AN AUSTRALIAN RIP VAN WINKLE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE ESCAPE OF SIR WILLIAM HEANS

(AND THE MYSTERY OF MR. DAUNT)

A ROMANCE OF TASMANIA IN 1840

SELECTIONS FROM NOTICES BY THE PRESS.

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'It was a moment therefore of intense relief when the ship jybed about and moved imperceptibly away on the south-eastern tack. Slowly the sound of the waterfall softened, and slowly the great walls dimmed over the silent pool and slowly they shrank under the wings and pinnacles of the forests, while those with their thousand shouldering sentinels slowly—very slowly—softened in the smoke of morning.'"

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AN AUSTRALIAN RIP VAN WINKLE

AND OTHER PIECES · BEING A SKETCH-BOOK AFTER THE STYLE OF WASHINGTON IRVING · *By* WILLIAM HAY

Author of "Captain Quadring," "The Escape of Sir William Heans," etc.

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

First published in 1921

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IN some states of Australia—especially in the South—there are those curious survivals to be seen as you thread the wild ranges in motor or coach—the roads that lead nowhere. Many will recognize the phenomenon indicated. There used to be scores of them threading the hills and flats that rise immediately over Encounter Bay. And it is the same to-day; as you flash along the fine valley causeways, you see winding up into the uninhabited bush-land on either side, these tracks of white sand, just wide enough to take a vehicle, and choosing one, you can sometimes trace it with the eye before you are away—ribboning for miles over the silent piney ranges.

Of course those neat little roads leading so persistently where by all human conjecture there is *nothing*, and never was anything, of permanent consequence (appearing so startlingly in the boundless scrub like a path in an enchanted shrubbery) have quite a steady romantic interest for youth, and a certain family of children which this story concerned, who sometimes took their pleasure on these high flats over the sea, would often turn their cobby little horses into some specially inviting road to *nowhere*, only to find it breaking off into lesser new ones, or threading unalteringly into the unknown, beyond their courage or the daylight.

The charm of these roads may be painted in a paragraph. The soil of the uplands is almost entirely whitish sand, and as bush-fires are not infrequent, there is hardly any

time for undergrowth to grow, so that the pretty little piney trees, and gums, and bushes, and wild flowers grow formally as if niggardly planted here and there by the hand of man. Starting up among these green formalities are the mysterious roads, nearly always pure white, in places quite hard and scattered with white crystals, in others sprinkled with transparent, reddish gravel like a private driveway, but generally speaking simply soft, white sand, into which your horse sinks to the ankles, and in whose heaviness he frets a great deal, perspiring much and shuddering off the pleasant-sounding flies.

In the minds of the children, these roads led to more than one remarkable place of the imagination, but perhaps the more pleasing and generally accepted were that of a strange little solitary church, a Grecian temple left by the soldiers of Alexander or the lonely tomb of a great explorer, all fearfully distant and found by guess and wonderful persistence, of the kind (but for the jew-lizards and large black iguanas) just expected to be found at the end of so homely an approach. The attractions of the find varied with the hour of the discussion. If not too late in the day, the church would be conspicuous for a grove of little green peaches; if towards twilight, there were sounds of a wonderful organ. In these harmless romances, the children had something more than an amused abettor in Jake, the stockman, whose duties after the cattle in the back-scrub led to occasional meetings and homeward rides in company. In appearance, Jake was very romantic, with a head and face something resembling the portraits of R. L. Stevenson, only that he was exceedingly fair, and slightly more melancholy. He often wore his hair quite long. When at work he always wore a white handkerchief knotted loosely round his neck. But in the evening, when he would come up to see the master, or chat with the maids, he donned

a beautiful fresh suit, and a handkerchief of exquisite pink or blue silk.

Looking back, we suppose Jake was a man of quite forty. He was a beautiful rider, and carried a small stock-whip, a weapon which, like the finished swordsman of old, he would seldom use. He never varied in his dress or address. There was something soothing in his slow voice, but sometimes—very seldom—his remarks were not exactly coherent. Perhaps this was owing to his solitary life—the life of his choice. Every year—we think it was every year—he would take a month's holiday, sometimes riding off to the capital on his horse, sometimes by coach. What he did with himself on these occasions was not quite clear. On one of them he informed me he went to Tasmania to see the caves, but finding his bush dress and manners not suitable to some fine company in which he found himself, took careful pencil notes of the clothing of a member of the party, purchasing exactly similar articles as near as he could remember from neck-tie to hat, and restricting himself to one single ornamental cup of tea who had been used to swig from his capacious billy-can. He also, he said, stopped himself in a habit he had of running down everything he saw, as it seemed to worry the party. "For the time," he would half sadly reflect, "he seemed to pass comparatively well as a sort of harmless companionable joker."

Jake seemed but absently amused at childish attempts to find romance in "nowhere" roads or anything else, yet he would exert himself sufficiently now and then to answer a civil question about a road; and one or two specially brought to his notice of the more respectable sort were even found to possess some sort of distinction. This one led to lime-stone. The one yonder that fell in lumps into the valley was "fire-wood." While one approached romance and danger so far as to lead to some disused "wells," which

same were afterwards privately inspected, and found grim enough among their rushes in the grey sand, guarded by ancient railings. However, on one inspiring occasion Jake pulled them all up before a string of no less than seven mingling tracks, and pointing over these with his sunburnt hand spread out palm downwards, said "Now, master and young misses, if you were to follow one of those roads, and knew which one to take, and knew how to keep in it and not be coaxed off among the others further on, and never grew weary of it, why, there you'd come on a peculiar thing—yes, the queerest end, right in there in the bush that you would fancy a road could come to." Of course this was a wonderful remark for a person like Jake to make, but it was a long time before there was won from him any more about it. He would just look wonderfully superior like a sad poet and slap his hand suddenly down on his knee, making all the horses jump. All got a notion somehow (not that his face was any less calm) that it was rather serious. At last one of the children by an oblique and then a direct question discovered that this silent, quiet track led like a ghostly guide actually to a house, and that the house was empty. In the moment's awed outcry, three other facts were extracted, that it was none of your mud and whitewash places, but built of good bricks and stone, with chimneys and a staircase. So here was the strangest information, aye, deep in one of these very roads, so wild, so disused, so quiet, so suggestive of romantic ends, so eloquent with silent mystery, there was—if a person were persistent enough, were brave enough, were, alas, impossibly and Olympically skilful and crafty enough—there was to be found a building, alone and empty.

Before we go further, it is time to narrate an incident in Jake's history, of which these children were then only dimly aware.

For years without number it had been the habit of the maids to chaff Jake about a certain "Biddy Laurence," an eccentric character, who dwelt somewhere on the road to the capital, and dealt, as the fit took her, in garden produce, though possessed of private means. Dowered with great personal strength, and capable of being roused to an awful scathing eloquence, she lived alone, associating only with those with whom she met when driving to village or capital, and certain favoured males—of whom Jake was one—who, in accordance with some tie of understanding or good feeling, undertook on occasion her ploughing and some of the heavier work. Of this strange scolding *solitary* it was not known whence she came, or what had been her history, if I fear (as is the fate of such eccentrics) they generally heard her spoken of partially in jest. Face to face, however, from her mature powers of sarcasm, and the sharp cynical, efficient expression of her eyes, she was treated with more respect. I remember seeing her (a tall, dark woman) and have never been able to forget the extraordinary power and beauty of her expression of tired scorn.

It was not quite clear in what light Jake and his sparse brotherhood of helpers should have really been looked upon in their relations with the woman—whether actually suitors for her hand, or men approved of by her difficult eye, or merely acquaintances in whom existed a sort of freemasonry of solitude—whichever it was, when we heard one day Biddy Laurence had died, there seemed some uncertainty whether Jake should be laughed at as one in a sort of mock-bereavement, or treated rather carefully as one who had really suffered a sort of loss. As a whole I think he was accepted generally as one who did not consider himself much the worse off, and this I perceive was the suggestion of his rather smirky demeanour on the subject, if as I distinctly remember he was known to be one of those named

by the dead in the distribution of her belongings. A faint interest lay in the fact that these were left to the children of a relation whose whereabouts it had been left to Jake and two visionary shepherds—his co-executors—to discover. Jake was believed to be going to look into the matter on his next visit to the capital, but there the interest lapsed.

It was not long after this, that Jake was late one windy night in returning home, in fact he did not come home till the following morning, looking very ill and grey. He gave, however, no more than a trivial excuse connected with his work, and not long afterwards he was again absent all night, and at yet another time was two whole days away upon his duties, without returning. This was very unusual with him. Some one chaffed him on one of these occasions as having been "visiting with Biddy Laurence's ghost," and though he put them off with a laugh, he looked weary and nervous. However, he soon seemed to recover himself, though he more than once repeated his absences, and we heard him chaffed most unmercifully by a certain ancient maid-servant, for "mooning like a lunatic about Biddy Laurence's place." Perhaps they thought he was doing himself a harm. He took it always pretty well, though slowly requesting them to "stop their nonsense." Finally, the children gathered from various asides that silly Jake had got a scare about the belongings in the dead woman's house, and had been watching there to see if he could discover if any one was tampering with them . . . as if any one would have wanted the poor rough things!

Out of this, one day, came quite naturally to the children in private discussion the strange conclusion that the house along the secret road, of which Jake had told them, must be "Biddy Laurence's place." What a fancy! What a gruesome idea to think of Jake hanging about the strange place in the night!

But the story turned out stranger than this.

There occurred that terrible summer storm, still remembered for its savagery and persistence, and Jake did not come home, and was not found for twenty-one days and nights. Searchers, having heard he had been hanging about the cottage of Biddy Laurence, went there among other places. He was, however, not found at that cottage which was padlocked on the outside (or his horse, though it had been stalled there in a shed) nor at any of the nearer houses, including those of the two lonely shepherds, his familiars, who had neither of them seen him for some while.

It might have been supposed he had taken French leave and ridden off to the capital, but that his little collie dog had come home covered with mud and matted with burrs. The animal was wild and savage with a sort of bewilderment and seemed to be trying to convey something to every one. With great difficulty it was caught and tied up in the stable in the possibility that it might lead them after the vanished bushman, but it severed the rope with its teeth and disappeared in the night.

Some one had gone off to the capital to see if Jake was there.

One evening one of the gardeners, who was milking a cow in the further paddock, heard a curious quick barking and growling, and glancing scrubward, he saw what at first looked like a horse calmly walking along and cropping the bushes with a dog "yapping" queerly about it. But suddenly he concluded there was something amiss as something like a saddle hung under the horse's belly, and at once he perceived that the horse (bridled though matted with mud) was hung upon by an awful, tottering figure, who leant against it, clutching the reins and girths, sometimes in a sort of frightful weariness dropping his head on his hands,

again slyly raising it and urging the wonderful beast forward a meander of a few cropping steps.

Jake fell when he saw the gardener running, and was picked up quite cracked in the head. He wore no hat, and his shirt and trousers were caked with mud, like the coat of the horse, and fearfully torn. His hair and beard were long and stained with earth like his face. He looked as if he had been dug up from a grave. The poor horse had been rolling and rolling till you couldn't tell his colour, till there was only a hanging remnant of the saddle ratcheted by the martingale; while his beautiful mane and tail, over which Jake had lavished so much care, were tangled up with mud and stones. The little dog, besides being extremely wild and important, had, so it was found, the remains of blood on his jaws. The children called it "the return of Rip Van Winkle" because when Jake became more coherent he could not understand that he had been away more than a single night.

Before we relate Jake's story we must return to the children. As we shall be some time before returning to Jake, we may mention that his strange narration was at first very contradictory and hovered on the supernatural—in fact *there*, in spite of stern moments of self-correction, it has hovered ever since. There are wicked men, however, who think he was hiding with this tale a more ugly and ordinary one.

The children heard next day that Jake had been taken ill in the scrub, but they were not told how he had managed alone in his long absence. They knew of course of Jake's condition when first sighted, and two of them hurried off and examined grievsomely his tracks backward for a part of a mile. Though it had rained in the night, these were easily traceable where they now and then marred the surface of the scrub roads. Immediately after lunch, one of the

children, privately retiring, rounded in and saddled his pony. He wished to see for himself what happened to Jake's tracks further back on the uplands. He intended to follow them swiftly back on the chance of their taking him to Jake's seven roads, one of which, so he said, led to the forgotten house. In short, it was his splendid thought that, given Jake's tracks led to the seven roads, and onward along one of them, surely he might take it that he knew whence his sick friend had come, surely here was the key to the puzzle and the discovery of that mysterious dwelling.

What a chance ! Nor would there be any danger in following Jake's tracks to untold depths of lonely scrub, since he could find his way home again by them, enlarged by his own !

The boy got off unseen, and was soon out of sight of dwelling and sea in the higher scrub. Jake's tracks were scarred so deep every now and then upon the road or among the brush that they were followed back at a trot : though horse and swinging Jake seemed often of two minds, the former pushing instinctively for the track, the latter from all appearances making now and then an effort to pull him upon a piece of clear going. At first the road rose over patches of red gravel bright enough among the piney foliage, but presently he was led off into a white soft road, he and his pony sinking deeper between narrow shrubberies. Out of this he galloped by a strange way again into the open, and but for Jake's footsteps and a vista of the sea and its mountain was entirely upon unknown ground. At length, with a panting cry, he recognized some configuration of the trees and view which told him he was actually being led towards the place of Jake's puzzle of the seven roads. These in a few seconds opened out before him, while away into the raggedest, most unused of the seven

the bushman's footsteps sauntered on beside his horse in uneven strange distortions.

Imagine the Investigator's feelings of excitement at approaching such a romantic mystery. Here were old Jake's tracks like a string leading him through this labyrinth of intersecting roads to an actual habitation, somewhere hidden among these miles and miles and miles of empty wilderness rising and falling in unbroken change before him. It was the possibility. There is such a difference between dreams and stories, and reality. It is not quite so pleasant. There is a difficulty in *doing* the thing. It is as if a person who had been making believe with you grew rather grave. A young fellow breathes hard! Along the white track, between the countless, stiff wild, shrubs, would Jake's solitary house indeed be found?

The boy pulled in an instant; and then drew off his horse, and urged it into the new road. At first it was hardly a road at all, and so much a discarded human way did it seem, and so many little bushes had grown up in the surface of it, and hemmed it close about, that it was only their bruising and the fantastic bruising of the sand by Jake that drew the explorer further. He went now at a trot, more often at a walk, and was able to observe a certain prettiness in the path. It was impossible to help reflecting how like a private driveway were some places, if only they had cleared the bushes growing in the fair red gravel. At one spot where the hard marble whiteness of the surface was powdered with little crystals, he breathlessly dismounted and pocketed one as large as "an almond." On either side grew the wild fuchsias, about a span high, the honey-scented bells, like the cottage-flower, only made of leather. And smaller than these, but spreading more, things covered with garnet and gold. In great numbers were the double great white everlastings on silver stalks. He disappeared

entirely now into a grove of banksias with serrated leaves, and now he pushed through trailing grey bushes with soft mauve flowers. But generally speaking the forsaken way passed agedly through formal shrubs, most of them spiked and prickly, and each living, as it were, severely exclusive. There seemed something sacred in such an old road, and to ride upon it was like troubling something that was shyly dead.

Quite early Jake's footsteps had vanished from beside the horse's, so it was plain that for a time at least he was on its back. Of course there were moments when the boy was full of scepticism, not only that Jake's tracks were leading true, but that such a track would lead to anything of human solidity. How could it lead to anything more satisfying than some withered erection of its own too plentiful walls of greenery under which the sick Jake had sought to shelter himself! Then the road was now and again crossed by others, some in better use across which Jake led with a persistence barely trustworthy, while at one point he himself waveringly forsook his own road, for one not a whit more respectable. It was difficult to retain faith with a little restive horse continually pointing out how little it had in our purpose, or any purpose at all leading that way. But to hasten our story, just sufficient will was retained to push with Jake down the long, long slope, and on over flat after flat till the gums and wattles thickened darkly about the road and down a little dip in front, half buried in sand and banksias, suddenly appeared the half of an old grey gate and chain.

As the boy pulled in, feeding his eyes on these foreign things, he heard a curious sound, like the wind in the trees but never ceasing. He felt if he should discover nothing else in the empty silent wild but a gate and chain, it would be rather peculiar. Slowly he resumed. Just a

little on, a dog-leg fence poked out of the banksias, which had almost overgrown it, and two wires that had been once twisted across, were now sunken in the sand. He pushed his way along the choked old road for a few dawdling paces, when there opened in through the front leaves, just below, a little flat that had once been cleared, and showed a few cow-eaten apple-trees. Over beyond was a rise like his own, under which a creek ran with a loud constant serene sound. Just on the north of the orchard, was a bare mound, on which quite ghastily, stood a lean looking house, of two stories, fearfully plain and strong, two windows and a blind one above, two windows and a door below. *There it was*, Jake's house, but how plain from what had been imagined! At last the awed Investigator pushed down the tale of Jake's wonderful "nowhere" road, and jigging out on the flat, saw lonely away against the scrub, eighty yards behind, a shed and barn of great logs, rudely roofed with straw held down by wires strangely suspending great stones.

Nothing could have been more motionless than the place was, or more lacking in animal life. Round the windows of the house, as he came nearer, he saw the wood had gone quite black for want of paint, while the door was just old, grey wood. If this was a little ugly, the brick-work of the house was nice and pleasant, while it was good to have the creek in there, calling all the while so loud and serene. Also the great apples on the tops of the trees were very homely, though when one was snatched and tested, it was found to be dreadfully sour. Afar—very far—in the scrub some jackasses were effusively laughing. When the mound was mounted and the house encircled at a polite distance, it was seen that two of the windows were mended with black sacking, and the old blinds, discoloured by the rain, were little more than coarse bits of stained rag. There

was an enclosed plot before the front of the house, but nothing in it of human planting, not a shrub or a flower. This was just the same at the rear, where presently he arrived, not a poor bit of ivy or even a single ragged bush of geraniums. The owner had been one who had no love for flowers, or had somehow ceased to love them. What a sardonic woman ! The boy wondered if this was what Jake meant when he said there was something peculiar about the house, or if there was something else. Jake's manner had not implied that there was anything awful, but only rather strange. There seemed nothing stranger than that. The back of the place was very bare. There were two lower windows, boarded up, and a door of old grey wood. There was a sphere-shaped tank half sunk in the ground. A small shed faced the door, in which were the wheel-marks of a cart, but nothing else. A path ran down to the river, passing on its way a dairy sunk in the slope, and down below, some remnants of tree-cabbages.

The child found courage in the persistent noise of the water, and slowly sliding off his horse, tied it protesting to the shed. He thought he would go round to the front, and see if he could perceive anything through a pane of glass on one side of the door. Parting from his irreverent pony with reluctant hand, he was passing slowing round the building, when the back door drew him nearer. It hung uneven on its hinges, and there was a gap at the bottom. Surely something might be seen through the gap. When he had come close up, he found to his great surprise that the padlock was undone and hung against the post. He was surprised because he remembered when the other day Jake's searchers visited the house, that the doors were fast.

He was awed. For the instant he thought of quickly remounting. But it was wonderful how calming was

the silence and that pretty creek. It occurred gradually to him that Jake must have returned here after the searchers had left, have entered the house, and then forgotten the door. He had felt too ill perhaps to fasten it. If there were any one inside, it could only be one of Jake's two friends, with one of whom he was acquainted. Slowly his awe lessened. He could not hear the slightest sound. He took courage and knocked with his whip. If one of Jake's friends came, he would ask him if he might see inside.

There was no answer to his knock, which was so solitary it seemed to echo into the trees. He waited with a proper decency, and knocked again. If there was one thing he had no belief in it was the existence of ghosts of dead people. The house was silent. He put his hand on the old door and ventured to push it. Had he known what had happened, he would not have done so. He saw inside some nice stone flags. He pushed the door yet further, and then quite wide, so that the light crept in. This was the room where the woman had lived. Jake knew this room well of course. It smelt of incense, the smell of burned shea-oak. It was quite a decent sort of place. Two black kitchen chairs with flowers along the tops ; she had to have flowers somewhere ; a brown cupboard made of rough boarding ; a few plates in a rack, with pictures of the Rhine ; a bare table under the window ; a low stove in which the ashes still lay. Before the latter a heavy milking stool. The flag-stones were clean and grey. There was a bit of sacking by the table for people's feet. All was quite clean except the ashes. The stove itself was nice and black.

Against the wall there was a piebald stone, evidently for keeping the door open, and the boy pulled this before it. He took another peep about the room. Past the door there was another table, scarred with burning on which lay a

penny ink-bottle, a pen, and some paper with something written upon it. Past the table, in the back wall, near the cupboard, there was a door, very rough, crossed with level beams. By this you would enter the interior of the house. To enter by this door you would have needed to mount a step. The boy began to wonder what sort of a strange look had the rest of the stern rooms. There was something strange about it, as Jake said. One peep through the door !

The door had no latch, but a bit of fretted rope hung down for a handle. He took a peep back at his pony. It was straining and snorting after a bit of grass, but the reins were strong. Advancing on tiptoe, he mounted the step and pulled at the rope. The door opened rather heavily but as easily as if it were oiled. Inside it took his breath away, it was such a change. There was a narrow old carpet along the passage, which was varnished at the sides. A narrow staircase led up above him, with polished banisters. Only a cobweb here and there. On the walls a faded wall-paper with hundreds of little black baskets of fruit, and two walnut-framed engravings, one with a great many figures of men—probably great men, for they wore frock-coats—and in the other, too, a great many figures, among which he thought he saw Wellington. There were two beautiful baskets made of "everlastings" hanging from the dim ceiling, and there was a hat-stand, in which stood a fishing-rod ; but he could hear no noise, only that of some flies moving to and fro.

It was not long before he thought he would go further. There was a door on either side of the front door (painted here a dusky yellow), that on the left being just open, as he could see through the banisters. The kitchen door fell behind him, pushing him in, and he advanced breathless up the carpet. The stairs, he now saw, were covered with an ivory patterned linoleum, and at the bottom, inside, hung

a large cross of "everlastings." This reminded him that the woman was quite dead, and for a moment he fluttered in the hall like a frightened butterfly—dead as the road on which he had found his way to this lost place, along which, when Jake's footsteps were gone, he could never come again. He clung desperately to a chair of polished wood by the door that was ajar. To this presently, he reached, and gave a dreadful knock. There was nobody moving but the flies. He felt the door again and it moved like a live door from near the hinges. It allowed itself to be pushed, and he sprang up with an exclamation of amazement. The room was a pretty little sort of drawing-room, if hardly faded. A number of little chairs of dark carven wood, with cushions of a kind of green worsted covered the carpet. The light came dully through the thin blind, shining half-darkly on the faded flowers of the wall-paper, on which hung a number of interesting things, including a guitar, one string of which was broken and hung down over the dull gleam of a mirror. It was a surprisingly pretty place. There was a large engraving on the left wall which interested him greatly. It was that of a man in armour with a dark brooding face like a faithful dog, seated beside a woman who stood by a table with strange, wild, haunted eyes. What could it mean? When presently he entered the room, he several times caught the man watching what he did. It was surprisingly pretty. There was a gold clock on the mantelpiece opposite, and on either side two beautiful grey-hounds carved in marble, almost as large as live dogs. On the left there was a cabinet piano, with a bit of satin on the front, and some songs on the top. Beyond the chimney, there was a faded-looking orange-coloured bookcase, with perhaps twenty books behind the glass in the top portion. But there was one little chair, as pretty a thing as any one every saw, covered with satin of different colours, red,

and washed-out blue, and parrot green and gold. It might have been made for a child. A cruel-looking Afghan sword, without a scabbard, hung on the wall past the curtains, so long it was difficult to believe it was really meant for use. In the corner too, beyond the window, there was a large fan of peacock's feathers, the brown ones below (which you see when he flaunts his tail) and the beautiful blue ones above. He remembered superstitious people saying that peacock's feathers were unlucky except at Christmas; the eyes were rather dark. Everything was spick and span, except the broken string of the guitar, which perhaps a mouse had gnawed. Through the crack of the door, in the corner, there was a green sofa, a Chinese mat, and a round table with books on mats of green wool, besides a Swiss cottage and something else carved out of wood. Above on the wall was a coloured picture of a pretty woman with hair hanging on her shoulders, lying back, fanning herself and staring smilingly out of the frame. It would have been as startling as if you had seen somebody, if she hadn't been so sleepy. When presently he stepped right into the room to see if he was accurate about the bit of wood-carving behind the door (it was as he thought a stock-whip handle such as Jake cut with his knife and beautifully done like a snake) when he was standing examining everything, he was afraid something jumped on the wall, but it was his face in the mirror, and this wouldn't have sent him away, nor the man watching him from beneath his helmet, only suddenly, on the mantelpiece, extraordinarily faintly, he was nearly sure he heard the clock going.

He was immediately in the hall again, where he listened himself to his senses, concluding there was no sound of ticking in the room at all, and after eyeing the stairs with exceeding longing, he pushed over the hall, turned the handle of the opposite door, and took just one quick polite look.

This was a pleasant dark sort of dining-room, with a great deal of grey earthenware on the tall sideboard opposite, and an engraving of Venice over the mantelpiece. This picture was an old dull friend of the child's ; also a coloured picture of the Prince of Wales hunting, which he had seen in the Christmas numbers. Everything was very neat. There were some glass jugs shimmering on the tablecloth reminding a young fellow of lime-juice and well-water. There were some very nice brown chairs with benobbed horseshoe backs. By the fender was a yellow rocking-chair without any arms. There were some pictures over the sideboard. They seemed of dogs or of calves ; and there was something in a glass case whose eyes gleamed. He was quite certain it was not the head of any one, but rather just a small wild animal or perhaps a little dead parrot. Over the table hung the usual basket of "everlastings," round which some silent flies were swimming.

He would like to have examined everything, but thought he would not. Lingeringly closing the door, he moved to the stairs and looked up. They led straight to the back wall, and up the other side. Mounting three steps up, he eyed the stairs to the top, where they stopped before a grey-white door. Now he crept carefully up to the corner, and peeping round, perceived another door across in the left wall, like the one into the drawing-room. It was dark up here, but a glow came from somewhere. The glow he found, when he had stopped and craned just a little further up, came through the left hand door, which, like the one below, stood open a little, and from the top of which somebody had cut out a large V of wood, either for the light, or some peculiar reason. The boy presently cried out : "Please, is there anybody here ?" but he couldn't hear a sound in the house. He had mounted a little further. He would like to have seen what the bedrooms were like.

It was rather a courageous thing to ascend the stair into the dark. However, he would not need to open any door, since that one was open over the drawing-room, while the jagged cut in its top had given the house a look as of nobody caring so much for it, or what any one did with it. He crept up three steep little steps and took another survey. In the dark at the back of the stairs, there was a third door. It was shut, and between the banisters and it, there was a red wooden trunk with brass nails. At the top of the stairs, where he at last breathlessly climbed, he felt a nice carpet; and ignoring the door beside him, he moved, coughing twice, across the blind window to the door which was open. A large piece seemed to have been sawn out of the top. He could not see the piece anywhere.

With a fumbling knock, he pushed the door in a little. It was a wonderful peaceful dark room. There was a green bed against the back wall, with white frills and curtains. Over on its other side was a varnished mantelpiece, on which was a clock with a gable top and a picture in the front of a trotting horse and trap. The pendulum had stopped rocking. There were numberless blue flowers on the wall-paper, like those the children call "snake-flowers," which come out to warn you when the summer begins to blaze. In the surprise of it, it was quite possible to see some interesting and even beautiful things. On the mantelpiece there were two black wooden candlesticks, and two large yellow sea-shells. On one side hung a Japanese mat with pockets. On a round table by the window, there stood a work-box with mother-of-pearl in the lid, and opposite to it one of those writing-boxes which, when opened, offer the correspondent a little eminence of lavender plush from which to address her friend or her enemy. Besides these, upon the dim table, there was a basket of wax flowers of all kinds of colours which he wished rather to examine.

There was yet another "basket" of yellow and white "everlastings." There were such a number of things he could never remember all. On the back wall there hung a dim text, which, however, he was just able to read. It said: "Wherefore did'st thou doubt, O ye of little faith?" On the same wall besides this, there were two small engravings in orange frames, the nearer of a man lying dead or fast asleep with his hair hanging down. The other beyond the bed seemed to be a woman kneeling. He could not be certain with so little light. There was a dressing-table beyond the bed, and some small pieces of china. Beyond the door was a chest of drawers with china handles, and beyond the window a washing-stand, with marble-top, and a curious low square basin and jug which would have been nice to wash your hands in in boiling weather. In the plain brick grate, which was clean and black, there was that kind of bitter bush they put in fireplaces.

There was just one other thing about the room that was not neat, and that was a mat at the side of the bed which was dragged up in a great fold instead of lying flat on the carpet. Like the cut in the door near his head, it made him wonder if any one cared any more what was done. It occurred to him perhaps when they lifted the dead woman from the bed to take her away, they displaced the mat without knowing it. But more likely a "possum" had climbed down the chimney and been playing about with his little hands like the little monkeys they are. It was troublesome among those many interesting things so dimly there. . . . The child drew slowly out of the memorable place, pulling the door after him. Crossing over the passage, he paused for a moment at the head of the stair beside the other door there. It would be nice, he thought, to take a look into this room before going. It would be like the other, only just so much more different to be peculiar. His hand felt

for the handle, and he opened the door a fraction. It was not as he thought : it was lighter, and the flooring was uncarpeted. He hesitated and then pushed and stared his way in. It was a quite empty room, and had the pleasant, winey smell of a place where pears have been kept. There was nothing whatever in it, nor were the walls papered. It might have been a room in a ruined forsaken house. There was a hole in the blind through which considerable light entered, and there must have been a broken pane in the window glass, for into the place the sound of the river came, loud and remote, like the breathing of some serene bosom. And suddenly, all of a heap as the child stood in the bare room, he remembered that all the intimate, pretty things he had been seeing, were alone in a far away wild forest.

He stood beside the door, listening to the calm sound, and wondering about the woman. He speculated upon how she spent her Sunday evenings. It occurred to him to suppose she went to bed early and read in bed, a dangerous but pleasant habit. While thinking about her he thought of the man listening to his movements in the picture below, and this would have given him rather a grisly feeling, if it hadn't been for the sleepy woman on the wall opposite to it. He decided to go away now, while there was plenty of light for Jake's road. It would not do to be caught by twilight in such a place. The creek was nice. It would never let you think anything about it, but that it was always quite quiet. It never ceased to say it—even to the empty house.

He closed the door on the empty room, and climbed quietly in the shadow downstairs. Partly to avoid panic, and partly because he knew he would be sure to be asked by somebody or other if he was certain he was right in thinking it was *Wellington* in the engraving in the hall, he passed the

open door at the bottom of the stairs and made certain it was the Duke with his cocked hat crooked as usual. In the sitting-room door as he turned back, he had a dark glimpse of the things on the wall, and the backs of chairs. He pulled himself away in a sort of panic of hurry (he was still afraid of the clock there), and passing another little door, arrived at that which led into the kitchen. This—painted russet—pulled him with a squeak into the stony room, and as he crept across the floor, he saw that there was a hole in the flags by the stove, where the solitary person had stood while she stirred at her cooking. The ghostly incense of her fires was still there. . . . He found his little horse staring skittishly at something over the river (as if the quiet had bothered it) but it was quite secure. It did not seem to have had any doubt that he would ever return through the open door. As usual it would not wait till he mounted, but was moving off round the lonely house while he was still clambering. He reined it up in the orchard, and wrested another great apple from the protecting branches. It was rather better than the first, but very awful. Such as it was it must be made to content him, however, on the way home. Ah, what a burden of news and deeds he carried! How incredible! He took a last scared look at the house before he galloped out of the open. Who would have thought there were so many beautiful things in the lonely and ruined place?

* * * *

How Jake's life was saved is half-revealed in the following occurrence. If we are to believe Jake he was kept alive by the dead woman. We learn it is a fact of medical science, that a person in a certain state of health, and especially in cases of bereavement, may lie in a condition of swoon without food, water, or nourishment of any kind, for a space of time

measured in weeks. He may return to his senses with system hardly impaired. His body may be tended by artificial nourishment, or even lie untended. Though this does not apply to Jake in that he had a different story to tell, yet remembering that he was not quite like other people, and that he may have been suffering from grief, we are helped by the point to a passable clearance of the mystery.

Before accounting for Jake's "two days'" absence (in all two weeks and three days), and his other absences, we throw in a picture of his shepherd companions, who with himself constituted the sole society made free of her house by Biddy Laurence. Of these, his two co-executors, one was a powerful gipsy sort of creature, who might be said to live in a state of perpetual sulk. He was tall, almost black of skin, and self-possessed; most masterful and efficient in everything he cared to put his hand to; and so excellently poised in his nature, so completely at ease with his own company, that to meet and address him in the scrub alone with his gun seemed a sort of intrusion on his dark good-natured privacy. The other was a Dane, nicknamed "the Crusader," from the air with which he approached any form of work, whether it was to clean a sty or a wine glass. He wore a red peaked beard and had an obstinate, grim expression in his small, light eyes.

To go direct from these to Jake's account of them, after the woman's death, they kept her house cleanly and decent between them, taking the singular pride of three singular men in the preservation of her pretty possessions and that each should be in the place and condition in which it was left. Each man possessed a key to the cottage, and while they met there on certain occasions to give the house a thorough overhaul, any one of them dropped in as he cared to and went through the rooms to see that all was as it should be. There were some worldly people who whispered

that they met in the dead woman's hermitage to gamble, and that the natural result of such proceedings occurred. But Jake sufficiently quashed such accusers by refusing to entertain a word of evidence against the two men. His liking for the two had never allowed much beyond a sort of shrugging contempt for two more human freaks, but such as it was, it was unaltered by what happened to himself. They may have gambled and quarrelled, or they may have simply quarrelled as partners in a delicate transaction, but if they had, Jake had forgiven them extraordinarily easily. It was not easy to breed a crime out of the story, when the wounded man laughed the only reasonable plot away.

Nevertheless the web had a blackish look for one of the men as it was first spun from Jake ; if against the man's denials and the victim's, there was no more to be said. It seems there had arisen a sort of troubled discussion—without a trace of heat in any of them—about a certain shifting and misplacing of sundry ornaments in the rooms, first noticed by Jake. These peculiar circumstances were rather pooh-poohed by the other two, led by the Dane, till the gipsy became half-persuaded there was something in it. At last the doubt began to grip all three, until to clear themselves in one another's eyes of the slightest suspicion of fooling with the rest, and to free themselves of the fear (less possible yet) that someone entered the locked cottage in their absence, a sort of agreement was one night come to to set a trap in the house of which they should all, of course, be cognisant.

