot be always sublime, and if he could his readers would grow weary. His imagination must inevitably flag as he pursues a task which requires time as well as genius, and the utmost he can do is to make his coarser workmanship serve as a foil to that which is more delicate. This has been done with consummart art by Milton, whose sense of fitness and congruity is as remarkable as the lovely harmony of his versification. Lyrical poetry, on the other

hand, will not admit of aught that is of inferior quality. Like the sonnet, it should be perfect throughout—in form, in thought, in the lovely marriage of pure words, in the melody that pervades the whole. The lyric at its best—as in the songs of Shakspeare and some of the old dramatists, in the "Epithalamium" of Spenser, a poem of almost unequalled loveliness, in the pretty love-warblings of Herrick, in the artful music of Collins and of Gray, in the etherial melody of Shelley, in the impassioned songs of Burns—belongs to the highest order of poetry. It is the noblest inspiration of the poetical mind, its choicest utterance, the expression of its profoundest feeling. With the exception of Shakspeare and Milton, each of whom, be it remembered, in addition to his dramatic or epic genius, is a supreme master of the lyric, the greatest poets of this country belong to the lyrical class. Moreover, the poems which live in the memory and which take most hold upon us, are essentially lyrical in character. Not that the most precious of our lyrics are generally the most popular. The finest literary work, no matter what the department may be, will never be the most sought after. It is for the appreciation of the few rather than for the delight of the many. Mr. Tupper has more readers than Spenser, Dr. Cumming than Jeremy Taylor, and there is many an essayist of the day whose writings are better known than the essays of Lord Bacon. We are accustomed to regard poetry as a kind of inspiration, and so no doubt it is. The gift, like the gift of wisdom, cannot be purchased. The poet, like all artists, may enlarge his range and perfect his skill by labour and intense study, but the power comes from Nature, and even when the power is possessed it can only be exercised at certain periods. Dr. Johnson indeed in alluding to this notion, as held by Gray, calls it a "fantastic foppery," but Johnson, it has been well said, "made poetry by pure effort of diligence as a man casts up his ledger;" in other words he was a clever versifyer, not a poet, and the conditions upon which poetry is produced surpassed his comprehension.

Poetry is not a profession, and the poet who dreams of immortality cannot write as Dr. Johnson seems to have thought, and as Southey thought, a given number of lines a day. Verses written to order are as worthless as most prize poems. They may display ability, but genius never. The mechanical art of the verse-maker is, however, often mistaken for the noble labour of the poet, and in Johnson's time especially the one was constantly confounded with the other. We laugh at the old Cumberland dame who on hearing of Wordsworth's death exclaimed, "Ay! it's a pity he's gane; but what then? I'se warn't the widow can carry on the business aw t' seame;" but something of the like feeling existed among the poetasters of the eighteenth century, and is perhaps not quite extinct even in our day.

The great age of Elizabeth—an age as remarkable for noble deeds as for noble words—may be taken by the student of our poetry as the birth-time of the lyric. Some sweet snatches of lyrical verse were produced indeed before that period, and in Chaucer, the first splendid name in our

literary annals, there may be frequently detected, under the narrative form, marks of the bounding spirit and sweetness which delight us in lyric poetry. Poets indeed who sing of love can scarcely fail to fall into the lyrical strain, and Chaucer, with his healthy vigorous nature, his love of all outward beauty, especially of the beauty of women, and his fine ear for music, was not likely to be wholly deficient in this branch of the poetical art. A delicious simplicity, a joyous humour, a skill in delineating character, a manly grasp of his subject—these are among the more prominent features of this great poet's work, but in much of it we may detect the spirit of the lyric poet, although the form of the lyric is wanting.

For our purpose, however, and indeed for any notice of English lyrical poetry that is not severely critical, the sixteenth century is the period in which it seems natural to commence our survey. With the splendid exception of Chaucer (for the works of Gower, Surrey, Wyatt, and others are comparatively of small account), it may be said that our poets performed their first achievements in that wonderful age. And what they did, in the dawn of our poetical literature, remains a living power, so that their words and thoughts influence us and delight us still. The greatest poets then used the drama as the vehicle of their art, and the lyric, although largely employed, was generally made subordinate to the requirements of the dramatist. Not always, however, and some of the loveliest lyrics of that age, although the work of dramatists, had no place in their dramas, while much sweet lyrical poetry is to be found in Elizabethan poets who never catered for the stage. If we ask the reader to spend a few minutes with us while we open some of these old poets, it is not from any doubt that the best which they have written is already familiar and beloved. Those who know it best, however, will be perhaps the best pleased to refresh their memory, and that they may do so, allusion will often serve the purpose of quotation. Of course, the first name we think of is that of Shakspeare, who is not only the greatest of dramatists but stands in the front rank of lyrical poets. But of Shakspeare, simply because he is so great and because his words are so well known to all who read the English tongue, it is scarcely needful to say anything. There is nothing in poetical literature more entirely lovely, more delicately fragrant, more dainty in form, more like music, which once heard must be remembered alway, than the songs or snatches of song scattered through the works of Shakspeare. They are as fresh as roses just bursting into bloom, as grateful as the perfume of violets, or the scent of the sea when the wind blows the foam in our faces. And we are content to enjoy them without criticism as we enjoy the warmth of the sun or the soothing sound of running waters. There seems no art in these little pieces, which appear to fall from the poet like notes from a bird, so consummately is the art concealed.

"Full fathom five thy father lies;" "Under the greenwood tree;" "When icicles hang by the wall;" "When daisies pied and violets blue;" "Where the bee sucks;" "Fear no more the heat o' the sun;" "Come

away, come away, Death ; "—it is enough surely to quote in this way the first line of a Shakspearian song in order to recall it to the memory, and to convince a forgetful reader that the charm of musical song is as much one of Shakspeare's gifts, as the dramatic strength and the superlative imagination which enable him to see through the deeds of men. Several of the Elizabethan dramatists show an ear for melody, and a knowledge of lyrical form which gives an abiding vitality to their verse. Webster, one of the most powerful, although far from the most pleasing, of Shakspeare's contemporaries, throws his grim strength into tragedy which sometimes borders on the grotesque. He heaps horror upon horror with a vehemence of language which enchains the reader while it appals him, but this gloomy poet does now and then venture upon a lyrical strain, sad indeed, according to his wont, but at the same time beautiful. Here, for instance, are ten quaint lines worthy almost of Shakspeare :—

Call for the robin-redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.
Call unto his funeral dole
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,
To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm
And (when gay tombs are robb'd) sustain no harm ;
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

This song is entitled by Mr. Palgrave " A Land Dirge," and with good judgment he places it on the same page with the sea dirge sung by Ariel. A lovely little song of somewhat similar character by Beaumont and Fletcher might have aptly followed these two famous pieces.

Lay a garland on my hearse
Of the dismal yew ;
Maidens, willow branches bear,
Say I died true.

My love was false, but I was firm
From my hour of birth.
Upon my buried body lie
Lightly, gentle earth !

In their lyrics these twin-poets approach sometimes very near to Shakspeare—so near indeed that it might seem as if they had caught the very echo of his verse ; and we think that Hazlitt is correct in his judgment that, while as dramatists they rank in the second class, they belong to the first order as lyrical and descriptive poets. If we may judge from the *Faithful Shepherdess*, Fletcher's genius as a lyrist surpassed that of Beaumont, and it is infinitely sad that so lovely a lyrical drama should be deformed by gross coarseness and by passages which, viewed simply from the artist's standing-point, are out of place in such a poem. Coleridge wished that Beaumont and Fletcher had written poems instead of plays. Had they done so, instead of pandering as they too often did to the corrupt tastes of the town, we might have had lyrics from these

brother-poets worthy of a place with the youthful poems of Milton. There is a little poem ascribed to Beaumont, although it appears in a play of Fletcher's, which must have suggested the "Il Penseroso." So perfect is its beauty, so delicious its music, that it is not surprising it laid hold of Milton and prompted him to utter on a like subject his own beautiful thoughts.

Hence all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
  Wherein you spend your folly ;
There's nought in this life sweet,
Were men but wise to see 't,
  But only melancholy ;
O sweetest melancholy !

Welcome folded arms and fixèd eyes ;
A sigh that piercing mortifies ;
A look that's fastened to the ground ;
A tongue chained up without a sound !

Fountain-heads and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves !
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed save bats and owls !
A midnight bell, a parting groan!
These are the sounds we feed upon ;
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley ;
Nothing so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

It was Francis Beaumont also who wrote the lines on Life, which may remind the reader of similar but not more striking verses on the same topic.

Like to the falling of a star,
Or as the flights of eagles are,
Or like the fresh Spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew,
Or like a wind that chafes the flood,
Or bubbles which on waters stood—
Even such is man, whose borrow'd light
Is straight called in and paid to-night :
The wind blows out, the bubble dies,
The spring intomb'd in autumn lies,
The dew's dried up, the star is shot,
The flight is past and man forgot.

Ben Jonson, whose learning has so encumbered his verse as in a measure to obscure his fame, had also a fine ear for music; and those who know him only as a dramatist have missed perhaps some of the finest traits in his poetical nature. As we read of Rare Ben, we picture to ourselves a coarse-grained, powerful-looking man, prodigious in waist, and boasting, like Falstaff, a mountain belly — a man who liked good cheer too well, whose love was licence, and who led the life of a town wit in a gross age, when the conscience of a playwright was not likely to be over-sensitive. London life he understood in all its varieties, and as

the leader of the Apollo Club, we can picture him enjoying the same kind of honour which was bestowed some years later upon Dryden. Such a man, you might say, was not likely to babble of green fields, or to sing the sweet songs which are inspired by an open-air life, or by that faith in the beauty and purity of womanhood which is the reward of honest thought and generous aspirations. Nevertheless, this fine old dramatist, man-about-town though he was, and far, it is to be feared, from a cleanly liver, had an eye for natural loveliness and a heart susceptible to the delicacy and grace of womanly charms, and of all that is lovely and of good report, which surprises and delights us as we read his lyrical poems. To know Ben Jonson at his best, as a man, if not as a poet, the reader should gain a familiar acquaintance with "The Forest" and with "Underwoods," under which headings are to be found the gems of his lyrical poetry as well as much of rare excellence in descriptive and rural verse. This tavern poet and town wit knew and loved nature well, and how charmingly he could sing of love might be proved by a variety of examples. Perhaps the song commencing with —

> Drink to me only with thine eyes
> And I will pledge with mine—

is Jonson's best; at all events it is the one best known, and therefore we shall not venture to quote it. Room, however, must be found for one short and dainty piece, which affords a favourable specimen of this poet's craft as a song-writer, as well as of his hearty way of making love. It is addressed to Celia, and although imitated from Catullus, is not the less original in tone. The man of genius, when he attempts to imitate, generally transforms:—

> Kiss me, sweet; the wary lover
> Can your favours keep and cover
> When the common courting jay
> All your bounties will betray.
> Kiss again! no creature comes;
> Kiss and score up wealthy sums
> On my lips, thus hardly sundered
> While you breathe. First give a hundred,
> Then a thousand, then another
> Hundred, then unto the other
> Add a thousand, and so more,
> Till you equal with the store
> All the grass that Rumney yields,
> Or the sands in Chelsea fields,
> Or the drops in silver Thames,
> Or the stars that gild his streams
> In the silent summer nights,
> When youths ply their stolen delights;
> That the curious may not know
> How to tell 'em as they flow,
> And the envious, when they find
> What their number is, be pined.

In another and nobler strain are the fine lines so often quoted and so quotable, containing, as they do, a world of meaning within briefest compass:—

> It is not growing like a tree
> In bulk, doth make men better be;
> Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
> To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:
> A lily of a day
> Is fairer far in May
> Although it fall and die that night—
> It was the plant and flower of light.
> In small proportions we just beauties see,
> And in short measures life may perfect be.

As a dramatist Ben Jonson deserves to be read, and not only read but studied, for his wit and humour, for his wonderful skill as an artist, for his masterly command of language, for the knowledge his works afford us of the age in which he lived; but we venture to think that his highest claim upon posterity rests on the pastoral and descriptive passages, and on the lovely specimens of lyrical verse to be found in the little volume that contains his poems. Truly does Hazlitt say that Jonson's "Discourse with Cupid" is "infinitely delicate and *piquant*, and without one single blemish"; and truly, too, does Leigh Hunt remark of his ode "To Cynthia," which has a place in almost every selection, that it combines classic eloquence with a tone of modern feeling and a music like a serenade." No man, says Mr. Henry Morley, can be a dramatist in any real sense of the word who cannot produce good lyrics—a just assertion in the main, and one that assuredly holds good with regard to this great poet.

Sentimental, refined, melancholy in temperament and inclined to solitude, Drummond of Hawthornden led a very different life to that enjoyed by his friend Ben Jonson. In his verse there is a lack of vigour, but seldom a want of sweetness, and many of his short pieces deserve, in the quaint language of the age, to be called "sugared." His genius is essentially lyrical, and much that is of genuine beauty may be found among his poems. As a writer of sonnets, his rank among our early poets is a high one, but he has produced nothing that is of supreme excellence, and it is probable that he will be better remembered for his "Notes of Conversations" with Ben Jonson, than for his own work as a poet. Drummond is one of the few notable poets of that age who did not try his hand at the drama, which was as popular among men of letters as the novel is now. A peculiar taste and special leisure are needed for an adequate study of the minor Elizabethan dramatists, and it may be doubted whether a knowledge of a few of the masterpieces of Ford, Webster, Marlowe, and Dekker will not suffice to satisfy most students of our early poetry. The writings of these men partake in large measure of the passion and turbulence of their lives, and the biography of poets has few sadder pages than those which record the careers of Marlowe and of Greene.

Marlowe, the famous author of *Dr. Faustus*, which suggested his

incomparable work to the greatest of German poets, perished in a drunken quarrel; and Greene, after a brief, but grossly dissipated life, died miserably in abject poverty. Both these writers have left some striking pieces of lyric verse. Who does not know the madrigal

Come live with me and be my love

of Marlowe, and the reply written by Sir Walter Raleigh? Robert Greene has not written any piece popular like these; but several of his poems, though disfigured by conceits, have the ring of true poetry. Not one of them, however, has been transferred by Mr. Palgrave to his *Golden Treasury*, and he has perhaps rightly judged, so largely is the beauty of Greene's verse mingled with imperfections. Lodge, also a minor dramatist of the period, shows more of artistic skill than his contemporary as a lyric poet. The best of his pieces appeared in *England's Helicon*, a collection of pastoral and lyric poems published at the close of Elizabeth's reign, and reprinted for the service of modern readers by Sir Egerton Brydges. This is but one among many selections of verse which appeared during the period, and the student who would make himself acquainted with the lyric poetry of the age will also read *The Phœnix Nest*, *The Paradise of Dainty Devises* (which, however, belongs rather to the reign of Queen Mary), and *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites*. There is much in these selections that is only curious, but sometimes, and especially in the *Helicon*, a poetical gem will repay the reader for his toil. To the *Helicon*, Lodge and Breton are among the most important contributors; but here, too, will be found the great names of Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, Marlowe, Spenser, and Shakspeare.

Breton is so little known in these days (he has no place in the best selections of English poetry), that one short specimen of his skill as a lyric poet may be transferred to these pages. The following lines, three hundred years old, remember, run almost as smoothly as if they had been written by a modern poet:—

In the merry month of May,
In a morn by break of day,
Forth I walked by the woodside,
When as May was in his pride:
There I spied all alone
Phillida and Corydon.
Much ado there was, God wot;
He would love and she would not;
She said, never man was true,
He said, none was false to you;
He said he had loved her long,
She said, love should have no wrong;
Corydon would kiss her then,
She said, maids must kiss no men,
Till they did for good and all;
Then she made the shepherd call
All the heavens to witness truth
Never loved a truer youth.

Thus with many a pretty oath,
Yea and nay, and faith and troth,
Such as silly shepherds use
When they will not Love abuse,
Love, which had been long deluded,
Was with kisses sweet concluded,
And Phillida with garlands gay
Was made the Lady of the May.

The marvellous genius of Spenser, the poet who beyond all others possesses the finest sense of the beautiful, and whose lovely verse carries us through a land of enchantment, was not wholly expended upon his "Faery Queene." He has written one lyric poem of such incomparable excellence as to place him beyond all controversy in the foremost rank of our lyric poets. Truly does Dr. George Macdonald say of the "Epithalamium" that it is "one of the most stately, melodious, and tender poems in the world," and Mr. Hallam, the calmest and least impulsive of critics, writes of this splendid poem with generous enthusiasm. "It is a strain," he says, "redolent of a bridegroom's joy and of a poet's fancy. The English language seems to expand itself with a copiousness unknown before, while he pours forth the varied imagery of this splendid little poem. I do not know any other nuptial song, ancient or modern, of equal beauty. It is an intoxication of ecstasy, ardent, noble, and pure." Spenser "sage and serious," as Milton calls him, had ever a high and delicate perception of the passion of love. "Noble and pure" are the words applied by Mr. Hallam to the feeling which finds musical utterance in this nuptial song, and better words could not be used. Yet Mr. Palgrave has omitted this almost perfect poem from his selection on the ground that it is "not in harmony with modern manners." So much the worse then, we say, for modern manners, which find sensational novels, many of them of doubtful purity, in harmony with the morals of society, and reject as unrefined the manly and simple expressions of loyal love and passionate tenderness uttered in this song. Gladly would we quote a portion of the poem, but the verses will not bear separation, and the supreme loveliness of the poetry cannot be justly appreciated unless the entire poem is read. We may add that another piece of similar character called "Prothalamium," although worthy of Spenser's genius, is not to be compared to the glorious "Epithalamium" written on his own marriage. The first is, indeed, of high excellence, but the latter is divine.