This rather gruesome suggestion again originated with Jake and was taken up scientifically by the gipsy, who was of course an adept at such things. Several suggestions, promising bodily hurt to an intruder, were discussed, though they parted undecided yet which to adopt. It spoke for the reverent care with which the men kept the rooms that

the disorder agreed upon by all as most troubling to them was of a nature hardly noticeable to an outsider. In the sitting-room a string had been found broken as by a presumptuous hand in the woman's guitar. Then the pictures, especially in hall and dining-room, were constantly found crooked on the walls, not (as Jake agreed) that they hadn't each of them a different notion of what was "straight in a picture," but these were at such a vicious angle, and often a different one on the same wall, as could hardly be dismissed as the work of earth-shock or shock of thunder. There was as well sometimes a strange smell in the rooms which it was difficult to account for, a sort of bitter, herby smell as might have come rather from an old well, or from down in a tomb, than a warmly furnished house. On top of this a pair of horse-clippers, whose peculiar design all had much admired, had disappeared from a shelf in the kitchen, and no one would countenance the thought of having borrowed them.

These were some of a few objects whose disturbance seemed peculiar, but what most troubled the minds of all three, and what they had all three privately replaced and privately found disturbed again, was the disorder of the carpet in the woman's bedroom (a place, according to Jake, held with a feeling almost of veneration by them) which was constantly found drawn up in large folds about the room. It is strange how persistent had been this rather grisly untidyness, yet having quite captured the (perhaps disordered) imagination of the three watchers, it was agreed that in this composed and sleepy room some experiment in the nature of a man-trap might be made.

Jake had been previously much disturbed at the loss of the clippers and had spent one or two nights watching the clearing, without any result but a strange heaviness of mind. Not long after the "trap" suggestion, Jake was waylaid

near the clearing by a great storm, and thought he would take shelter in the house. He turned into the orchard about twilight. The lightning was the fiercest he had ever seen, almost ripping open the low canopy, while there was an awful close noise of thunder as if they were moving heavy furniture in a narrow room. Two storms were approaching beside one another, forking and banging like struggling beasts and giving little respites of wicked silence, in which the quiet creek rippled by with a dove-like sound. Jake rode to the house and let himself in at the back door. He was in the kitchen waiting for the rain to come on or the thunder to cease, when he thought he heard something drop on a floor somewhere up in the house. He opened the inner door and listened, and though he did not hear it again, he tip-toed into the passage. The storm was flashing through the blinds and fissures, and cracking loosely overhead. Inside, the house seemed to cower. He looked into the sitting-room, and came out, and went up the stairs. The last thunder-roar had made the doors rattle, and awed even Jake, whose ears were still straining after that little sound. When nearly up he thought he heard a movement in the woman's bedroom. Somewhat disordered, he struck a match, and half-dazed with the alternate clamour and silence, advanced steadily as far as her room. (When asked if he noticed in the dark, the piece cut out of the door, he said he did not notice anything of the kind, though the gipsy, who acknowledged to cutting it, said he removed it before that time.) Jake then hurled open the door and at the moment he entered it, there was a ghastly crash of thunder, and a blue light came out of the chimney and advanced over the floor towards him. He received at the same instant a sort of sickening blow at the back of the neck and fell in a swoon beside the bed.

The gipsy afterwards explained that he had removed the

piece of wood from the door and taken it away, with a view to constructing the trap as agreed. It looked rather black for this man, supposing him to have entered the locked house by some private way. If you assume him to have made a murderous attack upon Jake, he might have afterwards removed the piece of wood as a blind. Some said, crediting the gipsy with panic, that the man-trap was actually in its place, being removed afterwards, and that Jake was the first to suffer from his own punishment, like the Scotch Regent of singular memory. The gipsy, however, vehemently denied that the trap was in place. Jake's story, as we have said, amusedly laughed him out of suspicion.

When Jake came to a few hours after (it is supposed he lay insensible for *days*) he could not tell where he was. There he lay in the dark, conscious of a ghastly thirst. To assuage this became a motive for movement. He had waked on his side, with a fearful stiffness in his bones; and as he groaned over on his back, his elbow struck both the roof and the side of some tomb-like place. Had he not been convinced he had been insensible only a short time, he might have supposed himself beneath the ground, though if he was buried, he knew he was not buried deep, for he could hear the thunder still pounding. He was suddenly conscious of a gentle, infinitesimal light about him. His thirst roused him to straighten out a corroded arm, and touch the side of his prison. He clutched at something which tore in his hand. It was curtaining. In the half-swooning state in which his senses swayed, he concluded he was on the floor under the poor woman's bed.

How he got under the bed he did not know, but it is possible he was there while his rescuers were about the house, and so they would hardly have found him had they entered. The Dane himself had called at the cottage two days after Jake, found the door open, gone through the

house, without seeing anything, and locked it behind him. Again, by order of the stipendiary, the Dane had called in at the clearing after the searchers had been, and unlocked the cottage door. But this was over a week after the accident happened. The Dane did not go again through the house, as he did not suspect Jake of lying hid in the place all that time.

This was all lost on Jake. According to him, he came to a sort of dazed consciousness a few hours after he fell and heard the thunder thudding. Somehow he rolled and wrestled his way out on the mat beside the bed. There was a bright moonlight behind the blind, and the objects of the room were dimly shrouded. For a while he essayed to focus a weak gaze on this and that, but when he was certain of the door, and had risen to his tottering legs beside it, a nausea of giddiness seized his brain, and he swayed hoarsely in a mad dance with floor and ceiling. So wild was the fantastic frolic of the furniture that it amused him and he laughed weakly as he took a third double-somersault with the friendly door. The wall beyond the bed swayed over below him, so that the white ceiling became the wall. The grey objects of the room dived and recovered themselves like awful birds. Impatient at last, he fell like a ninepin into the passage, and with only one steady thing in his consciousness, a dream of liquid on the dried paper of his throat, found his way over to the stair railing, and crawled in a whirligig of sagging darkness to the stairs. Down these, hold by hold, he felt his way, a swooning sailor on a swinging mast, and crouched at length at the bottom, panting loudly in the faded chaos of the hall and trying strangely to steady in his mind the half-remembered position of the kitchen door. As the goblin house rocked and reeled in mischievous phantasmagoria, there was a silent "blast" of lightning, with a tremble and report of thunder, and it seemed to the poor fellow

as if all the forces of Gehenna were gathering to confuse him and shut him away from his chance of succour. He was again swaying on his uncertain feet. His climb, however, had worse perplexed him, and he awoke in one side-room at least where the moonlight shone on some familiar furniture, and thought for one awful moment he was lost among the crazy medley of objects. So beside himself was he, that from one of the pictures in this room—an armoured man—he could not free his vision, and at last seemed to sway with the image in a mesmeric dance. Back and forth they reeled—nay, he was almost lost—when the stupidity of his extremity goading him, he drove the gibbering obsession from his eyes, and slipped and tumbled along heaving walls, and drove his way by dancing banisters, till with a dive and a quaking laugh of triumph, he fell *crash* at the foot of a heavy door, pushed it with his elbow, and knew by the step on the other side that he had won his way to the dark kitchen.

The kitchen door was open slightly, and the moon shone on the floor. Jake remarked that strange herby smell in the room. It may be thought a simple thing for the swooning man to reach the door, but he was now in a bad way, and when he had dragged himself inside, seems to have sunk for a while into a dreamy stupor, in which the shaft of moonlight danced mockingly before his eyes like a whip-poor-will. So great was his yearning for the water that he several times thought himself risen and swaying towards the door, to find the stone flags yet against his hands. It must be noted that he had reasoned the cement tank useless to him, for if he could lower the bucket within, he could never raise it to his mouth ; he must go downward to the river. Upon a sudden, in his almost swooning state (so he affirmed) he distinctly felt he was aided in an effort to gain his feet, and guided *outside the house*, where he quite swooned away.

This may be taken as the reader pleases. He awoke shortly after to find himself lying at the right side of the house on the mound above the orchard. He was conscious of a slight sound behind him. As he turned his head towards the back of the house, he quite clearly saw a figure in a bonnet and shawl blend with the moon-shadow by the shed. He was almost startled back into clear sense. When he stared upon it fixedly the shed was empty.

So fearful was his thirst, that he immediately rose and staggered down towards the river, which he could hear and indeed almost see in the uncertain yet bright night. The poor fellow got no further, however, than a large apple-tree at the bottom of the slope, 'neath which he fell, sinking again into oblivion.

He awoke in the long weeds under the tree, still (as he had it) in that night, which the moon still lit, but which was grown calm. He was conscious of waking twice, once with his throat a torture, yet unable to move, and again in perhaps a worse condition of want, yet just able to move his head. In this latter state he discovered not far from him in the grass an old white jug lying half on its side with its lip missing. It had the earth stained look of a vessel that has been cast aside for a long period. After some time staring at it, a hunger for the liquid it had once held, led him to drag himself over to it, in the hope of finding a drop or two of rain-water lying at the bottom. When he had pulled it from the sort of nest in which it lay, he found it heavy, and three-quarters full of a rather muddy liquid. Then and there it was trembling at his mouth, but when he would have finished it at a draught, he found it fiercely tart, burning his throat, yet so satisfying to his craving, that he put the old vessel down only half emptied. It may be that some apples had dropped from the tree into the jug and mingling with some rain-water fermented into an ardent spirit.

Whatever it was, a drink of such power had never before passed his lips. The effect on him was extraordinary. He felt revived, and yet he felt mysteriously elated.

His body seemed to grow firmer, and the blood to dissolve in his aching limbs, but if anything he was become more light in the head. The landscape was clearer to his vision and quiet, but as the minutes passed and he lay there in the shade as wide-awake as the mean house out in the moon he began to imagine a curious thing. He thought that he could hear the footsteps of somebody passing to and fro above him. It was done very slowly as by one looking about him as he trod, and he might have given it up as his horse, which must have broken out of the shed, but that it kept to one spot. He rose up on his elbow and screwed his head about the tree but there was nothing on the slope but a few logs and a couple of young trees with dark shadows. When he again dropped his length, after a few minutes, he heard the slow, slow pacing. Jake could not get his mind off it, but he could not see the top of the slope for the apple-leaves. He gave it up and lay listening. Suddenly he smelt a strong odour of crushed hoarhound as the weed is called, followed by a *thump* in the grass behind him. When he had got round his slow, stiffened neck to its limit, he had, he was certain, another glimpse of that stooping human figure as it vanished up the orchard-side.

Soon after, as he lay there in the shade under the apple-tree, he heard the sound of voices up at the house. He insisted that he heard these voices because at first they were so ordinarily conversational that he mistook them for human ones, and tried to struggle himself up to call for help—but he began suddenly to doubt if they were human, for they began to sing the tune of a hymn, "Though dark my path, and sad my lot," yet never singing more than the first two lines, and repeating them again until they suddenly went.

Jake had the muddled thought that perhaps these were spirits who had never been able to finish the spirit of the verse in their human existence. They had only just gone when loud and weirdly a bell rang down over the river, the sort of large homely bell they ring at picnics to tell the children it is time for tea. "Te-rang, te-rang, te-rang." But it too was gone in jerky inconsequence almost while it summoned so insistently. This was a strange experience for the poor bushman, but somehow (whether from the elation produced from the strong drink, or the still mazed condition of his mind) hardly at all terrifying. The noises ceased as the wind changes, and here he lay alone in the moonlit orchard, with the sad crickets and the creek simmering by always so beautifully unaltered.

He was dozing off, wondering at the nonsense of his brain, when—hark !—there was a sudden great crying-out behind the house, hardly beyond the raucous echo of something happening inside. Jake was almost struggled to his knees, with "help" in his mind (so certain was he these were horrid doings), when it seemed lost in a fearful chaffering of shrieking birds. Sharp on this, exceedingly pretty, a small silver light sprang up by the water, and was answered by another in a black window in the house. Once again arose that funny, insistent, angry old bell, "*te-rang, te-rang, te-rong, te-rong,*" dropping suddenly with an illogical clatter as if thrown on the ground. And a little after Jake was immeasurably astonished by the sound of two deep chords struck on the piano, followed by two impish trebles "dotted," as it were, with the point of the fore-finger. These were repeated again and again, till they were gone like a startling memory, and the calm river rippled alone in the solitary place.

But to hasten to the last of these dubious experiences—so far from all human aid and sympathy—little more occurred

to surprise him, excepting that once, from half a doze, he heard a stock-whip "cracked" close over the river: once, twice quickly, and then a while after away down the water, a loud, unbearable "crack." After that, for a long time on, the silence of the orchard was not broken in this strange way and he was left lying there in the normal night with his thoughts.

His mind was still excited and he could not sleep, but, as the effect of the drink, perhaps, began to wear off, his spirits became sad and disturbed. It was gathered from his guarded remarks that the poor woman was heavily on his mind—that her loss and the deprivation of her presence in the world, settled on him with dim grief. Doubtless he had reviewed his life without her before, and had found it at least bereft of something unreplaceable, and now, lying with powerless limbs, in a half-swooning state, he muddled her up with these half-real things with illicit longing, even would have followed after if he could that grey figure in the bonnet, in the hope of finding in it something resembling yet the woman who had died. But with his doubtful head and tottering limbs, he was not able to hunt the clearing after that figure, in which he only half believed (the reader, doubtless, is convinced it was but one of the guilty men), or do more than lie dreadly wondering if the dead woman were still among these invisible beings about her haunted house. Here he was, quite convinced he had received help from *something*, and while he had more than the courage, if he could, to stare it in the face, was troubled at the feeling that it might be connected with this strumming on the piano and impish ringing of bells, that it might be transformed into some impish ghost, among a set of impish spirits. It was worse to him, even than that he could not pursue her, that having gone from the world that had known her voice, she might not be happy away there.

Jake, felt that he had rather the woman was locked in her grave, than that her particular look and character should have changed, or lost in self-respect. This new dread settled on him till he became bitter and inconsolable : filled him, poor fellow, with an uneasiness that touched the vitals of his life.

At that time the thunder was still murmuring in the south, and a hoarse noise of wind began to move sleepily in the trees. The river rustled by before him, the very similitude of that line of the poet :

The poetry of the earth is never dead.

Its loud calm insistence reassured the bushman. Fear-stricken, he swayed up upon his hands to look upon it—to listen to it rippling by. There it was sweetly and somnolently washing the feet of its trees. It filled some of the lonely emptiness of Jake's heart to see it. His eyes followed it up till they looked once more on the house above. The tall narrow front of the building was now in shadow. His eyes went hurriedly from window to window. There was a vacant emptiness about them which seemed almost bottomless. It seemed inconceivably desolate, ruined, and alone. The voice of the river was all that was left of the woman in the moonlit solitude. He cried out suddenly and fell on his side in the grass, his staring eyes caught on a log just above him on the slope. Upon it there was a figure seated. It was stiff and motionless. It wore no hat and its wild hair hung on its shoulders. Its chin was in its hand, and calm as the river in the sound of which it had died, it was looking down upon him with a scornful, half-smiling face.

* * * *

Jake's troubles were not over with the morning. The reader remembers how bemazed he was when found, and

while absent at the clearing over a fortnight, long held to it that he was away only the one night. It must also be remembered how some said the clearing had been the scene of just a common, hushed-up brawl. But many thought differently, and to the present day, when the thunder rolls heavily over the Bald Hills, the village wives will say, "This reminds me of the fortnight Jake was lost," or "This is as bad as the night Jake Lewkner saw the ghost of Biddy Laurence."

If Jake had seen the ghost of a good spirit that night, he was confronted by something like the image of an evil one in the morning. The sun waked him, shining right under the tree, but when he tried to rise he found himself, if clear in vision, so weak and feeble he was scarcely able to move his limbs. He turned at once to the broken jug, to which he was barely able to crawl, and felt a little better after his second drink. He was lying near the jug, head on arm, when he heard two loud sounds not far off, one of which led him to get up on his arms. The first was the unmistakable thumping of hoofs, and when he had looked this way and that, he saw somewhat to his pleasure, his horse moving near under the trees, and watching uneasily while it tore at the grass. It was in a fearful condition, its coat and mane matted with creek mud, and its saddle half torn away. He called it feebly by name, and it shot up its head, and stared in his direction. The other sound was a curious dragging and rustling just in front of the tree, and now that his head was higher, he saw swaying in the yellow grass, a great, black iguana, coming fair for him with its half-waddle, half-glide. He had never seen a larger specimen of these great lizards; it must have been eight feet from forking mouth to swaying tail. It perhaps had been approaching him in the morning dusk, for it was plainly making for him, and from its alert head and shooting

fork, seemed already trying to fascinate him to rigidity or somehow to be triumphantly aware that he was unable now to crawl away from it. It dragged erect and stiffly through the rustling grass. He knew that it was capable of a flashing rush. The bushman, used as he was to these ugly things, felt he was at last in a corner with one. Perhaps it had in its mind to avenge its kind for the many he had shot. Swaying there on his arms, and staring the reptile in its ruthless eyes, he considered what sort of feeble defence he might make against it. Glancing to one side after some sort of weapon, he saw not far on his right a small branch which had been torn from the apple-tree. It was far too small, but better than his lethargic hands. Meanwhile the thing moved so near that he could see the sack-like pittings on its canvas skin. The horror was that it might flash upon him when it saw him move. He hoped the great thing would not get him with his hands on the ground. Just as he made a half-swooning swing towards the weapon, the beast, as if it saw through him, altered its course a little to the left, and came dashing at him with high angry head. Jake shielded his face with unwieldy hands. At the same identical instant, there was a fierce cry from beyond the tree, and down the slope came the bushman's little dog, galloping straight for the arrested reptile. A rope hung round his neck, his fangs were bare, and his jaunty little tail was cocked over his back. Fair and straight for the great thing he ran,[1] growling shrilly, without a foot's change in his pace, while the iguana slowed towards him, forking like Satan. The dog looked a small ship to be thrown against so huge an enemy, but he seemed to know his business. As he came up, the great iguana flashed to one side, the dog jumping the other way. Then, with some unknown canine quickness, he was on the

[1] A fact.

back of the flashing reptile, and had his teeth in its black neck, from which position he was whirled about, snarling awfully, and then shot off away over on his back, regaining his brave little legs and dodging round, and again getting in on the thing's back, in which something vital had been severed at the first onset, for it could no longer freely move. A third time the little animal sprang upon the creature, but this time he was not thrown off with the lashing of the other, but jumped aside and stood watchfully snarling and panting. The black skin of the reptile was terribly wounded, and it stared back at him writhing impotently, with a feeble flicker of its tongue. The little David had beaten his terrible Goliath. When the dog came warily at Jake's whisper, he still snarled, while his master somehow freed his neck of the vexing rope.

This strange rescue was near the end of Jake's adventure. He was immeasurably better for the presence of his dog and horse, and far from being incapacitated with the shock of his escape, seemed by the horrible occurrence, or that wonderful drink, to have been galvanized with a new strength. He almost immediately sat up against the tree, and began to fondly wonder if he would in a while be able to walk. Remarkably enough he experienced neither the cravings of hunger nor thirst, and had no longer any wish to reach the river where it lullabyed under the morning leaves, but he entertained a mounting hope that safety was now not beyond him. His horse had browsed nearer, and when he had been calling it awhile, it came up in the manner of these beasts and smelt his shoulder. He felt constrained to try his strength beside it and rising by the girth, the animal standing quiet, he secured and knotted the broken reins. He felt pretty well, his head steadily righting itself, and his legs promising better with use. Thus he stood collecting his strength, the beast eyeing him stealthily, and

he lengthening the reins with the dog's rope. He thought that, mounting the horse, and sitting well back, with a hold on mane and girth, he might go a long way towards help. . . . To hasten our conclusion, he *did* by some means or other manage to get himself upon the horse, and slowly, very slowly, left the clearing. Some said he was a night upon the journey, and this is not impossible. For certain portions of the way he clung to the martingale on his chest and face, and even, for a short ecstatic period, lay, like Mazeppa, on his back. He appeared to have twice fallen insensible in the road. On both of these occasions he was roused by the importunity of his little dog and found the horse feeding beside him. After the first interruption, he mounted the animal by the aid of some timber. But on the second, when nearer home, he was unable to mount, and with many a fall, could but cling to and move with his browsing beast.

* * * *

The finish of this matter of the "nowhere roads" quite touches the poetical. It was connected with the boy explorer. If it hadn't been for his investigations, Jake would have been in a nice corner with the maids.

Just as Jake was getting well, a photograph reached the household of two children of a distant friend, whose name happened to be Laurence. The bushman became very interested in this photograph, and would examine it for long periods at a time, and even fancied that it had in the jumble of its background, a second picture of a cottage of two stories standing on a mound. In point of fact this was not only his fancy for every one could see the thing he pointed out to them—a quite common photographic phenomenon. When held in the hand it was merely the picture of two children seated on the grass of a lawn, in front of a small fountain and a glasshouse. But if looked at on

a mantelpiece, or from an appreciable distance, the fountain and glasshouse had formed themselves into a narrow, tall house standing on a hillock. In many ways it was entirely unlike the house along the "nowhere road," yet there was a distinct resemblance. Jake was rather taken with this whim of the camera, and when soon after the children came to stay in the house, he seemed much interested in them, and, as if he really was inclined to connect them with the woman, Laurence, expressed a wish to show them some pretty things in the interior of the hermit's cottage . . . . Thus a party was made up of maids and children (though the maids, it must be told, were suspicious of exaggeration, and always sceptical of there being anything much worth the seeing in the woman's clearing) and one day, under Jake's guidance, two spring-drays of somewhat irreverent people jolted up into the scrub after cooking apples.

It is a point of the tale that when the boy returned from his first stolen visit, he was so frightened by the news that there had been foul play in the lonely place and one of Jake's friends was suspected of trying to do for him, that he kept secret the destination of that eventful ride, and in fear of a scolding, related his adventure, under secrecy, to two only of his play-fellows. They were as awed at their awful burden as they were for him, and if they let a hint drop in the kitchen it was only by way of expressing a belief in poor Jake and his cottage. Through various unexpected accidents and precautions, the truant had not yet confessed his escapade when enlisted for the apple-picnic, and, as they sat wedged in the carts among the apple-baskets, the three conspirators would nudge each other at some anticipatory hint of Jake's, or at the mere thought of approaching the place whose strange secret they shared.

After a pleasant journeying along the silent track (with an occasional groan as the wheels sank from the hard into

the soft sand) they arrived, with cries of half-amused amazement, in the clearing. The house as they drove up was the object of some blunt criticism, and it even appeared to the child that it had a more ruinous, dilapidated look than when he first saw it, hardly a pane of glass, so it seemed, being whole in the windows. Jake eyed it rather speculatively, but he said nothing until they approached the front door, when he greeted with an exclamation of surprise, an official notice pasted upon it, threatening prosecution to trespassers. Somewhat less proudly he unlocked and threw open the door, disclosing the hall bare of carpet or furniture, the varnish scarred and colourless, the pictureless walls weather-faded and streaked with ribald drawings in red and white chalk, the only ornaments a cane chair with burst bottom, and the bare staircase. With an incredulous movement Jake turned to the door on his right, and threw it open, followed by some of the party. The room here was alike bare but for a few straws, the light streaming in through the blindless window on the blue-grey walls, the very mantelpiece having been torn away, leaving the bricks fallen outward across the littered flooring. . . . Jake turned uncertainly back out of the room.

"Well, if this is your fine hall," called one of the maids, half-mockingly, "I don't think much of it. The staircase ain't so dusty."

Jake attempted to reply. He began, as a man might draw palely on his imagination, to enlarge on the beauties that had been.

"Ah, goo arne! Ye're chaffing us, Jake!" (The girl was not certain there had been anything but card-playing in the place.)

Jake seemed incapable of defending himself.

At this point the Investigator stepped forward beside the helpless bushman, and stuttered out a rather excited story.

He stated how he had ridden there, and seen the rooms as they once were ; how it had been a "perfectly beautiful place" ; and how Jake was right in all he protested. He then, to prove his story, took them from room to room and showed them what had been here and here—here a picture, and here a beautiful chair, and here a guitar with a broken string, and here a piano with some tumbled music.

Well, everybody was *that amazed!* And Jake, followed about, taking his chaffing calmly, and listening while this or that was replaced on its legs on the varnished boards or hung for a moment on the empty nails. It gradually dawned on all that there must have been some rough play and Mr. L. the magistrate had taken the valuables out of harm's way. At length the party scattered noisily among the orchard trees, or gathered laughing down beside the loud-voiced creek, and at last returned, singing, in the apple-carts.

MARY STUART

(An Enquiry into her Character)

. . . the singular fortune of this world-famed lady, her wild story, her exile, her imprisonment, her constancy to the faith of which she was the supposed martyr, set on fire the imagination of half the youths of Europe.—Froude.[1]

MARY STUART was a Queen of France always, but picture the Queen of France led into Edinburgh through the howling mob in a red skirt and fisherwoman's jacket. . . . Men plighted their sacred faith to her and broke their hearts when they broke it on the rack. . . . In appearance we gather her tall and slight; incomparably beautiful even to the last when her wig was removed; to the last athletic when she was well (also, if it can be conceived, an accomplished scholar); a billiard player; a delighter in riding, both on horseback and in her carriage; a person of wiles; a thinker; a linguist; a subtle politician near equal in her tactics to Cleopatra; a fast and faithful friend; and oh, a terrible enemy! dangerous with all the pathetic wooing subtlety of exquisite beauty and noble bravery. . . . We all know the story how she held out her hand, wooing her enemy to put his in it, and when she held it fast, swore to his eyes she would have his body dead. . . . We know how she compared herself as

[1] This study is based almost solely on the documents and authorities quoted in Froude's *History of England*.

a fellow-martyr to Richard crook-back. . . . We know the awful things on which her eyes rested when a captive in England, the insanity and terrible fates of her devotees . . . and we know how well she was treated by her captors: the "eighty cart-loads of books from Europe" following her from prison to prison, the hunting and the hawking, the dances, the changes to the Buxton baths, the arms and pomp of Scotland in her suites of rooms, and the village largess from a great Queen (generally used by her to communicate with her friends). We finally memorize how, in captivity, her honour was once questioned, and how that great lady, her slanderer, was brought to her knees for the untruth before the Privy Council; also how her suspected lover (and keeper) coupled her with his countess, her slanderer, as "two devils," and this to Elizabeth, to whom he was a faithful servant.

She did not comport herself as we might have done. When she was accused of joining with her Catholic abettors in Elizabeth's murder, she arrived in court in a plain grey dress, always as "your Queen," and seating herself, defended alone with flashing wit a terrible situation before a council of the most skilful men who could be found in England, nay, Europe. And without a slip. The letter in which she yielded in a weak moment to the importunities of Queen Elizabeth's assassinators, and stumblingly agrees in a stumbling sentence to Elizabeth's death, reads like a piece of Hamlet rather than Macbeth. For the moment her wonderful wit fails her. She seems unable to dictate a lucid sentence (to her secretaries whose minutes were afterwards discovered by threat of torture). She seems ill. She had just recovered from a juster, and closer, confinement. She who kept her reputation so femininely *chic* throughout her grave, dramatic life, and in that time of snarling steel, pretended, or tried to pretend, with the

Spanish statesmen of the age, and the Pope who appears to have been willing, that murder was a fair weapon against "the beast that troubled the world." [1]

If she was terrible and patient in her hate, she seems seldom to have aroused personal hatred, and certainly not in her rival, Queen Elizabeth, who, from the old days in Scotland, had defended her either with a singular sympathy of womankind, or an artifice and calm policy that was too prolonged and unvarying to conceal the venom of private dislike. And this, for a being who had significantly ignored Elizabeth as rightful Queen on her assumption of her own crown. No, in the awful days in Scotland following Darnley's murder, when the mob was up in Edinburgh, and Mary degraded to the dress of a peasant-woman, Elizabeth stood (for whatever reason) steadily her friend and (but for occasional fits of anger on the discovery of double-dealing) seems to have continued the protector of her life in captivity, against Parliament, against Bishops, against confidential Minister, till Lord Howard of Effingham, Admiral against the Armada, asked for audience and begged for her execution.[2]

Besides Elizabeth (and the brave Crawford perhaps) Walsingham, her romantic secretary, runs a suspicion of dislike for Mary Stuart; he it was who christened her the "bosom serpent"; he made his way into public life on an offer to Burghley to disclose certain facts about the

[1] Name of Catholic conspirators of Europe for Elizabeth.

[2] NOTE: The reasons why England executed Mary Stuart seem sufficiently clear. (*a*) The life of Elizabeth stood between the nation and civil war (another Roses). (*b*) Protestant Orange had just been assassinated (second attempt). (*c*) Conspiracy after conspiracy was discovered to assassinate Elizabeth for religion's and Mary Stuart's (the Catholic sovereign's) sake. (*d*) She joined and conspired with them.—Parry's confession, *State Trials*, vols. i, xi, xii.

Darnley murder; and he it was who trapped her secret correspondence at the last. But his warm temper, as hot as that of Knox himself, and strange gift of his services to the State on a private income, disarm the seeker after dark motives. There is, however, one example of hate inspired by Mary Stuart in which there lies no doubt, as all may read, in the awful poem of Lord Sempil,[1] the friend of the Regent, her bar-sinister brother. For instance:

> Were I an hound—oh! if she were an hare,
> And I an cat, and she a little mouse,
> And she a baim, and I a wild wood bear,
> I an ferret, and she Cuniculus.

and this,

> My spirit her spirit shall douke in Phlegethon,
> Into that painful filthy flood of hell. . . .

Sempil was the man who afterwards wrote the beautiful elegy to Mary's brother, when, much to Mary's relief, he was assassinated,[2] and we naturally have a suspicion for anything done (like the former poem) to further enrage the Edinburgh mob against the Queen and by her brother's familiar. We see that Murray stands in a dangerous light in all his doings with his sister, and almost saint as he is held by many to this day, it is to be wished that he had pushed his career somewhere else than parallel with hers.[3] We know that many writers have more than touched on the suspicion that he was a wicked, ambitious man, rather than the good leader of the Protestants at the courts of his Roman Catholic sister and her mother, and though it is

[1] Supposed author.

[2] She pensioned his assassin.

[3] To Froude he is a model of a man; Sir Walter Scott is suspicious of him; brilliant Miss Strickland pillories him as the devil, but hardly convinces us.

deeply in his favour that Knox quarrelled with him over some point of religion, and afterwards preached a wonderful eulogy over his body, still, it is disquieting that both the pæan of hate and of praise was by the companion of the son of her father, afterwards Regent of Scotland.

Here we are done with the hate she inspired, yet while we are writing of her brother, it is to be remembered he was the chief witness against her in the *Enquiry* in London (and at York) into Darnley's murder, and it was he who brought at life's risk the incriminating Casquet Letters for inspection by those weighty and lenient Englishmen : familiar and dreadful letters from Mary to her faithful lover, the murderer, which the commissioners agreed were not forgeries.[1] Yet with what faithful and brilliant finesse did Murray withhold the letters while her life was in danger—with what honourable reluctance did he produce them at the second trial—with what sternness did he admit they were those of Mary Stuart. If, however, these things were the dread forgery that Mary said and many have almost proved—a hoax which deceived the greatest statesmen in England—who was then the ruin of the Queen ? On the contrary, if they were actually Mary's letters, why (says a great historian) did Elizabeth not publish them, and rid herself for all time of the wiles of a disgraced siren ? Why was the trial hushed up ? A worldly answer to this old question is that with Mary uncondemned, yet a prisoner in England, Philip of Spain would have less political inducement for seizing the throne of Elizabeth, her Catholic successor being still eligible. We hesitate to add the innocent solution of Froude, that our Elizabeth of a thousand tricks was touched for her sister-Queen's reputation. If that was so, why did she never accede to the request of Mary

[1] We may remember it was her brother and Maitland—not Bothwell—who originated the idea of a divorce from Darnley.

Stuart to be allowed to appear and clear herself before her? It would seem a pity.[1] As bad a question is this other, Why did Mary Stuart never publish her defence if she had one? This simple remedy was always in her power. No doubt Elizabeth was afraid of her beauty and wit at court. She never made a concealment of being so. She might well be afraid of the lady who could not be hurried through an English village without having half of it at her devotion; while she warns Cecil, Lord Burghley, previous to his first cruel interview with Mary, that he will be sure to fall. But why not have received her *privately*? And why did Mary not publish her defence, if she had one? She was a brilliant hand with the pen. Her witty counsel, Ross, published a book in her defence, but unhappily that was a defence not of Mary, so much as Darnley's murder.

She was always jealous for her "estate Royal," and her affairs in English captivity were conducted with the utmost formality, dignity, and deliberation. Did any question reach her implying that she was connected with the murder of her husband, she would answer through her secretaries that if she were formally accused she would put in a reply. It is curious to think that often with one extra step from either Mary or Elizabeth this mystery of the ages would not be a mystery.

We believe she was implicated—however protectedly—in the murder of the King. For the motive for such a sin, we must go back to the outrage that had been done her reputation and princely hearth exactly eleven months previous: the stabbing of Rizzio.

All hangs on the behaviour with Rizzio.

We state the question, Was she privy to the murder of poor Darnley? Despite of the indignation of the Edin-

[1] It would seem a pity that "private matter" which Mary wished to communicate was never heard.

burgh mob against her, and despite of the fact that so hazy was the general assurance of her part in it, that while the English ambassador wished to fight a duel with Bothwell on her behalf, others could draw a vile picture of her and circulated it in the streets, it is dreadfully evident that if she knew nothing of its preparation, she allowed herself to feel too little regret. What are we to say of her conduct in presenting Bothwell with the pet horse of Lord Darnley a few days after her husband's murder? That is either the act of a Borgia (and we have evidence she could be the kindest of women) or some one who harboured in her unforgiving nature something unforgettable.

In the early days of her marriage with Lord Darnley there was a whisper of something amiss with the poor fellow who was consort of this exquisite princess; who had been brought up to be King of England; and, indeed, had been the favourite prince of the English. Then we have his "confession,"[1] a few days before his death, when, from his sick-bed, he begs Mary's forgiveness for something he had done, and promises if she will receive him back he will not again misbehave. Would he have owned to some wrong, and begged forgiveness, if she had lost what is "technically called her honour" as he had sworn she had, so causing that most unforgivable of all things to Mary Stuart: Rizzio's stabbing in her presence? We do not see how he could have asked forgiveness of a wife who had wronged him, and whom he alone knew for certain had wronged him.

All hangs on the behaviour with Rizzio.