To pass from Spenser to Herrick is to descend from the heights of poetry to a comparatively lowly level. Herrick lives in the plain, and his prettinesses are such as belong to a flat country. His verse is often graceful, but it is never elevating, and the dainty love lyrics in which he sings the charms—too minutely specified sometimes—of a score of mistresses are frequently sensual in tone. Hazlitt has pointed out that from Herrick's constant allusion to pearls and rubies one might take him for a lapidary instead of a poet, and it must be allowed that the use he makes of jewellery in describing the eyes and teeth and bosoms and lips

of fair ladies is not a little wearisome. It is impossible to say of Herrick's poetry that it is a perpetual feast of nectared sweets where no crude surfeit reigns. The sweets are to be found in it in such abundance that they are apt to induce satiety, and while women's bodily charms are methodically inventoried, their spiritual features, if we may use the term, are left out of the catalogue. Rarely does this poet exhibit feeling or pathos, but his command of language is great, and he has the art, which Prior and Thomas Moore possessed, of saying pretty things in a pretty way. The following little piece of counsel addressed to girls affords a favourable specimen of his style as a song writer, but his chief strength, perhaps, lies in the epigram:—

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of Heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That eye is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

Herrick was born in 1591, but did not reach his poetical prime until he was considerably advanced in life. Among his contemporaries were several minor poets who exhibited remarkable facility and grace as writers of love lyrics. Waller, who has been praised especially for "the softness and smoothness of his numbers," has left little which will be read with pleasure in our day, and nothing that for sweetness and harmony can be compared with the loveliest lyrics of the Elizabethan period. Generally he is correct and tame, sometimes he is feeble, and if we allow that at his best he is graceful, and has some felicities of language, we have given to Waller the highest praise that he deserves. Readers will remember this poet's comparison of old age to a worn-out tenement:—

The soul's dark cottage battered and decayed
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.

And his lines on a girdle will also be familiar:—

That which her slender waist confined
Shall now my joyful temples bind;
No monarch but would give his crown
His arms might do what this has done.

It is seldom that we feel disposed to differ from Mr. Palgrave in his critical judgments, but we cannot agree with him that "the poetry of simple passion produced in Herrick and Waller some charming pieces of

more finished art than the Elizabethan." Among the love poetry characteristic of this period are some lyrics by Lovelace, Suckling, and Wither, that have all the wit, the graceful turn of expression, and the lightness of touch, which this style of verse demands. Sometimes, as in the case of Suckling, the poetry is disfigured by grossness, but the liveliness and gaiety of the verses in which this poet describes a wedding are unequalled in our language, and who does not know the lines to Althea by Lovelace, and the spirited piece beginning—

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?

written by George Wither? A word of praise must be given here in passing to Thomas Carew, whose little piece commencing—

He that loves a rosy cheek
Or a coral lip admires—

has won a place in our anthologies.

Contemporary with these men, though born a little later than some, and moving apart from them in a lofty and sublime region which has been attained only by one or two of the world's greatest poets, John Milton proved in early manhood that his genius as a lyric poet would have sufficed to perpetuate his fame even if he had not lived to accomplish the chief labour of his life. If he be not the greatest of epic poets—and there is but one that can compete with him for the palm—the author of "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and "Lycidas" stands beyond question in the front rank as a writer of lyrics. There are flaws in these glorious poems which have been painfully dwelt upon by critics, but in spite of some insignificant defects, these three poems, two of them most admirable for description, and one, a pastoral elegy of the rarest poetic beauty—lay hold of the imagination and possess the memory as only the greatest poetry can. They do not merely win admiration, but they are treasured up as a precious portion of our intellectual property. Turn from them to the greatest lyric effort of John Dryden, the "Alexander's Feast," and how vast appears the gulf that separates these poets! Dryden's ode is of its kind incomparable. It is written by a consummate versifier, and by a man of brilliant genius. How finely and swiftly the verse rolls along, how full it is of animation, how free from weakness, how great in its variety of language! It is a magnificent piece of poetical rhetoric, but the exquisite and subtle charms of poetry are not to be found in it. It creates no feeling but that of admiration, whereas "Lycidas" excites in the reader capable of appreciating noble verse, not admiration only, but a glow of emotion, an elevation of spirit, which lifts him for the moment to the poet's level. Dr. Johnson's praise of Dryden's famous Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew, which he terms "undoubtedly the finest ode which our language ever has produced," must be regarded from our point of view as over-strained. Again we say it is a great rhetorical effort, not a great lyric poem, and in some portions it lacks

——the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march and energy divine,

for which Dryden is deservedly famous. How stiff and prosaic, for instance, are such lines as the following! Instead of the majestic march, it is as if the poet were hobbling painfully upon crutches:—

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfused into thy blood:
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,
An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.
But if thy pre-existing soul
Was formed at first with myriads more,
It did through all the mighty poets roll,
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.
If so, then cease thy flight, O heaven-born mind!
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore:
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return, to fill or mend the quire of thy celestial kind.

May we presume to say that, at thy birth,
New joy was sprung in heaven as well as here on earth?
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And even the most malicious were in trine.

Dryden stands on a high eminence as a satirist and narrative poet. He is also a vigorous reasoner in verse; and his clear, sinewy style in such poems as "Absalom and Achitophel," and the "Religio Laici," is that of a master of language. In his special domain he need fear no rival; but in his lyric poetry, as in his dramas, the work he has produced is of inferior quality. If this be true of "Glorious John," it is assuredly equally true of his imitator and rival, Pope. The author of the "Dunciad," of the "Imitations of Horace," and of the exquisite "Rape of the Lock," is in his own way inimitable. The perfection of art, the finest satire, the most graceful play of fancy, characterise these poems, but when Pope attempts the lyric the failure is conspicuous. His "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day" has been justly called only a feeble duplicate of Dryden, and Mr. Elwin says truly that his "Universal Prayer" is a tame composition, and "never rises above the level of a second-rate hymn." The character of the age was not favourable to lyric poetry, and among the brilliant wits who associated with Pope, Addison, and Swift, one or two only have been successful in this form of verse. There are a few fairly-good lyric passages in Gay's "Acis and Galatea;" and that small poet, who produced also some good ballads, has written one or two tolerable songs. Matthew Prior was far more successful than Gay, and many of his pieces have a brightness and quickness of fancy which remind us of Thomas Moore. The Irish poet was no doubt, in some instances, indebted to his predecessor for the structure of his verse; and readers familiar with the "Melodies," in listening for the

first time to some passages in Prior's poems, would at once attribute them to Moore. There are several little love-pieces in Prior so like the prurient poems published under the name of "Mr. Little," that it would be easy to believe they were the productions of the same author. Like Moore, Prior is an apt writer, also, of *vers de société* and a brilliant epigrammatist; but unfortunately many of his pieces are too coarse to be tolerated in our day. Yet Dr. Johnson strangely enough declared Prior's poems to be a lady's book. "No lady," he said, "is ashamed to have it standing in her library." The following piece sounds like a song of Moore's, and the fancy exhibited in it is of the artificial kind, in which Moore delighted. It is an answer to Chloe jealous—

Dear Chloe, how blubber'd is that pretty face,
  Thy cheek all on fire and thy hair all uncurl'd!
Pry'thee quit this caprice; and, as old Falstaff says,
  Let us e'en talk a little like folks of this world.
* * * * * * * *

What I speak, my friend Chloe, and what I write shows
  The difference there is between Nature and Art;
I court others in verse, but I love thee in prose:
  And they have my whimsies, but thou hast my heart.

The god of us verse-men (you know, child) the sun,
  How after his journeys he sets up his rest:
If at morning o'er earth 'tis his fancy to run,
  At night he declines on his Thetis's breast.

So, when I am wearied with wand'ring all day,
  To thee, my delight, in the evening I come:
No matter what beauties I saw in my way,
  They were but my visits, but thou art my home.

Then finish, dear Chloe, this pastoral war;
  And let us, like Horace and Lydia, agree:
For thou art a girl as much brighter than her
  As he was a poet sublimer than me.

Prior deserves, we think, more praise as a lyrist than he has hitherto received; for his success, such as it is, was not due to any contemporary influence. The vein of poetry at that period led in another direction, and when the Queen Anne men attempted the lyric they generally blundered. Such laboured and conventional odes as those written by Addison, Hughes, and Congreve, on St. Cecilia or in Praise of Music, were not uncommon; but these odes—and there are numbers of equal merit, or demerit, in Chalmers's vast collection—are mere specimens of the verse-maker's handicraft in an age when the sole merit of some writers, called poets by courtesy, was mechanical skill.

Charles Dickens once observed of Thomas Gray that no poet ever gained a place among the immortals with so small a volume under his arm. And it may be safely asserted that, little as Gray has written, it does not all belong to the highest class of poetry. It is as a lyric poet that Gray has won his laurels, and his best work is limited to five or six odes and to the "Elegy

Written in a Country Churchyard." This elegy is probably the most popular poem in the language. It lives in the memory of most men who have received a liberal education, and the hold it has upon us is owing to the pensive beauty of the verse, to the naturalness of the thoughts, which are obvious without being commonplace, and to the choice of a subject in which everyone must feel a pathetic interest. When the poem appeared, the leading review of the day observed—"The excellence of this little piece amply compensates for its want of quantity;" and this was all the critic had to say in praise of a poem which ranks with the choicest treasures of poetical literature. In spite of the cold praise of the reviewer, the Elegy gained immediate popularity, which Gray imputed to the subject, observing that the public would have received it as well if it had been written in prose; an extraordinary assertion, for there never was a poem that owed more to the melody of the versification, and to the exact adaptation of the metre to the theme. Of Gray's two greatest odes, the "Progress of Poesy" and the "Bard," little new can be said, for criticism has exhausted itself upon them. Dr. Johnson's fault-finding in his examination of these poems may be sometimes captious, but it contains a large amount of truth. No doubt amidst much splendour there is also much obscurity, much conventional diction, many words arbitrarily compounded, many thoughts that are grasped with difficulty and that give little pleasure when the meaning is perceived. The following remarks can hardly be gainsaid: "These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. Double, double, toil and trouble! He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature." Gray, who found fault with his friend Mason for the artificial structure of his poetry, fell himself into the same error, and the diction of the Odes is in the highest degree laboured. Yet there are lines in these poems of superlative excellence—lines which none but a genuine poet could have written in his choicest moments of inspiration. The "Ode on Eton College" is marked by some of Gray's worst faults, but some of the verses are of perfect beauty, and how lovely is the conclusion, too familiar to be quoted here! The "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat" has also some felicities of language, but why the cat should be called a "hapless nymph" in one stanza, and a "presumptuous maid" in another, the poet himself might have found it difficult to say. The permanence of Gray's fame depends, not on his Odes but on his Elegy; and it is impossible to conceive of any progress of thought or of society which shall make that poem less acceptable to his countrymen. It is founded, to use one of Mr. Carlyle's phrases, on the eternal verities.

It was Gray's happy fortune to move by one of his poems the universal heart. William Collins—a lyric poet perhaps of equal genius—has not been

so successful. Collins's Odes appeal, like Gray's, to a limited circle of readers; and there are men of culture and with some love of poetry who are quite unable to appreciate the peculiar powers of this fine, but occasionally obscure poet. Sometimes, and when in his highest mood, Collins is simple and pathetic, and his language, tortuous perhaps elsewhere, is marked by the most exquisite propriety. Had Collins written nothing else, the "Dirge in Cymbeline," the Ode commencing

> How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
> By all their country's wishes blest!—

and the unrhymed "Ode to Evening," would suffice to keep his memory green. Throughout his short life, or a large portion of it, he had the burden upon him of a great fear and sorrow, and his verse, the growth of a mournful disposition, is full of plaintive melancholy. Perhaps the most inadequate criticism to be found in Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* is that bestowed on poor Collins; but the subtle charm of his poetry was not likely to be appreciated by the robust critic who failed to see the loveliness of "Lycidas." Johnson, strange to say, finds far more to admire in the lyric poetry of Shenstone, whose ideas are commonplace and whose verse is jingling. His "Pastoral Ballad," once so famous that it had a place in most selections, is now forgotten. James Thomson, a genuine poet, whose genius, in spite of his artificial diction, has given him a distinct and honourable place in our poetical literature, deserves mention among lyric poets, although his strength lies mainly in description. Either he or Mallet is the author of "Rule Britannia," and it may be noted here in passing that the best patriotic songs or lyrics in our language, and the best battle songs, are the work of Scotchmen—of Burns and Campbell, of Sir Walter Scott and of Allan Cunningham. Burns, the greatest of all song writers, is too distinctly Scottish to be included in this brief survey of English lyric poets. He needed his native dialect when giving utterance to strong passion and feeling, and his purely English poems are comparative failures. When Burns was delighting some of his countrymen, and shocking others, with his amorous lyrics, a poet of a very different stamp was slowly winning his way to fame amidst the tame scenery of Buckinghamshire. Cowper's chief merit, it has been sometimes said, is, that he freed poetry from the so-called conventional diction popular in his age, and drew his imagery, as all true poets must, direct from nature. Burns, a man of a far stronger intellect, did this more vigorously; but his prose is full of affectations. Cowper, often unpoetical and commonplace, is never wanting in simplicity, and in his observation of nature he is unerring. As a lyric poet his place is not with the highest. He has no fine sense of harmony, none of those exquisite felicities of language which abound in Spenser, Milton, and Keats, and which form a striking feature of Mr. Tennyson's poetry; but he has great clearness of expression, and his pathos is profound. Such lyrical pieces as "The Poplar Field," "On the Loss of the Royal George," "The Castaway," and above all the exquisite

lines "To Mary," will always be read and re-read by those who can best appreciate a poet's work.

Cowper died in 1800, when several of the great poets, whose works gave such splendour to the first quarter of this century, were in the full prime of manhood. Wordsworth was thirty, Walter Scott twenty-nine, Coleridge twenty-eight, and Campbell twenty-three. Shelley, Keats, and Hood, were at this date comparative infants, and Byron was a schoolboy of twelve. The French Revolution, exciting ardent hopes in some minds, and profound disappointment and regret in others, created an extraordinary movement in intellectual life. The beautiful but somewhat languid stream of poetry that flowed so calmly in the eighteenth century, burst towards the close of it into a mountain torrent, leaping and foaming with an impetuous energy that amazed the few so-called classic versemakers who retained Pope's style, while lacking his vigour and his wit. Wordsworth, calmest and least impulsive of poets, has described what he felt at this period :—

> A glorious time,
> A happy time that was ; triumphant looks
> Were then the common language of all eyes ;
> As if awaked from sleep, the nations hailed
> Their great expectancy.

And Coleridge, inspired by the same hopes, writes :—

> When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,
> And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,
> Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free !
> Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared !

On various minds this great movement acted in different ways. If for a time it quickened hope and enthusiasm in the breasts of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, it forced Scott into the ranks of Toryism. In every case, however, it served to stimulate intellectual energy, and whatever political view men may take of this extraordinary period, all must allow that poetry, and especially lyric poetry, gained from it in exaltation and fervour. The poets we have mentioned have many claims upon our attention apart from the lyrical bent of their genius, but our subject leads us to regard their poetry solely in one direction. If we except Shelley—and we do not feel sure that we ought to except him—Coleridge, great in so many ways, takes the foremost rank in the lyric amongst the early poets of this century. The music of his versification is exquisite ; so perfect, indeed, is it at times, that the most able critic would be doing a rash act were he to attempt to alter a single word. Read aloud his "Genevieve," and say whether poet ever framed a more exquisite love poem ? read his "Ancient Mariner," and his "Christabel," and the perfect movement of the verse will strike you as much as the dazzling imagination which floods every page with poetic light ; or read the short poem entitled "Verse and Age," and you will agree with Leigh Hunt that its music can only be matched by some of the sweet strains of our early

poets. Willingly would we quote the whole of this little piece, which contains forty-nine lines. This would, however, encroach too much upon our space, and the poem, which is in almost all selections, should be known to every one. This indeed is a constant difficulty in writing a paper upon English poetry, since to quote the finest illustrations of the subject, is to print verses with which readers are already familiar. Passing as we do now from Coleridge to Shelley, who is his rival in musical expression, it would obviously be absurd to transcribe such poems as the "Ode to the West Wind," or the "Ode to a Sky-lark," as examples of his lyrical genius. Of Shelley and of his poetry it may be said in his own words:—

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Like his sky-lark, Shelley is a "scorner of the ground," and sings the sweeter the higher he ascends. He is the poet of dreams and aerial fancies; he does not walk in the common ways of men; his beautiful voice speaks to us from a lofty height, and if it does not always speak clearly, it is because while singing he is "hidden in the light of thought." His song gives to us the same kind of delight we receive from the sounds of inanimate nature. The same kind, but in a larger degree, for the words Shelley addresses to the sky-lark may be fitly applied to him:—

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh thy music doth surpass.

It seems natural to turn from Shelley to the young poet whose death he has so exquisitely mourned in "Adonais." Keats was such a youth when he died, so immature, not in years only but in culture, that it would be ungenerous to dwell too much on the defects of his poetry. His faults arose in part from a lack of liberal training, and still more, perhaps, from the influence of the poetical school in which he was a pupil. The aroma of Leigh Hunt's poetry may be detected throughout the poetry of Keats; whatever is beautiful in colour, delicious in scent, or graceful in form; whatever captivates the fancy, or enchants the ear, gives inspiration to his muse. His verse is full of sweetnesses, but it is apt to cloy. Yet there are indications which can scarcely be mistaken that had the life of this wonderful youth been spared (he was but twenty-six when he died) he would have put aside the pardonable faults of his boyhood, and have exhibited the calm strength and the elevation of purpose which give dignity to poetry as well as to life. In spite of faults which lie upon the surface of his poetry, and need no critical sagacity to detect, what a

delightful and exceedingly precious volume Keats has left his country! There is genius visible in every page of it, and not lines only, but whole poems, which entitle the author to claim a place with the great poets of England. The sonnet upon Chapman's Homer is one of the finest in the language. "Hyperion" is a majestic fragment; the "Eve of St. Agnes" is full of glorious poetry; and scarcely any ode produced this century shows a higher power of suggestiveness than the "Ode to a Nightingale." Listen but to one stanza of it:—

> Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird.
> No hungry generations tread thee down;
> The voice I heard this passing night was heard
> In ancient days by emperor and clown;
> Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
> The same that oft-times hath
> Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn.

Contrast this ode, or Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," with the frigid, conventional, laboured odes which passed for poetry in the last century—they may be read by scores in Chalmers's *Anthology*—and the difference is like walking in a lovely country, with its woods, and meadows, and hill-sides fragrant with heather, after being confined to the formal paths of a London square. The splendid poetical fruit produced during the first thirty years of this century was for the most part lyrical. Of didactic poetry, of satirical poetry, of epic poetry, the specimens produced were comparatively worthless, and although some dramas were written, we know of none save Shelley's *Cenci*, and perhaps Lord Byron's *Sardanapalus*, which retain a living power. Wordsworth, who in spite of great deficiencies (he lacked passion, which, if not the soul of poetry, is one of its chief attributes) held the highest place, and perhaps still holds it, among the poets of his century, is philosophical, and therefore to some extent didactic; but the strength of Wordsworth is not to be found in his philosophy, much of which might have been uttered more suitably in prose. As a meditative poet, his genius finds its truest expression in lyrical verse. There are noble efforts of poetry in "The Excursion" and in "The Prelude," but there are also long distances in those poems over which the poet plods with heavy lumbering feet. For his highest and most poetical thoughts we must look elsewhere—to the "Ode on Immortality," to many of the sonnets, which, if they do not bear a lyrical form, are full of lyrical feeling, to the familiar pieces in which he imparts a human interest to the sights, and sounds, and life of nature.

Some writers upon poetry—notably Mr. E. S. Dallas, in his admirable work "Poetics"—confounding the lyric with the song, declare that while England is strong in the drama she is weak in the lyric. This conclusion is due to a misconception. A song is, no doubt, a lyric; but a lyric—witness Wordsworth—need not be a song, and most of the finest lyrical

poems we possess take another shape. As song-writers, our English poets must yield the palm to Scotland, perhaps even to Ireland; but as lyrists they occupy the first rank, and the sceptic has only to read with the care it merits Mr. Palgrave's selection, which covers the poetry of three centuries, to be convinced that the poetical genius of England finds in this direction its highest expression, or, rather, that it is as great in the lyric as in the drama.

Sir Walter Scott has given the world more of genuine healthful pleasure than any author of this century, than any writer, indeed, in the language, with the one great exception of Shakspeare. And this delight is of a kind which no novelist could impart who was not at the same time a great poet. Scott's finest and most lasting work has no doubt been done in prose, and there is more of poetry in the *Antiquary*, or in the *Bride of Lammermoor*, than in "Marmion," his best metrical composition; but whether he wrote in prose or in verse he was animated by the spirit of poetry; and in "Marmion," a poem which it is difficult to appreciate at its just worth in an age when poetry delights in subtleties of thought and intricacies of expression, the fire of the lyric poet gives fervour to the narrative. The death of Marmion is in the highest degree noble; there is no such martial strain in our language, nor anything of the kind equal to it out of Homer, and in another direction Scott's genius for the lyric is also remarkable, for many of his songs possess a plaintive sweetness, a spontaneity, a tenderness and simplicity of feeling which will secure them, one can scarcely doubt, a permanent place in poetry. In some of these pieces the *naïveté* and freshness of the old ballad is blended with the gracefulness of expression which is a characteristic of modern art.

Of Thomas Moore's poetry, even of his *Irish Melodies*, which contain beyond all question his best work, it is impossible to write so confidently. His poetry sometimes goes to the heart of things, and expresses the essential feelings of the race; this, however, is but rarely the case; in general, his pretty songs give utterance to transitory emotions, to fancies which touch the surface of life, or rather of the artificial society in which the poet laughed and sung. Some of his admirers have compared him with Burns: as well might you liken a pretty exotic to the mountain heather, or an artificial cascade to a natural waterfall, or the notes of a bird that has been taught to pipe with the free song of the skylark. He was more of a musician than of a poet, and instead of composing music to verse, he wrote his verse to the music. He said he could answer for the sound of his songs more than for their sense; and it has been justly remarked that it is hardly fair to read them unless you remember the air.

Earl Russell once stated, if we remember rightly, that Lord Byron was the greatest poet of this century; that Scott stood next in eminence, and Thomas Moore third. We are not disposed, according to a fashion of the day, to depreciate the genius of Byron. He possessed some of

the highest qualifications of the poet—passion, vividness of perception, pictorial skill, and within a limited range, imagination. Moreover, he had, what Wordsworth and Shelley had not—wit of a high order, and a considerable amount of humour. What, then, it may be asked, did he lack? Just those powers, we reply, which we find in the greatest poets—sincerity and concentration of purpose, breadth of imagination, sympathy with his kind, and the patient culture, without which no poet ever succeeded in attaining the highest eminence in the most difficult of all arts. Of all illustrious poets Byron is perhaps the least remarkable for that exquisite adaptation of language to thought, that *curiosa felicitas* of diction which distinguishes the greatest masters. Oddly enough he asserts somewhere that execution is the sole test of a poet, and yet in execution he is eminently deficient. He considered Pope one of the greatest of poets, but in spite of this extravagant admiration, he has little in common with the author of the "Dunciad." Wordsworth, whom he admired and laughed at by turns, is in reality the master from whom Byron caught the feeling which inspires his noblest poetry. He is strong, however, where Wordsworth is weak, and writes often with a vigour and point unknown to the calmer poet. He is eloquent, too, as many an orator is eloquent—commanding attention and exciting admiration, but leaving little permanent impression on the mind. As a descriptive poet, as the poet of passion, and as a splendid wit, Byron will always retain a high place in our poetical literature; as a lyric poet, his position is less certain. There is a period of life in which such a piece as "The Isles of Greece" sounds sublime, and is recited with enthusiasm. Have we not all heard it shouted by schoolboys, or impressively delivered by young men devoted to the study of elocution? Sound is dearer than thought in those early days; nor is it easy then to detect the faults of a poem, the lines of which glide along so gallantly. What are called his "Domestic Poems" will always interest, and in a measure charm, but the interest they call forth is due to the feeling uttered, rather than to the sweetness of the song. The best of Byron's lyrics, however, although not of the highest order of beauty, are worthy of his reputation.

Mrs. Browning's name can never be mentioned without profound esteem, and even by those who were not happy enough to know her personally, with a feeling approaching to affection. It is easy of course to say that she was the greatest of all poetesses. The real question to be answered is, what position does she hold among great poets? In many respects her genius was of the noblest order. She had a fine though an undisciplined imagination, an earnestness of purpose, which imprints itself on every page of her work; the largeness of culture which, as we have said, Byron lacked, profound feeling, and a pathos which few readers can resist. She wanted, on the other hand, what Wordsworth wanted, the humour which would have prevented incongruities. Her Pegasus too often gets the bit between his teeth, and rides rashly over metaphors and similes which utterly bewilder us when we attempt to follow in his rear.

It is remarkable that Mrs. Browning's profound study of the Greek poets produced apparently little influence upon her style of composition, and that the very faults most alien to the spirit of Greek poetry are sometimes visible in her poems. Thus it has happened that some of her sweetest lyrics contain lines which grate upon the ear: discordant thoughts which break the continuity and destroy much of the harmony of the song. This is often evident in that wonderful series of "Sonnets from the Portuguese;" it will be felt in "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," in "Bertha in the Lane" (witness, for example, the last stanza), in "The Cry of the Children," which deserves to be ranked with what Sara Coleridge designates the "high impassioned lyric," and again and yet again in "Aurora Leigh." But defects such as these, if they injure Mrs. Browning's poetry, are but as specks upon the sun in comparison with the splendour of her genius. She may never become a popular poet (though some of her brief lyrics, as perfect in form as in thought, will always hold their place in selections), but her verse will be a solace and a joy to many persons, and those belonging to the fit audience which the poet cares chiefly to attract.

Writing on a theme so fertile as the one we have selected, a number of striking poems occur to the memory composed by men who can scarcely claim a place among English poets. Henry Carey, for example, is an unknown name in our literature, but he has written a little poem, "Sally in our Alley," which is unique of its kind, and of the highest order of excellence. As much almost may be said for the "To-morrow" of John Collins, a lovely lyric, which appeared in a volume of the writer's verse, now deservedly forgotten, entitled *Scripscrapologia*. The Rev. Charles Wolfe would be unremembered in our day were it not for his immortal lines on the death of Sir John Moore. William Blake, artist and poet, glorious madman as he was, dreaming dreams and painting visions, is an exquisite lyrist; but what he has done in this respect worthy of permanent life might be comprised in a few pages. A single song, indeed, witness the "Auld Robin Gray" of Lady Anne Lindsay, may raise the singer to a place with the immortals, so precious in poetry is quality, so insignificant a factor is quantity in our estimate of a poet's work.

There was a time in the last century, when poetry seemed dead, when verse-making had become a trade, and when the sound thought sometimes uttered in rhyme might have been more fittingly expressed in prose. But the present age, so notable for what may be called matter-of-fact aims, so eager in the pursuit of knowledge that might seem inimical to the special aims of the poet, is remarkable at the same time for the ideality of its poetry, and among living poets are several whose exquisite gifts lie almost wholly in the direction of the lyric. To these it will suffice to allude, for the space to which this paper is necessarily restricted will not allow us to examine the lyric poetry of living poets. Consider for an instant what such an examination would involve. Mr. Browning might possibly be left out of the reckoning, for his chief strength lies in another

direction; but Mr. Tennyson, who has produced some of the sweetest lyrics in the language, and who, even in his blank verse and in his "Idylls," writes with the kind of movement that belongs to the lyric poet, has a claim in this respect not readily to be satisfied. "Lord! what a blessed thing it is," exclaims Dickens, of the "Idylls," "to read a man who really can write! I thought nothing could be finer than the first poem, till I came to the third; but when I had read the last, it seemed to me to be absolutely unapproachable." There is perhaps no modern poet who combines with a genius so exquisite, so profound a knowledge of his art. We may add, what the reader can scarcely fail to observe, that his supreme excellence is always to be found in the lyric. The more indeed that we examine the poetry of the age, the more evident will it appear that its principal achievements have been performed in this field. In America, Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Lowell, and the venerable Bryant, to name three poets only out of many, are chiefly to be distinguished as lyrists. In our own country, it will suffice to mention but the names of Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Rossetti, Mr. Coventry Patmore, Mr. Buchanan, and Mr. Matthew Arnold (whose "Scholar Gipsey," and "Forsaken Merman," by the way, are of almost peerless beauty), to show how thoroughly the poetical genius of the age is permeated with the spirit of lyric poetry.

Looking back over three centuries of our literature, it will be evident that the splendid achievements of this century are worthy of the early fathers of English poetry. It is surely remarkable that the most practical race in the world should have produced the noblest fictions, and the most imaginative verse.

J. D.

Dreams.

THERE are subjects which have been dealt with by the weak and the designing, until Society has learnt to regard them as the peculiar property of these people. Whoever therefore selects one of them for investigation must expect to become an object of suspicion. He is pretty certain to be set down as willing to be deceived himself, which is bad; or as meaning to deceive others, which is worse.

Such prejudices, unfortunate as they always are for the progress of science, we consider especially unfortunate as regards dreams. Being phenomena, they would be fair matter for study under any circumstances; but bearing, as they do, on such interesting problems as those that concern life and spirit, they seem to us doubly worthy of attention.

Did savans agree to note and analyse such dreams as came under their own observation, and to make mutual exchange of facts, ideas, and conclusions, the results, we are persuaded, would prove very valuable, notably to the psychologist. But it is only on the dreams that come immediately under their own observation that the scientific may venture to reason with safety. Little reliance is to be placed on those recorded by history. While nearly all such come to us at second hand, a large proportion are evidently fabricated from beginning to end; and most of the remainder have been as evidently remoulded by the narrators into things much more picturesque than the originals. Hardly one of them has that dreamy film—that envelope of mist and unreality—which is never wanting to the pictures beheld by the eyes of slumber.

Nor are the dreams told by people in general of much scientific value. Weak and fanciful minds dwell too intently upon their visions. They smooth here and develope there, unwittingly perhaps, but still very effectually—until their descriptions become a mixture, wherein it is impossible to distinguish that which is dream from that which is invention. The stronger-minded go to another extreme. They recount their dreams, if at all, with scorn or ridicule—giving us either a meagre skeleton or a caricature.

In our own opinion even the most extraordinary dreams are capable of rational explanation. Take, for example, those of religious enthusiasts. In every instance the visions of such people transport them to the mystic world, exhibiting it under aspects of delight or terror, according to their temperament. They are always soaring to heaven or diving to the infernal regions—always speeding off to the companionship of angels or demons

—the staple of the dream being invariably *motion*. Now, we have observed that dreams in which motion predominates, are accompaniments of a certain state of the blood which, for lack of a better word, we will term thinness. This "thinness" may proceed from opposite causes—it may be the result of austerity, voluntary or enforced, or of indulgence that exhausts. With commonplace personages such dreams leave only disagreeable impressions. Not so with the enthusiast. Here the vision produced by the state of the blood, is acted upon by the ardent spirit of the visionary, upon which it reacts, in turn, with consequences most important to the world at large. Such dreams are accepted as revelations; and out of them are constructed dogmas which become, in time, the foundations of social institutions. Most of the doctrines which fastened so deeply on the Pagan mind of all climes and ages, and a large proportion of those which sank so deeply into the mind of mediæval Christianity, were deduced from the visions which mortifications or vices presented to the slumbers of enthusiasm. It is humiliating to think that creeds which exercise such tremendous influence over mankind, should have had such an origin. But that the fact is as we state no impartial student of history will deny.

Remarkable among dreams are those in which the intellect works with full power, and even attains, at times, results beyond reach in the waking state. Stories have been told of mathematicians mastering, on the pillow, difficulties which baffled them in the study, and of musicians and poets producing in slumber compositions quite equal to the best of their other efforts. Nor are such doings confined to master brains, like that of Coleridge: they are, indeed, much more common than the world would suspect. One of these curiosities of literature, heretofore unpublished, was produced, a good many years ago, by a lady of our acquaintance, who laid not the smallest claim to literary ability. We should premise that on the day previous she had been much interested by the *Sorrows of Werther*, a novel more fashionable then than now; and that she had supplemented this choice bit of reading by the study of the story and the songs of Sappho. She retired with fancy and feeling highly excited to dream a dream of love, wherein there was much adventure, plenty of passion, and not a little despair—quite a three-volume-romance sort of dream, which, however, as the lady took care to observe, had in no part the smallest foundation in the reality of her own life—she being then altogether heart whole; that is when awake. The despairing phase wound up the vision; and the dreamer awoke, just as she had completed the following lines, which she lost not a moment in committing to paper:—

I.

Thus, thus to meet, though more than sweet,
Is but new cause for sighing;
Grieved, though impassioned, must we greet—
Denying, still denying!

II.

We whisper, tremble, gaze, and part,
From our own feelings flying;
The one deep wish of either heart
Denying, still denying!

III.

Oh, Love! what anguish dost thou bring,
When, stern and uncomplying,
On Transport's verge thou foldest wing—
Denying, still denying!

IV.

Say, will there never dawn a day
For Hope and Have's allying?
Or must existence pine away
Denying, still denying?

We have ourselves to plead guilty to the charge of perpetrating a similar piece of involuntary folly. On a beautiful April evening not long ago, we paused in a footpath, leading through a vale in Buckinghamshire, to enjoy the prospect—one of the prettiest we ever saw. Hills rose gently on all sides; there were long strips of meadow and broad stretches of woodland; there were hedgerows and cattle groups, in plenty; there was a rivulet, shadowed by rows of willows, stealing along at our feet; and there was the tower of a church, not less than six hundred years old, rising over a clump of beeches, some furlongs to the left.

Nor is the scene without its stirring reminiscences. To begin with, the ground we trod once formed a portion of the possessions of the truculent brother of the Conqueror, Bishop Odo. The vaults of the quaint old church contain the remains of mediæval abbot and crusader, and of modern statesman, admiral, and bishop. Not far off, on one side moulders the body of William Penn, under the shadow of the oldest Quaker meeting-house in England. At an equal distance, on another side, stands the oak which the poet Waller turned into a study; and in the immediate vicinity exists the cottage in which Milton completed *Paradise Lost*. Were we to climb one of the hills in front, we should come upon a monument erected in memory of the navigator Cook; from thence we might behold, on the declivity of a neighbouring hill, the spot where resided the tough old knight who boxed the ears of Sir Francis Drake for presuming to appropriate his crest; and a short walk to the southward would bring us to the mansion erected by the infamous Jeffries. Widening the circle by a few miles, we have the haunts of Hampden, the Black Prince, the poets Shelley and Gray, the historian Gibbon, the demagogue Wilkes and his wild confrères of Medenham, and a hundred other celebrities. At every stride, too, may be detected souvenirs of Norman, Saxon, Dane, and Roman; in short, the whole history—political, literary, warlike, and ecclesiastical—of the grand old island is concentrated in the

atmosphere that wraps the place, though it (Chalfont St. Giles) is hardly ever mentioned elsewhere ; and yet no spot in England better merits visit, were it only for its exceeding quiet and seclusion. There is not a railway station within six miles, not a chimney stack, not one contrivance for money-spinning. It is deliciously rustic—a quiet country hamlet, one of the very few patches of the lazy, dreamy past whose seclusion has not yet been invaded by the far too busy and utilitarian present.

The beauties of the scene mingled most exquisitely for us with its memories ; and while we paused to feast thereon, a little incident occurred which added the only thing wanting to complete our enjoyment. From the brow of a hill in front came a mellow burst of song, and then, winding down the incline, appeared the singers—a group of peasants returning from their labour, with their jackets slung picturesquely over their shoulders. The ditty was a primitive thing, descriptive of rustic courtship ; but distance, echo, and surroundings eliminated all that was rude, leaving sweetness only behind.