Yet the Lords of the Congregation and Darnley's family (those who had egged on the young prince in his jealousy of Rizzio and to whom the stabbing was a political advantage) said that she was guilty, i.e. that Darnley had spoken the

[1] Witnessed by his brave and afterwards renowned servant.

truth. And one of them rose from his death-bed to lead them to Rizzio's slaughter, returning to it to yield up his soul. Old lords, already swaying with death, have not frequently staggered into armour for anything but truth. Yet again Rizzio was stabbed solely on Darnley's evidence, and Darnley and the Queen had just deeply quarrelled. Among other things Darnley had been drinking too heavily at a merchant's dinner and been coarse to Mary Stuart when she attempted to restrain him. She had wept. The estrangement became a matter of separate apartments. Darnley began to draw his family about him. Mary Stuart began to draw her co-religionists round her. Among the Roman Catholics were Huntly, Athol, Caithness, Rizzio and Bothwell : [1] the latter "the glorious Lord Bothwell" who had been the faithful friend of her mother through good and ill, and now was there by her. Mary, always an ardent Roman Catholic, kept late hours with her Catholic friends in the palace rooms. More and more were the Roman Catholics encouraged. Rizzio, her chief secretary, the once restraining influence on Darnley, was given a seat on the council, and a private seal—like Darnley's. Mary Stuart was exceedingly angry. Her state of health was questionable. Darnley complained to his family, and the Protestant lords began to back him and stimulate his jealousy, cunningly giving the poor fellow of twenty "advice for his honour." Here was a chance for the banished among them getting "home" again. His jealousy needed no stimulant. He was jealous of all about his wife—of Maitland, of the Earl of Argyle, of the Earl of Murray, her brother. He "worshipped her as a God," as he said in his dramatic style of speech. His family was powerful. He was the heir to the English

[1] Bothwell, if his religion is disputed, was of the Catholic faction.

throne after his wife. He was suspicious and ignored. He complained. He gave evidence against his wife and the man who was being raised to the highest honour by her in Scotland. The man whom they had all been so fond of, who among themselves they affectionately called "Davie," was now become a dangerous power and had dishonoured him!

If one thing is more evident in her character than another, it is that she never forgave "man Davie's" murder.[1] It seems she was always furious at rude doings in her presence: she was Queen of France. She would be charmingly familiar and talkative with all; but it must be remembered who it was. And this was vile behaviour, apart from the killing. One lordling held a pistol to her breast—*the Queen of France*.[2] It seems to have been etiquette of the time that men should not bring firearms into the presence of the ladies. Sixteen years afterwards, when there seemed a faint chance of her regaining her throne, her first order was that this obscure squire should be executed, and the other who stabbed Rizzio with Darnley's dagger. Mary Stuart was still unsatisfied, we see, with the justice and seemliness of "Davie's" end.

All hangs on the behaviour with Rizzio.

We think her unappeasable indignation was not simulated. In after life we see her honour was again questioned, and found to be above question. She is known to have been a woman of warm heart and familiar manners. She was clever, terrible, and patient in her hate. We think

[1] After the murder she said "she would now study revenge."—Sir Walter Scott.

[2] Another—probably the same—originated the threat that "he would cut her into collops." There seems an unpleasing doubt if one of the Darnley-men did not attempt to stab the Queen herself.

her hungry indignation was dreadfully genuine—and was her ruin. It is evident that after Rizzio's murder, she never ceased to talk about him with dangerous ease to every one—Darnley too ; and we think it was her constant remarking about the death of Rizzio as a grievance against Darnley, the manner in which she seemed to half insanely carry it on her mind, from which at intervals, despite her acting, it would spring to utterance, which led to the King's murder and her ruin. Nothing more evidences the admiration and pleasure people had in her existence, than the reluctance with which they admitted to each other (anxiously asking for comfort about the beautiful Queen's part in it) that they had no hope. Moret, the ambassador of the Duke of Savoy, who was in Edinburgh, " mentioned among other circumstances, one which had left a painful impression upon him. Darnley, it seems, had intended to present a pair of horses to the Duke of Savoy, and a day or two before his death had told the Queen that he wished to see Moret. She had said in answer that Moret was so angry about Rizzio's murder that he would not go near him : she had not the slightest grounds for such a statement, and had only wished to prevent the interview." [1] Why did she tell this cruel lie to a sick man ? We know not, but it implies this : She was either guilty of a part in the impending plan to kill him, or so half-insane on the subject of Rizzio's death, that she egged on, by her continual crying out about it, her and Rizzio's friends to revenge their friend and her honour.

Shortly after James's birth she fell " sick to death " and was revived only by the chafing of her limbs. It was said some indiscretion of Darnley had made her ill,[2] and as her

[1] Froude on letter of De Silva to King Philip of Spain.

[2] She had ridden fifty miles to see the wounded Earl Bothwell, fainting as she was taken from her horse.

brother and the cynical Maitland stood by her bedside listening to her delirium, she exclaimed passionately : " that unless she was freed of him in some way she had no pleasure to live, and if she could find no other remedy she would put hand to it herself." [1] Couple this with the later interview with Darnley when he confesses that he had wronged her, promises to amend for good, and pleads his youth and that she had forgiven others, and we see again she was ill with detestation and carried something unforgiven. Yet before we dismiss her as the tragedy Queen whose last words to Darnley on the night of his death were : " It was just this time last year that Rizzio was slain " ; before we dismiss her as the revengeful Semiramis who lured him from Rizzio's murderers, and then with all her artifice and beauty lured Rizzio's murderers to her service, and cast him out so that he was alone in Scotland, fenced round by hostile lords, and whispered he feared for his life ; before we dismiss her as the murderess of her husband of the Edinburgh mob, the " whore " they wanted to " burn," let us remember the hope, sadness, and love for her of the humane and anxious gentlefolk looking on, the ambassadors and politicians of Scottish, English, and European courts, who came and begged to be told their brilliant Mary of France, " so worthy, so wise, so honourable in all her doings " [2] had not been in it ; and the fact that only one of the great lords and governors who confessed on trial to a part in or foreknowledge of the conspiracy, implicated the Queen . . . and he with the crude statement that she asked him to kill her husband because she could not forgive him for the death of David Rizzio.

[This single witness, Governor of Edinburgh Castle,

[1] Her brother, Maitland, Argyle, Huntly and Bothwell now made offer for a divorce, which she refused.

[2] Randolph to Cecil and Leicester.

Sir James Balfour, went a sort of Queen's evidence, earning his own pardon by confessing a part in the murder as instigated (he said) by Mary Stuart. Another of the Queen's enemies, the Regent Morton,[1] confessed at execution that he knew of the conspiracy and would have joined in it, but wanted the Queen's signature to know if she desired it. The evidence is further shaken by the accusation of Bothwell's man, Hepburn, who charged Sir James Balfour, before his execution, with having contrived the whole conspiracy. Mary, in the gathering of the clans at Hamilton Castle, before her last battle, granted an amnesty to every one in Scotland except Morton, Lindsay, Lord Sempil (the ballad writer), Sir James Balfour, and the Mayor of Edinburgh,[2] into whose house she crept at the finish of her awful ride through howling streets from Carberry.]

Once more, and finally, any enquiry into the character of Mary Stuart hangs on the behaviour with Rizzio. There are no two roads. We must either dismiss her to the Edinburgh mob as a villainous person who sought the lives of others without the rectitude even of revenge (and this we cannot do, for we are stayed by Darnley's petition for forgiveness), or we must believe that this princess, so patient and vindictive in her hate, had had her honour rancorously destroyed, and her friend and co-religionist fashionably, if horribly, murdered, through a quarrel between herself and the informer, who was joining his twenty years' inexperience of ladies' tempers with revelling and wine. Our solution is—that she never forgave. Not when, forsaken and hated by all,[3] he clamoured at dead of night at the gates

[1] Morton, who *found* the Casquet Letters, hinted the Queen knew and willed the conspiracy.

[2] This was the Provost who stopped a city rescue of the Queen from Bothwell on the assurance she did not want it.—STRICKLAND.

[3] His body-servants were devoted to him.

of Holyrood, and was admitted by Maimouna [1] in person. No, nor when, next day, he faced alone the lords and Queen in council, to answer for himself, it having got about that he was about to flee the country. No, nor when she rose, "clasping her hands like a skilled actress, saying: 'Speak—speak; say what you complain of; if the blame is with me do not spare me.'" No, nor when he bade farewell to this stony circle of enemies (some his murderers) with those kingly and pathetic words: "Adieu, Madame, you will not see my face for a long space; gentlemen, adieu."

Having, we think, produced sufficient testimony to clear her of her husband's charge, if not clearly exonerating her of complicity in his mysterious end, we are at liberty to try and counter the knock-down blow which meets resultantly all defenders of Mary Stuart: the sudden and amazing disclosure of fondness for Lord Bothwell. Twice afterwards, when threatened with execution at Loch Leven, she could have regained her safety and even her crown by deserting this man, but could not be moved. The amazement her preference caused, if not among her court and co-conspirators yet over the wide world (which begged her to punish the murderer); the vulgarity of her behaviour and gifts to him instantly upon her widowhood; [2] his divorce; her defence of him and refusal to permit him to fight the numerous single combats to which he was invited; and her surrender on the promise of his life—these might dismiss him and her as beneath interest, were they not raised to a height almost sublime by the obstinacy with which she stood at his side, and the torturing degradation, unsubdued, she underwent. At the affair of Carberry Hill,

[1] Name used by Froude for Mary Stuart.

[2] She was married out of her Church, and in widow's weeds.

after the murder, when the armies faced each other in strange quiet all day, she had upheld before her on the enemies' banner the dead body of her husband and a kneeling child calling for vengeance on the murderers (some of whom were serving under it), and beneath this banner, in her red skirt and peasant's jacket, in tears and dust, "half-dead with grief and faintness," she (of France) was led, like a spit-fire, back, past the charred ruins of the blown-up house, through the thronged streets, howling with fury. . . . A bad woman (even a Guise) would have been glad to return to parlour-life, even at the expense of a friend, after such an experience; but neither after this, nor months, in her eight-by-six rooms at Loch Leven, would she buy the safety of her head, nor of her crown, by consenting to desert Lord Bothwell.

We fear their union was not a success, even in the days before Carberry, when they were separated never again to meet. We read of her "wishing" to some one who waited upon them—"wishing that she were dead." She threatened to stab herself. Yet she followed him dressed as a page. For him, the Lord Warden of her Marches (a sour, Italian-looking man, with fine carriage, dark thin face, and almond eye of a protruding, ill, still air, quite fell enough to be called deadly), whatever he was, he was a faithful and brave person, only ghost-white once during the ordeal of his mock-trial, facing the rising snarl of the mob with a handful of private troops, and nailing up a challenge to any "well-famed man" upon the Tolbooth door. A bad thing for her, but what for him, the bold and "glorious" Earl of Bothwell, he who had gone among the flock of young Scotch lords to welcome the nineteen years old princess at Paris, "the one among them all who through good and ill had been faithful to her mother's fortunes," notable Roman Catholic, friend of David

Rizzio,[1] he who had galloped his men to her aid after Rizzio's murder—not well for him! The thing is wrapped in a mystery, and clouded deeper by that mysterious thing, a woman's philosophy. At the time of the murder, she was faithful to the Earl—against cold reason. Five years after, when the marriage was being nullified that she might for political reasons accept the Duke of Norfolk, she called it "an indignity," and said "he forced me to marry him" when "he had procured a pretended divorce between himself and his wife." She asked that a commission of enquiry be sent into Scotland. Yet at the same period, in a discussion vital to her restoration on the murderers of her husband, in her famous interview with Elizabeth's subtle Cecil, she contrived to shelter the Earl of Bothwell by "adroitly inserting a phrase insisting on the lawfulness of his mock-trial." If the romance was so distasteful to her, that she "wished to drown herself," and yet so much a bond to her, that she faced the executioner sooner than desert the Earl, where was the point of such fortitude? We again point to Rizzio's murder. It would seem—for herself—she wished to be accepted the following strange explanation: that she was trepanned with the Earl of Huntly and her secretary into Dunbar and Edinburgh Castles by the Earl of Bothwell, and by force made by the assassin (and the advice of certain lords who after deserted) to go through a form of marriage with him: a marriage for which she herself signed the order for the banns in St. Giles's Cathedral. . . . She afterwards, however, for some change of reason unexplained, refused to desert or be separated from him who was popularly thought to be the chief assassin of her husband, but whom she never acknowledged as such, and who, if not the murderer,

[1] "The marriage with Bothwell," says Froude, "is the best proof of her innocence with Rizzio."

profited by the murder to marry her and be crowned Duke of Orkney by her own hands.[1]

* * * *

There is some danger in arguing from a modern standpoint on the lives of ancient personages. How different was the world? How much more ready were they with their rope and steel (Drake beheaded his second-in-command on his voyage to the Antipodes)—how much worse, more coarse, and hardy were the natures and bodies needing and faced by the execution of such horrible discipline? These were rough times; parts not bearable to the reader of our day. In a word, what is the worth of the argument regarding these persons as like people with ourselves?

By Elizabeth's later letters, you would say the age was little coarser than our own. But, by remarks and letters such as those of the Duke of Norfolk to her, and his fellows, and some of those of Cecil, we and our women could hardly have carried on an ordinary conversation without shame. Again, we cannot judge the beautiful clemency initiated by Elizabeth and her father without a constant memorandum that the Wars of the Roses and their bloody insecurity were raw in men's minds, and the leaders waiting another chance; while against this savage rip and thrust, if we balance the humane character and sacrifice of Philip Sidney, a model for our day, and the plays of William Shakespeare, possible upon our stage, we see how falsely we would force an entire difference. In further resemblance or comparison we have the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University (a little too ready with his dagger, perhaps) inhabiting the same Senate house; we have a Regent of Scotland, not a good man, fond of fly-fishing

[1] Bothwell acknowledged, before death, that he was implicated in the murder of Darnley.—Bothwell's Confession, STRICKLAND.

before he came to the block ; we have our stag-hunting at Sir Walter Aston's park ; our chess, our billiards, our tennis (a little too ready to lay our racquets about each other's faces, but mopping the perspiration from our foreheads with our ladies' handkerchiefs) ; we have a tennis-player asked if he will interfere with a gentleman's racking in the Tower, who turns away and says "*Play*" ; and we have both Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops proposing torture as a means of discovering if the Mass is attended or not attended. . . . We have the sailors against the Armada getting a good six shillings a day ; and we have the Regent Murray burning a few witches when on circuit. We have the Queen of Scots witnessing a foot-ball-match twice in a fortnight (when there was less foul play "offered" than usual), the while both Ireland and Scotland were familiar with the wolves' howl. To punish a traitor we considered it wise to inflict him with more than one death, while the shrewd old captain-general of Elizabeth's father suspected a colleague of the Black Art. We had ships'-captains ducked with stones on their feet by English privateers after money, and our people "died of a cough" (a suspicious reason) perhaps more frequently than now. We embroidered at windows, and warmed our hands at the fire, but we had no tea, and drank *eau sucre*. Such men as Lord Howard of Effingham contracted for the rigging and food-supply of the fleet under threat by religious torturers, whose burnings and anguishings Knox was stemming with his single mouth, while he himself had forbade the *Mass* under pain of death. We had our jack-tar receiving a gallon of beer daily and we had Queen Elizabeth striking off the hand of a mean and vicious writer. We had our Judges of the Queen's Bench, our attorneys, our barristers, our clerks of the court of law, and they wore velvet and harness on occasion. Few

of us had a bible, but we must have been well taught its contents, for when we got it, we brawled over it in ale-houses, and larked over the interpretation of passages. By excellent arrangement our wages were given out in Church, and varied with the farmer's calendar. We had plenty of oranges and lemons, which, sliced, we used with verjuice and sorrel-water during the Plague. We had excellent biscuits and dried fruits, and we had massacres of St. Bartholomew. We ate "rabbit, chicken, and other bird," and we presented our feminine friends, as delicate gifts, with stones in gold boxes as preservatives, not against the moth, but poisoning. We knew the value of fumigation and fresh air, and strewed our cleaned floors during the sickness with lettuces and roses. Sometimes we sang a nasty little song :

> Goodman priest now beware your palate,
> Fire and faggot, helm and sallet,

or made a nasty little joke that we were "like to be made a deacon of," meaning decapitated. If our jewellery was finer (our gemmed paternosters and comfit-boxes things of marvellous consolation), a dead cat or dog would lie in the street for a week, while our perfumes must have been many and coarse to refine our ill-windowed rooms and rougher sewers. The visitor finds the rooms dark of the Abbey of Holyrood, but we suspect it only needed the outdoor *risk* that each nobleman brought in with his harness and brocade, to pass the jest, the chess-board, and the music. We see Mary Stuart receiving in her palace bed, and we see her riding, modernly, beside the English ambassador, when "she wishes she were a man, and longs to know what life it is to lie all night in the field, or to walk on the cawsey with a Glasgow buckler and a broadsword." [1]

[1] Randolph to Cecil.

Here we are or *were* then, more bred to physical agony, less bothered with compassionate niceness, and of such mingled bravery, roughness, and courtesy of mind as could quote the classics and at the same time conceal beneath the bonnet of the oldest a trick of the sword. The mind of a leading English statesman could consider the private removal of the Queen of Scots; but these were "Italian tricks," and the British were a people even then watching the cleanliness of these things, prepared to punish a false step with native indignation. This, of an awful cast, and ignorant and blundering enough, rose up and howled for things which to-day we would not see at all, or for which we would have long before lost all reasonable feeling; and it is in this degree, we suppose, that a modern may alone judge the plucky and affectionate gentlemen standing against the cupboardy backgrounds of Elizabethan portraits.

What chief effect had this woman upon the observer? Take a portrait of her—not the late widow and velvet Mary Stuart, but the earlier, slyer, more Elizabethan woman. Her effect upon you is not that of conscious superiority or patronage, but innate. Her effect, in a word, is to put one on a search after faults in himself. In short, it is the Queen. Observe her eyes. Not the beautiful, sad eyes of Elizabeth, which *could* grow so stern. But calm, just quizzical, kindly, noble eyes. What need to ask why so many books have been written favouring the Queen of Scots, and so few in judgment on her? It may be answered that the study of her winning face actually makes it a difficult matter to write or think a grim thing against her. We repeat there is no doubt about her peerless beauty, though that has been questioned, and though her portraits are doubtful. We judge, of course, by her effect upon men and women; not ordinarily handsome,

but fascinating and alluring to a degree seldom known in the world's history. Her enemy compared her to Semiramis. One of her greatest triumphs was made in her maid's dress. Pages, enemies' brothers, common sentries, half the youth of Europe, fell her slaves, or suffered awfully for "her who was the dearest Queen to me in the world," [1] while old inimical lords, on hearing her name mentioned after years of scheming captivity in England, "watered their plants." [2] Perhaps more remarkable was her effect on women. Apart from the awful experience in Edinburgh, when the women of the town were the first to turn against her, women were hardly to be trusted where she was. The mother of her rival, bar-sinister brother (about to become Regent) became affectingly attached to her at the prison of Loch Leven; while in captivity in England, the domestic women of the houses of her keepers were so constantly found to have become "her slaves," that it became necessary to give her very household washing into the hands of men. We are not qualified to say what peculiar value this devotion has as a testimony to character. Would it mean she was great as women regard these things? But while we see that she bore quietly in England painful illnesses, we must remember also this was the Queen whom the Lords' and Commons' Houses named a "fierce, hard, and desperate woman," and of whom her son James (whom Elizabeth named, "no rascal") said that "he had seen a letter from her in which she threatened if he disobeyed her, she would reduce him to the lordship of Darnley." In the portrait before us, we may search with especial interest for traces of her noble affection, her queenly talking powers, her utter imperturbability, her fiery fits of passion, and her truly marvellous intellectual and athletic accom-

[1] Confession of Throgmorton after torture.
[2] Wept.

plishments, and, for a final glance, stand off and observe the young Queen of France as the ambassador of England saw her on her arrival in Scotland at the age of nineteen: "Whatever policy is in all the chief and best practised heads in France, whatever craft, falsehood, or deceit, is in all the subtle brains of Scotland, is either fresh in this woman's memory, or she can fette it with a wet finger."

"This lady and princess is a notable woman," wrote Elizabeth's cousin of Mary, now a hunted fugitive over Solway Firth. But he who had only read of her fourteen years' captivity in England (her hawking, her tremendous renown, and her chicane) might put her down as one who had in her blood the spoilt caprice of Beatrix Esmond—who did not know of the horror of that ride from Carberry or the flight from Scotland cut at by the countrymen's scythes. Yes, in a few months—nay, hours—she of France had lived the horror down, and from being a gasping refugee, became an eager captive, volubly negotiating for two thrones. How marvellous, in one of her nurture, such endurance! "Her true mind was fastened on revenge and triumph," says Froude and her contemporary. And indeed we see her more than once temporizing over her restoration for some small amendment, too angry to accept the arrangements made by Elizabeth and her ministers. Was it that she a second time misjudged mankind and her strange influence (the first being when she thought her will would allow the *Mass* in Scotland), or nobly welcomed ruin rather than be "no more a Queen"? Some narratives of her captivity in England speak of it as a series of imprisonments in dungeons—an impression she was not unwilling to give. This is a romantic untruth. The *truth* is much more romantic, and at times as awful. She was elaborately lodged, in the family of her host, with her own household,

her almoner, priest, secretaries, physicians, and stable. There dwelt the beauteous Queen ; a brilliant person who wept, composed, conspired, and condescended to dance ; the "daughter of debate" for many ; for others a devil—a bosom-serpent ; but for all the most romantic captive in Britain and Europe. She kept late hours, and her window-light was an object of worship. Her keepers described themselves as "bewildered by the treachery with which they were surrounded." So she passed through her two trials for complicity in the murder of her husband (defended with Royal circumstance), to many years a state guest of England ; treated with elaborately for marriage and restoration ; treating brilliantly with foreign powers ; trapped again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and yet again in conspiracy for French or Spanish invasion with restoration in her hand (truly did Charles IX say of his sister in these days she would "never rest till she had lost her head"), at last joining with Catholic assassins, and to her quite noble death.

What a life of contrasts ! What a chasm between her beautiful castles of the Loire and the dagger-haunted house of Holyrood ! From the bejewelled buff and silver costumes of Paris to the "plain grey dress" of her trial for life at Fotheringay ! Compare those fine jesting hours before her arrival in Edinburgh, when she sneers at Elizabeth "for marrying her horsekeeper (Leicester) who has murdered his wife," with her own separation from the divorced earl, when her victors with difficulty kept back the execrating soldiery with the flat of their swords ! Compare the Royal services in Notre Dame, with that early clashing of steel about her chapel at the Abbey and the hustling of her priest at the altar.[1] And what a comparison

[1] It is said this indignity "bred in Mary Stuart a desire for revenge."

that of "this extraordinary woman" of nineteen, from an encounter with whom none but Knox escaped altogether uninfluenced ("the dearest Queen to me in the world"), and the trapped assassinator of the Queen of England, whom some wished to save from death that she might have solitary confinement for life!

We herewith end our brief examination of a few living crumbs of testimony. How near the *actual* have we got? What of this figure see we? More perhaps than if we had taken her portraits one by one and minutely examined characteristic and idiosyncrasy: those of this horse-faced, discontented woman unpleasingly picking her long narrow fingers, or this brilliant and headlong Ma'moiselle. We try to separate from mere stucco-romance and stupid repetitions of the Holyrood melodrame, some human trait which we see in ourselves or admire in greater humanity. Loving tradition still whines that she was noble and ill-used; but there were moments (as when she was arrested at her last meet with the stag-hounds) when there was justice in her tragedy, if others when she was sublime. We remember she was Queen of France; that her pride was of that dread kind which takes insult with a kind exterior; that she did not love her son; that she had a gay, brave jest at her very death. We recall, as we turn away, how pretty a lady it was who learned the look of each Scotch lord so that she had them all by heart on landing at Leith, but how remarkable a one who used her knowledge so winningly that all Scotland mewed about her skirts. Picture, on one hand, the young thing of nineteen, who so wrought upon these people with her cleverness that "men thought they were bewitched"; the scholar whose learning was such that it seemed not an accomplishment, but a part of her being—the rider of half-broken stallions; and on the other, the protesting captive at the thought of whom old

enemies wept. . . . Her fate was such a contrast to her nurture, that it acts as an antidote to the uncharitable and the crooked in her nature, and forces the pencil of the enquirer searching back again and again amid the brilliant, the earnest and the worthy in the facts of her life.

EXPLORING IN FULL UNIFORM

1831

IN the year 1831, some one noticed something peculiar in one of a mob of inland natives encamped near Sydney. Information was conveyed to the barracks, and by the help of the tribe themselves, this individual black was arrested. He was immediately discovered to be a white man, a robber known as *The Barber*, who had escaped from captivity and lived for years inland among the natives, whom he had led in depredations on the settlers' property. A sensation was caused by his discovery, and in the first expansive blush of his notoriety—as it were—he made the astounding announcement that he had found in the interior of Australia an immense river running north-west; described the different tribes upon its banks; and related his adventures paddling across Australia, to a great western sea. So particular was he in his account and so immovable (detailing his treatment by the river-tribes, and indicating by name—Courada—a burning mountain on the coast) that the Government decided to send an expedition to verify his story, and on November 24, 1831, a gallant Peninsular major, the Surveyor-General, struck off into the hot bush in red coat, towering collar, sword, and gloves, with a chosen following of good-conduct prisoners.

The romantic soldier was only a few miles north from Sydney, when an express galloped after him with the

news that *The Barber* had escaped. He had sawn through his irons. This set the expedition in some agitation, fearing that he would arouse the natives about the unknown path. Even if the man were recaptured, his native wife had got off among her kind. On his guard now, the Major pushed onward, never quite certain if this subtle old "Billy Bones" of a robber was among the natives.

Regarding the leader, Major Mitchell had had a career, not uncommon in Australian officials. He had gone with Wellington through the Peninsular War (he published, I believe, the maps of the battles) and had been engaged as Government Surveyor, on the special pledge that he would attempt the survey of the unconquerable Blue Mountains, which his predecessor had resigned after repeated attempts as an *impossible endeavour*. Mitchell not only succeeded in surveying them, but re-engineered and re-cut the precarious road across. He discloses something of his struggle against this wall (which for twenty-five years defeated all attempts to pass into the interior, including that of Bass with grappling irons) in these words: "Some idea may be formed of the intricate character of the mountain ravines in that neighbourhood, from the difficulties experienced, by the surveyors, in endeavouring to obtain access to Mount Hay. Mr. Dixon in an unsuccessful attempt, penetrated to the valley of the Grose, until then unvisited by any European; and when he at length emerged from ravines, in which he had been bewildered four days, without reaching Mount Hay, he thanked God (to use his own words in an official letter), that he had found his way out of them. . . ."

"I found the scenery immediately around it very wild, consisting of stupendous, perpendicular cliffs, 3,000 feet deep, at the foot of which the silvery line of the Grose meanders through a green valley, into which, neither the

colonists nor their cattle have yet penetrated. Having looked into this valley from the summit of Tomah also in 1827, I was tempted, soon after, to endeavour to explore it by ascending the river from its junction with the Hawkesbury near Richmond; but I had not proceeded far in this attempt, accompanied by Major Lockyer and Mr. Dixon, when we were compelled to leave our horses, and, soon after, to scramble on our hands and feet, until, at length, even our quadrumanous progress was arrested in the bed of the river, by round boulders, which were as large as houses, and over, or between which, we found it impossible to proceed."

"A flat horizon," he pertinently concludes, "to a surface cracked and hollowed out into the wildest ravines, deep and inaccessible; their sides, consisting of perpendicular rocky cliffs, afforded but little reason to suppose that it could be surveyed and divided, as proposed, into counties, hundreds, and parishes; and still less was it likely ever to be inhabited, even if such a work could be accomplished. Nevertheless, it was necessary, in the performance of my duties, that the rivers should be traced, and when the surveyor pronounced them inaccessible to the chain, I clambered over rocks and measured from cliff to cliff with the pocket sextant. Thus had I wandered on foot by the murmuring Wallondilly, sometimes passing the night in its deep dark bed with no other companions than a robber and a savage."

This will serve for a portrait of the namer of the counties of New South Wales, adding, of course, the furniture of an explorer, natural philosophy, and so forth, with a polished declaiming of his Pope and his Samuel Johnson as quaint as his streaming brow and red jacket, not forgetting a hand with the brush and pencil seldom surpassed here.

He gets away at two in the afternoon, with his two-

horse carts and fifteen followers. As he rides through the heat behind his guide, he notes with some amusement the native's hair hanging down his back, "tied with bits of half-inch cord . . . like a double queue." The same black imprudently casts a stone at a snake as they are crossing a stream, and runs when the snake glides upon him, shouting at the Major it will kill his horse. He regained courage, however, stunning it with stones, when the Major "cut it in two with my sabre." When they had lifted across their carts and gear, they "entered upon an open and grassy plain, and found in the skirts of the wood beyond it, a channel containing water in abundance, and which was known to the natives as 'Carrabobbila.'" Even before his men had seen this spot, the native name, in their mouths, was corrupted into *Terrible Billy!* The water, where they encamped, was hot and muddy, but the blacks knew well how to obtain a cool and clean draught, by first scratching a hole in the soft sand beside the pool, thus making a filter, in which the water rose cool but muddy. They next threw in some tufts of long grass, through which they sucked the cooler water thus purified also from sand and gravel. "I was very glad to follow their example, as I found the sweet fragrance of the grass an agreeable addition to the luxury of drinking."

It was strikingly hot, and to make matters worse the woods were burning before them, but fortunately the fire was one day's march in advance of the party, and thus the flames had cleared everything away before its arrival. That evening, however, the country seemed on fire all around them. . . . Trees lay smoking as they passed; several gullies were difficult for the passage of the carts, and detained the party in its ascent; but at length they reached the top of this pass. . . . The heights which they had crossed appeared to extend from the Liverpool range

to the northward, as far as could be seen ; "but the native told me, that it soon terminated on the river 'Callala' (or Peel), whose course, he said, turned westward (as he pointed) ; a fact corroborating so far, the statements of the bushranger." [1]

Fifteen miles on they reach the Peel, and in this, the boundary into the unknown, the men are set at work fishing, catching a fish of eighteen pounds, while Mitchell finds a native who will go with them among hostile tribes, a "Mr. Brown," who agrees to guide them on the promise of blankets and a tomahawk. This, a comical figure, with a white neckcloth, served them well, if at length vanishing. He is acquainted with the muskets of the men, but expresses sharp interest in the heavier barrel and percussion-lock of the leader's rifle. At this place, Finch, the third in command, arrives without the extra supply of flour he was told to procure, and is sent back with four men to procure as much flour, tea and sugar from the Hunter settlers as he can pack on six bullocks, following after the expedition by the trees which the leader will mark. Finch, if game enough when cornered, seems to have been too easy-going, and inclined to poke fun at the black ladies. This early failure to carry out arrangements was responsible for an ugly situation and murder.

"We advanced with feelings of intense interest into the country before us, and impressed with the responsibility of commencing the first chapter of its history." Off they go along the southern bank of the Peel, which, somewhat to the disappointment of this seeker after the "great north river," continues in a western direction for three days. "Mr. Brown" sends his wife back, again to the vexation of Mitchell, who noted that she had an "intelligent" face. The guide points out a kangaroo watching them

[1] *The Barber.*

over the long grass, at which the leader discharges his piece, surprised to see it jump quietly off, but more amazed to find a dead one lying where it had been. "Mr. Brown," who sets little value on common food like "kangaroo," demands a great deal of flour which they can ill spare. Being of grave value to the expedition, he is permitted to eat till he is congested. Before they cross to the other bank, Mitchell ascends a hill called "Perimbungay." Across their front lies a low range, between two points of which to the northward, he decides to proceed, after they have crossed the water. "The land immediately beyond the Peel was inviting enough; one green hill arose from the level country which lay between the river and the base of these hills. The waters of the Peel, and the shady trees overhanging its banks, were visible for several miles; and the varying outlines of wood (shea-oak, weeping acacia, pine trees, and leaning gums), tinted with the delicate lights, around which the deep grey shadows of early morning were still slumbering, contrasted finely with the rugged rocks of the hill on which I stood, already sharpened by the first rays of the rising sun."

Two emus confront them as they cross, but are not shot. They soon reach the range, which he supposes is Hardwick's Range, named from the east by the explorer Oxley. Passing through the opening, they reach a flat, where he would have encamped, but could find no water. A mile on they find some in a rocky channel. Ascending the range, to a summit called Ydire (by "Mr. Brown"), he had a fine view to the westward. In front is a flat-topped hill called Boonalla. But, great discovery! to the enchanted north is a strange-looking mount, or pic, which the guide tells him is named "Tangùlda." Towards it runs a line of trees marking the course of the Peel, now called the "Nammoy." Now this was the mount actually named

by *The Barber*, the course of the Nammoy and the position of the two hills exactly resembling his description ; and it remained to follow his direction : "to proceed after the *great river* north-east by north from Tangùlda."

Mitchell took a drawing of the country, noting only some low obstructions to the east which increased his faith in *The Barber's* journey.

"I had scarecely time to complete my sketch of these hills before the sun went down. Mr. White (second in command) took bearings of the principal summits, and at the same time obtained their respective names from the native. . . . We reached the tents, distant from the hill a mile and a half, as night came on. The moon soon rose in cloudless splendour, and received our particular attention, for we were uncertain how soon we should be compelled to depend on the chronometer alone for the longitude. . . ."

Next day being cooler, they advance across the plain, hitting, at noon, the bank of the Nammoy (late Peel). They find it a deeper stream, capable of carrying their canvas boats. With some excitement they perceive it follows a north-west course. On the following day, a startling discovery is made. They had hardly gone eight miles along the river bank, when among the trees they come on a great stockade and the remains of a European house, surrounded by a large sinister neighbouring of native huts. This, according to a native guide, is the stronghold of "George, *The Barber*." All about lie the white bones of stolen cattle. There is not seen or heard, however, a single native, though their prints seem recent, and though the surrounding country is presently seen to be on fire. In a lagoon here, they catch a fish like an eel, but short like a fish. The explorer neither makes reflection nor points moral on the curious life the cunning old pirate must have lived, the high chief in this community of natives, adept

as he was in all their customs, able to imitate their very songs. Instead he sits down and makes one of his beautiful facsimiles of the two species of fish caught in *The Barber's* lagoon.

In the afternoon, leaving the men in camp, he ascends Tangùlda with Mr. White and the carpenter. He had from the summit a lurid view, by a sun setting amid the smoke of fires. But he saw enough for his purpose. The Nammoy ran through a cluster of hillocks, turning somewhat disappointingly north-west. *The Barber* had been most positive in his "north-east by north from Tangùlda." In that direction, Mitchell plainly saw some strange and magnificent mountains. He decides to desert the Nammoy for the moment, and explore along the robber's line. The following day, being a dreadfully hot one—that kind which scorches the backs of your hands—they desert the river and make north-east up a valley, over easy, flat hillocks. The dogs kill a mother kangaroo with a little one in her pouch. "The death," reflects the leader, "of no animal can excite more sympathy than of one of these inoffensive creatures." After fifteen miles of good travelling, they meet an impenetrable wood of casuarina, and must cut a passage for a mile and a half in the hot wind. The men are thirsty and drink up the water. They camp without water, and Mitchell and White, riding on in search of some, enter a valley, at the top of which they perceive through the smoke a tremendous chain of mountains, barring all passage. However, the question of water troubles them more than the obstruction for the moment, and four miles up they find a stream, to which they apply parched lips. "Mr. Brown" is with them, and points out, with apprehension, fresh footprints of natives beside the stream. Also the trees were marked with stone-axes, no longer the tomahawks of civilization. "Mr. Brown" makes some prolonged

cooeys, this being the stern form of etiquette when approaching a strange camp; with no answer but silence. He grows curiously apprehensive. Returning campwards, they are informed that the men have discovered water, but not enough for the bullocks, who are restless all the night.