The scene haunted us all the evening, and was reproduced by our dreams, in the latter etherealised into something far too beautiful to be fixed by description. A sunset sky so glorious earth never saw ; the trees put on more than tropical luxuriance, the brook broadened into a magnificent river, the hills raised themselves to mountains, and the church expanded into a marvel of ecclesiastical architecture ; still the objects all maintained their relative positions as in reality. While we contemplated the gorgeous vision with wonder and delight, down the mountain side before us streamed a long array of figures—demigods in limb, peasants in garb, and poets every one in countenance. Foremost came Milton, leading the march, and in his track followed all the lords of English song. Miles off behind the river, yet were they as clearly visible as though just at hand. They sang, to an air that came sounding over the water with bewitching effect, the following song, every word of which sank deep into our memory :—

LABOUR SONG.

I.

When the sun is high
Our craft let us ply—
To labour yield the day.
But when night falls,
Oh, then Love calls!
And the call we must obey.

II.

When darkens the sky
Our toils we lay by,
And to the tryst away.
For when night falls,
Oh, then Love calls!
And the call we must obey.

It is not difficult to account for such dreams. Intense application to any theme is certain to produce them. Fancy highly excited, or Reason deeply absorbed in its labours, will not always sink to repose with the body of its owner. Rousing up again in dreams, it will continue the lines of thought which it had been pursuing during the day, but always with more or less of the playful waywardness which an Ariel might be supposed to exhibit when released from the control of a Prospero.

Perhaps the most curious specimen of this class of dreams that ever came under our notice was this one. The subject was a boy of thirteen, busily employed during the day and devoting his evenings to the class-room. To allow time for study he rose early and retired late, never wasted a moment, denied himself everything in the shape of recreation, and with the exception of his walks between the school-room and his place of business, took no exercise. The classes he attended were formed in great part of adults, all of whom had much more leisure than himself, and most of whom were merely renewing their acquaintance with former reading; yet the boy managed to keep abreast of the very best of his class-mates. Of course such exertions could not be made by a mere child with impunity. After six or seven months of them, he became subject to a singular malady. He never left his books so long as his eyes would keep open. When they refused to labour longer he retired—to fall at once into a heavy sleep. From this, however, he was sure to start, in half-an-hour or thereabouts, under the influence of night-mare, which compelled him to recite aloud every word of the lessons of the day. The thing was most painful, but there was no escape from it. Once in the grip of the tormenting fiend, he was constrained to go on repeating declensions, conjugations, trigonometric formulæ, and so on, to the very last syllable. Then the fit left him to a disturbed and unrefreshing slumber. There was no remedy for the disease save discontinuance of study, and to this the boy would not consent—even though this most repulsive night-mare was, visibly and rapidly, sapping his constitution. At length he was favoured with a strange dream. A face seemed to bend over him—one that he had never seen before, but whose features remained ever afterward fixed in his memory. In the decline of life, he used to tell a most interesting story of his meeting with that face, twenty-four years later, and of the decisive influence which its owner exercised over his destiny. This face, which he described as beautiful, spoke in tones delightfully sweet, to this effect—"If somebody will watch by your bed and when the night-mare seizes you, recite a certain passage" (which we shall specify presently) "you will be set free to sleep in peace." It was not until the dream recurred more than once that the dreamer ventured to mention it. It was laughed at by all, save an elder sister, who made up her mind to give a fair trial to the remedy so curiously suggested. She did so when her brother was next undergoing his torture. Hardly had she begun to speak than he ceased to go over his lessons, and taking up the passage after her, he went through it to the end—quite involuntarily as before, but very differently, with an ease and

comfort perfectly indescribable. When the recitation was over he sunk into a calm and refreshing sleep. The experiment was repeated night after night, and always with still more satisfactory results than before. By degrees the pest relaxed its grasp, and in nine or ten days vanished for ever. The passage employed was "the Lord's Prayer."

The dreamer used to explain the matter thus:—Once when thinking of his strange affliction, as he often did, and casting about for an antidote, there occurred to his memory a piece of old reading, in which it was stated that the wounds made one day by the application of heated irons, might be cured on the next by a similar application. While turning the story over in his mind, a conception of the remedy which, in the end, proved beneficial, glanced before him, but so vaguely and for so short a period that he could not grasp it. To this passing idea, and to his efforts to arrest it, he attributed—rightly as we think—the material portion of the vision. The passage recommended for recitation he accounted for by the fact that he had been piously trained. But his later opinion was that a paragraph from a profane author would have served just as well. As to the reappearance of the dream-face in real life—a notion in which he was obstinate to an extent inconceivable in a mind so logical—we may remark that strong imaginings and intense affections play strange tricks with our impressions.

More curious than even intellectual dreams are those which are retrospective and premonitory. That there are such things candid people will admit. That there may be such things reasonable people will hardly deny. It is but natural that an event which has made a deep impression upon a vivid brain, should be recalled in sleep. It is just as natural that an event which is anticipated with earnest hope or apprehension, should be prefigured in a dream by the same brain. In the former case, the dream will be the shadow of a real occurrence, and correct in proportion to the depth of the impression left by that occurrence. In the latter case, the shadow will be truthful in proportion to the accuracy with which we measure the circumstances which are moulding the event so anxiously expected.

But occasionally, premonitory and retrospective dreams present faithful pictures of events, with which we could have had no previous acquaintance, and concerning which we could have formed no anticipation. Twenty years ago there dwelt in a large seaport a family, the head of which was a widow, in feeble health. One of her sons, a youth of eighteen, was employed on a vessel trading to South America. News had reached home of his recovery from yellow fever, a thing that is thought to secure immunity from the disease for the future. His relatives, therefore, felt no apprehension concerning him; nevertheless they awaited the arrival of the ship with some anxiety. While they were waiting thus, a friend who took deep interest in the youth dreamt to this purpose:—

He seemed to be seated in a reception-room on the ground-floor, opposite a window looking into the street. In one corner, by the window,

sat the widow; and in another corner, on the same side of the room, sat one of her daughters. While the three sat thus, looking at one another in silence—in the dream be it remembered—a tall, sailor-like man, of the best class, roughly dressed as if he had but just stepped ashore, passed the window and knocked. Being admitted, he walked straight across the room to the chair which had just been vacated by the daughter, and spoke as follows: "Mrs. ——, I am Captain ——, of the ship ——, and I deeply regret that I have to inform you of the death of your son."

Such a dream he who dreamt naturally thought far too unpleasant to communicate to the parties chiefly concerned. Still, finding himself seated the following evening precisely as in the dream, he felt compelled, in spite of his unwillingness, to relate it. Hardly had he concluded when the figure, as he had seen it, passed the window, knocked, and was ushered into the apartment, where he acted and spoke in every particular as foreshadowed. It may be added that neither the family nor their friend had the slightest knowledge of the arrival of the vessel, and that nobody could have anticipated the captain in bearing the fatal news. The dreamer could not help remarking that his relation of his dream prepared the mother for the announcement, which, abrupt as it was, might otherwise have given her a dangerous shock.

Are such visions to be accounted for on reasonable grounds? We think so. In conjunction with what are called "forebodings," they teach ourselves to believe that intense love, or hate as intense, maintains a connection between those under its influence, no matter how widely they may be sundered.

Organised bodies—perhaps we might say all bodies—are for ever giving off particles—those at rest, in every direction; those in motion behind them, in one long stream. These particles carry with them the characteristics of the body from whence they part. We know it to be so in the case of flowers, otherwise there would be no such thing as scent, and assuredly no such thing as distinction of scent. And we may presume that it is so in other instances. Nor is it presumption only. That there must be something of the sort is evident from the success with which the dog traces his master through a crowd, or along a well-frequented thoroughfare.

It requires but a small stretch of imagination to conceive that the particles thrown off by human beings bear the impress of their thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, and expectations—as they exist at the moment of separation. We may conceive, too, that there exist in us senses acute enough to distinguish, under favourable circumstances, all the peculiarities of these particles when they are brought in contact with us. As to that contact, it is not so very unreasonable to suppose, in these days of electric wonders, that the fixed affection of persons may give a fixed direction to such emanations, and thus originate and maintain, through all chances and changes, those delicate chains of intercommunication between friends and foes, to which, rather than to supernatural agency, we prefer to ascribe our startling, truthful dreams and premonitions.

Sentimental Grievances.

When certain things are called, by a certain school of thinkers, sentimental grievances—with a shrug—the question of their being grievances at all is considered settled in the negative. According to them no merely emotional annoyance has a voice in the category of crying evils; and if a man cannot show bodily bruises or physical damage as the groundwork of his complaints, he has no case to go on. And yet, seeing that humanity is a composite kind of thing, and that, as more goes to the making of happiness than beef and beer so more goes to the making of misery than cold and hunger, the feelings are really as important factors in the great sum of life as are the sensations, and influence the product quite as much. When we judge of man as a whole, we must take into account his mental as well as his physical condition, and give due weight to sentimental grievances as well as to personal malaise, to emotional pleasures as well as to bodily well-being. And after all, if we define what are sentimental grievances as opposed to physical sufferings, we shall have to make a tolerably wide circuit, and include things on which there cannot be two opinions that the chief part of human happiness depends.

A sufficiency of food, warmth, shelter, clothing, and the negative good of freedom from pain, form the group of primary conditions on which our physical well-being rests. Who will dare to say that these are enough for the whole life of a man? Add the mate and they are the four corners of Paradise for beasts; but men are not beasts; and if all have not souls above buttons, so small a proportion house theirs in the pig-trough, we need not trouble ourselves about them. But even these material conditions taper off into the finer substance of sentimental grievances; and the pretty young woman in a shabby gown of last year's cut, set among fine ladies dressed in the height of the fashion, can enlighten you as to the extent of one of them at least. Her status is such that dress can neither make nor mar it, and her gown answers all the essential purposes for which that garment was designed. It is a decent covering for her body, and keeps out cold and heat as effectually as the most gorgeous of those which have just come from Worth's; perhaps better. But as it has not that shadowy quality called *chic*, and as the gloss has gone from the silk and the lustre from the satin, it is a grievance by which she is made unhappy.

This is a fact so well understood that men go through the Bankruptcy Court in order that the women belonging to them may escape the sentimental grievance of being clothed in materials that cost less money than,

and in garments of a cut anterior to, those affected by their friends. Understand, the social condition, the personal character, the prospects, the health of the woman are not affected by the unfashionableness of her gown. It is only the sentimental grievance of being less magnificently dressed than are her friends which affects her; but it is a grievance that makes her suffer painfully, and that destroys both her pleasure and her self-respect for the time being.

Those sumptuary laws of bygone days which granted to men and women of a certain rank only, the privilege of wearing such and such materials, while knaves and burghers were kept rigidly to their own fashions and their distinctive colours—these were only sentimental grievances to the knaves and burghers set below the millinery salt, and in no wise touched the main conditions of life. Nevertheless they were held as grievances of so onerous a character by the denied, that the privileged were obliged to enlarge their borders, yielding bit by bit and inch by inch till finally the last stronghold of all, the sacred ermine, had to go with the rest; and now tinkler Maggie may, if she pleases, cover her brawny shoulders in a mangy cape which once made part of a coronation robe, but which, going through the various stages of popular descent, emblematic of more than itself, from royalty has come down to gipsydom. This question of dress indeed is one of the most purely sentimental of all; but at the same time one of the most powerful forces of social action. With savages it is food, with the civilised world clothing; and among the civilised it is chiefly women who are affected by it, though they in their turn move the men by their lever. Every woman wants to look as well as her betters. It is part of the indestructible feminine instinct by which the sex is what it is; and every woman does her best to accomplish her desire. Joan stands an inch taller in her own esteem when she has taken pattern by my Lady Jane, and reproduced in flaring calico a hideous exaggeration of some wonderful *confection* in faultless velvet. She makes herself a fright; but that does not signify; she thinks she is superb; and the mind sees fashions as well as other things through coloured glasses which make what they show. Deny her the power of travesty; command that she shall be dressed otherwise than as her own bad taste elects, and put on her the prettiest, most becoming costume to be devised by the most highly cultivated art—but a costume that tickets her—and you give her a sentimental grievance that will poison her whole existence. She feels herself tyrannized over in her individuality; classed within positively defined borders, hence unable to be mistaken for my Lady Jane's younger sister, as she fondly hopes she may be mistaken now; and she is miserable in consequence. Substantially she is benefited. She is kept from making a fool of herself; personally well adorned; and secured from various not imaginary temptations by being thus proclaimed what she is: but for all that, the sentimental grievance is the strongest; and she gives up her place and its pleasant perquisites rather than submit to restrictions which save her pocket,

redeem her credit, and grieve her sentimentality. In so doing let us remember that she acts on the instinct governing women in general; and if she is to blame, then the whole sex is to blame with her.

This matter of a maid's right to dress herself according to her own fancy—which is generally in the ugliness of travestied fashion—and the limits of a mistress's power in enforcing or denying a certain cut of gown, of jacket or of bonnet, and the materials of which they are made, form no inconsiderable part of the difficulties with which modern domestic service is bristling. I am not however going to reopen that subject here; I only want to point out that there is no essential moral difference between the denial of modern mistresses and the assumption of modern maids as to the right of these last to use present fashions at their will, and the old-time enforcement of and revolt against the sumptuary laws by which classes were roped off each from each, and samite and camlet made as distinctive as are to-day titles. Those sumptuary laws touched the ancestresses of our modern middle-class with no light hand; and I often think, when I hear a middle-class lady say, "I do not allow my maids to wear flowers or feathers"—or whatever may be the special vanity against which she directs her crusade—how would she like them to be re-enacted for her own benefit by her superiors, and she denied the costly privilege of her velvets and her Russian sables, her satins and her ermines, and cut down to the woollen and rabbit-skins of her quaint and homely forbears? On the other hand, my Lady Jane feels it a grievance—sentimental if you will, but real—that the newly-invented pattern she has just had at such cost from Paris should be vulgarised by a ridiculous translation, and that the bloom should be taken off it while it is yet new and before its time. She thinks it is a dreadful blot on social legislation that she has no means at hand by which to prevent that clumsy-fingered Joan from her ungainly aping; and feels as if life had lost some of its savour when she sees opposite to her in church the broad-faced, freckled, sandy-haired cinder-wench in a gown and bonnet manifestly borrowed from her own, and treated in the translation much as an Etruscan vase would be if copied by a journeyman potter.—Sentimental grievances from first to last, on the one side as on the other; but none the less painful because sentimental.

Take the question of manners again. A haughty tone, a rude address, bruises no muscles, causes no physical pain, like the pangs of hunger or the misery of drought; but it hurts all the same; and if, as the proverb says, hard words break no bones, they none the less wound that self-esteem which lies at the root of half our sentimental grievances. Subordinates feel this domineering insolence of manner a great grievance when they are subject to it; so do superiors when they have to encounter the pertness of those whom they consider their inferiors. But the grievance in either case is based on exactly the same sentimental grounds, and to those who regard the physical, as the sole real, thing in life ought to count for nothing. So it does when gentlefolks are dealing with subordinates and the harsh words, the haughty tone, with which their

unrecognised susceptibilities are outraged; but we question if the coolest-headed philosopher of them all, if born in the purple, would apply the same calm test to the other side, and pooh-pooh the grievance of the lady as merely visionary, when she complains that her maid has spoken to her impertinently or her man familiarly. I think he would allow some weight to self-esteem then, and hold the lady's ruffled feathers to be a quite natural and allowable demonstration.

Imagine a gentleman who says to his valet; "You are a scoundrel," submitting quietly to the retort, not courteous; "The same to you, sir." In point of fact the valet may be a perfectly honest fellow, and the gentleman may have the knack of hiding an ace now and then up his sleeve; but we fancy the sentimental grievance of truth told from hired lips would be considered one that would warrant instant dismissal, and no character to the next inquirer, and that the world would applaud the decision, considering the magnitude of the offence. Decidedly, hard words and rude manners do count in certain relations.

Those commercial establishments where the young ladies are of the kind familiarly called hoity-toity—I forbear to call them shops and shop-girls, in deference to what they consider to be a grievance, albeit purely sentimental, and, as most people with common sense think, exceedingly silly—well, where the young ladies are, as has been said, of the class called hoity-toity, serving the customers with covert impertinence, tittering among themselves, offhand, disrespectful, indifferent, more solicitous about their appearance than their manners: in all of which, let me say parenthetically, lies the secret of the disinclination women have to be served by women: these establishments are the fountain-heads of a whole class of sentimental grievances to be understood by every lady who has had to run the gauntlet of those provoking little sinners behind the counter. Say that you are sure to get there the very thing you want, of the exact shade, the precise pattern, nevertheless you avoid those establishments for the future, and prefer to be served less satisfactorily and more pleasantly. Having once undergone the grievance included, you decline to repeat it; and your lady friends say that you are right, and they would do just the same as yourself. Yet, if you get what you want, is not your grievance that the manner in which it is handed to you across the counter is unpleasant, one of the sentimental kind, to be despised by the wise and put down by the strong? What you have to consider is the thing you want, not the way in which it is given to you; and are you not foolish for allowing a sentimental grievance to stand between you and your desires? If this argument holds good, then also does that of the futility of m aking demanding an apology for rude behaviour. No bones are broken, no substantial damage is done; why trouble about a shadowy wrong, a sentimental grievance, that has really no more weight than a bit of floating thistle-down? If the feelings do not count, why base any part of one's life on them? We should be led into rather an odd maze if we followed on this track.

There are graver grievances than these, though still of that sentimental kind which deal with a disagreeable manner rather than material damage. Nevertheless, they are grievances which powerfully affect the prosperity of an empire. Not having the fear of Mr. Freeman at this moment before my eyes, I will treat the old fable of Gessler's hat as an historic fact. It will do for an illustration quite as well as the sentimental grievances of Ireland spoken of by Professor Goldwin Smith, disregarded by most Englishmen as of no value, and so bitterly resented by the Irish themselves. There was no personal harm to any one included in the order that each passer-by should make obeisance to Gessler's hat. It was a mere symbol all through; and surely a wise man of these modern times, when we aim at such cold common sense and practical wisdom in our judgments, would have counselled the people to make the reverence demanded. He would have reminded them that it did them no kind of bodily harm, and that it really was of no consequence if they doffed their caps and bent their knees to a cylinder of felt stuck up on a pole or to the wearer thereof. It was no more degrading than standing bare-headed when "God save the Queen" is played. And, then, think of the respect due to a high office and a great person's feelings. Sentiment comes into play here. Sentiment always does come into play when we are considering the question from below, looking up; when we stand on the height and look down, God-like, on our inferiors—"ants from the dark earth streaming" —we see how foolish it is, and how far wiser are those of us who ignore and would stamp it out.

Following the fable however, a man of more passionate feeling than the rest understood the meaning of the symbol better than our modern philosophers are able to do; and the deliverance of the country from an intolerable tyranny was the result. In general the Gesslers of statesmanship may work their will unhindered, if they do not set up their hats on poles. Attention to the susceptibilities of a people—vague, intangible, unpractical, but nevertheless *there*—will carry a rule farther and consolidate it more firmly than even good laws surlily enacted and insolently imposed. The amenities of life spring from, and are rooted in, our self-respect; and nations are only aggregates of individuals, each of whom has these susceptibilities which smiles soothe and frowns fret.

Another sentimental grievance of the political kind, which we sometimes hear discussed now with querulous contempt, now with angry opposition, is the desire of those to hold land who cannot get it. It has no vital personal influence whether a man actually possesses the land through which he passes or only enjoys it as a wayfarer by hourly tenancy. He has the present pleasure of it, and for the time his passage lasts is the rightful owner. It is a mere sentimental grievance. He cannot live in the fields and woods night and day. If he had that spinney, he would do nothing with it but what he does now—walk through it and examine the budding branches of spring, or the yellowing autumn leaves, with as much artistic delight as has been accorded to him by

nature. If he owned that meadow, he could not lie down in it and browse with the cows and the sheep. He has in reality all he needs and all that it could give him, between the miller and the market gardener, the rights of way through pleasant places, and the fresh green stretch before his cottage door. The substantial wants of his life are provided for; but the land instinct holds him, and he makes a grievance out of the sentiment of dispossession and denial. The land-owners who have the title deeds keep them safely stored up at their lawyers' and out of the market, and think the grievance of those who want them a mere absurdity not worthy any one's attention. Those who back it up with argument and sympathy are revolutionary; which is rank atheism to men satisfied with things as they are, and whose share of pudding has its full tale of plums, consequently men who hold the belief that the final cause of the universe is the well-being of the class of men called English gentry, and the aggregation of our insular fields and farms into large estates and few landlords.

If we shunt this desire for land as a sentimental grievance not worth considering seriously, it is difficult to see where we are to stop in our estimate of what is and what is not recognisable as a righteous incentive to personal emulation, of which this is only one of many outcomes—read from the other side. Our neighbour's prosperity does not hurt us, yet we desire to equal him; and if we are prevented from trying to do so, we are infinitely unhappy, and are in point of fact serfs and slaves so far as the prevention extends.

All this is a sentimental grievance, we say, here in England, when we speak of our own lower classes and their demands; though we are illogical enough to hold certain wide traditions about the same kind of thing in other countries, and to condemn the name of slavery in coercion abroad while we applaud the essence in prevention at home; though too, we are also illogical enough to think, even at home, that man a fine fellow who rises to the height of his ambition after he has got a fair start. It is only in preparing for this start that we would, if we could, rap him on the pate and disable him from making the attempt. But if it were not for the sentimental grievance we have at our neighbour's prosperity and our own disadvantages, we should never rise out of the clayey rut in which the car of our fortunes is sticking, and we should be content with comparative degradation and positive failure. The sentimental grievance which gives Mrs. Tomkins a jealous headache and a fit of envious indigestion because her friend Mrs. Jenkins has a new black silk while she is forced to content herself with her rusty old cotton-backed velvet, springs from the same root as the ambition which determines the clever barrister to run his former school-fellow hard and be the Lord Chancellor to his Prime Minister. If our smaller, meaner, less gratifying circumstances included no sense of grievance, we should never try to make them better; and is not the deepest degradation of degradation its contentment? Every inborn social obstacle then which prevents a man from rising to the highest place, or from bringing out the best that is in him, is a cause of

grievance; the correlations of which are ambition and the determination to make what is called a success. We grant this in the case of the Pariahs and the like; but when we come to our own time and our own land, we have a very strong opinion that Hodge should not include a demand for private acreage among his new desires; that Joan should regard the precise cut of my Lady Joan's millinery and snippets as a sacred fetish not to be touched by her profane hands; that like should be content to breed like, and the low-lying to be low-lying still, fitted close into the "form" of their grandfathers; and that the privileged classes, for whom the universe was created, should be held so absolutely secure in their place that no turn of the wheel of Fortune should be possible by which they should go down, and those at present underneath should come up.

The whole matter of personal rank again is a sentiment full of rejoicing to some, if of grievance to others. Titles are a sentimental grievance to republicans, and "the first magistrate," or an elected president, grates on the ears of him who believes in the divinity hedging round the Lord's Anointed, and in the unrighteousness of society without an hereditary legislation. It could do the first no harm in their homes and counting-houses if a rubicund fussy little person over the way was called the Earl of This, or if a melancholy long-legged young man at the corner was known to have come into the possession of certain lands to which was attached the title of the Duke of That. And yet no one would advocate the forcible imposition of a Debrett on the public libraries of the United States, say, if they did not wish it, though the homes and counting-houses of the plain misters remained just as they were before, and the earls and dukes down the street affected them no more than a couple of car-drivers or store-keepers added to the registry. So too the believer in the divine right of kings must accustom himself to bear in quiet melancholy the sentimental grievance of "first magistracy" instead of supreme monarchy, if he lives in times and countries given to this heterodox social faith; and the simple, severe democrat need not hold himself called on to testify at the doors of St. James's on a court day, because he despises embroidered coats and pink silk stockings, and thinks a biped under a dais, with a crown on its head, not a whit more imposing than one on the knife-board with the regulation chimney-pot. If he does so, he will probably be made acquainted with the method adopted by Policeman X when he "runs in" troublesome customers. These are sentimental grievances which have no weight with individuals. Politically, and when touched by masses, they are important enough. To one man alone, the mere unit of society and in a minority which is not oppressed, they are of no personal moment; and he can pay his rates and taxes without regard to the name in which they are collected so long as those rates and taxes are not in themselves unjust. The Gessler's hat of modern date is a social idol rather than the symbol of political oppression, to be circumvented by the agile and the strong when standing in the way, but for the most part acting as an incentive to men

to whom the sentiment of duty and doing the right for right's sake are not sufficient to keep in the straight line and out of the crooked ones.

Was it a sentimental grievance or a positive personal wrong when the curfew toll'd the knell of parting day? Looking at it practically, we can scarcely say it was the latter. The Gurths and Wambas of the time were not much given to midnight study, and light was bad and dear for the people who could not afford the flaming torches and fiery cressets used by Baron and Abbot. They only ran the risk of setting fire to their huts; and it was better for every one concerned that they should lie down with the lamb and rise with the lark than do like their descendants—begin to live when the bats and owls come out, and prefer gas to sunshine. We have the same kind of thing on board ship, where "all lights out" is as much part of the routine of life as the captain's making the time and the setting of the night watch. Here it is not felt as a sentimental grievance at all, though it is sometimes a personal inconvenience; but under the Norman rule in England it was the former, not the latter, and in this strength conquered.

Should we call it a sentimental grievance, or a positive wrong, when the Jews were, or are, shut up in their own quarters at a certain hour of the evening, obliged to wear distinctive garments which ticket them as of the House of Israel, that same house being in a manner in ruins thereabouts, and offering neither shelter for the indwellers nor cause for the spectators to rejoice in its stately grandeur? It does them no harm to have the gate of their Ghetto closed at a certain hour. They have finished their business transactions with the Gentiles for that day, and they do not in the least desire to have any social relations with them. Where laws are equal and equitable, to be a Jew entails no kind of personal suffering on man or woman; and as a race they are faithful and loyal, proud of their nationality, and clinging to their ancient lineage with a love so earnest as to be pathetic. Still, the most loyal adherent in the world would rather not be assigned a special place, if that special place means social inferiority. Though no one wants to go outside the gate, all would rather the gate was left open; and if conquerors like to wear a badge, the conquered do not. The Mohammedan's green turban, the Brahmin's sacred caste marks, score honours to them, as do our stars and garters and ribbons to us; but the Jews' gabardine, yellow slippers, and distinctive caftan are as our "punishment pack," or the striped stockings of American convicts—symbols which hurt the self-esteem of those submitted to them; consequently sentimental grievances which a humane, an enlightened, a thoroughly civilised policy would abolish.

Pace the sterner school of political economists, the drier kind of materialistic reasoners, this is what it comes to: the more we are humane, enlightened, civilised, the more weight we give to the feelings as well as the rights of others, and the more fully we recognise the complex nature of man. Free trade in beef and beer, a good roof over one's head, and a good coat to one's back, are the primaries for a successful existence; but

they are not the totalities; else a convict would have a more enviable existence than many a struggling labourer who does not know where to-morrow's bread is to come from, whose dilapidated roof lets in the rain, and whose ragged smock does not keep out the sun. The superior condition of the labourer is only in the sentiment of the thing, material and personal advantages being all on the side of the convict, whose roof is undeniably watertight, whose rations are sufficient to the turn of the scale, and whose canvas suit has neither rents nor threadbare patches for his discomfort. For after all what is liberty but too often the power of committing folly, not to speak of sin, and doing ourselves personal damage? We might be thankful to be kept from such a questionable good; and if we measured things by their material value only, we might accept the dish of lentils as the best blessing for a hungry man, and a by no means bad bargain to make for a sentimental advantage. As we cannot fight under two flags at once, nor hold with the hare while we run with the hounds, we cannot despise sentimental grievances and respect sentimental goods. If we throw the feelings overboard on the one side, it is illogical to twist them as the sign under which we sail on the other; but there is no one who will dare to maintain this doctrine, and to refer all human life to the senses only. The pig trough has, to be sure, its votaries, scarcely its advocates; but, unless we fall back on the old delusion of finality and the absolute, we can scarcely draw a line sufficiently defined for practical purposes to say "This is a sentimental good we must cherish, that a sentimental grievance we may despise," with no more misgiving as to our boundary than we have when we stand by the side of a fence and look into our neighbour's field from our own. Sentimental grievances have a right to be heard when they take voice and complain; to be considered; and to be removed if their removal does not inflict a positive wrong on others. They belong to the nature of man; and as all things human demand the care of all men, on that ground alone they ought to be respectfully considered, and tenderly dealt with. *Homo homini aut deus aut lupus.* Can we hesitate as to which is the better character to take? or by what means it is best acted?

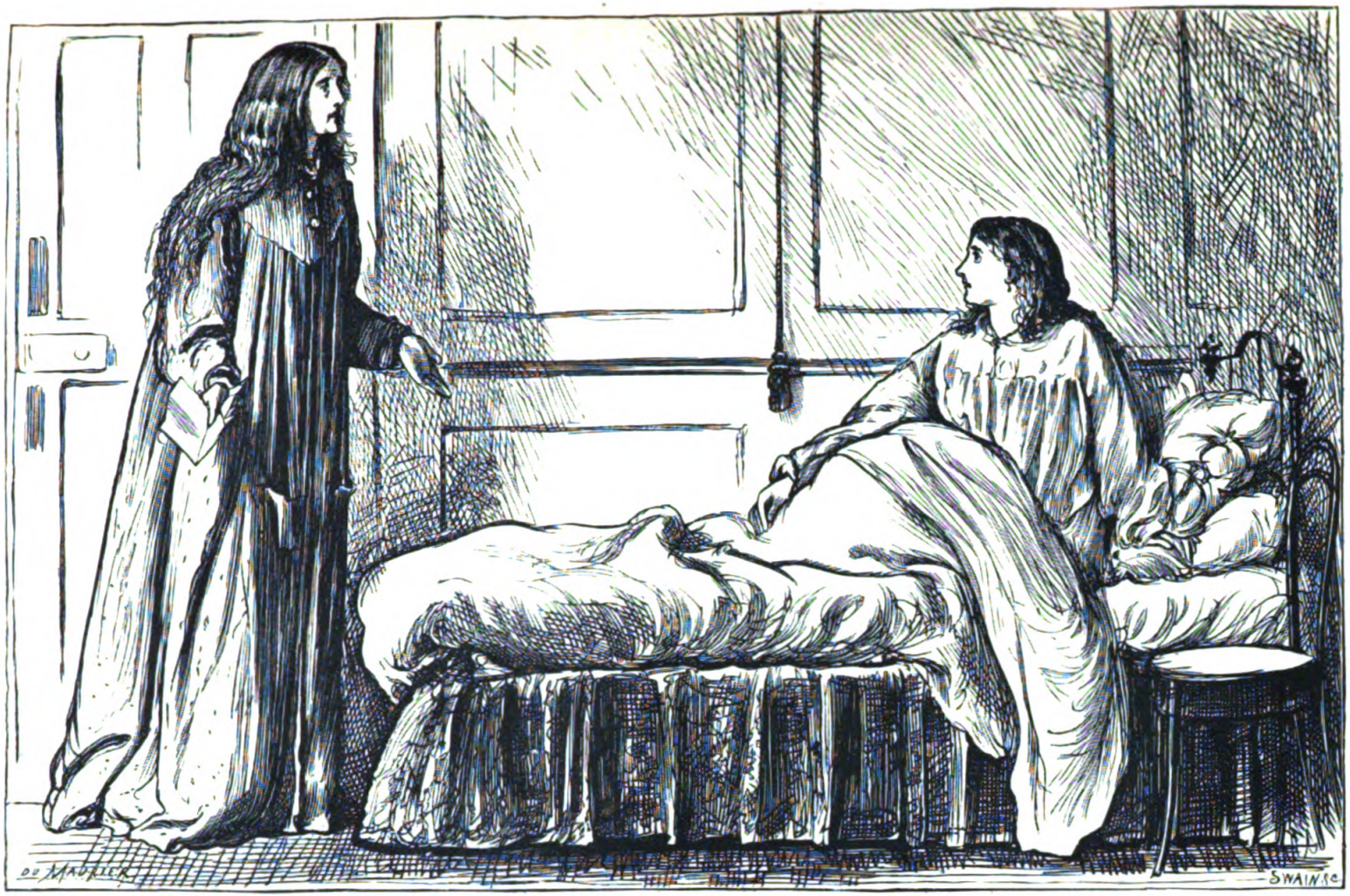
E. L. L.

A Rose in June.

CHAPTER X.



R. INCLEDON was a man of whom people said that any girl might be glad to marry him; and considering marriage from an abstract point of view, as one naturally does when it does not concern one's self, this was entirely true. In position, in character, in appearance, and in principles he was everything that could be desired: a good man, just, and never consciously unkind; nay, capable of generosity when it was worth his while and he had sufficient inducement to be generous. A man well educated, who had been much about the world, and had learned the toleration which comes by experience; whose opinions were worth hearing on almost every subject; who had read a great deal, and thought a little, and was as much superior to the ordinary young man of society in mind and judgment as he was in wealth. That this kind of man often fails to captivate a foolish girl, when her partner in a valse, brainless, beardless, and penniless, succeeds without any trouble in doing so, is one of those mysteries of nature which nobody can penetrate, but which happens too often to be doubted. Even in this particular, however, Mr. Incledon had his advantages. He was not one of those who, either by contempt for the occupations of youth or by the gravity natural to maturer years, allow themselves to be pushed aside from the lighter part of life—he still danced, though not with the absolute devotion of twenty, and retained his place on the side of youth, not permitting himself to be shelved. More than once, indeed, the young officers from the garrison near, and the young scions of the county families, had looked on with puzzled noncomprehension, when they found themselves altogether distanced in effect and popularity by a mature personage whom they would gladly have called an old fogie had they dared. These young gentlemen of course consoled their vanity by railing against



BEFORE ROSE WAS AWAKE, MRS. DAMERELL CAME INTO HER ROOM.



the mercenary character of women who preferred wealth to everything. But it was not only his wealth upon which Mr. Incledon stood. No girl who had married him need have felt herself withdrawn to the grave circle in which her elders had their place. He was able to hold his own in every pursuit with men ten years his juniors, and did so. Then, too, he had almost a romantic side to his character; for a man so well off does not put off marrying for so long without a reason, and though nobody knew of any previous story, any "entanglement," which would have restrained him, various picturesque suggestions were afloat; and even failing these, the object of his choice might have laid the flattering unction to her soul that his long waiting had been for the realisation of some perfect ideal which he found only in her.

This model of a marriageable man took his way from the White House in a state of mind less easily described than most of his mental processes. He was not excited to speak of, for an interview between a lover of thirty-five and the mother of the lady is not generally exciting; but he was a little doubtful of his own perfect judiciousness in the step he had just taken. I can no more tell you why he had set his heart on Rose than I can say why she felt no answering inclination towards him—for there were many other girls in the neighbourhood who would in many ways have been more suitable to a man of his tastes and position. But Rose was the one woman in the world for him, by sheer caprice of nature; just as reasonable, and no more so, as that other caprice which made him, with all his advantages and recommendations, not the man for her. If ever a man was in a position to make a deliberate choice, such as men are commonly supposed to make in matrimony, Mr. Incledon was the man; yet he chose just as much and as little as the rest of us do. He saw Rose, and some power which he knew nothing of decided the question at once for him. He had not been thinking of marriage, but then he made up his mind to marry; and whereas he had on various occasions weighed the qualities and the charms of this one and the other, he never asked himself a question about her, nor compared her with any other woman, nor considered whether she was suited for him, or anything else about her. This was how he exercised that inestimable privilege of choice which women sometimes envy. But, having once received this conviction into his mind, he had never wavered in his determination to win her. The question in his mind now was, not whether his selection was the best he could have made, but whether it was wise of him to have entrusted his cause to the mother rather than to have spoken to Rose herself. He had remained in the background during those dreary months of sorrow. He had sent flowers and game and messages of enquiry; but he had not thrust himself upon the notice of the women, till their change of residence gave token that they must have begun to rouse themselves for fresh encounter with the world. When he was on his way to the White House he had fully persuaded himself that to speak to the mother first was the most delicate and the most wise thing he could do. For one thing, he

could say so much more to her than he could to Rose; he could assure her of his goodwill and of his desire to be of use to the family should he become a member of it. Mr. Incledon did not wish to bribe Mrs. Damerel to be on his side. He had indeed a reasonable assurance that no such bribe was necessary, and that a man like himself must always have a reasonable mother on his side. This he was perfectly aware of, as indeed any one in his senses would have been. But as soon as he had made his declaration to Mrs. Damerel, and had left the White House behind, his thoughts began to torment him with doubts of the wisdom of this proceeding. He saw very well that there was no clinging of enthusiastic love, no absolute devotedness of union, between this mother and daughter, and he began to wonder whether he might not have done better had he run all the risks and broached the subject to Rose herself, shy and liable to be startled as she was. It was perhaps possible that his own avowal, which must have had a certain degree of emotion in it, would have found better acceptation with her than the passionless statement of his attentions which Mrs. Damerel would probably make. For it never dawned upon Mr. Incledon's imagination that Mrs. Damerel would support his suit not with calmness, but passionately—more passionately, perhaps, than would have been possible to himself. He could not have divined any reason why she should do so, and naturally he had not the least idea of the tremendous weapons she was about to employ in his favour. I don't think, for very pride and shame, that he would have sanctioned the use of them had he known.