Six o'clock a.m., and the camp is moved to the little stream, which he calls Maule's river. Leaving Mr. White in charge, he goes off with a couple of attendants to examine the great mountains. "Brown" is with them, and suddenly sees a dog, which they pursue to a fire, on which a snake is roasting. The guide divines—by a wooden water-vessel, perhaps—that they have disturbed some ladies, but though he shouts and endeavours to find them, has no success. The repast being somewhat overcooked, they had the presumption to place it in the wooden bowl, and departed up the mountains. These appeared of a gloomy, chocolate stone, extraordinarily weird and precipitous. A mile and a half up, they gave it up. There was no passage here for the carts. As far as could be seen, the hills mounted in impregnable terraces, "bastioned with rocky obelisks, and connected one with the other by narrow precipices." They decide to return to the Nammoy, and try and turn (in Peninsular parlance) the great range, by following the river in their canvas boats.

On the way down, they came suddenly on the proprietress, whom "Mr. Brown" managed to catch. It was a very old one-eyed woman, whom they persuaded at length that they meant no harm. She was extremely besoiled and had, it seemed, been somewhat terribly used by the "slings and arrows" of fortune. She seems to have been indeed a dread figure. As she talked with "Mr. Brown," she slapped the tormenting mosquitoes on her body. "Around her brow she had kangaroo teeth fastened

to the few remaining hairs, and a knot of brown feathers decorated her right temple." Mitchell moralizes on the persistence of human vanity. "The roasting snake, which we had seen in the morning, belonged, as we now learned, to this witch of the glen."

"'Mr. Brown's' conversation seemed animated on some subject, but not, as I at last suspected, on that most important to us; for, when I enquired, after he had spoken a long time, what she said of *The Barber* and the way across the mountains, he was obliged to commence a set of queries, evidently for the first time." She seems to indicate a way across to the east, and promised to send two boys to the camp in the evening. Excellent news, but the boys never arrive, and, more troublesome phenomenon, "Mr. Brown" (who has been looking very strange) deserts the expedition that night.

The following morning, before turning back, the explorer makes an attempt to cross the mountains to the north with pack animals, leaving men in charge of the carts. Just as they were starting off, they discovered the guide's desertion. They conclude he could not face the interior tribes. They are sorry for the loss, as much, it would seem, for his comical style, his neckcloth *à la mode* and adoption of a clean shave, as for his value as interpreter and medium of interchange. He had expressed disapproval of the expedition with the pack animals. They are not deterred, however, from testing them, and proceed up a valley first east and then north, at length desisting when it is found impossible to accustom the bullocks to the packs. "The passage was almost hopeless—indeed, it was so bad, that I was at length convinced it might be easier to pass to the northward in *any* other direction than this, and that it would not be prudent to struggle with such difficulties and separate my party for the purpose of crossing

a range, which, for all I could see, might be easily turned by passing between its western extremity and the river Nammoy. So far they had followed the robber's line, but finding it impossible for carts and bullocks, they decided to return to his stockade and hillock of "Tangùlda," and by using their boats, endeavour to circumnavigate the west end of the great mountains.

Burnett, Mitchell's body-servant, sitting by a pool with a musket, watches two natives warily approach and fill a water-vessel, but they depart without seeing him. These are the first wild men actually seen. The two following days are spent in returning to a hillock named "Bullabal-lakit" beside the Nammoy, where, menaced by fires on the opposite bank (which the leader fears will run across and burn his stores) they prepare a protected camp, and make ready a dock and saw-pit. The boats are of canvas, and require paint, floors and ribs, which last are cut from the blue-gums which lean over the river. "The smoke darkened the air at night, so as to hide the stars, and thus prevented us from ascertaining our latitude. One spark might have set the whole country on our side in a blaze, and then no food would remain for the cattle, not to mention the danger to our stores and ammunition. Fires prevailed fully as extensively at great distances in the interior, and the sultry air seemed heated by the general conflagration. In the afternoon I took my rifle and explored the course of the river some miles downwards, an interesting walk where probably no white man's foot had ever trod before. I found a flowery desert, the richest part of the adjacent country being quite covered by a fragrant white amaryllis in full bloom." On the 25th December an unfortunate man, named Bombelli, is sent off on horseback with a pistol, twelve days' food, and a message to the Government, giving an account of the journey, and advising that they have

taken to the water. He will return with laggard Finch and the stores.

Five days upon camping, the boats are ready, and they are off down the river. They are the more relieved to get away as the river has been falling four inches a day. After successfully threading a few reaches, troubles begin to occur, and they find their course blocked by a half-submerged tree, which the sailors remove by cross-cutting it with saws while they swim in the water. Hardly are they off again, when they are arrested by confused shouts from the second boat, and learn she has torn her bottom on a snag, and was only saved from sinking with all their supplies of tea, sugar and tobacco, and most of the flour, by White's skill in running her over a log. The activity of the sailors is such (Mr. White himself having been in the Indian Navy) that the stores are removed, the boat hauled ashore, and the leak caulked in an hour and a half, and all are again afloat. Alas, they are not fated to voyage far! Mitchell, in his eagerness, having a long way outdistanced White's boat, awaits it behind a bend, only to be assailed with more cries of distress, when on running back across the point, he finds her going down with a rent in the *opposite* bow. On this, very wisely for themselves, they decide to abandon the boat-voyage, and follow the river along the bank. The horses and carts are brought up from Bullaballakit, and the tea, sugar, and biscuits are laid out on tarpaulins to dry. Concludes the Major with some humour, "and on plotting my work I found we were distant, in a direct line, only about two miles from Bullaballakit."

They halt a day to thoroughly dry the provisions. In emptying the water out of the sunken boat, they find a small crayfish.[1] While they dismantle the boats, the Major buries his geological specimens in a hollow tree.

[1] That, of course, dear to the childish memories of Australians.

He thus epitomizes the climate: "During many days I had anxiously watched the smoky red-hot sky, for some appearance of rain: no dew nourished the grass, which had become quite yellow, and the river upon which I had set my hopes was rapidly drying up. In my tent, the thermometer generally reached 100° of Fahrenheit during the day. At length the welcome sound of thunder was heard, and dark clouds cooled the atmosphere long before sunset. These clouds at length poured a heavy shower on the yawning earth; flakes of ice and hail accompanied it, and we enjoyed a cool draught of iced water, where the air had just before been nearly as warm as the blood."

Next day (December 31st) they advance, aiming for a point west of the mountains. It is again very hot, and Mitchell notes that the worst character among the men cannot refrain from rushing the water, though expressly forbidden to leave the line without permission. ("This man lost all the advantages he gained by his services on this occasion.") On January 1, 1832, they approach the end of the great range, entering a large rich flat. As they round the mountains, there are no obstacles except heat and want of water, the very forests being burnt down before them, but they have to make west to the Nammoy that night. The following day they cross two dry rivers, and after ascending a slight slope they descend upon an immense, verdant plain extending beyond the mountains far to the north and west. Nothing here obstructs them in their quest, and they pursue a direction west of north, so as to rejoin the robber's line, where, if they had been successful, they would have descended the mountains.

On the plain, they discover a new tree, with yellow blossoms and fruit like a lemon.[1] Thinking of water, they see with annoyance that the Nammoy leaves their line of route,

[1] *Danthonia lappacea.*

turning away west. The low level of the plain, though now dry enough, disquiets the leader, thinking also of the early rains and the home journey. There is no water that day, and they camp despairing of finding any, when Mitchell, with much gratitude, discovers a pool beyond the tents. There is much congratulation over this discovery, as it is a solitary pool, the only one apparently within miles. One of the men, set to his fishing, catches a dish of little crayfish, which he calls "lobsters." They shoot a kangaroo for the dogs which are in a bad way. That night there is thunder up in the mountains, and some somewhat alarming rain.

A sunny day, January 3rd, yet the castellated summits were still growling. Again there was much axing to be done and absolute absence of water. The thermometer stood at 97 degrees. Riding in advance of the expedition, Mitchell says he began to be doubtful if he should see water again, "when almost in despair I observed a small hollow" over which was a large gum-tree whose white trunk was reflected in water. To make matters worse, the wheels of one of the carts began to rattle loose, and a halt had to be made, while they were wedged. While they were cutting through the scrub, they heard voices. Presently they discover trees cut with an *iron axe*. A little further, and they find some thirty natives. Mr. White's servant, a sailor, volunteers to approach them alone, and stops them as they are retiring. They hold some converse with this man. When they seem quieter, the leader in his red coat rides forward, but at this all depart save one young unarmed man, with a pleasant face. They talk "fluently" with him, and he with them, but nothing is understood. He accurately repeats what they say. The sailor places a piece of tobacco in his mouth which he chews without a wince. He seemed, however, to appreciate rather more

a piece of bread, a halfpenny, and a tomahawk. "Mr. B.'s" desertion is much regretted, as nothing about a great river (or even the liquid in smaller supplies) is discovered.

The two following days were a close shave. The thermometer, which up till then had never been above 101 degrees, now rose to 108 degrees in the shade. After three miles in the woods they pushed north on to a great plain. Thirteen miles of this, and seeing nothing but plains to the northward, they somewhat daringly change their direction east of north, where the great mountains they have passed end, and isolated hills spring up. They had passed some ponds early in the morning, but apparently had not valued them sufficiently. In the awful heat, animals and men soon begin to ask for water. Water however is entirely absent. The Major confidently looks for a stream descending from the scattered hills towards which they drag, and when they descend into the adjacent valley, they are much put aback to find no creek. They pull up out of this place, though stifling night is approaching, and the tongues of the bullocks are lolling out of their mouths; and but another deeper valley appears. Alas, when reached, it has no water! This is a grim place, bordered on one side with horrid hills. They crack along, urging the unwilling bullocks, into yet another waterless vale, under a mountain, which he names Mount Fraser, and here the men are left, while tireless Mitchell explores the place east and White searches north. No water, and the cattle lie groaning all night, the men near them on their backs. All night, when it should have been cooler, a hot wind rises and soughs like the breath of a demon through the dark hours. The Major starts awake in an atmosphere like a "priest's hole," thinking that some great bird has perched upon his tent, and hears the flapping of strange wings.

He says he could feel the scorching of the sun next morning, before it was risen ; and he draws a sketch of a crow sitting on a tree with its beak gaping. The beasts are got up and the party set going, all but two men who cannot move, one of whom is left lying. Man and beast struggle out of the place as though all know their danger. Two waterless miles were threaded, and they reached a sort of rise (they were still going east of north) when Mitchell succeeded in obtaining a view of the country. Some miles off, on the downward slope, there was a line of trees below some hills. The leader, with strong confidence, assures the men they will find water among this foliage. He himself gallops on. Discovering water in a creek, he hurries back to the men, and sends a kettle and a horseman to the man left behind. "The extreme heat and the fatigue of travelling could not have been borne much longer. . . . The cattle being unyoked, rushed to the stream, and in half an hour, we were all comfortably encamped. . . . We had now arrived in the country beyond the mountains which we had in vain attempted to cross, having found an open and accessible way round them ; it remained to be ascertained whether the large river into the interior, as described by the bushranger, was near ; according to him it was the first river to be met with, after crossing the range north-east by north of Tangùlda."

In any case they approach a curious event. It is remarkable that the mere word and antics of an old pirate availed to bring a search-party of serious men so far. January 6th was cooler in the morning, but they were almost immediately stopped by a wood ; in which, after cutting a way, the wheels and fittings of two carts collapsed. Two days are required for repairs, and Mitchell rides off in search of a creek for the camp. He chases a kangaroo which leads him off a flat into a watercourse, in which

is water. Here they encamp, though the quantity is barely sufficient. The scarcity of water begins to make the Major anxious about Finch, who is following their tree-marks with the spare provision cart and three men. The night rises to 90 degrees, "depriving them of sleep, weakening the animals, loosening the wheels of the vehicles, and drying up the pools; while the country smokes with fires." "No disciple of Zoroaster," says the Major, "could have made proselytes of us." They found that the heat had shrunken the wheel-spokes over an inch, but the carpenter soon had them repaired, and losing a day only, they plunge into a forest, in which they hew a road till night. They surprise a native up a tree, but he is hopeless with horror at the sight of them, and is allowed to escape. Further on they hear axes, and White's invaluable sailor-servant goes off unarmed, being at length found vis-à-vis with a gentleman of the wood, who has offered him honey before taking it to his wife and child, and indicates the presence of water both to the south and north. However, they are in trouble with it again before encamping, and the searchers, sent after it in all directions, return, at the signal-rocket, without a drop among them. Water at length is found a few miles from camp next morning, and suddenly, as they advance, remarkable signs of great inundations appear. Many fine lagoons are met with, and, amazing sight, high in the branches of great trees, there are deposits of logs, grass, and drift-wood.

"Look now," they cry, exultantly, "we must be near the course of some great river! Can it be that of George, the Robber, leading to the inland sea?" They pass pond after pond full of water-lilies. They fill their keg and kettles. Suddenly, from the top of a rise, they see before them a line of gigantic trees darkening a large stream. Mitchell gallops down upon it. It is large, but it does

not seem to the Major large enough. He beheld "a broad silvery expanse, shaded by steep banks and lofty trees." Their hopes sink. No, it cannot be. There is no current. It flows west, not north-west. And when Mitchell attempts to ford it, the water barely covers the ankles of his horse. In a few seconds he decides this is not *The Barber's* river, but the River Gwydir, discovered miles east by his friend Cunningham ; and next day the expedition is off again.

Before leaving, the Major has a brush with the blacks, many of whom are seen about, streaked with white paint. Crossing the river with an attendant, he finds himself face to face with a kangaroo, who sits staring at his horse. At the same instant the animal shies at something nearer, and just beside them they see a black, with weapons at shoulder. The native whipped up a spear, and swung his arm back, when Mitchell spurred up and ran upon him, whereon he turned tail. . . . The breadth of the river here was seventy-two yards, and the height of the banks twenty-seven feet.

Mitchell is anxious for Finch, seeing the scarcity of water and the attitude of the natives, and he leaves a letter of warning for the party in a marked tree. With unconquerable persistence, he conjectures that the Gwydir will take a turn northward and join some larger river, and with this hope, he leads the party for five days along its left bank, among many lagoons of water, amid the richest country. More and more, to the great delight of the leaders, the tortuous river turns off northwards, until, from the necessity they are in for changing to the higher and harder ground trending westward, they lose sight of the Gwydir altogether, so much is its course in the direction of their hopes. The weather, however, is against them, rain falling so heavily as to clog the wheels and force them

from their course on to the higher ground, while the wheels of the crippled cart, lately tautened, swell and burst the tyres. The country, however, is rich and beautiful, and a village of native huts embowered in wattle blossom and drooping acacia, each hut built in a conical fashion with a curious single portico, gives a notion both of cleanliness and comfort, to the rain-beaten explorers. After five days of it, the country has become so muddy and treacherous, that the leader and White ride on for twenty miles in search of a road ; returning in great heart, having gone 20 degrees west of north, seen no sign of the Gwydir, and found a solid pathway. "We were delighted at the prospect of so favourable a country for extending our journey, and, not less so, with the apparent turn of the Gwydir, as indicated by its non-appearance in our ride thus far." They considered it obvious, that the more this river turned northward, the greater would be the probability that it would lead into an interior river, i.e. to a channel unconnected with that great unknown southern stream, the Darling, whose banks had been reached by an explorer, 220 miles away in the south.

Heat again, and on the banks of the ponds they find a new fruit, round, red, in flavour like a prickly pear. The prints of natives are exceedingly numerous, with the empty shells of their shell-fish and the bones of pelicans. They hear continually their cries in the woods. Noting the mark of extensive floods on the trees, Mitchell grows anxious about their return. An early season would put the carts out of action. Descending with great reluctance on to the lower levels, they make fair progress west of north for three days, the cattle bruising themselves and labouring wildly. The country is fine, the grass "like fields of new wheat," but the nights are bad and the men lie about sleepless. At last, turning due north, after thirty

miles, they hit again the Gwydir river, larger yet, but again and finally running *west* and south.

Now comes the Major's last effort. It is obvious the faith of the men in the whole thing is finally shaken. The days and nights are hot and bad. The fires of the natives are all round them. Now for a last gallant essay in optimism. It was the strange fate of Mitchell's predecessor, Oxley, repeatedly by a few miles or for want of a last effort, to fall short of some great discovery; it was Mitchell's way to make this one more effort with less reason, but a more careful imprudence. Thus, when all have had a day's rest, on January 24th, leaving White behind, he takes the less fatigued half of men and animals, and crossing the Gwydir, dashes on due north.

It was laborious work crossing the river, the cattle everywhere sinking in the mud. At ten, however, all were across, and they are distracted by the fine sight of a flock of eight emus. After crossing a rise, and passing numerous huts, they enter a beautiful plain, with trees regularly placed like an artificial park. At midday the day becomes terribly hot and the carpenter falls ill. They are compelled to encamp; though no water is to be found. Night arrives, and one of the men (medical attendant of the expedition), who is sent searching with the tea-kettle, never returns. They see a black swan, but as it is flying south, it does not add to their hopes of that phantasmal river. They struggle on next morning after a waterless night, in a slight breeze. "The Doctor," as he is called, has not returned, and though the leader is rendered somewhat uneasy, he leaves the lost man to follow the marked trees or return to Mr. White. The party are "faint with heat and thirst," and Mitchell rides here and there off the track in constant search for water. A beautiful wood of pines is passed. Groves of river shea-oak are numerous. He had hitherto supposed this

tree a pointer to the presence of moisture. He now changes his opinion. His hopes sink and he determines to make this a last day's journey, and return to the Gwydir. The prints of natives grow numerous, but they are baked hard with age. Everything in the heat seems old and of the past. At length a curious thing happens. Halting the men and grimly searching about, the Major finds in a hollow a dry mass of leaves and litter, apparently heaped up long previous. He endeavours to trace the place down, but his thirsty horse tugs the rein aside and up the bank. Mitchell, with great coolness, drops the reins upon his neck, and permits him to take him out of the hollow and through a considerable wood, where he finds a glorious pond, surrounded with greenery and grass. As for the men, dazed with privation, they will not believe the leader when he gallops in, crediting him with luring them yet further into the horrible north.

Next day, persistence still holds sway, and they are off across the lagoons, and mount a hill, whose downward slope discloses a series of yet larger ponds. The great trees that grow by rivers now appear; and "drift-timber and other fluviatile relics" cover the sides of the pools. Several of these had been weired by the natives. The romantic leader is firmly possessed of the fancy that there are signs of the presence of a great river. They pass through river shea-oak, dwarf gums, and a few pines. "At six miles the woods assumed a grander character; masses of casuarinæ enclosed open spaces covered with rich grass; and, being in some directions extensive, afforded park-like vistas, which had a pleasing effect, from the rich combination of verdure and shade, in a season of excessive heat. . . . At eight miles, our course was interrupted by a deep and rapid river. . . . I had approached within a few yards of the brink; and I was not aware of its being near, until

I saw the opposite water-worn shore, and the living waters hurrying along to the westward."

Thus a noble stream was found, and if it did not come up to *The Barber's* promise of an interior river, if a few days later, in exploring the bank, the Gwydir was found to join it, and it was seen to take a southern course, thus proving itself to be the far upper reaches of the unexplored River Darling, that was not the searchers' fault : persistence and fortitude had not returned empty. Where the Gwydir joined it, the explorer was enchanted with the noble appearance of the river, being all that the old pirate had sung or said of it. "I now overlooked, from a bank seventy feet high, a river as broad as the Thames at Putney ; and on which the goodly waves, perfectly free from fallen timber, danced in full liberty."

* * * *

While the course of the river was still doubtful, it was Mitchell's intention to explore it in a boat, and this the men were immediately set to work constructing. White and the carts were sent for, a stockade built, and things set thoroughly in train for an examination of the country, when all these preparations were cut short by the arrival of Finch, with one companion, a tale of massacre, and the entire loss of provisions. This meant a serious blow, and the return (for which there was now a bare sufficiency of food) must immediately be made.

The attack on Finch's party and murder of two men (one being Bombelli, Mitchell's returning messenger) had occurred just where the expedition itself had experienced the grimmest need of water—under Mount Fraser. Thus Mitchell's fears were verified. Finch there found himself in the worst way for thirst. His horse died, and with it some of the bullocks. He was thus compelled

to make two or three journeys to the ponds with the stores. When they were all safe, he found he had not enough animals now to follow with them. Thinking the Major was not far in front, he hurried off with one of the men in pursuit. He soon found he was further behind the expedition than he thought, and having reached the Gwydir, returned, to find two bullocks quietly feeding beside the rifled stores and murdered men. Thereafter, with a little pork and flour, and never a fire at night, Finch and his companion found their way through.[1]

There were some curious occurrences at the river before the retreat. One of the most expert bushmen of the party, on going after the animals, loses himself, and fearing the natives had taken him, the leader rides after him all day. The man returns at night. Another, "the Doctor," who had been earlier lost, and turned up again with Mr. White, with a story of detention by the natives, is set upon by a young attendant, who accuses him of "having been a gentleman at home." "The Doctor," a strikingly handsome man, thereafter is seen camping by himself, by his own fire, and presently a curious coincidental illness brings the other under his mercy. With regard to the boat, there is great difficulty in finding "pine" for her completion, but when this is done, she is finished to a plank —only to be sunk and abandoned in the deepest part of the river. One wonders if any have looked for her remains. Here, too, a curious insect is discovered that "growls like a dog," and a fish that groans when lifted from the water. They were not, of course, at first uneasy about the natives. One night a fire-stick is seen. On January 27th a sudden snorting and straining among the horses draws the attention of the camp to the presence of a dozen black men on the opposite bank. A small native dog is killed by their dogs

[1] Two unruly men had been sent back.

and secretly buried. However, a white man, swimming after a duck, amuses the natives vastly and breaks the ice, when they enter the camp. Here, as yet unconnected with massacre, they are allowed to do as they will, showing great politeness, for a long time sitting in the sun before requesting to be allowed to move into the shade ; secreting under their cloaks, it must be confessed, a few small articles ; but showing themselves very crestfallen when discovered. However, after the arrival of Finch, "our feelings towards the aborigines were very different," and they were not allowed to approach.

They were now thoroughly shy of the natives, and looked forward with some apprehension to the journey over the country behind, 100 miles of which was subject to flooding, and as they now knew, thickly peopled. The wheels of the vehicles were in a bad way, and it was not till the afternoon of February 7th that they were repaired sufficiently to allow departure. All went well for that day, and having started the retreat at three o'clock, they reached at nightfall the ponds before visited. Between these and the Gwydir, though a two days' journey, there was no water, and the leader takes the twenty-three miles in one day rather than risk another waterless night. They had hardly started when a cart broke down, but White, left behind to effect repairs, overtook them before evening. The tracks of their northern journey are now nearly obliterated by the footprints of natives. They near the river as the sun goes down, and on all sides, over the trees, are the signal fires of the blacks. One single, piercing "cooee" fills them with misgiving. As the natives seem moving all about them, the leader decides to make across the river, towards a high and secure bivouac ; and the exhausted beasts are lashed and goaded through the moonlit water. One of the carts stuck in the mud, and the

others were abandoned for the night. Beasts and men were exhausted by their sixteen hours' day, but all were grateful to the Major when they were waked next day by a wild shouting and saw the opposite bank alive with natives. The men were armed and painted over the body with white streaks, and they swarmed roaring "in a most violent passion" over the carts. However, the explorers completely dominate them from their bivouac, and several brave fellows who are sent across to prevent them injuring the carts, somehow turn their anger to laughter. Their special fury against Mitchell (or his red uniform), to whom a few of them approach across the water (among them the man who had formerly tried to spear him) nearly leads to the use of his pistol, which Mr. White prevents by timely pointing out that they are not vicious, but seem angry because they are not understood. The explorers conclude there is a "corrobberee" in progress and they are being invited. It is marvellous the coolness with which these men are treated. However, no foolish risks are taken, and when about noon the enemy go off with presents, promising to return, Mitchell has the carts rescued in a jiffy, and "the Doctor" posted with a musket to keep them sternly at a distance. A final rocket persuades them finally to remove.

That day the beggared carts are again wedged up, and on the following, changing the route of their advance to puzzle the blacks, they accomplish a short cut, saving a day's journey. At these ponds, named "Rodrigo" after the battle-ground of his youth, a curious and beautiful incident occurs, surely one of the most beautiful in Australian exploration. They had struggled out of swamps on to better ground, and the leader, not quite certain where he was, suddenly recognized the reeds and parklike scenery of Rodrigo Ponds. He was in advance, the evening was

quiet,[1] and full of doubt as he was for the safety of all, he foresaw a less anxious night in the resplendent sunset above the fires and the twilight peace of the landscape. He had pulled in his horse when he distinctly heard a woman singing. "The soft sounds, so expressive of tranquillity and peace, were in perfect unison with the scene around. Nothing could have been more romantic, nevertheless I could most willingly have dispensed with the accompaniment at that time, so associated were all our ideas of the natives with murder and pillage. When my men came up, I directed them to give a "hurrah," in hopes that it would put the party, whoever they might be, to flight. Yet, after a cheer as rough as English throats could well utter, the sweets train, to my surprise, continued. . . ." A little later, proceeding with White to see whom these unwelcome neighbours might be, the two gentlemen come upon some young men as well as women, whose actions are curiously languid, and who, white as the strangers are, give them not the slightest attention. It was not till months afterwards, when interviewing *The Barber* in the hulk, that the old robber, imitating the notes of the girl's song, told him it was a dirge of death, and it was the custom of the mourners to "seem inattentive" to the presence of all.[2]

For the next seven days, till they free themselves of the woods, the blacks dog them like wolves. The men sleep with their arms in their hands. One or two, faint with poor sustenance, lag in the rear, and one saves himself by a kind of instinct from a stone-axe waving above his head. The dogs are on their last legs and are vanishing one by one. A little terrier named "Captain" is very clever at foraging

[1] The hour of the assault at Rodrigo, as is well known, was a resplendent calm eve.

[2] The explorer notes with quotation, that the same custom prevailed among the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans.

for himself and his companion, "the Doctor," catching rats, mice, bandicoots, and lizards. He now, however, attacks a deaf-adder, and dies. They have time to note the pretty sight of swarms of little birds with red beaks which nest in the very tops of a curious tree bearing flower and fruit.[1] They suddenly rejoice in the re-discovery of a guiding star in the shape of one of the summits of the great mountains, and though the inland natives in great force are moving along on either side of them, and though in front of them are the plains-men impudent with massacre, they know that the plains themselves are near. On the evening of February 12th they emerge in a hot wind upon the plain, and in turning, prepared to retaliate on the inland natives, are relieved to find that they do not leave their woods.

The great hills are now in view, reminding the leader of Teneriffe. He decides to save ten days' journey by a dash across to their last camp on the Nammoy. There is a lot more water on the low plains, and immediately the hot wind goes and rain begins to make them a sea of mud. They are delayed at one pond for three days unable to move upon the mud, sinking to their knees inside their tents. The carts are got across the ponds by yoking all the cattle to each dray. They are thankful they are free of the woods. "It was obvious, that had we got fast in the mud, or been hemmed in by inundations, we might have been harassed on one side by the natives of the Gwydir, and on the other by the plunderers of Mr. Finch's party, until we shared a similar fate." They are now again under Mount Fraser: the scene both of the massacre and their own grave difficulty. Mitchell makes a horseback excursion to the place of the dead, leaving White and eight armed men in a kind of fort. They hope to find remnants of the

[1] *Stenochilus maculatus.*

provisions, but nothing eatable is left. The bodies of the two men lie beside the solitary cart, with some saddles, and Mr. Finch's unopened hair-trunks. Sugar, tobacco, and tea had been cast unknowingly about. The poor fellows are buried. Bombelli, after whom these ponds are named, had lost his precious pistol while attending to the harness, and it was found further on beside the wheel-tracks. Had he retained it, he might have saved both himself and his companion.

Late they return towards White's camp, and, as dusk falls, columns of signal smoke rise from the country behind and before them. One of the horses knocks up, and his plucky rider, "an old guardsman," volunteers to remain behind, arriving in with his mount at three in the morning. The others had reached the camp at eight o'clock, being guided thither by a rocket, "like a needle in the remote distance."

On the next day they break away from this camp, but progress is slow. That night heavy rain falls, and on February 20th they only make five miles. "The cattle at length could draw no longer, the carts sinking to the axles; by attaching a double team, however, and drawing each cart successively forward to our intended camp," they hit their old road, and have now a line of marked trees leading home. That evening they kill and eat a snake "eight inches in diameter" and seven feet long. Next day they are closer up under the mountains, through a scrub formerly axe-hewn. On the following, they reach the woods where they met the friendly young native, and again find friendly natives. These men lay their weapons down right across their path, and even offer them wives. Mitchell has great difficulty, however, in restraining his men from vengeance. The carts flounder into worse and worse mud, till the Major, in despair what course to pursue,

accepts the advice of the natives, who indicate bad ground to the front, but better to the east; and with some self-gratulation (for the men feared treachery) leads the expedition on to hard ground. That evening they reach their old lobster ponds, and on the following win safely to the River Nammoy.

Thereafter, though scurvy and dysentery attend them, they conclude their journey without accident; returning in beautiful weather about the great mountains, the nearest peak of which the Major names "Mount Forbes, after my friend Captain Forbes, 39th Regiment" (then commanding the mounted police), who in turn called the eastern summit "Mount Albuera," commemorating the bloodiest engagement of the Peninsular, in which both gentlemen had served, and in which almost every field officer was wounded. Indeed the evergreen leaves of these old laurels are to be found in many a forgotten street or outlandish gully of the Australias; with a startling mixture of the untrodden and the renowned; of old gold lace and the collarless bush, though so closely do the native names often resemble the Spanish, that you pass without a jar (even if you are quite sure which is which) from Tangùlda to Rodrigo, from Milmeridien to the Arapiles. . . . On reaching Bullaballakit, where they had discarded the boats, the Major finds his geological specimens intact in the tree where they were hidden, though not one of the letters deposited for Finch on the way up had been left in its hiding-place. Was this owing to the fathomless wood-lore of the natives, or the work of the escaped help-meet of *The Barber?* At last they pass again the solitary house of the remarkable robber, leaving it without a reflection to its startling loneliness, and meeting, a few miles beyond, a leading landowner already on his way to examine that romantic find and the new country.

"Happy were the times," says the Major, quoting the Spanish of Cervantes, "when we again saw the plains of Mùllaba, on passing through the gorge under Mount Ydire. . . . Under a sense of perfect security once more, and relieved from the anxiety inseparable from such a charge, every object within the territory of man, appeared to me tinged *couleur de rose*." It is to be recorded that nearly all the men obtained their freedom for their services, one of them, indeed, renouncing his and taking again to the prisoner's grey, that he might be allowed to accompany Major Mitchell on a subsequent expedition. As for the "Billy Bones" of this remarkable search-party, how nearly he became the "John Silver" of the next! Being recaptured, his life was spared, but petitioning to be taken by the Major on his later expedition on the River Darling, and the Major consenting, he was prevented by those who knew him better, having been heard threatening to "do for the Major" at some convenient date. Thus by a piece of prudence the tricks of the old robber were not added to the singular obstructions and the grievous loss of that adventure.

STELLA

(OF SWIFT)

I thought to-day on Poppet when she told me she supposed I was acquainted with the steward, when I was giving myself airs of being at some lord's house.—*Journal to Stella*, March 31, 1713.

I borrowed coat, boots and horse, and in short we had all the difficulties, and more than we used to have in making a party from Trim to Longfield's.—*Ibid.*, October 4, 1711.

WE take up Swift's *Journal*, wondering what this curious, sneering fellow was really like. Our mental sketch of him, gathered from Thackeray's novel, lectures, and various half-remembered sources, gives a rather frightening figure, who was often seen without his wig, bald of head and face; who had a terrible scornful way with him, and bottomlessly sneered at all and everything. He has the peculiarity of one who was not interestingly so much as frighteningly cynical. We have a hazy notion also that he raised himself in the reign of Queen Anne to a position of extraordinary ascendancy over ministers and people. We may put this down loosely to the power of his writings and the fact that he was Dean of Dublin Cathedral.

One important fact we learn is that he was not made Dean of Dublin till he was falling from power. It was plain Dr. Swift, of the Irish Rectory of Laracor, who aided and swayed the two leading Tory ministers, who emended the Queen's speech in 1713 and drafted the address in reply,[1]

[1] *Journal to Stella*, March 8, 1713.

and who was publicly thanked by the Spanish ambassador, from the Kings of Spain and France, saying they were "more obliged to him than any other man in Europe"[1] When we learn the fact that all this, with its daily touch with the highest intellectual and fashionable society in London short of Queen Anne (who never spoke to him)—that all this was done, unpaid, on a small income, from small lodgings; done by the pen, the wit, the excellent manners, the amiability, the high grim character; we see we are on much more romantic ground than we looked for, and we end by imaging this ogreish, sneerer of a pessimist liker than anything else perhaps to his own humane figure of the hero of his *Gulliver's Travels*, a tall, fine, sour, pleasant, gentlemanly fellow, riding, bathing, and walking rather athletically for one approaching middle-age, amused at the world and somewhat coarse in his manner of girding at it, in short a most amusing, mistrustful, fond sort of man who knew whom he had to deal with.

The story of Swift's *Journal*-letters to Stella may or may not be known to the reader. They were the secret letters of a clergyman of forty-three, lodging for three years in London, nominally on business as delegate for the clergymen of Ireland, to a young lady of twenty-eight, lodging in Dublin with her duenna while her friend, Dr. Swift, was absent from the Irish village, his pastorate and her dwelling-place. In a fashion almost marvellous Swift, during these three years, joined the political party which had come to power, and rose with it to a position of the highest eminence short of a seat in the British Ministry, while Stella, frequenting what might now be termed the "best Dublin society"[2] —that of the Bishops and Deans and their children, the

[1] *Journal to Stella*, December 21, 1712.

[2] Compare March 25 and June 30, 1711, and January 30, 1712, *Journal to Stella*.

Chirurgeon-General of Ireland and his family, the Military Commandant of Ireland, and at least one Irish peer—walked, rode out in her mask, played at the fashionable *Ombre*, drank the fashionable claret, ate the fashionable toasted oranges, and killed her time with growing scepticism and impatience,[1] till her secret correspondent's return as Dean of Dublin. We may be specially particular in these details of Stella's way of life during the correspondence, from a notion often held that she was an obscure young woman, of humble (indeed questionable) origin and of the status and figure of an intellectual lady's-maid.