It happened, however, by chance that as he walked home in the wintry twilight he met Mrs. Wodehouse and her friend Mrs. Musgrove, who were going the same way as he was, on their way to see the Northcotes, who had lately come to the neighbourhood. He could not but join them so far in their walk, nor could he avoid the conversation which was inevitable. Mrs. Wodehouse indeed was very eager for it, and began almost before he could draw breath.

"Did you see Mrs. Damerel after all?" she asked. "You remember I met you when you were on your way?"

"Yes; she was good enough to see me," said Mr. Incledon.

"And how do you think she is looking? I hear such different accounts; some people say very ill, some just as usual. I have not seen her myself," said Mrs. Wodehouse, slightly drawing herself up, "except in church."

"How was that?" he said, half amused. "I thought you had always been great friends."

Upon this he saw Mrs. Musgrove give a little jerk to her friend's cloak, in warning, and perceived that Mrs. Wodehouse wavered between a desire to tell a grievance and the more prudent habit of self-restraint.

"Oh!" she said, with a little hesitation; "yes, of course we were always good friends. I had a great admiration for our late good Rector, Mr. Incledon. What a man he was! Not to say a word against the new

one, who is very nice, he will never be equal to Mr. Damerel. What a fine mind he had, and a style, I am told, equal to the very finest preachers! We must never hope to hear such sermons in our little parish again. Mrs. Damerel is a very good woman, and I feel for her deeply; but the attraction in that house, as I am sure you must have felt, was not her, but him."

"I have always had a great regard for Mrs. Damerel," said Mr. Incledon.

"Oh, yes, yes! I am sure—a good wife and an excellent mother and all that; but not the fine mind, not the intellectual conversation, one used to have with the dear Rector," said good Mrs. Wodehouse, who had about as much intellect as would lie on a sixpence; and then she added, "Perhaps I am prejudiced; I never can get over a slight which I am sure she showed to my son."

"Ah! what was that?"

Mrs. Musgrove once more pulled her friend's cloak, and there was a great deal more eagerness and interest than the occasion deserved in Mr. Incledon's tone.

"Oh, nothing of any consequence! What do you say, dear?—a mistake? Well, I don't think it was a mistake. They thought Edward was going to——; yes, *that* was a mistake, if you please. I am sure he had many other things in his mind a great deal more important. But they thought——; and though common civility demanded something different, and I took the trouble to write a note and ask it, I do think——; but, however, after the words I had with her to-day, I no longer blame Rose. Poor child! I am always very sorry for poor Rose."

"Why should you be sorry for Miss Damerel? Was she one of those who slighted your son? I hope Mr. Edward Wodehouse is quite well."

"He is very well, I thank you, and getting on so satisfactorily; nothing could be more pleasant. Oh, you must not think Edward cared! He has seen a great deal of the world, and he did not come home to let himself be put down by the family of a country clergyman. That is not at all what I meant; I am sorry for Rose, however, because of a great many things. She ought to go out as a governess or companion, or something of that sort, poor child! Mrs. Damerel may try, but I am sure they never can get on as they are doing. I hear that all they have to depend on is about a hundred and fifty a year. A family can never live upon that, not with their habits, Mr. Incledon; and therefore I think I may well say *poor* Rose!"

"I don't think Miss Damerel will ever require to make such a sacrifice," he said, hurriedly.

"Well, I only hope you are right," said Mrs. Wodehouse. "Of course you know a great deal more about business matters than I do, and perhaps their money is at higher interest than we think for; but if I were Rose I almost think I should see it to be my duty. Here we are at Mrs. Northcote's, dear. Mr. Incledon, I am afraid we must say good-bye."

Mr. Incledon went home very hot and fast after this conversation. It warmed him in the misty cold evening, and seemed to put so many weapons into his hand. Rose, his Rose, go out as a governess or companion! He looked at the shadow of his own great house standing out against the frosty sky, and laughed to himself as he crossed the park. She a dependant, who might to-morrow if she pleased be virtual mistress of Whitton and all its wealth! He would have liked to have said to these women, "In three months Rose will be the great lady of the parish, and lay down the law to you and the Green, and all your gossiping society." He would even, in a rare fit of generosity, have liked to tell them, on the spot, that this blessedness was in Rose's power, to give her honour in their eyes whether she accepted him or not; which was a very generous impulse indeed, and one which few men would have been equal to—though indeed as a matter of fact Mr. Incledon did not carry it out. But he went into the lonely house where everything pleasant and luxurious, except the one crowning luxury of some one to share it with, awaited him, in a glow of energy and eagerness, resolved to go back again to-morrow and plead his cause with Rose herself, and win her, not prudentially through her mother, but by his own warmth of love and eloquence. Poor Rose in June! In the wintry setting of the White House she was not much like the Rector's flower-maiden, in all her delicate perfection of bloom, "queen rose of the rosebud garden," impersonation of all the warmth, and sweetness, and fragrance, and exquisite simple profusion of summer and nature. Mr. Incledon's heart swelled full of love and pity as he thought of the contrast—not with passion but soft tenderness, and a delicious sense of what it was in his power to do for her, and to restore her to. He strayed over the rooms which he had once shown to her, with a natural pride in their beauty, and in all the delicate treasures he had accumulated there, until he came to the little inner room with its grey-green hangings, in which hung the Perugino, which, since Rose had seen it, he had always called his Raphael. He seemed to see her too, standing there looking at it, a creature partaking something of that soft divinity, an enthusiast with sweet soul and looks congenial to that heavenly art. I do not know that his mind was of a poetical turn by nature; but there are moments when life makes a poet of the dullest, and on this evening the lonely quiet house within the parks and woods of Whitton, where there had been neither love, nor anything worth calling life, for years, except in the cheery company of the servants' hall, suddenly got itself lighted up with ethereal lights of tender imagination and feeling. The illumination did not show outwardly, or it might have alarmed the Green, which was still unaware that the queen of the house had passed by there, and the place lighted itself up in prospect of her coming.

After dinner, however, Mr. Incledon descended from these regions of fancy, and took a step which seemed to himself a very clever as well as prudent, and at the same time a very friendly, one. He had not forgotten, any more than the others had, that summer evening on the lawn at the

Rectory, when young Wodehouse had strayed down the hill with Rose, out of sight of the seniors of the party, and though all his active apprehensions on that score had been calmed down by Edward's departure, yet he was too wise not to perceive that there was something in Mrs. Wodehouse's disjointed talk more than met the eye at the first glance. Mr. Incledon had a friend who was one of the Lords of the Admiralty, and upon whom he could rely to do him a service; a friend whom he had never asked for anything—for what was official patronage to the master of Whitton? He wrote him a long and charming letter, which, if I had only room for it, or if it had anything to do except incidentally with this simple history, would give the reader a much better idea of his abilities and social charms than anything I can show of him here. In it he discussed the politics of the moment, and that gossip on a dignified scale about ministers and high officials of state which is half history—and he touched upon social events in a light and amusing strain, with that half cynicism which lends salt to correspondence; and he told his friend half gaily, half seriously, that he was beginning to feel somewhat solitary, and that dreams of marrying, and marrying soon, were stealing into his mind. And he told him about his Perugino ("which I fondly hope may turn out an early Raphael"), and which it would delight him to show to a brother connoisseur. "And, by-the-bye," he added, after all this, "I have a favour to ask of you which I have kept to the end like a lady's postscript. I want you to extend the ægis of your protection over a fine young fellow in whom I am considerably interested. His name is Wodehouse, and his ship is at present on that detestable slave trade service which costs us so much money and does so little good. He has been a long time in the service, and I hear he is a very promising young officer. I should consider it a personal favour if you could do something for him; and (N.B.) it would be a still greater service to combine promotion with as distant a post as possible. His friends are anxious to keep him out of the way for private reasons—the old 'entanglement' business, which, of course, you will understand; but I think it hard that this sentence of banishment should be conjoined with such a disagreeable service. Give him a gunboat, and send him to look for the North-west passage, or anywhere else where my lords have a whim for exploring! I never thought to have paid such a tribute to your official dignity as to come, hat in hand, for a place, like the rest of the world. But no man, I suppose, can always resist the common impulse of his kind; and I am happy in the persuasion that to you I will not plead in vain."

I am afraid that nothing could have been more disingenuous than this letter. How it worked, the reader will see hereafter; but, in the meantime, I cannot defend Mr. Incledon. He acted, I suppose, on the old and time-honoured sentiment that any stratagem is allowable in love and war, and consoled himself for the possible wrong he might be doing (only a possible wrong, for Wodehouse might be kept for years cruising after slaves for anything Mr. Incledon knew) by the unquestionable benefit which

would accompany it. "A young fellow living by his wits will find a gunboat of infinitely more service to him than a foolish love affair which never could come to anything," his rival said to himself.

And after having sealed this letter, he returned into his fairy land. He left the library where he had written it, and went to the drawing-room which he rarely used, but which was warm with a cheerful fire and lighted with soft wax-lights for his pleasure, should he care to enter. He paused at the door a moment and looked at it. The wonders of upholstery in this carefully decorated room, every scrap of furniture in which had cost its master thought, would afford pages of description to a fashionable American novelist, or to the refined chronicles of the *Family Herald*; but I am not sufficiently learned to do them justice. The master of the house, however, looked at the vacant room with its softly burning lights, its luxurious vacant seats, its closely drawn curtains, the books on the tables which no one ever opened, the pictures on the walls which nobody looked at (except on great occasions), with a curious sense at once of desolation and of happiness. How dismal its silence was! not a sound but the dropping of the ashes from the fire, or the movement of the burning fuel; and he himself a ghost looking into a room which might be inhabited by ghosts for aught he knew. Here and there, indeed, a group of chairs had been arranged by accident so as to look as if they were occupied, as if one unseen being might be whispering to another, noiselessly smiling, and pointing at the solitary. But no, there was a pleasanter interpretation to be given to that soft, luxurious, brightly-coloured vacancy; it was all prepared and waiting, ready for the gentle mistress who was to come.

How different from the low-roofed drawing-room at the White House, with the fireplace at one end of the long room, with the damp of ages in the old walls, with draughts from every door and window, and an indifferent lamp giving all the light they could afford! Mr. Incledon, perhaps, thought of that, too, with an increased sense of the advantages he had to offer; but lightly, not knowing all the discomforts of it. He went back to his library after this inspection, and the lights burned on, and the ghosts, if there were any, had the full enjoyment of it till the servants came to extinguish the candles and shut up everything for the night.

CHAPTER XI.

When Rose went up the creaking stairs to bed on that memorable night her feelings were like those of some one who has just been overtaken by one of the great catastrophes of nature—a hurricane or an earthquake—and who, though escaped for the moment, hears the tempest gathering in another quarter, and knows that this is but the first flash of its wrath, and that he has yet worse encounters to meet. I am of Mr. Incledon's opinion—or rather of the doubt fast ripening into an opinion in his mind—that he had made a mistake, and that possibly if he had taken Rose

herself "with the tear in her eye," and pressed his suit at first hand, he might have succeeded better; but such might-bes are always doubtful to affirm and impossible to prove. She sat down for a while in her cold room, where the draughts were playing freely about, and where there was no fire—to think; but as for thinking, that was an impossible operation in face of the continued gleams of fancy which kept showing now one scene to her, now another; and of the ringing echo of her mother's words which kept sounding through and through the stillness. Self-indulgence—choosing her own pleasure rather than her duty—what she liked instead of what was right. Rose was far too much confused to make out how it was that these reproaches seemed to her instinct so inappropriate to the question; she only felt it vaguely, and cried a little at the thought of the selfishness attributed to her; for there is no opprobrious word that cuts so deeply into the breast of a romantic innocent girl. She sat there pensive till all her faculties got absorbed in the dreary sense of cold and bodily discomfort, and then she rose and said her prayers, and untwisted her pretty hair and brushed it out, and went to bed, feeling as if she would have to watch through the long dark hours till morning, though the darkness and loneliness frightened her, and she dreaded the night. But Rose was asleep in half an hour, though the tears were not dry on her eyelashes, and I think slept all the long night through which she had been afraid of, and woke only when the first grey of daylight revealed the cold room and a cold morning dimly to her sight—slept longer than usual, for emotion tires the young. Poor child! she was a little ashamed of herself when she found how soundly she had slept.

"Mamma would not let me call you," said Agatha, coming into her room; "she said you were very tired last night; but do please come down now and make haste. There is such a basket of flowers in the hall from Whitton, the man says. Where's Whitton? Isn't it Mr. Incledon's place? But make haste, Rose, for breakfast, now that you are awake."

So she had no time to think just then, but had to hurry down stairs, where her mother met her with something of a wistful look, and kissed her with a kind of murmured half apology. "I am afraid I frightened you last night, Rose."

"Oh, no, not frightened," the girl said, taking refuge among the children, before whom certainly nothing could be said; and then Agatha and Patty surged into the conversation, and all gravity or deeper meaning was taken out of it. Indeed, her mother was so cheerful that Rose would almost have hoped she was to hear no more of it, had it not been for the cluster of flowers which stood on the table and the heaped-up bunches of beautiful purple grapes which filled a pretty Tuscan basket, and gave dignity to the bread and butter. This was a sign of the times which was very alarming; and I do not know why it was, unless it might be by reason of her youth, that those delicate and lovely things—fit offerings for a lover—never moved her to any thought of what it was she was rejecting, or tempted her to consider Mr. Incledon's proposal as one which

involved many delightful things along with himself, who was not delightful. This idea, oddly enough, did not find any place in her mind, though she was as much subject to the influence of all that was lovely and pleasant as any girl could be.

The morning passed, however, without any further words on the subject, and her heart had begun to beat easier and her excitement to calm down, when Mrs. Damerel suddenly came to her, after the children's lessons, which was now their mother's chief occupation. She came upon her quite unexpectedly, when Rose, moved by their noiseless presence in the room, and unable to keep her hands off them any longer, had just commenced in the course of her other arrangements (for Rose had to be a kind of upper housemaid, and make the drawing-room habitable after the rough and ready operation which Mary Jane called "tidying") to make a pretty group upon a table in the window of Mr. Incledon's flowers. Certainly they made the place look prettier and pleasanter than it had ever done yet, especially as one stray gleam of sunshine, somewhat pale, like the girl herself, but cheery, had come glancing in to light up the long, low, quaint room and caress the flowers.

"Ah, Rose, they have done you good already!" said her mother; "you look more like yourself than I have seen you for many a day."

Rose took her hands from the last flower-pot as if it had burnt her, and stood aside, so angry and vexed to have been found at this occupation that she could have cried.

"My dear," said her mother, going up to her, "I do not know that Mr. Incledon will be here to-day; but if he comes I must give him an answer. Have you reflected upon what I said to you? I need not tell you again how important it is, or how much you have in your power."

Rose clasped her hands together in self-support—one hand held fast by the other, as if that slender grasp had been something worth clinging to. "Oh! what can I say?" she cried; "I—told you; what more can I say?"

"You told me! Then, Rose, everything that I said to you last night goes for nothing, though you must know the truth of it far far better than my words could say. Is it to be the same thing over again—always over again? Self, first and last, the only consideration? Everything to please yourself; nothing from higher motives? God forgive you, Rose!"

"Oh, hush, hush! it is unkind—it is cruel. I would die for you if that would do any good!" cried Rose.

"These are easy words to say; for dying would do no good, neither would it be asked from you," said Mrs. Damerel, impatiently. "Rose, I do not ask this in ordinary obedience, as a mother may command a child. It is not a child but a woman who must make such a decision; but it is my duty to show you your duty, and what is best for yourself as well as for others. No one—neither man nor woman, nor girl nor boy—can escape from duty to others; and when it is neglected

some one must pay the penalty. But you—you are happier than most. You can, if you please, save your family."

"We are not starving, mamma," said Rose, with trembling lips; "we have enough to live upon—and I could work—I would do anything——"

"What would your work do, Rose? If you could teach—and I don't think you could teach—you might earn enough for your own dress; that would be all. Oh, my dear! listen to me. The little work a girl can do is nothing. She can make a sacrifice of her own inclination—of her fancy; but as for work, she has nothing in her power."

"Then I wish there were no girls!" cried Rose, as many a poor girl has done before her, "if we can do nothing but be a burden—if there is no work for us, no use for us, but only to sell ourselves. Oh, mamma, mamma! do you know what you are asking me to do?"

"I know a great deal better than you do, or you would not repeat to me this vulgar nonsense about selling yourself. Am I likely to bid you sell yourself? Listen to me, Rose. I want you to be happy, and so you would be—nay, never shake your head at me—you would be happy with a man who loves you, for you would learn to love him. Die for us! I have heard such words from the lips of people who would not give up a morsel of their own will—not a whim, not an hour's comfort——"

"But I—I am not like that," cried Rose, stung to the heart. "I would give up anything—everything—for the children and you!"