Of the earlier, very touching history of the pair, most people know something. Young Swift, the confidential secretary of King William's old adviser Temple, late ambassador to the Hague, met with the eight years old Stella [2] in that gentleman's large household, and instructed the little girl in the rudiments of learning. Their relations seem to have been in every way as touching as might have been expected in the lonely, domineering, humorous young man, and the little, lisping, arch and pliant child. They seem to have been singularly thrown together in the great man's household; confiding in one another when they fancied him chill and stern (he could not have been very severe); and laughing, learning, and comparing health notes in sympathy.[3] The great man seems to have observed their conduct with benevolent interest, for he confided the

[1] Early in the correspondence Stella endeavours to persuade Swift to write weekly instead of fortnightly; towards the end of their separation she had not at two periods replied to him for six and seven weeks.—*Journal to Stella*, October 14, 1710, and March 22, 1713.

[2] Swift says he knew her at four years old.—*Character of Mrs. Johnson.*

[3] *Journal to Stella*, March 21, 1712.

young lady to Swift's guardianship at his death,[1] as he left, at the same event, his works to the famous Swift to publish, which he would hardly have done to one of Swift's integrity, and memory for a slight, if he had much offended him.

It was after an absence of three years, when he left his first parish, and returned at Temple's invitation to his post as secretary, young Swift found Stella grown a most beautiful girl of fifteen, of a loveliness which he afterwards balanced and compared with that of the two celebrated beauties (perhaps the most celebrated of their time), his friends Lady Ashburnham[2] and Mrs. Floyd.[3] One sees her, rather delicate in health, black-haired, vivacious, roguish, and full of sense. Macaulay, in his history, speaks of Stella almost as if she were in the position of a waiting-maid of Temple's household, as he speaks of Swift as one of the upper servants, and indeed this much disputed passage could hardly be rightly stated, unless they were servants of the Cinderella pattern, Swift taking the orders of the household in the absence of the family and once representing his master at the Court of King William III, and Stella being brought up as a horsewoman and seeing some of the best London society.[4]

Not long after Temple's death, Swift was made private secretary to one of the Lords Justices of Ireland, but found himself mulcted of his secretaryship on arrival in Dublin,

[1] Which would seem to disprove the well-known supposition that both were his children.

[2] *Journal to Stella*, June 27, 1711.

[3] *Ibid.*, October 12, 1711.

[4] "One of the most beautiful, graceful and agreeable young women in London."—*Character of Mrs. Johnson*, Swift.

"The beauty, the sparkling wit, the liveliness of Esther Johnson . . . provided her with opportunities of mixing with the fashionable world. . . . She was known in society."—*Life of Dean Swift*, Craik.

remaining however with the Judge, Lord Berkeley and his family, as chaplain, and earning as a wag and wit a life-long affection. While here, losing a rich deanery which he perhaps pre-anticipated, he was made rector of the considerable parish of Laracor near the town of Trim, and it was to this village that Stella moved at his invitation, with her life-long friend and companion Mrs. Dingley, not long after Temple's death.

The beautiful young horsewoman of nineteen, bequeathed £1,000 and some Irish property by Temple, appears also to have enjoyed, with her companion Mrs. Dingley, a small allowance from Swift,[1] in whose masterful hands she seems, to a certain restricted extent, to have entrusted the management of her affairs. Here in Laracor, lodging with a neighbouring rector, or, when Swift was absent, in the Laracor parsonage,[2] Stella dwelt with Mrs. Dingley for some nine years, constantly meeting Swift, and riding out in her mask in his company, but never once, so it was stated, except in the presence of a third person. No breath of scandal in this, in a sense gross-talking, hard-drinking age, seems to have ever touched the names of Stella Johnson and Dr. Swift. Is not this fact as interesting a mystery to us, who gird at petty rancour and think we know the world, as the historical mystery, weighed and discussed through ages till the paper and print of its records are figuratively threadbare, whether there was ever an actual marriage between the two!

Of their love and attachment, at least, we have the record in the *Journal*-letters,[3] from Swift to Stella, in which

[1] Swift talks of increasing their allowance on being made Dean.—*Journal to Stella*, April 23, 1713.

[2] *Life of Dean Swift*, p. 94, Henry Craik.

[3] "Love P d f r, who loves M D above all things," September 15, 1712.

Swift begins with the excuse for writing her a daily letter, that it would be interesting to read afterwards "how I passed my life when I was absent from M D this time." To some this may seem to imply expectation of imminent marriage. Here we may speculate, with what minuteness we please, among the good wishes, the scolding, the ghastly, sneering anger, the honest, frightened prayers to God for Stella's health, the little, touching, tender sentiments and endearments (in which there is almost always the doubt if they are addressed to Stella alone, or Stella united with Mrs. Dingley), here we may speculate if they were already secretly united as man and wife; if they were engaged with the intention of being shortly so united; or if his many references to their spending their lives together "in some pretty place" refer simply to a desire, as they began life alone together, to live within reach of one another ti death.

It is an idle speculation. While some of Stella's actions towards Swift seem almost domestic enough to be called wifely: her anxieties for his ailments for instance, and sicknesses in that grossest age; her impatience at his prolonged absence, and at the prospect of living at dull "Laracor all my life"; her interest in his prospective Deanery as belonging as much to her; yet her position in Dublin society, her travels to the Wexford Wells in the party of the nicest people in it[1]; her week's entertainment of Bishop Clogher and his lady in her lodgings[2]; these things and the rest point to the fact that there could never have been the minutest breath of a suspicion about the beautiful Miss

[1] See Swift's references to the Probys, Mrs. Proby's character, and that of the Chirurgeon-General. His great popularity with all.—*Journal to Stella*, June 13, 1711, and *Short Character of Thomas, Earl of Wharton*.

[2] *Journal to Stella*, March 21, 1712.

Stella Johnson—nay, even though she was the recognized business agent for Swift in his absence from Dublin.[1] There must surely have been something worthy of much respect in the character and appearance of both Stella and Swift that scouted all suspicion as to their relations : something in the manner of the beautiful, weak-eyed, intellectually-minded girl and the impressive-looking, humorous, bullying, genial man.

But it is little short of idle speculation. Unless some new evidence be discovered, unless some single one of Stella's letters in reply to Swift is found, we may speculate as we please, we will hardly come nearer than to say with such authorities as Sir Walter Scott or Henry Craik, that he concludes there must have been a secret marriage, or with Foster, the biographer of Dickens, Monk Mason, and the other weighty host of them, that "he can find no evidence of a marriage that is at all reasonably sufficient." And when we have gone through them all ; considered that awful suggestion that they discovered their poor selves to be brother and sister[2] ; and arrived again in much the same condition of doubt with which we started, we may turn with a shrug for a parting thought to Mrs. Dingley, their life-companion, and her reply to those who told her of the talk of a secret marriage after Stella was dead : how, with a smile, she answered, "it was an idle tale founded on suspicion."[3] At least she intended the secret should remain one.

Having informed ourselves of this, and seen what Stella

[1] She seems to have had his trust above all people. See the many commissions entrusted to her judgment, the secret letter to Sterne, the Deanery preliminaries, in *Journal*.

[2] *Swift, the Mystery of his Life and Love*, James Hay.

[3] From the testimony of Swift's *last Physician* in Hawkesworth's *Life of Swift*.

was doing up to the end of the *Journal*-letters and Swift's return as Dean of Dublin, we may devote a few lines to their association after the much looked-for reunion. Here there is little enough to tell. Though the poems of Stella and Swift give us some idea of the jollity and Vailima-like associations of their intellectual circle, Swift's biographers, with singular accord, turn off at this point to discuss his struggles with the young girl, Vanhomrigh, who threw herself at his head in London (flopping down and proposing to him), and afterwards pursued and pestered him in Ireland, dying eventually of her perverse passion. They appear to forget Stella, in this most fascinating and persistent creature, who seems to have been specially endowed by the Devil with every allurement and attribute likely to ensnare the self-torturing Doctor in his moral aim. We are at length returned to Stella where the young Miss Vanhomrigh wrote her a letter, asking, it is said, if she were Swift's wife; and Stella despatched the letter to Swift; and Swift severed all relations with Miss Vanhomrigh in a dread interview heralding her death by a few weeks. But we meagrely learn concerning this and the following fourteen years of Stella's life (for no letter remains of any further correspondence between them) that they met in Stella's lodgings and the Deanery with their old circle and the many eminent men who visited both places,[1] that they rode together again at Laracor, that Stella nursed him through some illness somewhat at the expense of her own health,[2] and that Swift was most guarded in their association up to the very grave in which they both were buried, even providing carefully against the accident of Miss Stella Johnson dying in the Deanery[3]: by which pathetic precaution we

[1] See Bishops named in *Character of Mrs. Johnson.*

[2] See poem quoted in Thackeray's *English Humorists.*

[3] "I would have your advice, if they come to town, that they

may gather just how fast were the bonds of their affection still.

Some may read a secret coldness into the lives of Stella and Swift in these last fifteen years; but despite of the legends of a secret marriage, of Stella's appeal to Swift to acknowledge her as his wife, of sad, tragic confrontings in the Deanery, and such romances littering their grave like waxen flowers, there is little among the facts handed down (see the warm poems to each other) to hint at any greater estrangement than might temporarily have arisen between two facing worldly ills and held by so frail a bond.[1] Swift's touching *Character of Mrs. Johnson*, begun on the night of her death, shows, we think, no remorse as from one who held himself for any reason to blame, either for neglect or impatience; while his tragic terror at report of her illness, or at last when faced by the certainty of their separation, makes him question whether it is worth while struggling longer against his own malady of the brain. Was he to live only that he might lose all that made life worth living? "What am I to do in this world? I am able to hold up my sorry head no longer." No, no, indeed, though it may seem strange that during his later long absences in England Swift never wrote another *Journal* to Stella, in the little journal he made to comfort himself when wind-bound and wander-

should be lodged in some airy, healthy part, and not in the Deanery: which besides, you know, cannot but be a very improper thing for that house to breathe her last in."—Letter of Swift to Worral, July 15, 1726.

[1] It is scarcely possible, in considering a secret marriage, to pass the inconsistency of Stella's will, written a month before death, in which she begins, "In the name of God. Amen. I, Stella Johnson, Spinster," with the high, moral, exalted picture of her, given by Swift, in *Character of Mrs. Johnson*: viz. "From which [the principles of honour and virtue] she never once swerved in any one action or moment of her life."

ing on the rocks at Holyhead before his last voyage, there appear the pathetic words concerning her to whom he wrote the former letters: "I shall say nothing about the suspense I am in about my dearest friend." [1] This from one who excelled in lasting friendships with celebrated men and women.

* * * *

According to the *Journal* Stella must have been quite wonderfully handsome. There are many references to her pretty, saucy, roguish looks, while Swift, as we said above, wrote in October 1711, of "the famous Mrs. Floyd of Chester, who I think is the handsomest woman (except Stella) that ever I saw." Yet again he notes in June 1711 and February 1712, "Lady Ashburnham is something like Stella," and, at the crowded Court for Queen Anne's birthday, when he went to see the dresses, "Lady Ashburnham looked the best in my eyes." Of her actual features the *Journal* tells no more, but that she had a little nose, and that her eyes—those "radiant eyes" of the poems—over which Swift was never tired of condoling, were weak. From another source, however, a lady relates how one who saw her by accident as she was going in to dine with Swift's circle, told how struck she was "by the beauty of her countenance, and particularly with her fine dark eyes. She was very pale, and looked pensive, but not

[1] To those interested in the question of some disagreement (owing perhaps to Swift's prolonged absence) having interfered with an intended marriage, the passage about "the Dean" and "the girdle" in the last *Journal*-letter but one may seem peculiar. Does Swift mean by this jocular (!) remark that Stella might have had him for her husband if she had but written him the "good-tempered" letter begged for in the preceding letter. Also see the hope expressed in the *Journal*-letter of December 21, 1710, that they might "never keep Christmas asunder again."

melancholy, and her hair was blacker than a raven." [1] Her eyes, so the *Journal* tells, were strained by her writing, which *en passant* was inclined to enlarge itself as it descended the page, for which she was designated "awkward slut." As for her writing itself, it so closely resembled Swift's (somewhat to the resentment of her tutor of the preceding fourteen years) that the Prime Minister of England, who saw her letter in the Coffee House, asked if he had taken to writing to himself.

But the boot of strong character and opinionativeness was not all on Swift's foot—as may be seen indeed in that poem to Stella in which Swift insists, while dwelling on her perfect qualities, in recording her "one fault," her perverseness under blame. A few lines from the *Journal*-letters will show the vivacity, and sensible self-assertiveness, which had grown up with the girl's strange training. "Well," he writes, in February 1712, "well, I never saw such a letter in all my life; so saucy, so journalish, so sanguine, so pretending, so everything." In January of the same year, she is told she is a good girl for not being angry when he tells her of spelling errors. In May, when he had been so ill, he endeavours to soften some coldness at his prolonged absence: "I believe I have lost credit with you in relation to my coming over"; and in July, "I wish I had never come here, as often and as heartily as Poppet." In October 1711 and December 1712 we read of Stella in the position of adviser. "Saucy Stella used to jeer me for meddling with other folk's affairs," and "I remember your reprimanding me for meddling in other people's affairs. . . ." Again (January 1712) "I believe Stella would have laughed at me, to see a suspicious fellow like me over-reached."

[1] Mrs. Delany, *Life of Swift*, Mitford, Aldine Edition of Swift's poems. See also verses on Stella's forty-third birthday, containing the line, "Adieu bright wit and radiant eyes."

Lastly, in October 1710, we see how Swift has been spiritedly tutored: "I think I am civiler than I used to be," he says; "I have not used the expression of 'you in Ireland' and 'we in England' as I did when I was here before to your great indignation." For one final quotation we notice Stella's rather rebuking criticism of Swift's poem of *Sid Hamet's Rod:* "that an enemy should like it, and a friend not; and that telling the author would make both change their opinions." [1]

Out of these extracts we find something of Stella's individuality. If in one or two letters it is plain Swift is restraining her exaltations, it is just as clear from others that she knew how to return the compliment. But these things are rarities; the general feeling of the letters being harmonious, humorous, or half-crazed with an attachment that does not leave their writer even when asleep: their tone changing not from Stella's replies but from Swift's experiences. On this point of tone it is interesting to see how from 1710 to 1713 the letters change their gross, oath-strewn beginning to an almost modern refinement as their writer associates closer and yet closer with the great people of the age, dropping again to the dark sardonic as the formal reward of his services is withheld from him, from which it is guided and helped towards the determined and triumphing end by the tender use of the infant prattle of a child. Having no letters of Stella's we do not know if it were she who initiated this reminding tenderness of her own arch prattle, and Swift's broken language was merely an answer to her piping, or if it was entirely Swift's own fancy to resurrect her early speech. In any case, by its means, she is often informed, without much arrogance, that he is "velly akkry" with Stella, or that he is very tired and will "go seep a dozey," that Stella and Madame Dingley are

[1] *Journal to Stella*, December 15, 1710.

"two dee logues," or that "I rove Stella bettle zan ever, if possibbere." Not indeed that our quotations give any idea of the touching nature of some of these lisping passages—that written in October 1712, for example, when sick Stella escaped the fever supposed by some to presage the plague, or that on March 31, 1712, when he deprecates that he is concealing something of his own illness. For the grim, humorous, grisly age in which she lived (age of flattened noses and sword-skewered chairs) Stella seems to have been a brave creature, at twenty-four shooting a burglar dead with her own hand, and being inclined to walk the streets when other women thought it wiser to sit shuddering behind the windows of their coach.[1] Swift says, in one of his poems, that she was born with a man's nobility. She was, however, averse from the terrible duelling practices of the time, so well recorded in Thackeray's novel, and refused to be interested in Swift's gossip of such; nor did her pluck prevent her from expressing her anxiety for Swift when the *Mohocks* were at their ghastly, if salutary, larking in the London night. There is not much more to be learned of Stella from the *Journal*-letters, but a few general facts, among them that she studiously read the literature Swift sent her and asked for more; that she walked, rode, drank her half-pint of wine, and loved china-shops with a virtuoso's love; that she played an excellent game of cards with her Deans and their wives, if losing, sometimes, it would seem, a little too much of her savings. But, laying the *Journal* aside, in Swift's *Character of Mrs. Johnson*, if its extraordinary eulogy makes it seem a little inconsistent with the generally good-natured scolding of the *Journal*, there are some most lovely and pleasant things about this interesting woman, the companion of gentleman in "camlet and red

[1] *Journal to Stella*, September 29, 1710, and *Character of Mrs. Johnson*, Swift.

velvet with silver buttons," who shaved their heads, wore black periwigs, and swore "a pox on you" by way of relieving the monotony of a letter to a young lady. Here the bereaved Dean, writing on the night Stella died, goes so far as to assert that never had there been any woman born with better gifts of the mind, or who more improved them by reading and conversation.[1] Her memory, however, was not of the best, and was impaired in the latter years of her life. Yet the Dean, as he sits writing, cannot call to mind that he ever once heard her make a wrong judgment of persons, books, or affairs. (Poor Swift, he had forgotten an old *Journal* scolding of November 8, 1710 !) Not only that, but her advice was always the best, and with the greatest freedom mixed with the greatest decency. As for her looks the beautiful creature had a gracefulness, somewhat more than human, in every motion, word, and action. Never was so happy a conjunction of civility, freedom, easiness, and sincerity. Not only was she most graceful, free, and kind, not only had her beauty and goodness gained her a dignity of place much above her standing in society, but her wit was so keen that people often wrote down the things that she said : these being seldom severe excepting when she was confronted by a vicious or loose-spoken person. Addison, the great essayist, in a single interview, saw how fine a person she was, and expressed regret that he was not remaining in Ireland, that he might have endeavoured to cultivate her friendship. About her servants the writer that night concludes, they loved and almost adored her at the same time. She would, upon occasion, treat them with freedom, yet her demeanour was so awful, that they durst not fail in the least point of respect.

Writing again of Stella on the night she was buried in

[1] The tone of Stella's poems to Swift bear out Swift's testimony to her character.

the Cathedral, within sound of the organ still muttering over her be-flowered grave, he mentions how agreeable had been her voice ; how she spoke plain words without hesitation ; being somewhat silent, however, with strange people and never insistently voluble even with her friends. If she was hasty at all, it was in her detestation of dishonour or lying in people of high station, especially the Church ; she seemed unable to forgive friends who sacrificed these things to their ambition. Indeed, she seemed better able to accept those people wanting something in modesty and good nature who had retained only the virtues of honour, truth, and liberality. And there we see, perhaps, the philosophy and, indeed, character of her tutor peeping through, coarse as was too often his way of moral expression, friend of such opposites as squinting Lady Orkney, Dean Atterbury, Bolingbroke, the Earl of Oxford, and Bolingbroke's loyal and devoted wife.

It is human in her to find (again from Swift) that she who was so brave with her horses, coaches, and pistol was somewhat timid in a boat, from some boating accident. And meanwhile we have to remember that she was never robust, and died of consumption at forty-six. We suppose it was the seeds of the same malady which so interfered with her reading and education up to fourteen years of age, if it seems to have introduced her to the friendship of some unknown physician, who taught her something of anatomy and physic, afterwards doubtless, of some use in her vigilant tending of Swift.[1] Not that her early health prevented her tutor from supplying her with some excellent mental furniture. He writes that she was well grounded in the Greek legends and history, and knew much of the history

[1] You to whose care so oft I owe
That I'm alive to tell you so.
(Poem of Swift to Stella on her birthday.)

of both England and France. (She spoke also the French language perfectly.) All the best books of travel she had read and she had studied the philosophies of Plato and Epecurus, comprehending the errors of the latter. She was well grounded in political and religious economy and could discuss Hobbes, the author of the day, on these sciences. She was even an excellent, if severe, critic on the elusive thing called "Style," both in poetry and prose, and was in the habit of transcribing the best passages from the books she read. If, however, a severe critic of books Stella was not of men, and this angel of help seemed entirely devoid of precocity, or arrogance of knowledge. She was both tender and skilful in her social manners. We have seen, indeed, what she liked best in people, and what she put up with best in life, but if she had one particular detestation more than another it was for two kinds of persons, one being your "covetous" man or woman, with whom our own age has not been unfamiliar, and another, hardly less unpleasing, the man, peculiar to that day, who endeavoured to employ double meanings in a drawing-room. Stella's speech to one of these all-conquering *beaux*, while her companion women agitated their fans in a vague flutter, is sufficiently well known.

Much more we might enlarge upon, much more submit of this grim catalogue of a dead woman's virtues—of her manner of confirming an arrogant person in a wrong argument, of her pretty definition of the gifts she loved to give, of her secret of being admired without jealousy, of her simplicity of dress—yes, one might almost say that with all these attributes she might even have, hardly knowing it, been a moral force of her time, so widespread become such efforts with and against the tide, so enlarged that peculiar mixture of power, charity and judgment which relaxes the defences of those convinced of it. How pleasant it is to read, among

all these acquirements, that "she preserved her wit, judgment, and vivacity to the last!" The lonely man concluded his all too short duty to her memory with a touch upon the second of these qualities; explaining that certain persons (he particularized women) expressed disappointment, on being introduced to the celebrated Miss Johnson, that they had heard her say nothing memorable, hinting she was but a woman like themselves; but that men knew at once they were understood by her from the judgment in her remarks and questions.

Here we have almost all that seems known of Swift's beautiful Stella. Swift seems never tired of declaring that it was he (gross-writing, scolding fellow) who indued this gifted being with the principles of honour and virtue, and indeed the woman who was buried in his grave herself echoes him in this:

> When men began to call me fair,
> You interposed your timely care:
> You early taught me to despise
> The ogling of a coxcomb's eyes;
> Show'd where my judgment was misplaced;
> Refined my fancy and my taste.[1]

A strange remark! Does he mean to imply then, and are we to accept, that the result of his satire, laudation, fibs, mud, sneers, jibes, tenderness, and thundering was the "extraordinary person" drawn in his *Character of Mrs. Johnson*? So it seems. Swift was her mentor from infancy, in an age which seemed to think that to be gross in expression was to be honest in heart, and in spite of the troubles on his own ship, she bore him company in calm and storm, reflecting in her beauteous canvas, under the com-

[1] (From Stella's poem to Dr. Swift on his birthday, November 30, 1721.)

passion and the tenderness of her woman's colours, much that was excellent in his guidance. Poor Swift, in his *Journal*-letters, with his sneering and his laughter so like the utterances of Hamlet that a few might, with little incongruity, be included in Shakespeare's drama: Doctor Presto,[1] abroad with Lord Bolingbroke in Hyde Park to see the new race-horse, and hoping they are unseen together by the Duke of Marlborough who passes in his coach[2]; Statesman Swift, dining with the French and Spanish ambassadors before the peace of Utrecht;[3] Dean Swift, at odds with his chapter, and erecting tombs to the forgotten in St. Patrick's Cathedral—Swift the tutor of this being, Swift the Hamlet of this Ophelia! He might laugh at and banter her out of her faults as Hamlet laughs at life and women; he might, in his pain, acknowledge himself to be "a brute" and beg her yet to pity; but he was careful to let through also the finer things of his being, and these she cherished in her bosom. Somewhere in his writings he says of a certain Bishop that he was "abounding in that sort of knowledge and goodness which makes religion beautiful." In a word her Hamlet knew, as few else, what makes life and religion beautiful. Here the querulous wrestler was silent; here spoke the tutor and life's friend (whatever else the bond) of little Stella. If the great secret of her life remains something of a mystery, and in spite, as Thackeray said, "of certain drawbacks," it is capable of an explanation as innocent and pathetic as the lisping prattle in which they held such tender intercourse.

NOTE.—Appended is one of Swift's *Journal*-letters (G. A. Aitken's Edition, Methuen), June 30, 1711: ". . . I have now

[1] "Presto," an Italian nickname for Swift.
[2] *Journal to Stella*, February 25, 1712.
[3] *Ibid.*, February 20, 1713.

got little M D's letter before me, N. 16, no more, nor no less, no mistake. Dingley says, 'This letter won't be above six lines'; and I was afraid it was true, though I saw it filled on both sides. The Bishop of Clogher writ me word you were in the country, and that he heard you were well: I am glad at heart M D rides, and rides, and rides. Our hot weather ended in May, and all this month has been moderate: it was then so hot I was not able to endure it; I was miserable every moment, and found myself disposed to be peevish and quarrelsome: I believe a very hot country would make me stark mad. Yes, my head continues pretty tolerable, and I impute it all to walking. Does Stella eat fruit? I eat a little; but I always repent, and resolve against it. No, in very hot weather I always go to town by water; but I constantly walk back, for then the sun is down. And so Mrs. Proby goes with you to Wexford: she is admirable company; you'll grow plaguy wise with those you frequent. Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Proby! take care of infection. I believe my two hundred pounds will be paid, but that Sir Alexander Cairnes is a scrupulous puppy: I left the bill with Mr. Stratford, who is to have the money. Now, Madam Stella, what say you? you ride every day; I know that already, sirrah; and, if you ride every day for a twelvemonth, you would be still better and better. No, I hope Parvisol will not have the impudence to make you stay an hour for the money; if he does, I'll *un-parvisol* him; pray let me know. O Lord, how hasty we are! Stella can't stay writing and writing; she must write and go a cock-horse, pray now. Well, but the horses are not come to the door; the fellow can't find the bridle; your stirrup is broken; where did you put the whips, Dingley? Marget, where have you laid Mrs. Johnson's ribbon to tie about her? Reach me my mask: sup up this before you go. So, so, a gallop, a gallop: sit fast, sirrah, and don't ride hard upon the stones. Well, now Stella is gone, tell me, Dingley, is she a good girl? and what news is that you are to tell me? No, I believe the box is not lost: Sterne says it is not.—No, faith, you must go to Wexford without seeing your Duke of Ormond, unless you stay on purpose; perhaps you may be so wise.—I tell you this is your sixteenth letter; will you never be satisfied? No, no, I will walk late no more; I ought less to venture it than other people, and so I was told; but I will return to lodge in town next Thursday. When you come from Wexford, I would have you send a letter of attorney to Mr. Benjamin

Tooke, bookseller, in London, directed to me; and he shall manage your affair. I have your parchment safely locked up in London.—O, Madam Stella, welcome home; was it pleasant riding? did your horse stumble? how often did the man light to settle your stirrup? ride nine miles! faith, you have galloped indeed. Well, but where is the fine thing you promised me? I have been a good boy, ask Dingley else. I believe you did not meet the fine-thing-man: faith, you are a cheat. So you will see Raymond and his wife in town. Faith, that riding to Laracor gives me short sighs, as well as you. All the days I have passed here have been dirt to those. I have been gaining enemies by the scores, and friends by the couple; which is against the rules of wisdom, because they say one enemy can do more hurt than ten friends can do good. But I have had my revenge at least, if I get nothing else. And so let Fate govern.—Now I think your letter is answered; and mine will be shorter than ordinary, because it must go to-day. We have had a great deal of scattering rain for some days past, yet it hardly keeps down the dust.—We have plays acted in our town; and Patrick was at one of them, oh, oh. He was damnably mauled one day when he was drunk; he was at cuffs with a brother-footman, who dragged him along the floor upon his face, which looked for a week after as if he had had the leprosy; and I was glad enough to see it. I have been ten times sending him over to you; yet now he has new clothes, and a laced hat, which the hatter bought by his orders, and he offered to pay for the lace out of his wages.—I am to dine to-day with Dilly at Sir Andrew Fountaine's, who has bought a new house, and will be weary of it in half a year. I must rise and shave, and walk to town, unless I go with the Dean in his chariot at twelve, which is too late: and I have not seen that Lord Peterborow yet. The Duke of Shrewsbury is almost well again, and will be abroad in a day or two; what care you? There it is now: you do not care for my friends. Farewell, my dearest lives and delights; I love you better than ever, if possible, as hope saved, I do, and ever will. God Almighty bless you ever, and make us happy together! I pray for this twice every day; and I hope God will hear my poor hearty prayers.—Remember, if I am used ill and ungratefully, as I have formerly been, 'tis what I am prepared for, and I shall not wonder at it. Yet I am now envied, and thought in high favour, and have every day numbers of considerable men teasing me to solicit for them. And the Ministry all use me perfectly

well; and all that know them say they love me. Yet I can count upon nothing, nor will, but upon M D's love and kindness.—They think me useful; they pretended they were afraid of none but me, and that they resolved to have me; they have often confessed this: yet all makes little impression on me.—Pox on these speculations! they give me the spleen; and that is a disease I was not born to. Let me alone, sirrahs, and be satisfied: I am, as long as M D and Presto are well.

Little wealth,
And much health,
And a life by stealth:

that is all we want; and so farewell, dearest M D; Stella, Dingley, Presto, all together, now and forever all together. Farewell again and again."

THE MYSTERY OF THE LOSS OF RICHARD CUNNINGHAM

(Exploring in Full Uniform—*Continued*)

IN 1835, the explorer, Mitchell, was ordered to make for the River Darling at a point where Sturt touched its bank first of Europeans in 1827, and to explore the new stream downward, in the supposition that it would be found to join the Murray through the opening seen by Sturt on his expedition down the latter stream. This meant a journey to the Darling of some five hundred miles, with another four hundred by boat or carts down the unknown river. In this expedition, in which the party, owing to the hostility of the river-tribes, failure of the cattle, and the sandy nature of the Darling's banks, was compelled to return, hardship and malignant arrogance were faced with signal cheerfulness and forbearance, and this with the strange fate of Mr. Cunningham hanging upon them from the earliest stages of their endeavour.

Richard Cunningham must, of course, not be confused with his brother Allan Cunningham, whose name stands so high in Australian annals for the first exploration of Queensland and who was then approaching his too early end. This was the younger gentleman, just come from England, to fill his brother's place of Government Botanist, and as such accompanying Major Mitchell on, for him, his first taste of the ardours and romance of Australian exploration. He appears to have been somewhat reckless for one

so new to the country—even chafing a little perhaps against the leader's veteran restraints—for the Major had repeatedly warned him against straying from the line of march and been more than once disobeyed. In the end he seems to have come to grief by this same too eager self-reliance and his confidence in a dangerous line mapped out by the Major with a view to cutting off considerable country and hitting a distant bulge of the nearest river. In a word, the Major's dash proving disastrous, and the Major having gone off on one of his desperate gallops after water, Cunningham galloped after him, but failing to overtake him, continued on *along the line mapped out by the leader for the next day's dash;* whereas the Major had turned off at right angles looking for the river where it was likely to be nearest. The Major hit the Bogan River in a few hours, and soon had the expedition safely watered. But Cunningham (missing, or careless of, the Major's tree-marks) had gone on into the waterless unknown.[1]

At night he had not yet returned, and all were a little anxious as they could only conclude he had gone the whole day without water. He had started after Mitchell early in the morning, somewhat before they crossed a dry creek, and they had not a notion just where he had missed the track. It did not occur to them that he might have gone on where Mitchell turned off almost at right angles along the creek, for Mitchell had marked the turning upon the trees. The later inference was, of course, that he had galloped unnoticing past Mitchell's turn, suddenly found the trees unmarked, and been unable to recover the friendly marks. . . . However, nobody had time to be unduly anxious, for on the first night water was not at once come on in the river, and it was dark before the huddling cattle

[1] Portions of this river had been explored by Dixon, when in flood. Mitchell was exploring in a drought.

(two days waterless) could be driven to it. Again on the following morning, the cattle were once more wild with thirst, and the expedition must be hurried along to a river camp, where the water was again difficult to find. It was night before they were again settled, but they thought, with justice, that the lost man, retracing his way towards the creek, could hardly fail to hit the cart-tracks along the creek-side. Poor Cunningham *did* return that day sixteen miles back upon them, but halted within a mile actually, of the track, and, turning off in a vain search for water in the wrong direction, continued back parallel along the track, and never further from it, till he passed that first right-angle turn and fell again in pathless bush.

So strange and bewildered was part of Cunningham's behaviour that it has been inferred by some that he had come to some kind of mischief with his horse. After retracing his steps on the second day and unfortunately turning off just a mile from the road, he, as we have shown, proceeded for fifteen miles away from help along the creek, always in sight of the great blue-gums that grew in it. Yet not once did he examine its dry bed, though Mitchell had carefully tutored him that these gums pointed to water. Had he done so he would have found the pools which Mitchell discovered there while trying to find him. In this direction, Cunningham rode on during the rest of the second day; then, turning a mile away from the creek, perhaps desperately seeking water, spent the night by a dry pond under some trees, to various of which he had uncertainly tied his horse. In the early part of this day he had been retracing his steps, in a searching zigzag course, some seven miles to the north of the outward track on the day previous. Had he continued it fair he would have hit the road. On the first day he had gone thirty miles without water, on the second about the same, a considerable part of that time in much anxiety

of mind, if no worse. Both horse and man, as with the dog that followed them, must now have been in grave distress.

On the third morning Mitchell, who had unfortunately sprained his ankle in the creek, arranged a more systematic search. One party was sent back along the cart-track, another (led by "the Doctor") in a direction at right-angles to it, with orders to turn inward and junction with the first. Mitchell himself, with his sprained ankle, took a line exactly bisecting these two routes, his aim being to drive out ten miles and at length make a sort of circle round the wandering man, driving him, as it were, back towards the creek-crossing. Here is a strange instance of the explorer's prescience or judgment. His line—the line he rode—as it curved out its ten miles like the passage of a rocket, exactly hit in direction the line on which Mr. Cunningham was returning that day from his second camp; and, at the point where Mitchell began to curve in (thinking he had the botanist inside him), the while cooeeing continually, that point poor Cunningham exactly hit, finding the directions left there for him by Mitchell.

Now came a mysterious occurrence. The Major's message ran as follows: "Dear Cunningham, these are my horse's tracks, follow them backwards, they will lead you to our camp, which is north-east of you. T. L. Mitchell." Cunningham appears to have again changed his mind during the second night, returning to his first mistake that the expedition had proceeded outward following its original plan; either *that*, or following some appearance in the prospect of the presence of water, he first returned four miles due north and then, again reverting to his later opinion, or hearing a faint echo of Mitchell's shouts, began to curve in again in a wide sweep towards the camp (five miles), crossing on the way a third dry creek, and with a

sudden drop finally two miles east, as if he again half-heard Mitchell as the leader retreated towards the creek; yet once again, not able to believe his ears, lunging with an inexplicable turn into the unknown for two miles, so, by extraordinary accident, hitting the post holding Mitchell's letter.

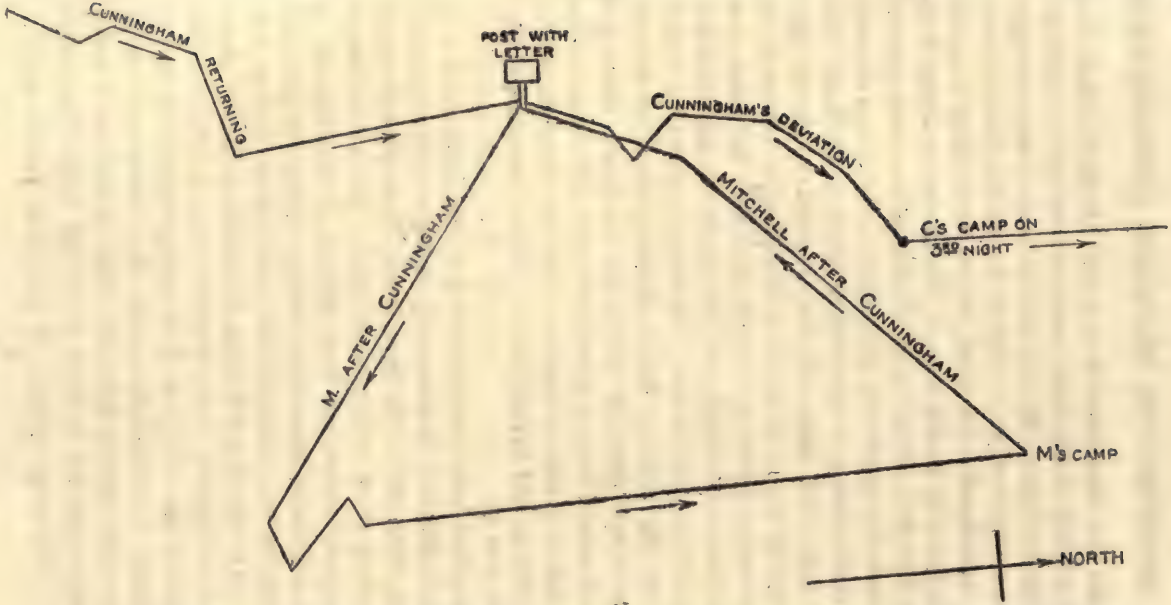
Here followed a mystery. Heaven knows the condition the poor gentleman was in by this time! Two days and two nights and the half of a third day without water or food. He had not yet abandoned his horse (which had gone one day longer than himself without water), but for much of this day he had been leading it. It is quite likely his mind was barely able to reason out the problem which Mitchell now unconsciously laid before him. Grimly deciphering Mitchell's letter, he finds himself told to follow the leader's track backward to the camp which is "north-east" of him. He does, however, an unaccountable thing. He is evidently bewildered by something. When he has followed Mitchell's track back for nearly two miles, he takes a fragment of paper, cuts with his knife the letters N.E. upon it, and leaves it in his glove. Proceeding, he a short while after leaves the tracks he has been told to follow and turns exactly in the opposite direction (i.e. north-west), recovering himself, however, in a mile or two and curving in again north and then north-east. Night catches him feeling his way north-east some miles off Mitchell's tracks. "It is impossible," writes the leader, "to account for this fatal deviation, even had night, as most of the party supposed, overtaken him there."

We can only suppose Cunningham was bewildered with some circumstance. For some reason, soon after reading Mitchell's directions, he cut the letters N.E. on a piece of paper. What could he mean by this message? We fear that, very excited in his mind, a slight discrepancy of his leader was distressing him. Mitchell wrote: "If you follow

my tracks you will reach the camp at the north-east." Cunningham, following back the thrice valuable footprints, discovers by his compass that they are not leading north-east, but nearly *north*. He is in a quandary what to do; whether to obey Mitchell and follow the tracks anywhere with the chance of their being the wrong ones, or whether to disobey directions and make across country directly to the camp " which is N.E. of you." In a condition of grave suffering, feeling all that hangs on his decision, he manages to cut the letters N.E. as he broods over the matter. A little further on, *just before Mitchell's track curved in on the home line direct north-east*, Cunningham made his fatal deviation north-west. He must either then have missed the track where Mitchell's turned off in the stated direction (the searchers twice lost all trace of Cunningham during the search), or his craving for water was so great that he found it necessary to deviate from the track in search for it, meaning to curve round and hit it further on, which he exactly did, camping for the third night where he would have hit Mitchell's track had it continued in the northerly direction it had taken when he forsook it.

It is of melancholy interest that in the above deviation from the track, he passed within a quarter of a mile of his first night's camp, thus completing his second circle since he was lost. It is quite possible, if the discovery would have been little use to him, that he recognized the place of his first bivouac as a lost man.

It would appear from Cunningham's movements from the first, that he was continually haunted by the fear that he was behind the expedition, and now again at this, his third camp, where, returning to the line of the tracks he found *none*, he appears to have fatally made up his mind to make due north, in an attempt to hit the river at a place where Mitchell would be likely to have moved his camp. This,



MOVEMENTS OF MITCHELL & CUNNINGHAM ON 3RD DAY.

from sketch by Mc Larmer
'Expeds. in Eastern Aust.'

and the fact that when he last saw Mitchell's tracks they were guiding nearly north, must account for his again disobeying directions. He had now been three days and nights without food or water. Two straps and Mr. Cunningham's whip were found at this camp, besides the mould of Cunningham's figure in the dry grass.[1] His horse now either broke away from him or was set adrift, for its footprints appeared alone and it strayed away many miles ; returning eventually as if endeavouring to recover him before it fell dead. The poor dog, it is supposed, the famished gentleman here cooked and eat, as its tracks were no longer seen with his. His footsteps, firmer and longer than they had been, were traced from here, making with great haste and set determination north by the compass. He seemed scarcely to trouble to avoid the bushes. Never deviating from his line for six and a half miles, he hits at last the Bogan River, and those anxiously tracing his footsteps find them pause in the mud before a pool of water. Alas, these were found ten days after he had stepped here ! Where was the lost man by this time ?

Delay had been occasioned among the searchers, first by the great difficulty in discovering any sign of Cunningham ; second, when the tracks were found, by losing them again or running short of food and water. In this connection the explorer points out how difficult is the watering of horses with small amounts of water, they going mad with anger at the next horse finishing what they consider their share. On the day following Mitchell's rocket-like curve after Cunningham, "the Doctor" and another are sent back along the road, the latter saying repeatedly that he saw where Cunningham turned off. These men return in three days, having found the track of the lost Botanist, but been compelled to leave it through lack of provisions.

[1] The straps appeared to have been trodden off.

Mitchell himself, regardless of his sprained foot, had proceeded the day after the others left, on a three days' search on a line between the road and his previous day's ride, but returned unsuccessful, having passed, as he afterwards found, within a mile of Cunningham's second camp. He discovers water in the large creek, and interviews some natives, but cannot make them understand that a white man is lost.[1] Returning he learns that "the Doctor" and his companion have come back successful and have been sent off re-provisioned, to continue along the tracks. Late on the following evening the two searchers again return, having lost Cunningham's tracks in the thick scrub. They had observed the footprints of a dog beside him, and his own steps beside those of his horse. Though Cunningham had now been lost eight days, the Major did not yet despair of finding him alive, and next morning he despatched young Larmer, now his second-in-command, with "the Doctor" and two others, supplied with water and food for four days. This party was to follow Cunningham's tracks till it found that gentleman or his remains.

Among these men was Whiting, the old guardsman, who risked his life, it will be remembered, to save that of his horse on Mitchell's first expedition. Whiting, who was to so nearly lose his life on this journey, was responsible for following to a great distance the tracks of Cunningham's horse and for recovering the saddle and bridle from its dead body. The whole party returned one evening three days after, having traced the horse seventy miles to its body, and bringing in several articles, including Cunningham's whip, glove, and message. Mitchell hurries out with Whiting next morning and takes up Cunningham's tracks towards the Bogan, only to lose them on some hard ground,

[1] One of these blacks had a bone-handled table knife stuck in his forehead-band.

and spend the day vainly searching for them. Returning to camp he is met by his second-in-command, whom he had sent with an armed escort down to Bogan, with the tale of a sudden encircling by armed blacks, one of whom, however, who had formerly been met with, informs the party that Cunningham had gone *unharmed* down the river and his *tracks would there be found.* On the last day of April the expedition proceeds along the Bogan, and five miles down finds Mr. Cunningham's steps making for the river. These were traced down to a pool, "and the two steps by which Mr. Cunningham first reached water, and in which he must have stood while allaying his burning thirst, were very plain in the mud!"

The movements of the natives seemed uneasy. They would not allow themselves to be approached. A column of smoke was seen near them in the woods, but when galloped after, it disappeared. Whiting, "the Doctor," and another, are sent to follow Cunningham's footprints which wander away down the river. The latter do not return at nightfall, despite of the firing of rockets and guns. Next morning, however, they came in, gladdening every one with the news that the footprints had not ceased as far as they had been able to trace them. A small naked footprint appeared beside those of Mr. Cunningham, either accompanying or grimly tracking him. A small fire, with some shell-fish, was found beside his tracks, which might mean that he had been fed by the natives.

Mitchell hurries off across country to endeavour to cut off the lost man at a higher reach, but when they reach the bend they cannot find either footprints or, for some while, water. Some blacks are brought in to the Major for inspection, one of whom, a nasty-looking fellow, wears a silk handkerchief on his shoulders. The handkerchief is so old and grimed with smoke, and the natives are so

frank and unconscious (speaking two or three European words), it is not believed the article belonged to Mr. Cunningham, to no reference to whom do they show the very slightest interest or fear. They are given presents and allowed to circulate freely about the camp. Mitchell presents to one of them (Yaree Buckenba) the handkerchief he had removed from his pocket. Another (Tackijally Buckenba) leads him mysteriously towards a belt of trees, from which emerges presently a chief, exceedingly handsome, ceremonious, and calm. This remarkable man, whose name his subjects will never disclose, advances leaning on the shoulder of a youth dressed in green boughs, whose face bears "a holiday look of gladness." Not the faintest trace of fear is shown, and the ceremony evidently indicated a desire for peaceful relations. Mitchell has left a fine lithograph of this meeting, himself with an expression of guarded weariness, naked sword in hand, leaning with an arm on the saddle of his horse; the pensive, graceful chief approaching with the decorated youth, carrying a green bough. This man accompanied Mitchell, pointing out water and providing guides, as long as he was in his country, and showed never the faintest symptom of alarm, even when Mr. Cunningham's map was found in the river and the tribe scattered with every token of uneasiness. He left the expedition only when he had, with great formality, introduced its leader to the tribe beyond him. Yet it was he and his tribe who were finally arrested, and who seem to have brought about the end of the lost explorer. It is to be noted that the Major leaves a portrait also of the decorated youth, Telambé Nadoo, whose beautiful, haunting face stares at you from these pages, with guilty knowledge for those who can find it.

[We cannot pause here to dilate upon the customs of this curious tribe, which buried its dead among the weeping

acacias—and had for ages—in mounded graves, between paths, after the European fashion.]

The attendants who brought in the black with the handkerchief had, as well, bad news of Cunningham's tracks. Though they had gone a long way up-river, they had not come on a single impress of his shoe. Mitchell sends them quickly back to return even to where they last saw his footsteps, and they hurry off, first endeavouring to persuade some of the natives to accompany them, which not one of them will do, nor do they show anything but a blank face to any enquiry after "a lost white." Mitchell now grew uneasy at the serious delay to the expedition, which, if continued, would bring them into the waterless months, and the end of his provisions. Too uneasy to sit fretting in camp, he goes off on a three days' exploration of the surrounding country. Immediately he himself is in difficulties. Fires spring up in his path, and it appears as if the natives have taken great pains to spread the blaze over as large an area as possible. No water is found for the horses during the three days. Even the natives met with seem in privation for want of water, as he finds them digging up certain roots under the trees and sucking them for the sap. They arrive back in camp at sunset, their horses being in such a way that they could not have survived another night off the river.

Dread news awaits him from the searchers. They had followed the Bogan twelve miles up, without finding a single pool of water. Further on there were a few pools, and there they found again the lost man's footprints. These they traced down again till they entirely vanished among a number of burnt-out fires in the bed of the river. Beside one of these fires, was discovered a "portion of the skirt or selvage of Mr. Cunningham's coat; numerous small fragments of his map of the colony; and in the

hollow of a tree some yellow printed paper, in which he used to carry his map." This was all, and nothing else—not a shred or a finger's print—could they find of the lost man, though they hunted tirelessly up and down, deep into the country, on either side of the river Bogan.

Cunningham had now been lost for three weeks (but a day), and Mitchell, crossing over the Bogan to the right bank, continued along beside the river. They never saw the Botanist again; indeed, the explorer seems to have been now finally convinced that he was dead, retaining only a forlorn hope that he might have struck north to the out-stations on the River Macquarie. The delay had seriously tapped Mitchell's provisions, and he felt he must push on with all speed if he were to make the descent down the Darling. He was quite accurate in thus abandoning hope. Six months afterwards, when Mitchell and his tattered followers, mistaken for bushrangers, arrived on their return at the verandah of the first far-out station, they learned that the colonial newspapers had already reported the death of a white man, not far from the place where Cunningham had been lost. This information had actually leaked through from one tribe of natives to another till it circulated among the outlying sheep-stations. Four native men and two women were mentioned in connection with the gentleman's end.

Nearer the capital, Mitchell had a more detailed account from a stockman of the death of what the natives described as a "white-man-gentleman," but the details given by this man, the Major never revealed. Two months after a lieutenant of the mounted police, with two of Mitchell's attendants and a large force, was despatched into the interior to ascertain, if possible, the fate of Mr. Cunningham. With instant good fortune the officer of police fell in with two natives, who gave him information, which led him,

under their guidance, to make for the Bogan, where he cleverly surrounded the tribe of the "pensive chief." The tribe had in its bags a knife, a single glove, and a cigar-case, supposed to be those of Mr. Cunningham ; and they delivered up into the lieutenant's hands three of the guilty men (the fourth being absent), one of whom led the constables to some human remains, near which were the portion of a coat and a Manilla hat. According to the story of this native, he and three companions saw in the Bogan a solitary white man, who approached them and asked for food. With this they provided him, but he, being restless in the night, and often rising and walking about, they became suspicious, and decided to kill him. They succeeded the following day in bringing the brave gentleman to his end, waiting till he was off his guard, and approaching him from behind. Such the story on the testimony of one man, for the other prisoners, before they could be questioned, succeeded in escaping from the guards and were never recovered.

Even with this knowledge, it is hard to account for the lost explorer's determined tramping down the Bogan in the wrong direction, unless, being slightly unhinged by his sufferings, the haunting notion had become a part of his mind, that his friends had passed on. It seemed his fixed conviction that he was *left behind.* On—on he tramped, with seemingly never a doubt or a pause of uncertainty, while his friends searched vainly for him, miles in the rear. Among many idle speculations on the point, that inevitably occurs which suggests that the natives enticed the brave fellow on either by misrepresentation as to Mitchell's position, or, born mimics as they are, by "cooees" exactly reproducing Mitchell's voice, till he was hopelessly decoyed beyond the beat of camp and search-party. It is perhaps worthy of speculation, too, why no hail from Cunningham

reached the searchers. We are reminded again of that hint of an early catastrophe. Until these points are decided, the fact remains a mystery why he persisted in the north and north-western routes even after he was directed north-east.

There is little doubt the end occurred where the foot-prints disappeared in the river-bed. Yet to what a depth of dissimulation and craft must this primitive tribe have lent itself to so nearly have destroyed every trace of the lost man. Such excellent calmness under scrutiny, and such detailed care, seem almost beyond our conception of a savage. They had even the subtlety not to obliterate the shoeprints approaching the fires. Had their knowledge extended just so much further that they could have committed to the flames the tell-tale map, instead of tearing it into tiny fragments, there would have been no hint of demoralization or the end. These things, coupled with the handkerchief undoubtedly belonging to Mr. Cunningham which one of the blacks was wearing on his shoulders when first met with, may lead some to suppose there lies a mystery still unexplained.[1] It may please these to ponder awhile over the haunted face of Talambé Nadoo.

Mitchell, returning from the Darling, six months after Cunningham's disappearance, met with one of the lost man's footprints in the River Bogan, baked hard in the clay. Further along the Major struck a second time upon the single shoeprints of the lost Botanist hurrying north to water, and he turned his horse and followed these once again to the place where they touched the longed-for pool. Nearer home yet, the explorer, when traversing the country now known after the lost man, halted in sight of the hill

[1] It is a curious fact that the murderer was released after a year's detention.

called Mount Juson, and reflected awhile on the point that almost the last words addressed to him by Cunningham had been the strange request to name it thus after the family of his mother.[1]

[1] *Expeditions in Eastern Australia*, 1831–5, by Sir Thomas L. Mitchell.

SOME ASPECTS OF A ROMANTIC ISLE

THE journey from the mainland to Tasmania has all the interests and grim romance of a long voyage, with as little as possible of the discomfort. It is an ocean adventure in little. You may take the passage, if you like, as a night's dream. There is the miniature liner with her red funnels, the crowded farewells, the settling-down in deck chairs, the ominous emergence into the straits, the cabin with its lashing seas, and next morning you breakfast with the landscapes of a lovely river passing the port-hole. In an hour you are landed in a semi-tropical town, where many of the people have quite a Spanish swarthiness, and harness their horses in a manner of their own.

The writer had the curiosity to see for himself what it would be like to drop off the bottom of Australia on to this little island, and with that intention remained upon the upper deck until the light faded off Cape Schank, the rising sea, and the "keening" cordage of the wireless. He made enquiry of the pacing officer how we steered as regarded the immense rock called King Island, of which he knew a tragic story, and Flinders Island, further east, where at Pea-jacket Point those peculiar people, the natives of Tasmania, were exiled after many but strangely manly depredations. Sometimes they were even humane, sparing the women with child. We kept, it seemed, midway between the two islands, of the former of which the writer recalled an early legend of a wreck of emigrant girls which

struck on that lone place through the importunity of the surgeon-in-charge, who lost his temper with the captain for shortening sail. One or two only were saved. A hermit-sealer, who lived on the rock, buried 370 of the young women. He said the sight of the shore was like a fantasm of sleep. This was not the first vessel lost on this awful sentinel erect in the very centre of the whistling straits.

To discover how the island first appeared, what the early colonist saw at the very first glimpse of his nebulous new world, the writer was on deck in a slight drizzle in the early morning. It was lively, and difficult for the mere landsman to keep a steady glass. Nothing was to be seen at first but the grey. But suddenly, fair in front, appeared two lofty, narrow peaks, and almost immediately on the extreme right and left of the horizon, more peaks and jumbles of summits threw up. We appeared to be approaching a range of mountains rather than an island. Not long after, the empty spaces began to fill in with slopes and ranges, trees began to appear, and soon a lofty erection of dim tiers piled up upon the view and was broken upon wanly by the quiet sun.

There was no sign of habitation, no appearance of indenture or bay. It appeared just as it might have seemed to that early ship. Just about the centre, however, there was a slight depression in the mountains and a slight thickening of the coast-line. Towards this we dipped and rolled. It was difficult to believe that below there were concealed forty miles of navigable river.

The writer had some conversation with a tall young man in the Cambridge-blue cap of one of the Etons of Victoria. He was returning home for the school holidays to the island we were approaching, and was reserved, pleasant mannered, and polite, as an Australian young gentleman should be.

He experienced this deep-sea adventure upon his holidays as others experience a train journey. One wondered what sort of effect upon the character it would have to pass often on these majestic seas. Would you not catch something of their indifference to petty contingencies! What poetical accidents of departure and arrival to pile up in the mind for after use! One felt his forerunner, who, as an early colonist, had gazed, perhaps, upon this place as we were looking, the mast of whose ship had heaved against these peaks as ours was at that moment, would have been pleased at the evolution of himself in this young man, and the promise of the island of dreams, fears, and aspirations which had so opened to him in the uttermost parts of the sea.

At the river's-top is Launceston, a low city hung about with tiers of houses on cliffs. You have heard, of course, there are things to see. As for these places, they are rather "wonders" than scenery. The river's gorge is one. One does not know whether he is more surprised at the ingenuity and accident which have embellished a singular place or at having to make no effort to admire a thing so entirely interesting. True, the attraction savours rather of the glass-house than natural beauty, as with the natural scenery of several parts of the island. It is startling to the mainlander, accustomed to his waterless creeks and weeping acacias, to come suddenly on something which is almost *operatic* in the fulness and romance of its display. It is one of those visions seen in melodramas, but the spate is real, the crags iron, and the lovely ferns living.

The once coach-road from Launceston to Hobart (roughly from one end of the island to the other) is chiefly remarkable for great and strange mountains seen in the distance, and for the historical connection of these with the bushrangers, who haunted the feet of Ben Lomond, the Tiers, and the Table Mountain, and with the dangerous, war-to-the-

death blacks, who have been likened to the North American Indian, and clung like a poisonous cloud about their slopes, watching for moments of weakness and loneliness in the whites. One tries to see the natives coming into Hobart from Bothwell along this road behind the unarmed pacificater, Robinson, in 1832. How, indeed, did this singular personage manage to ingratiate himself with these desperate people, who so often speared the trusting and the innocent, who killed their own babies that they might move the quicker, and who, though armed only with wooden weapons, overcame their fear of firearms? Even with the knowledge that he respected them living and dead (and that he was aided by black women who perceived that fact) it is a human enigma.

As for these hills, it is idle to pretend they are like hills you have seen elsewhere. To speak of them moderately they are vast and peculiar. Ben Lomond includes eight square miles upon its summit. The Western Tiers are monstrous, splendid, and romantic. The hill called the Dromedary, at the top of the Derwent, is sufficiently like a dromedary; and that named the Table Mountain is modestly well-called for so immense a looming thing. Yet none of these mountains is so strange and importunate in beauty as Mount Wellington which broods over Hobart, or that wonderful vast figure, found by the searching motor-car behind it, called "The Sleeping Beauty." Of the former it has been written of sufficiently touchingly by those born under it; it is kin with such hills as Gibraltar. It is to the "Derwenter" what Fuji-yama is to the Japanese, or Edinburgh Castle to the people of that city. But of the latter it has not been my good fortune to read anything, nor to be cognizant of any mountain, outside Turner's picture of "Ulysses and the Cyclops," quite so curious. Any one acquainted with the "Ulysses" would be caught

at once with the resemblance between the recumbent giant and this figure. It may even have been brought to the artist's ears by the story of some colonial traveller. Like much of the scenery shown to visitors it is surprising enough to startle the attention of the most carping. Perhaps the best conditions in which to see it are on the return journey over the hills to the capital from a visit to the river Huon. Your first view of it, from twenty miles off, shows a vast figure, astretch upon the summits, with streaming hair. The face is then the face of a girl, somewhat resembling that of Queen Victoria in her young sovereignhood. Now you can comprehend its secondary title of the "Huon Belle." But as you desert the gleaming waters of the river, and begin to mount the mountains in the ripening morning, the figure foreshortens, and the nearing face grows and ages, till the vast countenance hardens into the features of an Indian seer. From this view, the head thrown back, and looking ponderingly into space, it is inexpressibly sublime.[1] The traveller, wrapped in his rugs in the motor-coach, tries, as he plunges up and down the forests, to find a phrase for the expression on those giant features. He tries this one and that one. No, they will not do; this is too sad; that has missed half the grim and wistful air. At last he finds a metaphor which seems to catch something of the mountainous look, a good trait, it would seem, to have monumentally reared at one's back in any country: *sublime endurance.*

Reverting to the old road, there is a beautiful scene as you drop out of the hills on to the lake-like Derwent over Hobart. Much might be said of this. Some of the houses along here are as old as old, old houses in a dream. There are those of small faded bricks, with a squat upper story, and black shingle roof, which, so one reads, date from

[1] One is curious as to the native name for this marvel of nature.

Napoleonic days. There is the old village called Oatlands, planning-place of many a retaliatory raid on black and banditti, in whose district there were 150 victims during the black rebellion, which, with its hewn-stone dwellings, could hardly look more ancient if it were its ancestor in England, where Queen Mary and King Phillip spent their honeymoon. (Nor could the landlord of the inn in this place be more hospitable were he one of the old Jacobean inn-keepers spoken of by envious foreigners as being "the servants of their guests," or his lady, who herself removed the hats of the feminine travellers that they might take restfully of refreshment.) There are ruins down in the fields here, strange, old, towered white buildings, fantastic places which have somehow dreamed themselves out of human touch. You are shown, as you pass, a place where the road-gangs were housed in days when there was no galvanized iron. It has two stories, and is built of brown mud,[1] with lines of small frameless windows like the port-holes of a line-of-battle ship. To none of these places attaches, as far as can be ascertained, any appropriate local story; though one recalls the tale of one of Tasmania's early poets how the officials in charge of the roadmen, if you had not their goodwill, would bring the new road to within a mile of your house and thus leave it.[2] So we see that deputed authority in those days was not a whit more reliable than it is now. On another road, however, and another occasion, we were shown one of those singular human dwellings in which nobody can live for long. This was a quite respectable house, newly painted, but very lonely as to position. It stood about one hundred yards from the road, and behind it, at about double the distance, was the river Derwent. There were no trees or garden. It had been an inn in the very early days, and was fairly

[1] Wattle and daub. [2] Mrs Meredith.

large, with a verandah round the upper story. The most curious point about it was the fresh paint, on the slightly dilapidated house, in so lonely and wild a spot.

This is on the road to one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the world. The island possesses, we believe, seventy or, more accurately perhaps, one hundred falls quite uncommonly noteworthy, but *this*, one goes to see, if he is no mere novelty-hunter, as a sort of standard or vouched-for affair. The writer, having spent much of his life inspecting standard works and believing still in the testimony of faint but living rumour, opened the pages of this renowned thing without scepticism.

After a short walk towards a cleft in some hills, as dry and arid as the driest of Antipodean scenery (only remarkable for some gum-trees of extraordinary height and extremely narrow girth), you enter a fernery, as might be in a glass-house at Kew, and when you have threaded the enchanting path in this, in itself, notable place, you emerge suddenly right underneath the rocky fall.

There are two falls, one above the other, each about as broad as it is high. So many ferns embower them, that you may suppose a certain number have been evenly cleared away that the water may appear, and the silver stream falls framed in tree-ferns exactly as the curtain-opening is framed in a theatre. Each fall is about fifty feet in height, with about the same distance from the top of the first to the foot of the second. Standing in the grotto below, one's view of the top fall is veiled by two or three fragile trees. The main wonder of the display is that while you stand beshadowed under the lower, the sunlight shimmers among the ferns and waters of the upper.

* * * *

The experience of the voyager to Maria Island, off the east coat of Tasmania, can be lively enough, but the writer

of these sketches was rewarded by an exquisite calm. The boat steamed somnolently out of Storm Bay, in behind the peninsula of Port Arthur, and, through the canal now cut across that peninsula, out as quietly along the roaring beaches of the eastern sea. Readers of Clarke's *Natural Life* and *Stories of Australia* become very sensible of the breadth and reach of his work on this voyage. It was across East Bay Neck (where now is the canal) the prisoner Gabbet escaped, with his four companions, after evading the neck at Eaglehawk, in a boat. It will be remembered that the wicked Maurice Frere of the novel was once governor of the settlement of Maria Island. Coming immediately to history, it was from Maria Island that that rebel of nice honour, Smith O'Brien, endeavoured to escape in a schooner's boat amid the laughter of the police, who knew his plans. Cash, the bushranger, too, escaped across East Bay Neck, as he relates in his biography, actually swimming the gut at Eaglehawk. All this was antecedent to the cutting of the second neck, which is a flat piece of thick, low bush, about half a mile in breadth.[1]

There were but four passengers in the boat beside ourselves. These included an English gentleman in shooting gaiters, with a gun in a leather case; a young lady, his daughter, immersed in a novel; and a slender boy, his son, of about fourteen years, of singular grace and charm, who appeared to be familiar with captain and crew, for he was at off moments entrusted with the wheel. I was much interested, when so informed by the captain, to learn that the gentleman was the keeper of the famous lighthouse on that lone rock off the entrance of Port Arthur, known as Tasman's Island. This is a wild place, standing a few

[1] Clarke excellently figures the two necks as the connections in an ear-ring of two pendants.

yards off the lashed and precipitous coast, and approachable only in good weather. Even at that there appears to be no place of landing, the steamer moving up underneath a crane which lifts passenger, stores, or animal to a platform far above, from which there is a truck, raised perpendicularly by animals up the face of the cliff, to the surface of the island, on which the light stands. There is considerable acreage above, and the manager has his farm, his horses, his conservatory, and roomy house. The island is also remarkable for numberless wild-tame cats, the progeny of the pets of former keepers (there was a light on the island in 1840), some of which the young lady, who much enjoys her mistressship of this romantic dwelling, has succeeded in taming. This gentleman was good enough to lend us a rare and valuable pair of glasses, through which the formation of the stones on a beach several miles off was quite clear.

We approached Maria Island about five in the evening. As is well known, it was named by the Cromwellian explorer, Tasman, after the daughter of the Governor of Batavia. It is rather two forested heights springing out of the sea than an island, for it contains Mount Maria, one of Tasmania's finest mountains. We steered into the pretty little bay, surrounded by low hillocks, and backed by rising forests, in which O'Brien was a prisoner. This is an old settlement. Many of the buildings have been removed for the stone or have fallen, though some official places stand about upon the rise with the forsaken cemetery. To the right a village lies above the sandhills, with a number of dwellings of faded brick. A few of these have tenants. A brook and a few English trees twine among them. Our lodging was a pretty cottage facing what was once the village square. Further on is the residence of the owner of this end of the island. Further yet an ancient, wooden beacon, or

semaphore, stands upon the cliff, its woodwork remarkably carven.[1]

From our door was to be seen a row of joined cottages, on a raised pavement, peculiar only for a round hole in the door of each. The end one of these, so we were told, was the prison of O'Brien. However, by far the most famous of the rebel's prisons is that cottage on the hill above Port Arthur, now familiar to many by photograph, and become a sort of monument to the man. People are not so familiar with the reason for his distinction. An Irishman of gentle-breeding, bearing a name dear to Irishmen as Stuart or Argyll to Scotchmen, he became badly mixed-up with the journalistic rebels of 1848 when the whole world—France, Germany, England, Ireland—was rocking with riots and wild reforms. He was Member of Parliament for Limerick and became the military leader of the Irish rebellion. Exiled to Tasmania, after close confinement in Bermuda, he refused, in council with fellow exiles, to take a ticket-of-leave which bound him not to escape, not agreeing with their suggestion that he would find a way to renounce it when opportunity offered. His life, had he taken the "ticket," would have been that of a Tasmanian gentleman; having refused it, he had, justly enough, an ugly experience. Such experiences, connected with honour, the world seems unable to forget. Steadily refusing to bind himself, he was removed to the old prison-settlement on Maria Island, allowed occasional excercise with a warder in the small area cleared of forest, and causing much amusement to the police by endeavouring to escape in a ship provided by American money, his warders watching the whole thing materialize, and capturing him as he stepped into the ship's boat. Dreadfully downcast, he was removed thence

[1] I am aware this is said to be a pigeon-house erected by Bernacchi who accompanied Scott on his last Polar voyage.

to the sterner prison of Port Arthur, where he was immured, with what freedom we know not, in the small brick cottage beside the Hospital. In this little eyrie, singularly respected, he lived for two years, at last taking his "ticket," and being permitted to take up his residence in the enchanting village of New Norfolk on the Derwent. He had not been here two months when an offer to help him break his parole and escape was refused by him.

Our visit was made more memorable by the sight of some relics of another age and quite another rebellion: the 1745. In the entrance-passage in the house of a Scotch family, which has lived upon Maria Island for many years, hung an old sword with a curious basket hilt. On enquiry, I learned that it had been picked up on the field of Culloden by a member of the family. This romantic weapon possessed a long, heavy, two-edged blade, the point of which projected from the end of a scabbard of brown leather. The basket of the hilt, unlike that of the modern claymore (say of the Peninsular Wars), was of a dark blue colour. Not alone was this island family possessed of this beautiful relic, together with a small Raeburn-like portrait of an ancestor in the uniform of an officer of a Scotch regiment of the time of Waterloo, and a seascape by an early Tasmanian marine painter resembling the beautiful work of Stanfield, but also of a set of bag-pipes picked up as well on the field of Culloden, on which instrument it was our fortune to hear played several airs and laments, the while there lay before us on the table a print of the fated battle-ground.

The island boasts a number of snakes of a small black variety, which wriggle sleepily from under your feet as you walk in field or scrub. They seem slow to attack but are reputed poisonous. From the side of Mount Maria there is a vast view downward of Schouten Island, sea, and mountained main. Over the fields to the left of the

bay lies the famous fossil-beach, where the geological novice may pick up fossil shells for the exertion of stooping after them. There one may reflect for as long as he likes how a delicate thing like a shell comes to be filled with solid stone. . . . A sad place on this island is the little cemetery of the garrison, among whose memorials the sheep grazed unmolested. The tombs are nearly all very fine, of the flat-topped, stone kind on which the poet Byron was wont to lie and dream of death in the cemetery of Harrow Church. The railings about them are fallen away, and wild trees have taken root beside them, and grow downward over the tops of the tombs, the while the sea-wind tosses their branches, slowly erasing the inscriptions. One of these, fast disappearing, from which, that we might decipher it, we broke away an intruding branch off the letters, bore the date 1815, and was to one Margaret Boyd, aged 25, wife of the senior assistant surgeon, who, being in precarious health, had been brought from England by her heart-broken husband to Maria Island,

In the fond hope of regaining his lost treasure.

This grave was an old story when Smith O'Brien wandered here in charge of his armed companion.

* * * *

By steamer you may reach the mainland in a couple of hours, and may catch the morning coach to Hobart. You land at Spring Bay, once much patronized by the ladies and gentlemen of the capital for its medicinal spring, the waters of which are peculiarly dark and glutinous. The hotel which they delighted to patronize stands outwardly and inwardly much as it must have stood in the early days, with a holy-stoned doorstep, and two broad, dark-furnished, roomy stories. It reminded one of the manor houses

in the novels of the Brontës'. Just outside the village, the coach passes what was once the house of Mrs. Meredith, the flower-painter and poet, whose pretty, gilded albums of Tasmanian wild flowers were a part of the drawing-rooms of our childhood. It is a comfortable white villa, in character somewhat resembling Wordsworth's *Rydal Mount*, and confronts you over the bridge by which you cross the beautiful Prosser's river, on the roadside on whose banks it stands. This is how she spoke of it :

> Our forest cottage crests a woody knoll,
> Whose base, a river
> Of mountain birth and vagrant windings, ever
> Caresses lovingly ; with voiced fall,
> Or dimpled pool, or rapid, flashing out
> Where parting branches let the sunlight peep
> Into yon dingle deep,
> Silvering the agile fish that dart about.
>
> Upon the other bank, a level sweep
> Of forest stately
> Skirts that wide lawny meadow, where sedately
> With full mild eyes, and feet in verdure deep,
> And broad sleek glossy backs, our gentle cows
> Live lives of calm abundance, and calves frisk,
> With bound and antic brisk,
> Around their fragrant mothers as they browse.
>
> The sun is on the meadow marsh :—but see,
> Where ferns are dancing
> Under the column'd trees ; and, e'en enhancing
> The mid-day glory, thick and shadowy
> The forest dimness falls o'er plumèd leaves
> In cloudy flakes of dark, that gather deep
> In nook'd recesses, where the dense glooms sweep—
> Silent as Sleep—
> Round curtain'd bowers that the mimosa weaves.