"Except what you are asked to give up; except the only thing which you can give up. Again I say, Rose, I have known such cases. They are not rare in this world."

"Oh, mamma, mamma!"

"You think I am cruel. If you knew my life, you would not think so; you would understand my fear and horror of this amiable self-seeking which looks so natural. Rose," said her mother, dropping into a softer tone, "I have something more to say to you—perhaps something that will weigh more with you than anything I can say. Your father had set his heart on this. He spoke to me of it on his death-bed. God knows! perhaps he saw then what a dreary struggle I should have, and how little had been done to help us through. One of the last things he said to me was, 'Incledon will look after the boys.'"

"Papa said that?" said Rose, putting out her hands to find a prop. Her limbs seemed to refuse to support her. She was unprepared for this new unseen antagonist. "Papa? How did he know?"

The mother was trembling and pale, too, overwhelmed by the recollection as well as by her anxiety to conquer. She made no direct answer to Rose's question, but took her hand within both of hers, and continued with her eyes full of tears: "You would like to please *him*, Rose—it was almost the last thing he said—to please him, and to rescue me from anxieties I can see no end to, and to secure Bertie's future. Oh, Rose! you should thank God that you can do so much for those you love. And you would be happy, too. You are young, and love begets love.

He would do everything that man could do to please you. He is a good man, with a kind heart; you would get to love him; and, my dear, you would be happy too."

"Mamma," said Rose, with her head bent down and some silent tears dropping upon Mr. Incledon's flowers—a flush of colour came over her downcast face, and then it grew pale again; her voice sounded so low that her mother stooped towards her to hear what she said—"mamma, I should like to tell you something."

Mrs. Damerel made an involuntary movement—a slight instinctive withdrawal from the confidence. Did she guess what it was? If she did so, she made up her mind at the same time not to know it. "What is it, dear?" she said, tenderly, but quickly. "Oh, Rose! do you think I don't understand your objections? But, my darling, surely you may trust your mother, who loves you more than all the world. You will not reject it—I know you will not reject it. There is no blessing that is not promised to those that deny themselves. He will not hurry nor press you, dear. Rose, say I may give him a kind answer when he comes?"

Rose's head was swimming, her heart throbbing in her ears and her throat. The girl was not equal to such a strain. To have the living and the dead both uniting against her—both appealing to her in the several names of love and duty against love—was more than she could bear. She had sunk into the nearest chair, unable to stand, and she no longer felt strong enough, even had her mother been willing to hear it, to make that confession which had been on her lips. At what seemed to be the extremity of human endurance she suddenly saw one last resource in which she might still find safety, and grasped at it, scarcely aware what she did. "May I see Mr. Incledon myself if he comes?" she gasped, almost under her breath.

"Surely, dear," said her mother, surprised; "of course that would be the best;—if you are able for it, if you will think well before you decide, if you will promise to do nothing hastily. Oh, Rose! do not break my heart!"

"It is more likely to be my own that I will break," said the girl, with a shadow of a smile passing over her face. "Mamma, will you be very kind, and say no more? I will think, think—everything that you say; but let me speak to him myself, if he comes."

Mrs. Damerel looked at her very earnestly, half suspicious, half sympathetic. She went up to her softly and put her arms round her, and pressed the girl's drooping head against her breast. "God bless you, my darling!" she said, with her eyes full of tears; and, kissing her hastily, went out of the room, leaving Rose alone with her thoughts.

If I were to tell you what these thoughts were, and all the confusion of them, I should require a year to do it. Rose had no heart to stand up and fight for herself all alone against the world. Her young frame ached and trembled from head to foot with the unwonted strain. If there had been

indeed any one—any one—to struggle for; but how was she to stand alone and battle for herself? Everything combined against her; every motive, every influence. She sat in a vague trance of pain, and, instead of thinking over what had been said, only saw visions gleaming before her of the love which was a vision, nothing more, and which she was called upon to resign. A vision!—that was all; a dream, perhaps, without any foundation. It seemed to disperse like a mist, as the world melted and dissolved around her—the world which she had known—showing a new world, a dreamy, undiscovered country, forming out of darker vapours before her. She sat thus till the stir of the children in the house warned her that they had come in from their daily walk to the early dinner. She listened to their voices and noisy steps and laughter with the strangest feeling that she was herself a dreamer, having nothing in common with the fresh real life where all the voices rang out so clearly, where people said what they meant with spontaneous outcries and laughter, and there was no concealed meaning and nothing beneath the sunny surface; but when she heard her mother's softer tones speaking to the children, Rose got up hurriedly, and fled to the shelter of her room. If anything more were said to her she thought she must die. Happily Mrs. Damerel did not know that it was her voice, and not the noise of the children, which was too much for poor Rose's overstrained nerves. She sent word by Agatha that Rose must lie down for an hour and try to rest; and that quiet was the best thing for her headache, which, of course, was the plea the girl put forth to excuse her flight and seclusion. Agatha, for her part, was very sorry and distressed that Rose should miss her dinner, and wanted much to bring something upstairs for her, which was at once the kindest and most practical suggestion of all.

The bustle of dinner was all over and the house still again in the dreary afternoon quiet, when Agatha, once more, with many precautions, stole into the room. "Are you awake?" she said; "I hope your head is better. Mr. Incledon is in the drawing-room, and mamma says, please, if you are better will you go down, for she is busy; and you are to thank him for the grapes and for the flowers. What does Mr. Incledon want, coming so often? He was here only yesterday, and sat for hours with mamma. Oh! what a ghost you look, Rose! Shall I bring you some tea?"

"It is too early for tea. Never mind; my head is better."

"But you have had no dinner," said practical Agatha; "it is not much wonder that you are pale."

Rose did not know what she answered, or if she said anything. Her head seemed to swim more than ever. Not only was it all true about Mr. Incledon, but she was going to talk to him to decide her own fate finally one way or other. What a good thing that the drawing-room was so dark in the afternoon that he could not remark how woebegone she looked, how miserable and pale!

He got up when she came in, and went up to her eagerly, putting out his

hands. I suppose he took her appearance as a proof that his suit was progressing well; and, indeed, he had come to-day with the determination to see Rose, whatever might happen. He took her hand into both of his, and for one second pressed it fervently and close. "It is very kind of you to see me. How can I thank you for giving me this opportunity?" he said.

"Oh, no! not kind; I wished it," said Rose, breathlessly, withdrawing her hand as hastily as he had taken it; and then, fearing her strength, she sat down in the nearest chair, and said, falteringly, "Mr. Incledon, I wanted very much to speak to you myself."

"And I, too," he said—her simplicity and eagerness thus opened the way for him and saved him all embarrassment—"I, too, was most anxious to see you. I did not venture to speak of this yesterday, when I met you. I was afraid to frighten and distress you; but I have wished ever since that I had dared——"

"Oh, please do not speak so!" she cried. In his presence Rose felt so young and childish, it seemed impossible to believe in the extraordinary change of positions which his words implied.

"But I must speak so. Miss Damerel, I am very conscious of my deficiencies by your side—of the disparity between us in point of age and in many other ways; you, so fresh and untouched by the world, I affected by it, as every man is more or less; but if you will commit your happiness to my hands, don't think, because I am not so young as you, that I will watch over it less carefully—that it will be less precious in my eyes."

"Ah! I was not thinking of my happiness," said Rose; "I suppose I have no more right to be happy than other people—but oh! if you would let me speak to you! Mr. Incledon, oh! why should you want me? There are so many girls better, more like you, that would be glad. Oh! what is there in me? I am silly; I am not well educated, though you may think so. I am not clever enough to be a companion you would care for. I think it is because you don't know."

Mr. Incledon was so much taken by surprise that he could do nothing but laugh faintly at this strange address. "I was not thinking either of education or of wisdom, but of you—only you," he said.

"But you know so little about me; you think I must be nice because of papa; but papa himself was never satisfied with me. I have not read very much. I know very little. I am not good for anywhere but home. Mr. Incledon, I am sure you are deceived in me. This is what I wanted to say. Mamma does not see it in the same light; but I feel sure that you are deceived, and take me for something very different from what I am," said Rose, totally unconscious that every word she said made Mr. Incledon more and more sure that he had done the very thing he ought to have done, and that he was not deceived.

"Indeed, you mistake me altogether," he said. "It is not merely because you are a piece of excellence—it is because I love you, Rose."

"Love me! Do you love me?" she said, looking at him with wondering eyes; then drooping with a deep blush under his gaze—"but I—do not love you."

"I did not expect it; it would have been too much to expect; but if you will let me love you, and show you how I love you, dear!" said Mr. Incledon, going up to her softly, with something of the tenderness of a father to a child, subduing the eagerness of a lover. "I don't want to frighten you; I will not hurry nor tease; but some time you might learn to love me."

"That is what mamma says," said Rose, with a heavy sigh.

Now this was scarcely flattering to a lover. Mr. Incledon felt for the moment as if he had received a downright and tolerably heavy blow; but he was in earnest, and prepared to meet with a rebuff or two. "She says truly," he answered, with much gravity. "Rose—may I call you Rose?—do not think I will persecute or pain you; only do not reject me hastily. What I have to say for myself is very simple. I love you—that is all; and I will put up with all a man may for the chance of winning you, when you know me better, to love me in return."

These were almost the same as those Mrs. Damerel had employed; but how differently they sounded! They had not touched Rose's heart at all before; but they did now with a curious mixture of agitation and terror, and almost pleasure. She was sorry for him, more than she could have thought possible, and somehow felt more confidence in him, and freedom to tell him what was in her heart.

"Do not answer me now, unless you please," said Mr. Incledon. "If you will give me the right to think your family mine, I know I can be of use to them. The boys would become my charge, and there is much that has been lost which I could make up had I the right to speak to your mother as a son. It is absurd, I know," he said, with a half smile; "I am about as old as she is; but all these are secondary questions. The main thing is—you. Dear Rose, dear child, you don't know what love is——"

"Ah!" the girl looked up at him suddenly, her countenance changing. "Mr. Incledon, I have not said all to you that I wanted to say. Oh, do not ask me any more! Tell mamma that you have given it up! or I must tell you something that will break my heart."

"I will not give it up so long as there is any hope," he said; "tell me—what is it? I will do nothing to break your heart."

She made a pause. It was hard to say it, and yet, perhaps, easier to him than it would be to face her mother and make this tremendous confession. She twisted her poor little fingers together in her bewilderment and misery, and fixed her eyes upon them as if their interlacing were the chief matter in hand. "Mr. Incledon," she said, very low, "there was some one else—oh, how can I say it!—some one—whom I cared for—— whom I can't help thinking about."

"Tell me," said Mr. Incledon, bravely quenching in his own mind a

not very amiable sentiment; for it seemed to him that if he could but secure her confidence all would be well. He took her hand with caressing gentleness, and spoke low, almost as low as she did. "Tell me, my darling; I am your friend, confide in me. Who was it? May I know?"

"I cannot tell you who it was," said Rose, with her eyes still cast down, "because he has never said anything to me—perhaps he does not care for me; but this has happened: without his ever asking me, or perhaps wishing it, I cared for him. I know a girl should not do so, and that is why I cannot—cannot! But," said Rose, raising her head with more confidence, though still reluctant to meet his eye, "now that you know this you will not think of me any more, Mr. Incledon. I am so sorry if it makes you at all unhappy; but I am of very little consequence; you cannot be long unhappy about me."

"Pardon me if I see it in quite a different light," he said. "My mind is not at all changed. This is but a fancy. Surely a man who loves you and says so, should be of more weight than one of whose feelings you know nothing."

"I know about my own," said Rose, with a little sigh; "and oh, don't think, as mamma does, that I am selfish! It is not selfishness; it is because I know, if you saw into my heart, you would not ask me. Oh, Mr. Incledon, I would die for them all if I could! but how could I say one thing to you, and mean another? How could I let you be deceived?"

"Then, Rose, answer me truly; is your consideration solely for me?"

She gave him an alarmed, appealing look, but did not reply.

"I am willing to run the risk," he said, with a smile, "if all your fear is for me; and I think you might run the risk too. The other is an imagination; I am real, very real," he added, "very constant, very patient. So long as you do not refuse me absolutely, I will wait and hope."

Poor Rose, all her little art was exhausted. She dared not, with her mother's words ringing in her ears, and with all the consequences so clearly before her, refuse him absolutely, as he said. She had appealed to him to withdraw, and he would not withdraw. She looked at him as if he were the embodiment of Fate, against which no man can strive.

"Mr. Incledon," she said, gravely and calmly, "you would not marry any one who did not love you?"

"I will marry you, Rose, if you will have me, whether you love me or not," he said; "I will wait for the love, and hope."

"Oh, be kind!" she said, driven to her wits' end. "You are free, you can do what you please, and there are so many girls in the world besides me. And I cannot do what I please," she added, low, with a piteous tone, looking at him. Perhaps he did not hear these last words. He turned from her with I know not what mingling of love, and impatience, and wounded pride, and walked up and down the darkling room, making an effort to command himself. She thought she had moved him at last,

and sat with her hands clasped together expecting the words which would be deliverance to her. It was almost dark, and the firelight glimmered through the low room, and the dim green glimmer of the twilight crossed its ruddy rays, not more unlike than the two who thus stood so strangely opposed to each other. At last, Mr. Incledon returned to where Rose sat in the shadow, touched by neither one illumination nor the other, and eagerly watching him as he approached her through the uncertain gleams of the ruddy light.

"There is but one girl in the world for me," he said, somewhat hoarsely. "I do not pretend to judge for any one but myself. So long as you do not reject me, I will hope."

And thus their interview closed. When he had got over the disagreeable shock of encountering that indifference on the part of the woman he loves which is the greatest blow that can be given to a man's vanity, Mr. Incledon was not at all downhearted about the result. He went away with half-a-dozen words to Mrs. Damerel, begging her not to press his suit, but to let the matter take its course. "All will go well if we are patient," he said, with a composure which, perhaps, surprised her; for women are apt to prefer the hot-headed in such points, and Mrs. Damerel did not reflect that, having waited so long, it was not so hard on the middle-aged lover to wait a little longer. But his forbearance at least was of immediate service to Rose, who was allowed time to recover herself after her agitation, and had no more exciting appeals addressed to her for some time. But Mr. Incledon went and came, and a soft, continued pressure, which no one could take decided objection to, began to make itself felt.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Incledon went and came; he did not accept his dismissal, nor, indeed, had any dismissal been given to him. A young lover, like Edward Wodehouse, would have been at once crushed and rendered furious by the appeal Rose had made so ineffectually to the man of experience who knew what he was about. If she was worth having at all, she was worth a struggle; and Mr. Incledon, in the calm exercise of his judgment, knew that at the last every good thing falls into the arms of the patient man who can wait. He had not much difficulty in penetrating the thin veil which she had cast over the "some one" for whom she cared, but who, so far as she knew, did not care for her. It could be but one person, and the elder lover was glad beyond description to know that his rival had not spoken, and that he was absent, and likely to be absent. Edward Wodehouse being thus disposed of, there was no one else in Mr. Incledon's way, and with but a little patience he was sure to win.

As for Rose, though she felt that her appeal had been unsuccessful, she, too, was less discouraged by it than she could have herself supposed. In the first place she was let alone; nothing was pressed upon her; she had

time allowed her to calm down, and with time everything was possible. Some miracle would happen to save her; or, if not a miracle, some ordinary turn of affairs would take the shape of miracle, and answer the same purpose. What is Providence, but a divine agency to get us out of trouble, to restore happiness, to make things pleasant for us? so, at least, one thinks when one is young; older, we begin to learn that Providence has to watch over many whose interests are counter to ours as well as our own; but at twenty, all that is good and necessary in life seems always on our side, and there seems no choice for Heaven but to clear the obstacles out of our way. Something would happen, and all would be well again; and Rose's benevolent fancy even exercised itself in finding for "poor Mr. Incledon" some one who would suit him better than herself. He was very wary, very judicious, in his treatment of her. He ignored that one scene when he had refused to give up his proposal, and conducted himself for some time as if he had sincerely given up his proposal, and was no more than the family friend, the most kind and sympathising of neighbours. It was only by the slowest degrees that Rose found out that he had given up nothing, that his constant visits and constant attentions were so many meshes of the net in which her simple feet were being caught. For the first few weeks, as I have said, she was relieved altogether from everything that looked like persecution. She heard of him, indeed, constantly, but only in the pleasantest way. Fresh flowers came, filling the dim old rooms with brightness; and the gardener from Whitton came to look after the flowers and to suggest to Mrs. Damerel improvements in her garden, and how to turn the hall, which was large in proportion to the house, into a kind of conservatory; and baskets of fruit came, over which the children rejoiced; and Mr. Incledon himself came, and talked to Mrs. Damerel and played with them, and left books, new books all fragrant from the printing, of which he sometimes asked Rose's opinion casually. None of all these good things was for her, and yet she had the unexpressed consciousness, which was pleasant enough so long as no one else remarked it and no recompense was asked, that but for her those pleasant additions to the family life would not have been. Then it was extraordinary how often he would meet them by accident in their walks, and how much trouble he would take to adapt his conversation to theirs, finding out (but this Rose did not discover till long after) all her tastes and likings. I suppose that having once made up his mind to take so much trouble, the pursuit of this shy creature, who would only betray what was in her by intervals, who shut herself up like the mimosa whenever she was too boldly touched, but who opened secretly with an almost childlike confidence when her fears were lulled to rest, became more interesting to Mr. Incledon than a more ordinary wooing, with a straightforward "yes" to his proposal at the end of it, would have been. His vanity got many wounds both by Rose's unconsciousness and by her shrinking; but he pursued his plan undaunted by either, having made up his mind to win her and no other; and the more difficult the fight was, the more triumphant would be the success.

This state of affairs lasted for some time; indeed, everything went on quietly, with no apparent break in the gentle monotony of existence at the White House, until the spring was so far advanced as to have pranked itself out in a flood of primroses. It was something quite insignificant and incidental which for the first time reawakened Rose's fears. He had looked at her with something in his eyes which betrayed him, or some word had dropped from his lips which startled her; but the first direct attack upon her peace of mind did not come from Mr. Incledon. It came from two ladies on the Green, one of whom at least was very innocent of evil meaning. Rose was walking with her mother on an April afternoon, when they met Mrs. Wodehouse and Mrs. Musgrove, likewise taking their afternoon walk. Mrs. Musgrove was a very quiet person, who interfered with nobody, yet who was mixed up with everything that went on on the Green, by right of being the most sympathetic of souls, ready to hear everybody's grievance and to help in everybody's trouble. Mrs. Wodehouse struck straight across the Green to meet Mrs. Damerel and Rose, when she saw them, so that it was by no ordinary chance meeting, but an encounter sought eagerly on one side at least, that this revelation came. Mrs. Wodehouse was full of her subject, vibrating with it to the very flowers on her bonnet, which thrilled and nodded against the blue distance like a soldier's plumes. She came forward with a forced exuberance of cordiality, holding out both her hands.

"Now tell me!" she said; "may we congratulate you? Is the embargo removed? Quantities of people have assured me that we need not hold our tongues any longer, but that it is all settled at last."

"What is all settled at last?" asked Mrs. Damerel, with sudden stiffness and coldness. "I beg your pardon, but I really don't in the least know what you mean."

"I said I was afraid you were too hasty," said Mrs. Musgrove.

"Well, if one can't believe the evidence of one's senses, what is one to believe?" cried Mrs. Wodehouse. "It is not kind, Rose, to keep all your old friends so long in suspense. Of course, it is very easy to see on which side the hesitation is; and I am sure I am very sorry if I have been premature."

"You are more than premature," said Mrs. Damerel, with a little laugh, and an uneasy colour on her cheek, "for you are speaking a language neither Rose nor I understand. I hope, Mrs. Wodehouse, you have good news from your son."

"Oh, very good news indeed!" said the mother, whose indignation on her son's behalf made the rose on her bonnet quiver: and then there were a few further interchanges of volleys in the shape of questions and answers of the most civil description, and the ladies shook hands and parted. Rose had been struck dumb altogether by the dialogue, in which, trembling and speechless, she had taken no part. When they had gone on for a few yards in silence, she broke down in her effort at self-restraint.

"Mamma, what does she mean?"

"Oh, Rose, do not drive me wild with your folly!" said Mrs. Damerel. "What could she mean but one thing? If you think for one moment, you will have no difficulty in understanding what she means."

Rose woke up, as a sick man wakes after a narcotic, feverish and trembling. "I thought," she said, slowly, her heart beginning to throb, and her head to ache in a moment—"I thought, it was all given up."

"How could you think anything so foolish? What symptom can you see of its having been given up? Has he ceased coming? Has he ceased trying to please you, ungrateful girl that you are? Indeed you go too far for ordinary patience; for it cannot be stupidity—you are not stupid," said Mrs. Damerel, excitedly; "you have not even that excuse."

"Oh, mamma, do not be angry!" said poor Rose; "I thought—it seemed so natural that, as he saw more of me, he would give it up. Why should he care for me? I am not like him, nor fit to be a great lady; he must see that."

"This is false humility, and it is very ill timed," said Mrs. Damerel. "Strange though it may seem, seeing more of you does not make him give it up; and if you are too simple or too foolish to see how much he is devoted to you, no one else is. Mrs. Wodehouse had a spiteful meaning, but she is not the first who has spoken to me. All our friends on the Green believe, like her, that everything is settled between you; that it is only some hesitation about—about our recent sorrow which keeps it from being announced."

Rose turned upon her mother for the first time with reproach in her eyes. "You should have told me!" she said, with momentary passion; "you ought to have told me,—for how was I to know?"

"Rose, I will not allow such questions; you are not a fool nor a child. Did you think Mr. Incledon came for me? or Agatha, perhaps? He told you he would not give you up. You were warned what his object was—more than warned. Was I to defeat my own wishes by keeping you constantly on your guard? You knew what he wanted, and you have encouraged him and accepted his attentions."

"I—encouraged him?"

"Whenever a girl permits, she encourages," said Mrs. Damerel, with oracular solemnity. "In matters of this kind, Rose, if you do not refuse at once, you commit yourself, and sooner or later you must accept."

"You never told me so before. Oh, mamma! how was I to know? you never said this to me before."

"There are things that one knows by intuition," said Mrs. Damerel; "and, Rose, you know what my opinion has been all along. You have no right to refuse. On the one side, there is everything that heart can desire; on the other, nothing but a foolish, childish disinclination. I don't know if it goes so far as disinclination; you seem now to like him well enough."

"Do you not know the difference?" said Rose, turning wistful eyes

upon her mother. "Oh, mamma, you who ought to know so much better than I do! I *like* him very well—what does that matter?"

"It matters everything; liking is the first step to love. You can have no reason, absolutely no reason, for refusing him if you like him. Rose, oh, how foolish this is, and what a small, what a very small, place there seems to be in your mind for the thought of duty! You tell us you are ready to die for us—which is absurd—and yet you cannot make up your mind to this?"

"It is different," said Rose; "oh, it is different! Mamma, listen a moment: you are a great deal better than I am; you love us better than we love each other; you are never tired of doing things for us; whether you are well or whether you are ill it does not matter; you are always ready when the children want you. I am not blind," said the girl, with tears. "I know all you do and all you put up with; but, mamma, you who are good, you who know how to deny yourself, would *you* do this?"

"Rose!"

"Would you do it?" cried Rose, excited and breathless, pursuing her advantage.

Mrs. Damerel was not old, nor was life quenched in her either by her years or her sorrows. Her face flushed under her heavy widow's veil, all over, with a violent overwhelming blush like a girl's.

"Rose," she said, passionately, "how dare you—how dare you put such a question to your mother? I do it!—either you are heartless altogether, or you are mad, and don't know what you say."

"Forgive me, mamma; but, oh, let me speak! There is nothing else so hard, nothing so disagreeable, but you would do it for us; but you would not do this. There is a difference, then? you do not deny it now?"

"You use a cruel argument," said Mrs. Damerel, the blush still warm upon her matron cheek, "and it is not a true one. I am your father's wife. I am your mother and Bertie's, who are almost man and woman. All my life would be reversed, all my relations confused, if I were to make such a sacrifice; besides, it is impossible," she said, suddenly; "I did not think that a child of mine would ever have so insulted me."

"I do not mean it for insult, mamma. Oh, forgive me! I want you only to see the difference. It is not like anything else. You would do anything else, and so would I; but, oh, not this! You see it yourself—not this, mamma."

"It is foolish to attempt to argue with you," said Mrs. Damerel; and she hurried in, and upstairs to her room, leaving Rose, not less excited, to follow. Rose had scarcely calculated upon the prodigious force of her own argument. She was half frightened by it, and half ashamed of having used it, yet to some extent triumphant in her success. There was quite a bank of flowers in the hall as she passed through—flowers which she stopped to look at and caress, with little touches of fondness as flower-lovers use, before she recollected that they were Mr. Incledon's flowers. She took up a book which was on the hall table, and hurried on to avoid

that contemplation, and then she remembered that it was Mr. Incledon's book. She was just entering the drawing-room as she did so, and threw it down pettishly on a chair by the door; and, lo! Mr. Incledon himself rose, a tall shadow against the window, where he had been waiting for the ladies' return.

"Mamma has gone upstairs; I will call her," said Rose, with confusion, turning away.

"Nay, never mind; it is a pity to disturb Mrs. Damerel, and it is long, very long, since you have allowed me a chance of talking to you."

"Indeed, we see each other very often," said Rose, falteringly.

"Yes, I see you in a crowd, protected by the children, or with your mother, who is my friend, but who cannot help me—I wanted to ask about the book you threw down so impatiently as you came in. Don't you like it?" said Mr. Incledon, with a smile.

What a relief it was! She was so grateful to him for not making love to her that I almost think she would have consented to marry him had he asked her before he left that evening. But he was very cautious and very wise, and, though he had come with no other intention, he was warned by the excitement in her looks, and stopped the very words on her lips, for which Rose, shortsighted, like all mortals, was very thankful to him, not knowing how much the distinct refusal, which it was in her heart to give, would have simplified all their affairs.

This, however, was at once the first and the last of Rose's successes. When she saw traces of tears about her mother's eyes, and how pale she was, her heart smote her, and she made abject submission of herself, and poured out her very soul in excuses, so that Mrs. Damerel, though vanquished for the moment, took higher ground after it. The mother, indeed, was so much shaken by the practical application of her doctrines, that she felt there was no longer time for the gradual undermining which was Mr. Incledon's policy. Mrs. Damerel did not know what reply she could make if Rose repeated her novel and strenuous argument, and felt that now safety lay in as rapid a conclusion of the matter as possible; so that from this moment every day saw the closing of the net over poor Rose. The lover became more close in his attendance, the mother more urgent in her appeals; but so cleverly did he manage the matter that his society was always a relief to the girl when hard driven, and she gradually got to feel herself safer with him, which was a great deal in his favour. Everything, however, went against Rose. The ladies on the Green made gentle criticisms upon her, and called her a sly little puss. Some hoped she would not forget her humble friends when she came into her kingdom; some asked her what she meant by dragging her captive so long at her chariot wheels; and the captive himself, though a miracle of goodness, would cast pathetic looks at her, and make little speeches full of meaning. Rose began to feel herself like a creature at bay; wherever she turned she could see no way of escape; even sharp-eyed Agatha, in the wisdom of fifteen, turned against her.

"Why don't you marry Mr. Incledon, and have done with it?" said Agatha. "I would if I were you. What a good thing it would be for you! and I suppose he would be kind to the rest of us too. Why, you would have your carriage, two or three carriages, and a horse to ride, and you might go abroad if you liked, or do anything you liked. How I should like to have quantities of money, and a beautiful house, and everything in the world I wanted! I should not shilly-shally like you."

"No one has everything in the world they want," said Rose, solemnly, thinking also—if Mr. Incledon had been "some one else" how much easier her decision would have been.

"You seem to think they do," said Agatha, "or you would not make such a fuss about Mr. Incledon. Why, what do you object to? I suppose it's because he is not young enough. I think he is a very nice man, and very good-looking. I only wish he had asked me."

"Agatha, you are too young to talk of such things," said Rose, with the dignity of her seniority.

"Then I wish my eldest sister was too young to put them into my head," said Agatha.

This conversation drove Rose from her last place of safety, the schoolroom, where hitherto she had been left in quiet. A kind of despair seized her. She dared not encounter her mother in the drawing-room, where probably Mr. Incledon also would appear towards the twilight. She put on her hat and wandered out, her heart full of a subdued anguish, poignant yet not unsweet, for the sense of intense suffering is in its way a kind of excitement and painful enjoyment to the very young. It was a spring afternoon, soft and sweet, full of promise of the summer, and Rose, quite unused to walking or indeed doing anything else alone, found a certain pleasure in the loneliness and silence. How tranquilising it was to be alone; to have no one near who would say anything to disturb her; nobody with reproachful eyes; nothing around or about but the soft sky, the trees growing green, the grass which waved its thin blades in the soft air! It seemed to Rose that she was out for a long time, and that the silence refreshed her, and made her strong for her fate whatever it might be. Before she returned home she went in at the old familiar gate of the Rectory, and skirted the lawn by a by-path she knew well, and stole down the slope to the little platform under the old May-tree. By this time it had begun to get dark; and as Rose looked across the soft undulations of the half visible country, every line of which was dear and well known to her, her eyes fell suddenly upon a gleam of light from among the trees. What friendly sprite had lighted the lights so early in the parlour of the cottage at Ankermead I cannot tell, but they glimmered out from the brown clump of trees and took Rose so by surprise that her eyes filled with sudden moisture, and her heart beat with a muffled throbbing in her ears. So well she recollected the warm summer evening long ago (and yet it was not a year ago), and every word that was said. "Imagination will play me many a prank before I forget this night!" Did he mean that? had

he forgotten it? or was he perhaps leaning over the ship's side somewhere while the big vessel rustled through the soft broad sea, thinking of home, as he had said, seeing the lights upon the coast, and dreaming of his mother's lighted windows, and of that dim, dreamy, hazy landscape, so soft and far inland, with the cottage lamp shining out from that brown clump of trees? The tears fell softly from Rose's eyes through the evening dimness which hid them almost from herself; she was very sad, heartbroken—and yet not so miserable as she thought. She did not know how long she sat there, looking at the cottage lights through her tears. The new Rector and his wife sat down to dinner all unaware of the forlorn young visitor who had stolen into the domain which was now theirs, and Rose's mother began to get sadly uneasy about her absence, with a chill dread lest she should have pressed her too far and driven her to some scheme of desperation. Mr. Incledon came out to look for her, and met her just outside the Rectory gate, and was very kind to her, making her take his arm and leading her gently home without asking a question.

"She has been calling at the Rectory, and I fear it was too much for her," he said; an explanation which made the quick tears start to Mrs. Damerel's own eyes, who kissed her daughter and sent her upstairs without further question. I almost think Mr. Incledon was clever enough to guess the true state of affairs; but he told this fib with an admirable air of believing it, and made Rose grateful to the very bottom of her heart.

Gratitude is a fine sentiment to cultivate in such circumstances. It is a better and safer beginning than that pity which is said to be akin to love. Rose struggled no more after this. She surrendered quietly, made no further resistance, and finally yielded a submissive assent to what was asked of her. She became "engaged" to Mr. Incledon, and the engagement was formally announced, and all the Green joined in with congratulations, except, indeed, Mrs. Wodehouse, who called in a marked manner just after the ladies had been seen to go out, and left a huge card, which was all her contribution to the felicitations of the neighbourhood. There was scarcely a lady in the parish except this one who did not take the trouble to walk or drive to the White House and kiss Rose and congratulate her mother. "Such a very excellent match—everything that a mother could desire!" they said. "But you must get a little more colour in your cheeks, my dear," said old Lady Denvil. "This is not like the dear Rector's Rose in June. It is more like a pale China rose in November."

What could Rose do but cry at this allusion? It was kind of the old lady (who was always kind) to give her this excellent reason and excuse for the tears in her eyes.

And then there came, with a strange, hollow, far-off sound, proposals of dates and days to be fixed, and talk about the wedding dresses and the wedding tour. She listened to it all with an inward shiver; but, fortunately for Rose, Mrs. Damerel would hear of no wedding until after the anniversary of her husband's death, which had taken place in July. The Green discussed the subject largely, and most people blamed her for standing on

this punctilio; for society in general, with a wise sense of the uncertainty of all human affairs, has a prejudice against the postponement of marriages which it never believes in thoroughly till they have taken place. They thought it ridiculous in a woman of Mrs. Damerel's sense, and one, too, who ought to know how many slips there are between the cup and the lip; but Mr. Incledon did not seem to object, and of course, everybody said, no one else had a right to interfere.

All this took place in April, when the Damerels had been but three months in their new house. Even that little time had proved bitterly to them many of the evils of their impoverished condition, for already Mr. Hunsdon had begun to write of the long time Bertie had been at school, and the necessity there was that he should exert himself; and even Reginald's godfather, who had always been so good, showed signs of a disposition to launch his charge, too, on the world, suggesting that perhaps it might be better, as he had now no prospect of anything but working for himself, that he should leave Eton. Mrs. Damerel kept these humiliations to herself, but it was only natural that they should give fire to her words in her arguments with Rose; and it could not be denied that the family had spent more than their income permitted in the first three months. There had been the mourning, and the removal, and so many other expenses, to begin with. It is hard enough to struggle with bills as Mrs. Damerel had done in her husband's lifetime, when by means of the wisest art and never-failing attention it was always possible to pay them as they became urgent; but when there is no money at all, either present or in prospect, what is a poor woman to do? They made her sick many a time when she opened the drawer in her desk and looked at them. Even with all she could accept from Mr. Incledon (and that was limited by pride and delicacy in many ways), and with one less to provide for, Mrs. Damerel would still have care sufficient to make her cup run over. Rose's good fortune did not take her burden away.

Thus things went on through the early summer. The thought of Rose's trousseau nearly broke her mother's heart. It must be to some degree in consonance with her future position, and it must not come from Mr. Incledon; and where was it to come from? Mrs. Damerel had begun to write a letter to her brother, appealing, which it was a bitter thing to do, for his help, one evening early in May. She had written after all her children had left her, when she was alone in the old-fashioned house, where all the old walls and the old stairs uttered strange creaks and jars in the midnight stillness, and the branches of the creepers tapped ghostly taps against the window. Her nerves were overstrained, and her heart was sore, notwithstanding her success in the one matter which she had struggled for so earnestly; and after writing half her letter Mrs. Damerel had given it up, with a strange feeling that something opposed the writing of it, some influence which she could not define, which seemed to stop her words, and made her incapable of framing a sentence. She gave it up with almost a superstitious thrill of feeling, and a nervous tremor which

she tried in vain to master; and, leaving it half written in her blotting-book, stole upstairs to bed in the silence, as glad to get out of the echoing, creaking room as if it had been haunted. Rose heard her come upstairs, and thought with a little bitterness as she lay awake, her pillow wet with the tears which she never shed in the daylight, of her mother's triumph over her, and how all this revolution was her work. She heard something like a sigh as her mother passed her door, and wondered almost contemptuously what she could have to sigh about, for Rose felt all the other burdens in the world to be as nothing in comparison with her burden; as, indeed, we all do.

Next morning, however, before Rose was awake, Mrs. Damerel came into her room in her dressing-gown, with her hair, which was still so pretty, curling about her shoulders, and her face lit up with a wonderful pale illumination like a northern sky.

"What is it?" cried Rose, springing up from her bed.

"Rose," said Mrs. Damerel, gasping for breath, "we are rich again! No! it is impossible—but it is true; here it is in this letter—my uncle Ernest is dead, and he has left us all his money. We are richer than ever I was in all my life."

Rose got up, and ran and kissed her mother, and cried, with a great cry that rang all over the house, "Then I am free!"