This distinguished lady was, in a manner, the Robert Louis Stevenson of the Tasmania of Governor Franklin,

and has left, in its degree, as fine a record of a happy, successful, romantic existence, and determined, poetic mind, as the Vailima Letters.

* * * *

Hobart has the rather curious possession, for an old colonial town, of a real tennis court. The writer, having once an interest in this singular game, after some searching, was directed to an insignificant door in a wall opposite St. David's Cemetery, which, however, could not be opened, and he was let into the *dedans* through a motor-garage next door. The marker was ill in hospital, and the "gentlemen were nearly all at the war," so there was no play in progress, and nobody from which to obtain information as to the date of the court. The real, or royal, tennis court, from being lit from the top, and from its flagged floor and black pent-houses, has always a look of the Middle Ages, but this one looked especially venerable, and possessed a feature—the Royal Crown of France on the wall above the net—which the writer did not remember to have seen before. In this ancient game—as is well known—the balls are hard, the rackets heavy, and the intricate scoring alone takes the average learner some weeks to learn. The strokes are almost all cuts. The service is driven high upon the pent-house roof, and is taken as it drops into the court, while the nearer the return hits the flags at the back wall, the better the stroke. Behind the server is the *dedans*, where, from the most ancient times, the ladies—among them Queen Elizabeth—have been accustomed to watch the play, guarded by netting. That athletic and fearless English sovereign, Charles II, especially excelled at real tennis,[1] with which he had probably whiled away the heavy hours of his exile. The writer recollects watching a

[1] Evelyn.

Lord Chief Justice of England (to be), and the present Lord Chancellor of England (1918), playing real tennis with their undergraduate sons. We read of real tennis courts in France, when that strange woman, Joan of Arc, led her countrymen to victory[1]; they probably date from some centuries earlier. It is instructive to think, as one enters these weird places, of gentlemen at play in black trunk hose and ruffs; of King Francis and the awful Guise slashing at each other with ball and racket a few days before the infamous St. Bartholomew's Eve; or of that last suitor of Queen Elizabeth, whom she publicly kissed in her gallery, whiling away his time in London with ball and racket, while she endeavoured to bring herself to a late marriage with "her frog," for whom she seems to have harboured a kindly and amused attachment.

A Colonial Church

It is almost a morning's walk from Upper Davey Street, down past the barracks, to Battery Point and St. George's Church. Forsaking Davey Street for Albuera Street, and leaving on the right Byron Street with its old brick terrace and cemetery, wonderful with multitudinous tombs, where in London is the garden of the Square; you cross thence the tramline, where there is a place called "Bleak House," and so emerge upon the thickly-housed, wind-blown knoll of Battery Point. We know not from when dates this beautiful and interesting church, but it stood here in 1823. When looking up at its façade, it is hard to credit that you are standing in a colony. It is a clear example of the work of Sir Christopher Wren, or rather that class of work by Wren which endeavoured to make spires out of Roman temples, and might outwardly have been shipped, in carved portions, from some side street

[1] Andrew Lang.

off the Strand. Its bell has "winnowed the keen sea-wind" for many years, and behind the gardens, down at the ends of the little streets about it, poke up the masts and shrouds of havened schooners. What structure could better express the sheltering, little changing power of religion than this pillared temple, full of cavernous spaces, erect upon its wind-blown knoll! It was built, one supposes, under the influence of that renaissance of Roman and Greek art of the Napoleonic empire. Everything is of a part. The very windows and doorways are narrow at the summit and broad at the base, with the peculiar Greco-Egyptian air of buildings of that time. When you have passed under the immense portico, and entered the interior, it is the same, if with a conceit and beauty quite unexpected. The resemblance to the Wren church ceases and there is a colonial look about the clean, barish walls and the old, high, spotless, varnished pews, each with its individual door. The chancel, across the top of the church, is the exact representation of a Grecian temple, pediment and pillars complete: the furniture being in carved and varnished wood. The windows have small square panes of colourless glass, with the exception of that great angular one which lights the altar, whose panes, while in unison of size with the rest, are in colour of a limpid and exquisite blue. Only one memorial tablet was noticed on the walls, and that, a monument appropriate enough in that sea-worn edifice, to a certain "Commodore of the Port" of an early date, seemingly held in much esteem.

ALONG THE GIANT FILTER

(Exploring in Full Uniform—*Concluded*)

WITHOUT mishap, other than the loss of Cunningham,[1] Mitchell travelled the five hundred miles to the unknown River Darling, which he was to trace to its mouth or junction with some other river. All—men, cattle, horses, and the two boats drawn on wheels—arrived without misadventure, other than the shooting of a native who had attacked one of the men when alone and been shot in defence. In this matter Mitchell had shown his usual coolness and forbearance, himself approaching the maddened native unarmed and succeeding in persuading him to allow "the Doctor" to handle his wounds. The explorer accounts for the native's violence, from his having been approached without the usual ceremonious shouting. The man proves a quite excellent and polite individual, even while his wounds are being dressed, warning the Major that the grass is on fire near his feet.

We have seen how "the Doctor" again accompanied Major Mitchell on this expedition. This time, he markedly distinguished himself for energy and steadiness, and with Whiting, the old guardsman, and another veteran, won his leader's unqualified trust and praise. "The Doctor," on this occasion, brought with him a flute, with which he would solace his lonely evenings, and the Major, quoting some exquisite lines from Crowly's *Gems*, describes how the

[1] See page 123.

strains of the instrument would rise over the tents in the moonlight.

Two distressing accidents befell the leader as they neared the Darling, one being the loss of his telescope while chasing an emu. This instrument he had had in his possession for some years and he had seen through it the smoke and glory of the battlefields of Wellington. As well, he here somehow broke his sabre-blade, though this accident he made fine use of, presenting deserving chiefs with the fragments on his advance along the Darling; while the blacksmith forged him a rough, new sword. One wonders what has become of the seven fragments of the "weapon" worn by the first explorer of Australia's second river.

Near the Darling, it is to be noted, they met with a singular tribe of natives, consisting of a curious diversity of types, some of the men having long straight hair like Cingalese and others resembling Hindoos: anthropological phenomena noted by later Antipodean scientists. These, however, were mild enough people. It was at the river itself they came on a new kind of native, brazen, swaggering, and greedy, who, always on the verge of violence, seemed to live in a habit of impressing on the stranger that he was in possession of abundance of the river's fish and water. "The chief spokesman," wrote the leader, "was a ferocious, forward kind of savage, to whom I would rather have given anything than a tomahawk, from the manner in which he handled my pockets." Indeed, their diplomacy was of an entirely one-sided kidney, they never laying aside their arms, even in formal palaver.

The surprises and accidents of this journey are full of interest, but have been perhaps not infrequently retold. On reaching the Darling, those attendants who had been with Mitchell on his first expedition, at once recognized its peculiar features, while some of the blacks met with

seemed to remember the leader. There it was with its long somnolent pools and transparent water, in which the bottom could be clearly seen with shoals of beautiful fish "floating like birds in mid-air." The Major, recollecting the discoverer's report that the water was *salt*, on descending to the brink, was agreeably amazed to find it fresh. Not a mile and a half down, however, it was found to be turned *salt*; if at about the same distance lower yet, it was presently discovered to have regained its freshness. In a word, the river was one of the many surprises of Australian exploration (with its spectral and goblin enigmas of fauna, flora, and natural conditions) running unfed by one single tributary for six hundred and sixty miles, here fresh and here again salt, as it partook—according to Mitchell's theory—of the different springs which filtered through its banks. . . . Truly, in so strange a land, a place now of excessive drought and now excessive flood, with the country first explored over the mountains watered by numerous rivers, with that later discovered not watered by a single river in an area of over sixty thousand square miles, possessing one exemplar watercourse given up by our hero where it sank into a morass, and rediscovered by another where it rose again from the ground seventy miles in the unknown, where a fellow-river ran both fresh and salt in near as many miles, is it to be wondered there was a coolness between our first and greatest explorers, who returned to civilization with strangely diverse valuations.

The boats, which had come their five hundred miles on wheels, were now launched in the water, and named after Cook's ships, the *Discovery* and *Resolution*. A fort was erected for the shelter of the cattle, a set of pikes and spears forged for the boatmen, and some of the expedition floated off. Less lucky than Sturt, the boats were at once blocked by falls and rocks, and Mitchell returned, resolving

to proceed with the whole force of twenty-two men, cattle, sheep,[1] horses, and carts along the banks.

Before going, the Major, with three mounted men, made a hazardous dash down the river; he was absent for four days and returned with accurate knowledge of the country to be traversed—thankful for no hostile encounter with the numerous and uproarious natives, his only communication with whom being with a fine athletic tribe, ruled apparently by the loquacity of an old woman, who would scarcely allow the men to speak. Among the tribes about the river was one whose older people rouged their cheeks with red-ochre, and whistled to express surprise, a habit peculiar to this one tribe. These people seemed to remember the visit of the discoverer of the Darling six years before. While retracing their way from this down-river dash, Mitchell and his attendants observed the single footsteps of a native tracking them on the way out for a distance of fifteen miles.

The expedition was absent from its improvised fort exactly nine weeks and traced the new river downward for three hundred miles. For much of this time the course of the stream led due west, encouraging the leader in the theory, then generally held, that the great mountains to south-west divided it altogether from the Murray.[2] Mitchell decided to return with the Darling's junction with the Murray, if more certain, still undecided, his cattle being foundered, scurvy being among the men, and with the behaviour of the tribes growing more and more contemptuous and exacting, till they threatened to amalgamate in

[1] This was the first occasion an explorer droved sheep.

[2] The reason for the theory is plain. It was naturally questioned whether the river flowing into the Murray, seen by Sturt, was not a stream from the immense waterless triangle between the Lachlan and Bogan Rivers.

a great force against his little band. In brief, the men's excellent patience was beginning to give out under an everyday *menu* of jocose familarity and raised spears, and at length a sudden crashing blow was responsible for the report of musket and pistol.[1]

Three days out from the deserted fort, they had arrived at the point where Sturt, the discoverer of the river, turned back, and here, "the Doctor," despatched down a water-course for the purpose, found the tree on which Sturt's companion, Hume, had carved his initials. It was "a very large and remarkable gum-tree, and on the side next the river, the letters 'H H' appeared, although the cross-line of one 'H' had grown out. The letters seemed to have been cut with a tomahawk, and were about five inches in length." "The Doctor" cut his leader's initials upon the same tree. . . . Here also they discovered a fall in the river, "and I listened with awe," says this interesting and distinguished writer, "to the unwonted murmur of this mysterious stream, which poured through the heart of a desert, by its single channel, that element so essential to the existence of all animals." Next day, while making a drawing of the fall, some natives hailed him from the other bank, and swimming "slyly" over, they stole stealthily down upon him. They were overheard, however, by the sentries, whereupon the whole lot stood up and laughed. No doubt they were curious as to what the stranger might be at, if nothing worse. On being given presents, they made the expedition welcome to their water (the Darling). They are generous with their fish. Among them was a beautiful young girl in the companionship of an older woman. The Major mentions especially how beautiful was the expression of her mouth, and how modest was her demeanour.

[1] It is startling to remember these men were exploring under the inauspicious cloud of Cunningham's loss.

Briefly recording the journey, and the strange variety among the tribes, next day they met with natives who contented themselves with expressing surprise at all they were confronted with, a strange characteristic in these most formal yet familiar people, who invariably hid their surprise, at what must have seemed to them amazing novelties, with instinctive politeness or "loud false laughs." Two days later another tribe was encountered, whose prevailing traits were covetousness and brazen greed, "uttering constantly, in an authoritative tone, the word 'Occa!' which undoubtedly means 'give!' I had not been in their presence one minute, before their chief, a very stout fellow, drew forth my pocket handkerchief, while a boy took my Kater's compass from the other pocket, and was on the point of running off with it."

Another four days on, they are astounded at the homely sight of hayricks piled up for miles along the banks, the use of which is explained, when a day or so after they see, on both sides of the river, villages of large permanent huts, built semi-circular and made of thatch, about a foot in width. The inhabitants of these dwellings showed themselves mild and pleasant after they had bidden the Major "lay aside my sword," while some of the older men and women had the additional quality of civilization, of rouging their cheeks, thereby, according to the explorer, being much improved in appearance. These people (men of poor physique but impressive cast of countenance) greeted the expedition with considerable civility on its way out, when, as Mitchell puts it, it was proceeding *en vainqueur*, but on the return, when they imagined it to have been thrown back by the lower tribes, they had nothing for it but jeers and cries of "loud insulting glee."

Three days after passing through these people, the leader rested the failing cattle, and himself, fording for the first

time the River Darling, ascended and named the first hill ever climbed by an European on its further bank.[1]

On the following morning they met with the curious "Spitting Tribe." The behaviour of these natives was very peculiar, and they haunted them with an unappeasable malignity while passing both down and up the river. Two individuals of the tribe, when encountered on the river's bank, refused the usual peace overture of a raised green branch; on the contrary, seizing a branch in reply to the white man, they thrust it angrily into a fire and spat on it. As well they waved their branches furiously up stream, seeming to order the expedition to return. At intervals, during these frantic actions, they threw dust up at the strangers in a skilful manner with their toes.

Nothing could appease their fury. And when Burnett, a veteran attendant, with great coolness approached these reviling people, and sat unarmed on the ground within two or three yards of them, the action only served to draw their anger and pointed spears from the party towards himself. The two natives at last went off, throwing up considerable dust. Mitchell touches here on this incident as a curious example of the "identity of the human mind," giving instances from "The book of Kings," "The Acts," and various books of travel of how, from remote periods, the dumb nations of the earth have expressed their hatred of one another by dust-throwing.

Somewhat later in the day, a large party of these natives approached the tents, but on being again met with a peace branch by Mitchell, went through the same violent pantomime. Not far off, along the river bank, the blacksmith was at work at his forge. The newcomers were permitted to approach him and at once began to steal his tools. This they did by picking them up with their feet and passing them

[1] Mount Murchison.

to those behind, the while staring him in the face. Mitchell allowed the blacksmith to be so surrounded, placing guards about him, and leading the men in good-natured laughing. There was not the usual laughter, however, in return, the natives constantly brandishing and spitting upon the branches they carried, while their old men walked about and weirdly chanted. The Major at this moment gave one of the older men a tomahawk, whereupon he angrily demanded the pistols from the explorer's belt. The latter, drawing one, fired it into a tree, at which the blacks did not flee, but gathering instantly into a circle, retired dancing round and round, flinging out awful imprecations, chanting in chorus, and hurling their waddies with strange effect high above the trees.

The same natives, finding they had come to no hurt, returned next day, and again attempted to pilfer the blacksmith's tools ; nudging each other as they gathered round the forge, and resorting to their tactics of dancing, spitting, chanting, and throwing dust, at the least sign of opposition. At the same time a hideous old man wandered about the camp with uplifted branch, invoking heaven, chanting, and expectorating. " It was evident the ceremony belonged to some strange superstition. He occasionally turned his back towards each of us, like ' the grisly priest with murmuring prayer ' ; he touched his eyebrows, nose, and breast, as if he were crossing himself, then pointed his arm to the sky ; afterwards laid his hand on his breast, chaunting with an air of remarkable solemnity, and abstracted looks, while at times his branch,

> ' He held on high,
> With wasted hand and haggard eye,
> And strange and mingled feelings woke,
> While his anathema he spoke ! ' " [1]

[1] Sir Walter Scott.

The malignity of this tribe culminated in its setting fire to the country as the expedition departed, and they were last seen shouting their menaces and expectorating amid the smoke. "I never saw," says the Major, "such unfavourable specimens of the aborigines as these children of the smoke, they were so barbarously and implacably hostile and shamelessly dishonest, and so little influenced by reason. . . ." A short way on (July 1st), they came on some aboriginal graves, great mounds surrounded by immense trenches, presumed by the explorer to be the pest-field or interment-hole during the visitation of a plague. This he supposes to have been the smallpox, as the natives next encountered were fearfully marred by that disease. It may be worthy of remark how hypocritical was the outcry of those days and the 'fifties that the civilized white man's only gifts to the healthy savage were his diseases and his drink, in the light of the reports of the pioneers Sturt and Mitchell of the bad health and disease among the remotest natives. The graves were covered with skull-casts, balls, and tip-cats, of white lime, this being a custom also of the ancient Israelites, "who used to mark their graves with white lime that they might be known, and so priests, Nazarites, and travellers might avoid them, and not be polluted." Near the graves were some large, excellently made, but long deserted huts, the last dwelling places, perhaps, of those infected. They were still littered with the flax from which the native women make their excellent nets.

The tribe next met with were of a placable and pleasant disposition, after the preliminary encounter coming unarmed to the camp and bringing with them their womenkind and children. These remained with them two days, even aiding in finding the cattle, which usually

the natives avoided with much fear, and receiving many presents.

On the second day, after parting with the above, they came upon the last tribe met with on the river. These people approached them frankly, at first with their weapons, demanding gifts "like continental beggars." One old man, however, became too importunate and mischievous, and this fellow presently roused the tribe to a state of insolent greed that only stopped short of violence. In the meanwhile an old woman explained to the Major "that it was very cold, and asked him for some clothing like his own." He gave her all he could spare, a shirt and an old sack. These natives were engaged in wild dances about their fires, unfortunately, perhaps, mistaken by the Major for signs of hostile intention, but which our better information suggests were too likely but the stern and intricate totem ceremonies, initiation of young men, etc., for which the tribes joined at certain stated seasons. It would appear that, in the intervals of masterly pilfering from the carts and tents, individual natives of both sexes endeavoured without success to explain the reason for their alarming crowding and dancing, and it is only too likely that the arrival of the new force of natives on the opposite bank, which the Major mistook for a hostile mustering of fresh tribes, was but the orderly advent of a brother tribe to share in the totem corrobberee.

Be this as it may, the uproarious natives continued to crowd about the carts and threaten and snatch at anything and everything to an exasperating and alarming degree, till amid these wild doings, with the cattle falling in the yokes, and the consciousness of eight hundred grilling miles between the expedition and home, sudden shots were heard from the river and a bleeding attendant staggered in through the trees, having been struck down by the tribal chief as he

was filling the water-vessels. The natives had been skilfully kept off the wounded man by a single guard with a pistol, and presently, when the supports arrived, guns were fired and spears were thrown.

After this affray, the Major, not knowing if he were to be attacked in overwhelming numbers, and renouncing all hope of forsaking his party among such people for one of his hazardous gallops into the unknown, turned sadly about and retraced his way home. Before doing so, an examination of the country to the south showed some mountains in the immediate westward, a fact which pretty well assured him that the river was blocked in that direction and eventually joined the Murray through Sturt's opening.

Scurvy was at death grips with several of the men before they reached civilization, but Mitchell brought all in without the ultimate loss of another life. The Government showed its confidence in the explorer by despatching him next year in command of an expedition of twenty-four men, to discover, by another route, the ultimate course of the Darling; and this he accomplished, together with the exploration of the country beyond the river Murray, which he found most rich and named Australia Felix (now, of course, Victoria). Among the interesting personages which this time accompanied the explorers were their two native guides, one a black widow, named Tarandurey, carrying her child (after adopted by the leader), and another, a fine Hercules, named "Piper," who journeyed with them for every mile, and was rewarded by no less a gift than the Major's "own red-coat." The expedition set out, auspiciously for the Irish leader, on St. Patrick's Day, and he writes, exultingly: "Dr. Johnson's Obediah was not more free from care, on the morning of his journey, than I was on this, the first morning of mine. It was also St. Patrick's Day, and in riding through the bush, I had leisure to recall

past scenes and times, connected with this anniversary. I remembered that exactly on that morning, twenty-four years before, I marched down the glacis of Elvas, to the tune of 'St. Patrick's Day in the morning,' as the sun rose over the beleaguered towers of Badajos." Similarly, the expedition may be said to have finished on a deep note. The scene of Mitchell's return across the dividing Murray into New South Wales, after accomplishing this successful journey of two thousand four hundred miles, is perhaps as truly picturesque, grand, and triumphant as any moment of his fine career. We have the flooded stream with high and forested bank; the evening light; the wild disorder of the maddened bullocks, driven into the river, and all swimming "out of direction"; the herding of the horsemen in their red shirts; the *expedition* boat heading off the beasts; the carpet snakes in the water; the carts and horses waiting on the further shore; the footmen with their red shirts, white braces, muskets, and bayonets; the naked natives, among them "Piper," wearing the sword his wife shouldered in a moment of danger; lastly the leader, a-horseback in the water, directing operations in his worn, red tunic. This is one of the historical pictures of Australia.

We leave the explorer when, a few hours from the first habitations of civilization, he allows his men to hasten on, and himself remains behind in the twilight solitudes to draw and paint an unusually noble gum-tree.

NOVELS AS A GUIDE TO THE MORE WORLDLY LIFE

His life had been a various life; and he'd better not have known some things himself.—*Sir Charles Grandison.*

PROPER criticism may say this is a question of very little importance, and perhaps that is so. Two of the first desiderata of a good novel are that it should be sufficiently exalted and entertaining, and human life and character (at least to youth) are not always exalted or even entertaining. He who seeks, therefore, among novels, as a student approaching life, for a guide or finger-post in the human world is asking for almost superhuman insight, and superhuman faithfulness in the novelist, together with the skill to hide or render decent enough for publicity some of the proverbial unpleasingness of truth. In stating this truism, we lean, as the realists are so prone to, to the bad side of the matter (so hard is it to hold the pen in the mean); for the novelist must be as big again if he is—in the midst of his wild plot—to hold his hand from ill-reporting on the good of life: from keeping dark for his machine what is not so dark. One may, therefore, take it for granted as a whole that the majority of fictional works (not polemical) are, if helpful, barely decisive as a tyro's cicerone, and indeed are as much intended for the purposes of amusing, erecting a model character, satirizing a bad one, stating a case in the cause of justice, or merely as an ingenious work of ideas,

opening life, generally speaking, as Nathaniel Hawthorne said, in a manner "far more subtle than the ostensible one."

Before instancing those novelists whom we find giving youth some index to life's stranger differences, we may name, in antiphony, a few of the greater writers whose work is hardly useful in this respect, to which, perhaps, they make little pretension. We do not suggest that their statements of life are even faintly falsified, that their plots may not lose in grip (a sort of plea for misstating life), but that it seems asking too much of human handicraft that, while they write and depict so dramatically, they shall at the same time emphasize for youth's inspection and guidance enough of the lower realities and the more intricate unexpectedness that lie barred in the human features. In short, it is too much to ask a Dickens to be so amusing, so hauntingly homely, so melodiously tragic, and produce with equal clearness the suggesting subtleties of a certain kind of bitter-hearted adventuress (when he does so it is laughingly hidden from youth), while we think a great part of Thackeray's revealing passes with inexperience for mere narration, his irony hardly disclosing its warning to any but the mature. These two writers seem too busy with a hundred other things to be Virgillian conductors to aspiring young students of humanity. When the former points a warning he is so determined to have you laughing, that he seems to youth (as with the three Pecksniffs) to paint too exaggerated a case; while the latter, as we have suggested, rather holds youth up for the amusement of his readers than addresses his ironic reflections to him, and is perhaps too gentlemanlike with the worst moves of human nature to be a true worldly policeman. Nor is Sir Walter Scott much help to youth in an ultra-worldly way, though his touches on life, to those whose eyes are more open, need no comment. We fear much of his

novel of *St Ronan's Well* will (like Dickens' *Veneer and Podsnap*) escape youth's apprehension as humorous exaggeration. Neither is Fielding in his *Tom Jones* of much value in this aspect, Jones being too bad for a good normal man, and too good for a bad, normal one; while those wonderful "prefaces," which possibly keep the novel alive, are somewhat scamped by romantic youth in judgment on the story. The aspiring tyro is discouraged by the grossness of Smollett (an impression perhaps unfairly increased by the fantastic illustrations), and does not thrive in the company of *Roderick Random*; while the *Clarissa* of Richardson, though one may say of such a masterpiece that no man may rise from its perusal the same as when he had not opened it, is more, perhaps, an analysis of "good" in the arms of choking "wickedness" than a doctrine of life. Inimitable Nathaniel Hawthorne, who writes his subtle thoughts as if he were composing noble epitaphs, delving in the curiosities of retribution and revenge has some strange facts for youth, indeed, what might he not have revealed had he perfected his wonderful *Elixer of Life*; and Washington Irving, too, is wonderfully clever in depicting the common characters met with in *l'ancien régime*, if youth hardly finds in him sufficient romantic incitement.

Saint-Pierre, of *Paul and Virginia* sets us in the right direction on one point, the delicate and precious beauty hidden in feminine character, if a doubt is cast upon his worldly advice by that unfortunate passage in which he reveals himself as party-mad against the rich; in the same manner has many a novelist imperilled, if not destroyed, his influence, in a just youth's judgment, by constant signs of his carelessness to the feelings of the poor. George Eliot is good, as she is great, but is troubled with, and troubles the young male student with sign of, sex-bias, that fatal

disease always threatening the art of the woman writer; while her contemporary, and one who she so closely resembled in appearance, Georges Sand, while a true and tender revealer of perhaps the best feminine philosophy, hopes, and compassionate attitude (a rare faculty in the authoress), hardly bends her proud head to interest herself in bad men and women. To mention two or three more of these familiar works, sooner than lose many of which from his life's library, your true lover of books for books' sake, would almost as lief part with one of his limbs or senses, the novels of Stevenson, hardly help youth much in his struggle with the world, except in turning his face away from it (we have hardly the trepidity to suggest that all the characters in *Treasure Island* are to be found in modern life), if *The Master of Ballantrae* has a valuable fact to put before great-heart arming. Perhaps *The Ebb Tide* has its goad for youth as well as maturity. . . . Lord Lytton, at his best (see *Pelham* as Borrow directs), has as many useful intimations as Le Sage and Goldsmith; the Brontës, too, of certain hypocrisies in men; and Mrs. Gaskell, at least in her *Cranford*, of some of the gentler under-currents of life. But not to these books would we specially turn in youth in the province of extra-worldly revelation, for sour, cold enquiry; indeed you may look along your shelves, at your Victor Hugos, Daudets,[1] your Disraelis, your Goethes, and ask yourself are there any such—must we go, as many scoffingly say, to life alone for its more actual differences?

It is the reward of the student who has given up his youth to the cult, or art, of books, to rediscover in many of these volumes, as a veteran, a hundred touches of beautiful insight. This, we suppose, is the

[1] The revelation in Daudet's *Artists' Wives* is superb, but who would recommend it to youth?

prize of Providence for "the continuing to the end," for the youthful and grey plodding through what often appears to youth dull work enough. But this is not what Disraeli means in the sanctuary-like pages at the beginning of the third book of his novel *Coningsby*, when he shows youth asking guidance on the threshold of the world—for "one who by the comprehension of his thought, and the richness of his knowledge, and the advantage of his experience, might strengthen and illuminate and guide his obscure or hesitating or unpractised intelligence." It may be interpolated that excellent guidance in the actual is to be found in the reading of the few great histories, and the biographies of great statesmen; and this is so, if reverent or ardent youth may be expected to find his chief interest in such reading. Indeed, is there a better monument to a great man than the way he instils us with fresh hope by the manner of his life. But is there, as there often is in human intercourse, any direct answer from the *novelists* to young Coningsby's sighing in the summer forest? Are there any criteria of resemblance between one man and another, between one woman and another, on which an author may touch, or has touched, for youth's guarding, beyond the thousand and one variations on the Italian adventuress, the parent in law, the parent of somebody else, the Blifils and Rashleighs of life, its Moses-with-the-gross-of-spectacles, and such-like "old wives'" warnings. We are inclined to think, there do exist, in this peculiar province of the novel, one or two explaining men.

We have indeed not touched on the more modern novels, though we find great ability in many. We suspect there is any amount of guidance to be got from a Benson, a Kipling, a James, a Deland, or a Haggard—indeed there are one or two of the latter's novels, such as *The Witch's Head*, which are specially interesting to the student of life.

But for the dark staff of Virgil many of our authors (like Dickens) are too busy with the entertainment. We know not if a novice rises from a Phillpotts much better armed than when he took his seat, nor will we hazard if Hardy's beautiful ideal of "a pure woman faithfully presented," would be any but a doubtful shrine for youth to attend in a world containing some Hamlet's mothers. In this connection of youth's extra-worldly guidance, some of our modern writers show signs of the crushing burden we have borne in our times of political things: many of their characters being mere stumps for the party-mad—a thing Dickens, reformer and publicist as he was, never once descended to. It is true, many modern novels are a guide to the reader, in that they unconsciously reveal the author's method of approaching certain difficulties, either with a natural indifference, or an instinctive knowledge, that the reader does not possess. This must be a part of what Hawthorne meant when he wrote, "when romances do really teach anything, or produce any effective operation, it is usually through a far more subtle process than the ostensible one." But it hardly becomes our poor knowledge to discuss the modern novel; on many, Time must yet imprint his seal. So many are but copies of our leaders. Some even stark and impudent plagiarism (plagiarism as Fielding saw it, from a contemporary) the sign of the art cut-throat, the mark of the literary beast. But among the Johnsons, Hichens, Howells, Wards, and those confusing American authors with the names of English statesmen, we would select Churchill as having some occasional hints for up-looking youth not confused by a perplexing taste, while Mrs. Ward may be read for her sometimes illuminating characterization, if, where her polemics sway her, we shiver with her worst characters. We are not, however, well informed, and speak but pretentiously on modern Romance.

It is so easy to write captiously on the subject of what another has written ; the achievement was that other's, when he took his seat and wrote with *nothing*. As Trollope, that facile-appearing writer of nearly fifty novels, has put it : "There is no way of writing well and writing easily." [1]

Among the tragic Russian realists you might think to find help for youth about to essay the world, but splendid and faithful as they are, they are generally more sordid than normal life, and can hardly be said to touch the experience of the ordinary neophite. Indeed, like the Reformations of our time, they perilously approach the opinions of the member for "burglary." Moreover, the Russian novelists are not moralists, and youth must have hope. The whole of the philosophy of Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* is based, we think, on a false foundation : the common moral fall of youth in early life ; and is like a superb statue with feet of clay. Reading in this wonderful and awful work of art, you might think people had no faces, only persons. . . . As for the gentler realist Turgenev, has he anything for youth ? We should call him rather a chastener of youth, than one who beckons on or charts the course. Youth is none the worse for being a little horrified at his confronting with old "Rudin," once (nay, yet) a Russian "Coningsby"; and what a stinging revelation the *Fathers and Children*, with its pathos of parentage, its story of the almost terrible comicality of the patience of quiet, gentle parents with a gay, wicked, and worldly son. Yes, this book, at least of Turgenev's, has a message for all youth.

But to those who are really looking for some insight, and who are not embittered by bitter truths, sometimes badly, sometimes humorously, sometimes grossly over-stated, what much better than a course of Balzac, warily taken, indeed, like all strong medicines containing poisonous

[1] *Barchester Towers*, by Anthony Trollope.

ingredients, but taken bravely into the system. We think no harm could come to youth on his guard, from the reading of *Cæsar Birotteau* (in some ways this might be included among the novels of Dickens), and the volume containing *La Grande Bretêche* and that picturesque fragment *Peace in the House*.[1] We admit that the ladies and gentlemen in the latter story are rather nauseous, and the reader is on the whole relieved to learn that the more worldly of the heroines does not, after all, marry the less worldly of the heroes, but is burned at a ball given by Napoleon for Marie Louise; but what wholesome, cynical advice from the old Duchesse De Lansac! Yet more interesting, and more important to the student of life than these, perhaps, are the two novels *A Bachelor's Establishment* and the pleasanter *Ursule Mirouët*. It is instructive to compare the former with Turgenev's *Fathers and Children*, the main *motif* touching on a catastrophe in a family owing to the loss of the male parent: in a word, the infatuation borne by a mother for her ne'er-do-well son. The secondary aim of this brilliant story, from which it takes its name, the uniting of a young gentleman with a cunning and gross-hearted grisette, if horribly told, it would not be amiss if all reverent young men would swallow, get well into the system, and forget. Of the novel *Ursule Mirouët*, it is as well to have it among one's volumes of De Balzac (we would not be understood to recommend all Balzac's stories), the more gentle tale of this orphan girl, brought up by an infidel doctor, a priest, a military officer, and a country magistrate, bringing some needed sweetness into much astringency of scepticism. Not that Balzac's weariness of the world has made him a sceptic. He does not laugh at all ingenuousness and love, like Hamlet. Far from it; he does not even smile askance at "love's young dream";

[1] We refer here to the Saintsbury translation.

he has some of his most hopeful and memorable things to say of happiness in marriage (see *The Vendetta*). His rapier seems reserved for the intriguers and betrayers of both sexes. . . . Then for all interested in an art or craft, we have *The Unknown Masterpiece* ; what serious artist has not to face the issue here so learnedly developed ! while the secondary moral of this tale is worthy of the study of all : that no one's art or career is to be balanced against the values of devoted love. Last, for the uglier side-issues which ambitious war brings in its train, for its grim and piteous picture of love vainly beating its wings against the crags of insanity, we have the poignant *Farewell*, where we have the anguished attempt to restore the sanity of a woman by reproducing the scene of the horror which killed it.

But, if a lasting revelation of master-work to the veteran reader, Balzac, even as a guide to extra-worldly pitfalls, is strong medicine for youth, and had better be taken with admixtures of some pleasant English writer, such as Richardson, Borrow, or Trollope ; by turning, with a sense of refreshment and relief, from such women as Flore Brazier and Madame de Vaudremont to Harriet Byron, Madeline Staveley, or spirited, mischievous Charlotte Grandison ; from such men as the Baron de la Roche-Hugon and du Tillet to Grandison himself (despite his rather wearisome persistence in reasoning with the wicked) and our Dr. Livesey ; and indeed, in these pages (turn again to Letter XIII of *Sir Charles Grandison* : the reflections of a young man concerning the bringing out and marriage of a young girl) indeed in these pages is there not to be found almost as faithful and skilful counsel for youth as in those of the great French master ! Yes, especially in Borrow's novel, and its continuation (excepting the mistaken appendix), here are pages of easily assimilated worldliness, a suit of simple

harness and stand of arms for the reader, as clear and true as the water of the wayside springs of which the author was so fond. Nay, read once more the letter of poor Isobel to her rejected lover ; here is a passable life's chart in the compass of a piece of notepaper.

It is a reader's conviction that these books are worthy of the attention of a youth interested in the grim study of life. There are others, of course, better and more carefully read, who can point to other Pharos among the charted lights. But here, at least, are singularly true men, who have skilfully, and with passionate interest, touched upon some more puzzling things. We are speaking here rather of guides to life than helps to the same. There may be others more helpful than these. They have their hour. Nay, as one thinks of the comfort of good clever books [1] over the more unbecoming things of life, one thinks of similes too terrible to be written here. One fact—which has become a well-known philosophy—one fact may be restated : that of some great poet, even as Emerson, seated in his library writing great, good, and hopeful things. Such a curious fact, supposing your man to be great, good, charitable and faithful, is the defeat of all gloom and evil.

[1] What Swift playfully called, "a foolish book."

LADY HAMILTON

(OF NELSON)

LONDON, PICCADILLY, *February* 10, 1803.

I must beg leave to warn you to be careful how you mention the characters of such excellent Sovereigns as the King and Queen of Naples. If you wish to have any conversation with me on the subject, I shall be at home any morning at ten o'clock.—From letter to Alexander Stephens, Esq., *Des. and Lett. of Lord Nelson* (Nicolas) V. v, p. 43.

. . . his manners are unaffectedly simple and modest.—From description of Nelson, after the Battle of the Nile, from Miss Knight's *Journal*, September 21, 1798.

England has had many heroes, but never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow men as Nelson. All men knew that his heart was as humane as it was fearless. . . .—Southey's *Life of Nelson*.

HOW full of strange situations is this study! Take, for example, the single incident after the Battle of the Nile, when Nelson diplomatically toured through Austria, accompanied by Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and after some great glittering banquet in his honour, sat modest and fateful in his chair, while she, who had been known as "the prettiest woman in London," friend of the sister of Marie Antoinette, wife of the British Ambassador to Italy, rose from her place and sang, in her cultivated voice, a song composed by one of the party [1] in honour of the "Nile's" victor!

[1] Miss Knight, daughter of Rear-Admiral Sir Joseph Knight.

Any one staying in Dresden during the Napoleonic Wars would have been startled to hear, one day in 1800, that the famous Admiral Nelson, so celebrated for his personal daring and extraordinary set-back to Buonaparte,[1] was passing through to England, with that bewitchingly beautiful Lady Hamilton and her husband. Actually the little man, with the single arm and the simple, determined manner, would be seen walking in the street, and besides himself, that most beautiful of English women whose image the painters had so doted upon, and whose name the revolutionary papers had endeavoured, from the first moment of the conqueror's arrival in Naples, to force before the public in relations of more than mere friendship, with the ambassador's illustrious compatriot. . . . And so they arrived, amid all sorts of acclamations, Nelson barely able to move or obtain a moment's privacy from the enthusiastic crowds ; the lady, large of figure (some said "monstrous"), exuberant and direct of manner (some said "vulgar"), most lovely of face (and to that the majority were agreed), herself cutting up the poor Admiral's meat at table, introducing him and warning crowds that "Nelson" was coming, with tears in her eyes, the while her courtly husband held himself most gallantly and pleasantly, always to be heard praising his "good-hearted" lady.

Strange events had taken place in the lives of Lord Nelson and Sir William and Lady Hamilton since the Admiral arrived in the bay of Naples, in his battered *Vanguard*, having wiped out (but for two battleships) the fleet of Buonaparte, behind that general on the sea off Alexandria. So many, and so surprising, were these occurrences that it is difficult to bring them before the reader in a small enough

[1] "The victory of the Nile, was the most splendid and useful that had hitherto signalized the naval annals of their country."—William Pitt, in the House of Commons.

compass for the purpose. It is to be noted, by one reading among these grim engagements, that the admirals and leading officers in command complained, after some action like "the Nile," how distressing was the reaction after the victory, how difficult it was, in short, to throw off the melancholy that ensued when the supreme effort was over, and the immediate reason for it gone up with the blood and smoke of sunken ships. Thus it is not to be wondered at that when Sir Horatio received the King and Queen of Naples on his deck, and when the British Ambassador Hamilton, and his lady, had come on board the *Vanguard* with bands playing ("terribly affecting," Nelson called it), and amid all the congratulations, festivities, and pageants organized in his honour, it was seen that he was grievously overdone, and it was wondered how the frail, active figure, with the loose sleeve, his bad sight, and again, nastily wounded in the head, so that, for a while, reticent of his wounds as he was, he had given up his life—it was wondered how he was able to carry off so wonderful and terrific an accomplishment. He relates that Lady Hamilton, when she came on the quarter-deck of the *Vanguard*, even fainted with the oppression of the moment. From this condition, he was nursed and comforted back to health again in the palace of the British Ambassador, where he was treated with asses' milk, and this devoted nursing, by Sir William and Lady Hamilton, and some of the wonderful hospitalities that followed, the great tactician always seemed to regard, perhaps contrasting them with some envy of which he complains, and some festivities that had not his approval, with peculiar pleasure and gratitude.

(We must here insert the reminder that Nelson had been entertained in the same palace seven years previous, as an obscure post-captain, having never yet fought an action at sea, when the Ambassador, after some talk with him,

prophesied for him the greatest future, and insisted that he should be given the apartment in his house which had been prepared for an English prince.[1] How was it then, when Nelson returned to this same friend of his captainhood, and her ladyship, having so transcendentally fulfilled their best belief in him? To the rumours that were immediately circulated through the Jacobin press,[2] that his relations were too familiar with the beauty, he seemed to scornfully answer that, man of honour that he was, how could he otherwise than be enraptured to connect them with his success!)

Among the festivities at Naples stands out Nelson's birthday-ball at the embassy, when Sir William and Lady Hamilton entertained 80 guests at dinner, and 1,740 and 800 at the ball and supper.[3] On this occasion a *rostral column*, or Grecian dais, was erected, adorned with some trophy, from each captured ship, and arranged no doubt by Sir William Hamilton, who was, of course, the noted antiquary, and even used perhaps by that finished actress, his lady, for some of her classical tableaux. Another occurrence, amid the court arrangements, which has peculiar interest, was a visit of Nelson to some china works, where purchasing, with his invariable grace, some busts of the Neapolitan Royal family, he was informed that the King had given orders that everything he chose to purchase had been paid for. In this connection Lady Hamilton relates, that the sister of Marie Antoinette had ordered, from this manu-

[1] Prince Augustus.

[2] "First it was said, Sir W. and Lord N. fought; then, that we played, and lost. First Sir W. and Lord N. live like brothers; next Lord N. never plays: and this I give you my word of honour." —Let. of Lady Hamilton to Hon. Mr. Greville, February 25, 1800. *Des. and Lett.*, etc.

[3] It has been considered by some inexplicable why Lady Nelson did not join her sick hero in Italy.

factory, a set of china to be painted with Lord Nelson's sea battles and portrait.

And then, suddenly, came the crash. Napoleon's troops were surrounding Naples, and the Royal family, with the English residents, must be got away where the victorious English fleet could protect them. In some danger from the frightened populace, the sister of Marie Antoinette and her husband were secreted away by night to the *Vanguard*, and thus upon the Admiral's ship, in company with the Hamiltons, were conducted by the fleet to Sicily. This little voyage was the grimmest perhaps Lord Nelson ever experienced, the weather being the worst he had ever known, and the youngest of the Royal children dying under Lady Hamilton's nursing. The Hamiltons were of great service during the escape, themselves conducting, with Nelson, the Royal family to the boats, and surrendering all their cabins and servants to the King and Queen ; while her ladyship, who by some strange fate was a natural sea-woman,[1] bore herself calmly and steadily through the awful uproar. After, came the landing at Palermo, a place of stately palaces on the sea, amphitheatred by calm peaks. Here Lord Nelson, complaining often of illness, yet conducting his overwhelming activities with rigid precision, lodged, when ashore, with the Hamiltons, occasioning more talk thereby, and some misgiving from his brother admirals, one of whom wrote directly to Lady Hamilton, begging her not to be seen playing in company. Here, perhaps, began the ensuing coldness between the Queen and Lady Hamilton, her "friend for life" as the former had called her. Nevertheless, Nelson's letters to the Ambassador and Lady Hamilton at this period, disclose little but a stately polite-

[1] It was perhaps this immunity from sea-sickness, and its unusual feminine powers, which induced Lord St. Vincent to give her the title of "Patroness of the British Fleet."

ness if deepening attachment to both. Here, too, amid multitudinous operations, occurred more Royal festivities for Lord Nelson. And here, or hereabouts, young Nisbet, Nelson's stepson, once a pet of Lady Hamilton, and now raised to rank above his years by a cautious father, turned one day publicly upon Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton with open anger and upbraiding.[1] And then, after Nelson's capture of his old French antagonist, the *Genereux*,[2] came the return to Naples, the stern, just trial of the Neapolitan deserters, Nelson's resignation of his command sooner than serve under an obscure Admiral, and the previously-mentioned journey, full of gratulations (running within three miles of capture by the French) through Austria and Germany. Thus the little, frail, active seaman went home to an extraordinary welcome from the British people, a cold one from the King and Lady Nelson, and, almost constantly at sea, in quick succession (from 1800 to 1805), to the dogged restraints and diplomacy of Copenhagen and the grave, grim accomplishment of Trafalgar.

But following on those brave Italian happenings, and festive and tragic intimacies, which we brought to Nelson's return to the domestic hearth, there came his tragic separation from his wife, and acceptance of rooms in Sir William Hamilton's house in London. For our account of these occurrences we have to rely on the honour of Nelson's

[1] He was reconciled to Lord Nelson, who was mortally offended, under the plea of intoxication. It is to be seen, in the first letter written by Nelson with his left hand, that, though his stepson was instrumental in saving his life, he was seemingly repaying some obligation in so doing. In a man so full of compunction in what he says as Lord Nelson, this is of great importance. See also his "stern condemnation of his stepson" in his last letter to Lady Nelson.

[2] Last but one of the "Nile" battleships. The last was soon captured by Nelson's Captain Berry, after a grim fight, in which her colours were nailed to the stump of the mast.

solicitor, Haslewood, who wrote to the editor of Nelson's despatches with the following account of the separation of which he was an *eyewitness*. He says (naming those members of Nelson's family who were aware of the circumstance) Lady Nelson left her husband's house after creating a scene at breakfast, in which she indignantly objected to Lord Nelson's styling Sir William Hamilton's wife, in his habitual way with his men and women friends, and even his ships, as "dear Lady Hamilton." Being left without a *ménage*, Lady Nelson having taken up her abode with his aged father, Lord Nelson, who had urged throughout the scene the calm assurances of his attachment, accepted the invitation of Sir William and Lady Hamilton to make himself a guest at their London house, afterwards removing his possessions, with theirs, to his hoped-for home at Merton—returning to his lodgings only at Sir William's decease. But it is evident that, previous to their separation, Nelson's life with Lady Nelson had been rendered most unhappy; for though, afterwards, in his generosity, he wrote "he took God to witness there was nothing in her or her conduct he wished otherwise," he recorded, in a note of a yet later date,[1] conferring a liberal allowance upon Lady Nelson, "that sooner than live the unhappy life I did when last I came to England, I would stay abroad for ever. My mind is fixed as fate." It seems evident that Lady Nelson, who was an experienced campaigner, as her letters show, and one of those peculiar people who are always found first whatever the circumstances or company (it is a common fact how this nature can make use of generosity of character)—it seems evident, from her cold reception[2] of the Admiral on his return from Italy,

[1] *Des. and Lett. of Lord Nelson*, p. ccix, Addenda V. vii.

[2] See Beresford's *Nelson and his Times*, p. 133. Beresford suggests that she was prejudiced by her son, to whom she was entirely partial.

that she had jealously prejudged the case, and, however excellent his intentions, she at least had determined upon the end. In her quarrel with him, as it touches the character of Lady Hamilton, we must either dismiss Haslewood's narrative as for some reason false, or admit, with Nelson's oldest biographer,[1] there is still much doubt where the burden of the blame should be attached. Lastly, there is the mystery of Lord Nelson's reply to one who censured his conduct in this matter, "Either as a public or private (man) I wish nothing undone that I have done." In tracing the life of Lady Hamilton, we have the misfortune of touching on what seems the weaker side of a man who (apart from his genius and bravery) carried out numberless duties and graces of life with exact niceness of precision. Only take a glance at him as he visits every gun's crew before going into action; or when dealing with sarcastic and humane diplomacy with the Danish Prince at Copenhagen; or, pen in hand, with certain of his captains suspected of farming the fleet's supplies[2]; or encouraging a midshipman a little fearful of the first round-shot. Or see him alone ordering a general prayer of thanksgiving after the battle-night of the Nile. Nay, see him if you can, upon his two years' chase in the *Victory*, never once ashore,[3] walking his stockings dry upon his cabin floor because they were a trouble to his one hand! Human life is not always what we think it; and the history of this reply is to be found, perhaps, less among its listed facts than its mysteries and coincidences.

* * * *

It was indeed a strange fate which threw together, from such divided lives, perhaps the noblest, most celebrated

[1] Southey did not think there was anything but sentimental intercourse between N. and L. H.

[2] We suspect his despatches and letters became the model for the correspondence of the gentlemen of the thirties.

[3] For two years.

man and the most bewitching and charming woman of their day. Scarcely a beneficent fate, you would say; for not only the man, but the woman, was behaving in a manner that became her well, and earning for herself an honoured —a more honoured—place in the country to which she had flown. History assures us of her behaviour, of the place she took in the Queen's affections on her marriage with Sir William Hamilton, how the beautiful and good-hearted Lady Hamilton, during those seven years, was an object for the social attentions of those ladies of the English nobility who passed through Naples.[1] It was here she summoned all her good sense and ability, and built up that better character, to which Nelson, who spoke sometimes of her faults as well as virtues, in the codicil to his will appointing her the guardian of his beloved adopted daughter, addressed the hope that "she would educate the child in the paths of religion and virtue, and give her those accomplishments which so much adorned herself." When this poor "Trilby" of the studios came to Naples and married her good, elderly "Svengali," she seems to have determined to enrich her beauty and charm by his learning and good leading to the utmost of her power; with such marked success that in all she did, from her art and singing to her frank, exuberant, good-natured, charming manner, she quite excelled herself, and became highly held by high and low. Her worst fault appears to have been a fondness for a constant stream of guests in her drawing-rooms, and at her table, upon which point her husband seems to have made dignified complaint here, as in later days, in company with Nelson, at Merton. (We may well ask how could Nelson, any more than Washington, in similar conditions after victory, deny himself to a constant stream of guests?) Long anterior to Nelson's second coming to Naples, our

[1] Mahon's *Life of Nelson*.

beautiful, aspiring "Trilby" had taught herself Italian and become the close friend ("Your best friend," Nelson wrote to that princess) of the Queen, and was so much in her confidence, and in the trust of her husband, that she acted, on several occasions of the very gravest nature, as the agent between the Sicilian Royal Family and the British Government—being awarded, through the Czar of Russia, for her direct services in extorting provisions for the hungry "Nile" fleet, with Nelson's undying gratitude, the well-known Cross of the Order of the Knights of Malta.[1]

And yet, more unfortunate for this woman was, perhaps, that later mischance, which called away her husband, Sir William Hamilton, only a little over two years before the death of Lord Nelson. Had Sir William lived till after Trafalgar, the celebrated position in society of Emma Hamilton might have remained very much unchanged, except for the sympathy which would have been accorded Sir William and Lady Hamilton as the two closest friends of the dead hero of yet another victory. With his two friends alive, Nelson's dying messages to Lady Hamilton, and the nation in her behalf, would have been less warmly worded; and with her husband beside her to give her balance, stay her indignation, and accord the lonely woman honourable protection, her fall could not have been so signal, her extravagance and embarrassments overwhelmed her, or her death occurred at Boulogne in nine brief years after that of Nelson. Indeed, the end of our poor "Trilby," our charming hostess of the great, our sagacious political ambassadress (with all the honours she had won by her

[1] Her ladyship was officially named "Dame Petite Croix de l'Ordre de St. Jean de Jerusalem," and the Governor of Malta, who obtained the Order with her, Commandeur Honoraire." —*Desp. and Lett. of Lord N.*, V. iv, p. 192.

sagacity and intelligence) might have been, God willing it, in something more of the position she had won herself; and could hardly have been so thriftless, reckless, and complaining.

In touching briefly on the more debated relations between Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton—the only shadow, so it has been said, on the fair fame of this high souled and determined man—of whom a certain Judge said, after Lord Nelson had given evidence in a certain case, "a man on whom to pronounce a eulogy were to waste words"[1]—they bear the singularity that Lady Hamilton was always affectionately countenanced by Lord Nelson's female relatives. Sir William Hamilton, as we know, was the close, attached, and testified admirer of Lord Nelson, from their first meeting up to his last hour and breath. "The most virtuous, loyal, and truly brave character I have ever met with," he wrote of Nelson, a week before his death; while a few hours after it Lord Nelson wrote of *him* to the Duke of Clarence, "the world never lost a more upright and accomplished gentleman." He died in the presence of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton—in the arms of one and holding the hand of the other. After Sir William's death, Lord Nelson returned to his lodgings, and the ailing Admiral never again dwelt at Merton till those brief twenty-five days before Trafalgar, when the household consisted of his much loved brother, Dr. Nelson (afterwards Earl Nelson), Mrs. Nelson, and their children, Horace and Charlotte (afterwards Lady Bridport); his sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Matcham; his nephew, Mr. Thomas Bolton (afterwards second Earl Nelson), and Mrs. George Matcham; and his nieces, Miss Dun and Miss Eliza Bolton; and Lady Hamilton. It is of importance to be observed

[1] Trial of Capt. Despard for high treason.—Note to V. v, p. 42, *Desp. and Lett. of Lord N.*, Nicolas.

how these people were among the few who seem to have paid regard to Nelson's dying wishes, and never reversed their affectionate civility to Lady Hamilton.

With regard to Horatia, it may be of interest to note, that she was brought up to the end to look upon Lady Hamilton as her guardian, and wrote of her, after her death, as somebody not related to her. She testified thus of Lady Hamilton's character: "With all Lady Hamilton's faults—and she had *many*—she had many fine qualities, which, had she been placed early in better hands, and in different circumstances, would have made her a very superior woman. It is but justice on my part to say that through all *her* difficulties she *invariably*, till the last few months, expended on my education, etc., the whole of the interest of the sum left me by Lord Nelson, and which was left entirely at her control." [1]

* * * *

This was a very celebrated woman—celebrated, we mean, in a way that was very unusual. No sketch of her life will impinge upon it which does not emphasize the extreme influence of her loveliness. There was a homely, good-hearted, sweet simplicity in the exquisite picture she presented, with which, at her highest, it is quite likely her manner chimed. Numerous pictorial masterpieces recorded her beauty in her lifetime by such artists as Romney and Reynolds in England, and Madame Le Brun in France, and from these numberless mezzotints, lithographs, engravings, miniatures had been copied and scattered broadcast over England and Europe—some being captured by the terrible revolutionaries—a treasured object of furniture in all kinds and conditions of homes. Nay, the fame of her looks carried her image even beneath the glaze of

[1] *Desp. and Lett. of Lord N.*, V. vii, Appendix.

china, and we read in Nelson's letters (Nicolas) of a little cup and saucer which reached him in his swaying *Victory*, when tirelessly watching the combined fleets off Gibraltar; of which, wrote the left-handed, near-blind Admiral, chilled and ailing with his watch-dog chase, bothered with his cough and old St. Vincent wound, "Your dear phiz—but not the least like you—on the cup is safe; but I would not use it for the world; for, if it was broke, it would distress me very much."

Emma Hamilton's earlier associates spoke of something about her that was honest and unselfish. More—poor dragoon-tongued "Trilby" of the studios—she gave, according to her sadder chronicles, distressing signs of good faith and a desire for the higher thing. As the companion of men of pleasure, she had a curious effect. They fell to instructing her in virtue, or forsook her company, as that of one secreting aspiring wishes. Her taste—if sometimes affected — manners, beauty, and good heart, enticed the men she met with to raise her (and sometimes themselves), and indulge her innocent hope. From becoming celebrated for her loveliness, she bid fair to become celebrated for her good sense, and fate raised her at length to a strange pinnacle of eminence, as the Lady of a great Antiquary and Ambassador, in the very hub of the world's struggles and at the very door (nay, with her fingers on the door-handle) whence actions move which remake worlds. But no, they tell us she turned away after that beacon or marsh-light of woman—the longing to inspire a sublime passion. If so, her temptation was nigh as great as her fall. Poor Cinderella, it was after all but once again the grave, old fairy-tale! in which the godmother lavishes upon beauty all she can imagine of marvellous and brilliant fortune, provided only she obeys one small behest, asks not that one more gift, turns not that one key too much,

when an' she must, all will vanish like a dream, and there sits again poor silly Amy Lyon fingering for those phantom gems among the ashes of her father's forge.

We read her ladyship could be outspoken enough and sufficiently headstrong and publicly exuberant in her enthusiasm. We see her driving through rejoicing Naples in her carriage, a'chime with the thronging crowd, with the printed word "Nelson" bound upon her forehead. In her letters, and we suspect in her conversation, she was fond—indeed, a little too fond—of a downright or slangy expression. At the very genesis of her correspondence with Nelson she made use of the words "you lie"—in what connection seems unknown—while a long and rather grandiloquent letter from Naples to Lady Nelson concludes with the somewhat incongruous pleasantry, "hang them, I say." In connection with the additions to Merton, which Sir William and the absent Nelson left to her pretty judgment, we note a certain determination to have her own way, which Nelson treated amusedly, with his well-known, "but never mind, have it as you will." (How movingly that expression "never mind" rings in all the painful deprivations of Nelson's life — his lost arm, his twice-blinded eyes, his troublesome bruised chest—"but never mind, it will do very well!") Not that she was possessed by that ungainly fault of a predisposition for her own works; she was not always mistaken about her failures; and if, for example, she was no great fist at a letter, she was given to modest apology for her composition in a manner that was almost as taking as if she had written faultlessly. She had considerable reputation for womanly compassion, and erring sailors of the fleet were in the habit of directly appealing for her intercession, while the Neapolitan deserters begged her, by a still extant letter, to intercede for them

with their King. In this connection it would seem she was a kind and practical nurse. For the rest, there are signs, pretty well proven, that she had "a devil of a temper," and while there seems to be no doubt that she was a modest woman, her fondness for a constant stream of society, which Nelson might have curbed, seems to have grown upon her till it became an instrument in her ruin. Nelson himself speaks of her incurable generosity as a quality from which it was difficult to withhold admiration—which, in short, he would like to have furthered. Thus poor, charming, wistful "Trilby," with her fine and prudent taste in her art (so that her charades appealed to the most learned, as well as those entirely ignorant of what she so inimitably imitated, while even the inimical agreed as to their beauty, modesty, and brilliant success), was not only generous enough with those of her host of poor relations who behaved to her with any feeling for decency, but had a similar partiality (it may be well to remember) for those of Lord Nelson, with a family of whom, as the Admiral was amazed to discover, she was found to be sharing a modest household allowance.

Of the more doubtful things that were said of Lady Hamilton, there was that which described her as "an artful woman"—even one of those beings whom Henry James has contradictorily portrayed as "a terrible woman." It has even been suggested that, in financial distress, she forged that letter of Lord Nelson's thanking her for her services to England before the Battle of the Nile, on the imputation that Nelson never made use of classical allusions, one of which that letter contained. How dangerous such a proof is, may be seen by any who remember Nelson's more famous classical allusion to his "returning with his shield or upon it." Was it not also forgotten in this imputation that Nelson mentioned her services to England else-

where?[1] Again, she has been called "volatile"; but there is a lengthy letter to her from Nelson before Trafalgar, on passing Naples, in which he relates the condition of many old friends, mostly children and old servants, which surely was not written for a light and changeable heart. The lowest form of brute rancour spoke of Nelson and Lady Hamilton, when at Palermo, as "Antony and Cleopatra," and several of Nelson's sea acquaintances wrote to him in this rough mood. But, in judging the relations between this renowned beauty and Nelson, we must remember other platonic friendships which this stern, somewhat wearied man had with women (Mrs. Moutray, Lady Spencer, etc.) whom he addressed, and they him, in similar affectionate terms. Perhaps, for final reflection, we cannot do better than turn again to the short testimony of Horatia; and whether we believe, with Nelson's father, to the death in his son, or with the amazing mind of Mrs. St. George who was prevented from spreading a falsehood that he overdrank, we are perhaps to be thankful that Nelson, at least, kept his head—that he went off and on, from Palermo, in his Admiral's barge, with never less than half an eye on his cherished crews,[2] his "ground-tackling," and the

[1] In his will. Nelson was as angry at the injustice he considered done to Lady Hamilton as he was at that accorded to the crews of the fleet which fought at Copenhagen.—*Desp. and Lett.*, Nicolas.

[2] Letter to Nelson on leaving Palermo for England:

My lord, it is with extreme grief that we find that you are about to leave us. We have been along with you (although not in the same ship) in every engagement your Lordship has been in, both by sea and land; and most humbly beg of your Lordship to permit us to go to England, as your Boat's crew, in any Ship or Vessel, or in any way that may seem most pleasing to your Lordship. My Lord, pardon the rude style of Seamen, who are but little acquainted with writing, and believe us to be, my Lord, your ever humble and obedient servants,

Barge's Crew of the *Foudroyant*.

"knees" and "riders" of his beloved ships. Nay, none of these men knew her so well, we suspect, as did the quiet, right-headed Admiral himself, who replied to one of her letters with the half-sad, half-laughing comment that, "they gave him the greatest pain and the greatest pleasure, they showed so plainly what she was after."

Perhaps the best testimony to beautiful Emma Hamilton was the confidence imposed in her by Lord Nelson, as shown in his bequests to her, irrespective of future union, and his remark, in the terrible shambles of the *Victory*, together with thanks to God for duty done, "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton if she knew my situation!" Finally, there is Nelson's reference to her feeling for heroic duty in life: "If there were more Emmas there would be more Nelsons." We can only say, if she gave something from her cleverness, skill or soul to the seconding of the better nature of this great man, who began his deeds by opposing loose authority in self-interested error,[1] and finished them by leading his last fleet, for England's sake, upon the enemy's line, in such a manner, that for a time, he took the fire of eight full sized line-of-battle-ships upon his single hull, we must be careful how we lay too dread a censure upon her. Indeed, before this is done, should we not be more certain of a tale still founded on strange falsehoods, and ask how much of the trust she won the woman retained. "Look after my Guardian-angel, Hardy," said Lord Nelson of Lady Hamilton's portrait, as they removed his cabin-fittings preparatory to going into action—into crash, and roar, and grape, and blood—for the last time.

[1] Pages 27 and 28, Beresford's *Nelson and His Times*.

WHERE THE BUTTERFLIES COME FROM

THE range of hills behind the city of Adelaide is, much of it, almost bare of scrub and tree, and in the winter these lofty cones and ovals are covered with a smooth green grass, and rise one over the other in the distance, as round and pleasant as a giant's pleasure-links. Deep in the passless range, as most people know, are strange, remote valleys and cul-de-sacs, where the sheep feed on the grassy sheer, and outlaws from our Black Forest are said to have made a last stand in former times, while here and there, far up on the sloping bosoms, little cobweb paths wind round and about: perhaps, before the days of mountain roads, the way the early legislator rode his forty miles to the Governor's Ball or Parliament House. In any case the paths were well worn enough, for in many a man sinks well up his calf in the little creepers and weeds that choke them now.

Down in a close valley, in a cot on the Waterfall Road, lived little Isbel Yawkins. Perhaps you would remember that year, after the drought, when the butterflies were so troublesome. *Troublesome*, we repeat, because many were convinced they killed the flowers in the gardens where they fluttered and crowded, though it was impossible to make quite certain, because, flying in orange companies from flower to flower, and settling for so short a time on this and that, it was not easy to be discovered if their long tongues wrought any damage, or the flower died of something else. Often, that year, Isbel was within an ace of

settling this vexed question, but just as she trotted near enough to see the butterfly's face, it lifted orange wings and floated by. Some people, it may be recollected, said you ought to "kill all you could catch," which was not a difficult matter, for they seemed so stupid in the hot air and hung about in nines and tens. Indeed, I heard it said, many grown gardeners killed as many as they conveniently could. Little Isbel, however, was never able to catch any but the dead ones that lay beneath on the ground, and these she was glad enough to secrete for her own.

Nobody else seemed much interested in the butterflies—at least nothing like so interested as was little Isbel. Her too oft-repeated questions on their way of existence, why they were so silent, and where they nested in the evening, produced confessions of absolute ignorance or answers most immature and vague. "Accursed caterpillers which just come from nowhere and go with the blessed rain," was hardly satisfying to a person surrounded daily by these indestructible and lively presences, and no one liked the brilliant things to be trifled with as, "Bugs with angels' wings," or treated jokingly as, "sorts of giddy mosquitoes that have give up housekeeping"; nor, indeed, was she permanently oppressed by mere cross remarks, as "they were bits of doomed vanity without sense enough to make a hole to die in." To Isbel their enchantment was born anew each sunny morning, and decked her short and homely hours, like the gardens where they swam and swayed, with bright and restless mystery.

It seems to have been owing to a remark of Mr. Yawkins' brother—a sort of sailor when he was not helping with the potatoes—that there was the trouble in the family. Mr. Yawkins' brother was sometimes very talkative, and, generally, it was thought, rather a giddy sort of young man. It was vaguely wondered how so giddy-minded a man could

trust himself upon the masts and shrouds. Some of the things he related—well !—an elephant or an acrobat couldn't have endured so much worry, and even grown people privately agreed that they didn't believe all his remarks, though politeness might keep them sitting silent longer than you would have expected. Nevertheless, Isbel found him as agreeable a pass-the-time-o'day acquaintance as you might meet in a parsley-walk. To come upon him down by the creek, where the mint smelt strong enough to knock you down, and the soil was black as a coffin, sometimes resulted in a little fish swimming in a glycerine bottle, a geranium-breasted robin on a fork, a frog, or a remark of considerable witchery. Even with Isbel, Mr. Yawkins' brother was never unready with a word, and this was how it occurred that the former, with her interminable butterflies, got that particular reply after the numerous others he had made her. "Where the butterflies come from ?" returned he, with a thoughtful gravity, as if the idea was still rather curious to him ; "Where the butterflies come from ? Look, I'll tell you where they come from, Lizzie ! See yonder, up on that great, green balloon" (pointing at one of the hillsides hanging over them), "there's a little path running up and around, till it rounds the corner—well, you chivvy aloft up there, and you follow under where the white cloud is, away and away till it stops . . . ah, there you'll find 'em sleeping in the trees like pretty birds."

Now Isbel had been nearly up to the lower part of this path before, when she was accompanying some goats that had a kid. So when a great longing took possession of her, to see all the butterflies asleep in their nests, it did not take her more than a night and a day to decide she would go again. She chose Friday, because Mrs. Yawkins had gone to town after some boots. As it happened, Mr. Yawkins' brother was also absent, having had a slight

coolness with Mr Yawkins on the subject of the sea-shells that hang underneath ships, and had gone for the night to the Black Hill. And Mr. Yawkins had taken his lunch along, and did not come up the garden, till he heard Mrs. Yawkins call his name in her rather shrill voice, and when he did, there she was dead-tired and bewildered, and that Isbel nowhere that *she* could find.

As for little Isbel, in pursuit of her pretty fancy, she had trotted up the hill till her form looked like a small moving stone in the grass, and then she found the path and trotted away. You could hardly have seen her head as she went along. She trotted along the path, and trotted along the path, and trotted along the path, till, just round the corner, there was a single hollow tree, in which quite a grown man might have found shelter from the storm. Here, somewhat to her bewilderment, the path, as they say it is with life itself, instead of mounting on towards the hill-top, began to descend again, and, though the descent was very gradual, still it was not quite the arrangement she expected. Though a little daunted, she was soon reassured by the "rattle" of some wattle-birds, and three great blasts from the quarries, which made her feel quite at home, and on she went round the hill. At the next bend, she came on a number of black lambs' tails hanging from varnished walking-sticks, which she could not know were just grass-trees, and they made her think of goblin things. Only a little further down, however, was a tiny grass valley, all shut in by towering slopes, in the middle of which was a single great gum-tree. Little Isbel stood awed on the precipitous path-edge, at the sight of this great tree, which was lush and full-leaved with the beautiful soil in which it grew. From ground to summit and from side to side, every leaf was hung with clusters of orange butterflies, till the whole tree was a moving orange yellow in the

fading light ; so plentiful they were, it seemed as if all the butterflies in the world were clustering there ; so thick they hung there was hardly a leaf to be seen for their yellow wings ; while others yet, as if they could not find nesting room, or were too happy to sleep, floated rejoicing above the rest in the delicate air.[1]

* * * *

Poor Mr. Yawkins went up the road nearly to the waterfalls looking for Isbel, and then down the road to the electric-tram terminus, but he did not see her anywhere, nor had any of the neighbours seen her, not even Mrs. Allnutt, who lived at the first bridge, and generally knew where anybody was. He and Mrs. Yawkins and that hurried about all night looking for Isbel, and next morning in the dawn they were still hurrying somewhere, but they could not think where the child had taken herself. Mr. Yawkins' brother came back to dinner at twelve, and he talked a good drop when they told him Isbel was gone away, and followed them about (very aggravating of him it was) just behind them, Mr. Yawkins one way, and Mrs. Yawkins another, bothering them, when they did not want to talk, with all sorts of inquiries. But suddenly he threw up his hands into the air, and gave a wild screech ; and when they turned, quite distracted with him, he was running up the mountain behind the kitchen door, shouting to them to scurry up aloft, for he was pretty certain now where the pretty was run to.

Mr. Yawkins soon closed up behind his brother, and quickly learned the stuff he'd been telling Isbel about the butterfly path, and Mrs. Yawkins hurried after them as quickly as she could, shouting at them in her rather shrill voice, and being shouted back at, but she never quite caught

[1] A fact.

up with the others. She was in the brown dress she preferred to wear, with darkish plain hair, and she followed them just as she was, with her sleeves a little up her arms.

You would be surprised how long it took the three, who were in such hot haste, to ascend to the path, and then along to the corner, and so, past the hollow tree, down—down to where the great gum was shimmering in the sunlight, even now alive with butterflies. Mr. Yawkins' brother was struck a'back with the sight, and stood staring at it almost as amazed as Isbel had been, but Mr. Yawkins pushed roughly by him, looking this way and that after his lost one, while Mrs. Yawkins came up and began to call the child's name in a voice rather thoughtlessly loud.

Little Isbel must have slipped in her pleasure at finding all the butterflies, for they found her lying below the path in the valley, her face on her arm, which was stained with blood. About her head, attracted perhaps by the colour of her hair, fluttered two or three of the pretty creatures she had come to see, and one was actually settled on the wayward strands. Mr. Yawkins carried her home, with his wife stumbling and hurrying just behind his arm and now and again reaching forward and touching the child, and behind them came Mr. Yawkins' brother, talking endlessly and excitedly.

Any one interested in learning more would find the rest in Mr. Luke Fildes' noble picture of "The Doctor."

Printed in Great Britain by
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, THE GRESHAM PRESS, WOKING AND LONDON

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